

should be enabled to grant to that person a loan on second mortgage, if he was unable to arrange the whole of the finance himself.

There is more than one way in which a person can acquire a new house. He can have his own block of land and build the house himself, either with or without the assistance of sub-contractors, by what is generally referred to as the self-help method. He can let the contract to a builder and have the house built for him, or he can approach a builder who has just completed a dwelling and buy it and the land from that builder. Whilst it was intended, in the Act of 1954, that a person doing any of those three things could obtain a loan on second mortgage from the State Housing Commission, it has been found that the last case is not covered by the Act. That is to say, the person buying a new ready-built house rather than building one himself is not covered.

The Bill is designed to include that class of person among those who may be assisted. As to whether, on the precise wording of the Bill, that objective would be achieved, there is room for difference of opinion, but that aspect can be dealt with during the Committee stage. The only other point is that the Act at the moment provides that a man can build a house, but it makes no provision for a person living in a partially built house, as so many do today, and then enlarging or completing it. The Bill will provide that financial assistance can be granted also to a person in that category. In the main, the Bill does little more than tidy up some drafting weakness in the parent Act of 1954. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

The Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 60A amended:

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

Page 2, in line 22—Delete the words "built at a cost" and substitute the words "of a value."

The amendment relates to the final paragraph—paragraph (c) on page 2—and the words "built at a cost" there can only mean, built at a cost to the builder who ultimately sells it to the person who will occupy it, and who is the person who wishes to receive the loan. It seems to me that the cost to the builder is not the true criterion. The true criterion, in my opinion, is the value of the property for which the purchaser is paying. Only this afternoon we passed the third reading of

a Bill which cleared up an ambiguity in another Act, so I think we should make the position quite clear in this legislation and ensure that there is no room for doubt in the existing wording.

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: I agree with the amendment. As the hon. Mr. Watson has said, it is an attempt to clarify the wording in the Bill and there is no intention to change its tenor.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 8.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 9th September, 1958.

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

RAILWAYS.

Free Road Transport to Country Railheads.

1. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Referring to his statement that the road transport section of the Railway Department has not commenced the practice of providing free transport for freight to railheads in country centres (parliamentary question No. 6, on the 27th August, 1958), is it correct that—

(a) the Narrogin Road Board recently obtained quotes from two private carriers at Kalgoorlie for the transport of approximately 12 tons of machinery from Kalgoorlie to Narrogin on the basis—

(i) if the Transport Board approved, for the full distance Kalgoorlie-Narrogin;

(ii) if the Transport Board did not approve, from site to Kalgoorlie railhead;

(b) the Transport Board granted a permit for the transport by road for the full distance of approximately half of the consignment with the balance to be carried by rail Kalgoorlie-Narrogin;

(c) as a result of an offer by the Railway Department to carry the whole of the consignment from the site to the railhead free of charge, the whole of the consignment was subsequently carried by rail?

(2) If the foregoing is correct, will he state the cost to the Railway Department of the free cartage referred to and whether

this arrangement was made possible as a result of the decision to allow a Railway Department official to participate in meetings of the Transport Board?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The weight of the machinery to be transported was 20 tons 9 cwt. 1 qtr. There are no crane facilities at this private siding for loading heavy lifts into railway wagons, but a stationary crane near the machinery was used to load on to a railway road vehicle for transport to Kalgoorlie goods yard where the machinery was transferred to rail wagon for transport to Narrogin. There was no question of free haulage to the railhead. The freight was assessed on the rail mileage from the private siding Kalgoorlie to Narrogin.

(2) The first portion is answered by No. (1). In regard to the second portion, the Railway Department's representative was at the board's meeting when this was discussed. It is general policy for the department to be consulted on matters of this nature.

MT. LAWLEY HIGH SCHOOL.

Number of Teachers, Students, and Classrooms.

2. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How many students in each year group attend Mt. Lawley High School?

(2) How many teachers are there for each year group?

(3) How many classrooms are there available for each year group?

(4) How many vacant rooms are there, if any?

(5) Are any more classrooms to be built at this school; and if so, how many?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) First year, 426.

Second year, 433.

Third year, 269.

(2) and (3) High schools are not organised in this manner. Classes move according to the subject to be taught, and teachers are responsible for different subjects.

(4) None.

(5) No.

MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL.

Number of Teachers, Students, and Classrooms.

3. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How many—

(a) first-year students;

(b) second-year students;

(c) third-year students;

- (d) fourth-year students;
 - (e) fifth-year students
- attend Midland High School?

(2) How many classrooms are there available for each year group?

(3) How many teachers are there for each group?

(4) How many new classrooms will be available in January, 1959?

(5) Are there any vacant rooms at present, and if so, how many?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) First year 610.
- (b) Second year 489.
- (c) Third year 330.
- (d) Fourth year 98.
- (e) Fifth year 62.

(2) and (3) High schools are not organised in this manner. Classes move according to the subject to be taught and teachers are responsible for different subjects.

(4) None.

(5) No.

Number of Students Transferred from Mt. Lawley High School.

4. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How many—

(a) fourth-year students;

(b) fifth-year students

attend Midland High School ex Mt. Lawley High School?

(2) How many students is it anticipated will enter fourth-year at Midland High in 1959?

(3) How many students entering fourth-year in 1959 at Midland High will be ex Mt. Lawley High?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) 30.

(b) Nil.

(2) It is not possible to state at the moment. Adjustment of boundaries cannot be finalised until it is known how many students desire to continue into fourth year, and this is never known until after the results of the Junior Certificate examination are published in January.

(3) See No. (2).

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

Status of New Australians.

5. Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What is the position of New Australian doctors entering Australia who wish to commence practice in the following States:—

(a) New South Wales;

(b) Victoria;

(c) South Australia;

(d) Queensland?

(2) What is their position in Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) In New South Wales the position resembles that in Western Australia.

(b) New Australian doctors who have lived continuously in Victoria for three years may apply to be examined by the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee. If successful they are registered. This entitlement expires in 1960.

(c) We have no record of special legislation relating to the registration of new Australian doctors in South Australia.

(d) New Australians who hold certain specified foreign medical qualifications may apply to be examined. If successful they are registered.

(2) Whenever any district or medical service in Western Australia requires the services of a medical practitioner and a registered practitioner cannot be secured to fill the position, the district or service can be declared a region or auxiliary service as provided by the Medical Act. When a declaration is made the Medical Board invites applications from new Australians with foreign medical qualifications. The board selects the applicant to be appointed. Appointment is subject to three months' probationary service under supervision in a public hospital.

When a regional or auxiliary service appointee has served for three years he may present himself for examination under special conditions. If successful, he is entitled to full registration. Alternatively, he may serve in a region or auxiliary service for five years when, subject to satisfactory service, he receives full registration without examination.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT TRUST.

Effect of Industrial Agreement on Costs.

6. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

What is the estimated increase in costs arising from the consent agreement filed for registration in the Arbitration Court by the Metropolitan Transport Trust—

(a) in respect of services already operating under the Trust;

(b) the services mentioned in (a) and all other services to be taken over ultimately?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) The amount is £15,000.

(b) The amount is £25,000.

MOTOR-CYCLISTS.*Safety Helmets.*

7. Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Have any official tests been made of safety helmets for motor-cyclists, available through trade circles?

(2) If so, have results been satisfactory?

(3) If not, what steps are being taken to make satisfactory helmets available?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No official tests of helmets have been made in Western Australia. So far as is known there are no testing facilities available for this purpose. The helmets used by the Police Department and other Government and semi-Government departments are of British manufacture and have been tested to British standards.

(2) I have been informed that helmet shells, which were imported from Great Britain and completed in this country by attaching a harness of Australian manufacture to the imported shell, recently underwent a test in London at the request of the National Safety Council of Western Australia, but did not conform to the standards required, by reason of the fact that the strap attached to the helmet broke during the test. A copy of the report is available and will be laid on the table of the House for a period of two weeks.

(3) The National Safety Council of Western Australia has made approaches to the Department of Excise and Customs, and so also have motor-cycle dealers, to permit the import of tested helmets from Great Britain without import restrictions.

Dealers advise that they can import helmets, but only at the expense of their import quotas for other motor-vehicle parts. These representations have been refused and the Federal Minister for Transport has stated that the Australian helmet is satisfactory.

The British standard is BS2001/56; and so far as is known, no helmet made in Australia has been tested according to this standard, and the only known attempt is that referred to with respect to the imported shell and the Australian manufactured harness.

I have a photostat copy of the report and I move—

That it lay on the Table of the House for a period of two weeks.

Question put and passed.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCES.*Primary and Secondary Students.*

8. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Education:

How many school children in this State attend—

(a) primary schools in the metropolitan area;

(b) primary schools in the country areas;

(c) secondary schools in the metropolitan area;

(d) secondary schools in the country areas?

The MINISTER replied:

These statistics are not readily available in this form. The following figures are approximate:—

(a) 48,700.

(b) 39,900.

(c) 13,900.

(d) 7,900.

COLLIE BRIDGE.*Census of Traffic.*

9. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has a regular census been taken in recent years of motor traffic using the Collie Bridge situated between Australind and Bunbury?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) If so, what are the details of the figures for each of the last five years?

The MINISTER replied:

I have no knowledge of any census having taken place, since the matter is not one which comes within the jurisdiction of the Police Department. I know of no reason why it should be necessary for such a census to be taken, and I would suggest that the information could be obtained only from the local authority in the district concerned.

SUPERPHOSPHATE AND SULPHURIC ACID.*Perth Prices.*

10. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the present price in Perth of superphosphate per ton?

(2) What is the price in Perth of contact sulphuric acid (100 per cent.) per ton?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The price of superphosphate at all works is £13 3s. per ton less 5s. for cash with order.

(2) The price of the so-called 100% sulphuric acid made by the contact process is £21 per ton.

NORTH FREMANTLE SUPER-PHOSPHATE CO.*Roasters Used for Treatment of Gold Ore.*

11. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Mines:

What type of roasters or reactors are used by the North Fremantle Superphosphate Co. in its recovery of gold by treatment of Kalgoorlie gold ores?

The MINISTER replied:

The roasters used for the roasting of Kalgoorlie concentrates at North Fremantle are of the fluid bed type.

SCHOOL-OF-THE-AIR.

Establishment in Western Australia.

12. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that a new school-of-the-air for outback children was inaugurated by the South Australian Education Department at Port Augusta on the 8th July of this year, and that now the children, by virtue of co-operation between the school, the Flying Doctor Service and the P.M.G., which issues radio transceivers under licence for £12 a year, are able to converse with their teacher and thus establish a very valuable educational link which will materially assist the normal correspondence courses?

(2) Is there any similar school-of-the-air operating here in Western Australia?

(3) If not, will he have inquiries made in regard to the South Australian project and give consideration to establishing similar schools in various parts of Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Not on the same scale. Experiments have been taking place at Carnarvon over the last 18 months.

(3) Inquiries have been made and consideration is being given to establishing similar schools in Western Australia.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

Persons Over 70 Years of Age.

13. Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Premier:

Will he state what Government appointments are held by persons over the age of 70 years; the names of the appointees; and the salary, fees, or allowances payable in each case?

The PREMIER replied:

It is not possible to answer this question precisely as appointees to boards are not obliged to state their ages on appointment. However, the following persons are deemed to be over the age of 70 years:—

Medical Board—

Dr. D. Paton—£4 4s. per meeting, £7 7s. court meeting.

Dr. D. M. McWhae—£2 2s. per meeting, £4 4s. court meeting.

Mr. J. L. Walker—£2 2s. per meeting, £4 4s. court meeting.

Emu Point (Albany) Reserve Board—

Mr. W. G. Drew—£3 3s. per meeting and £3 10s. per week as caretaker of reserve.

W.A. Onion Marketing Board—

Mr. F. Mann—£4 4s. per meeting—limit per annum £250.

W.A. Potato Marketing Board—

Mr. F. Mann—£3 3s. per meeting.

Dairy Produce Marketing Board—

Dr. G. L. Sutton—£4 4s. per meeting—limit of £250 per annum.

Wheat Products Prices Committee—

Dr. G. L. Sutton—£3 3s. per meeting.

W.A. Egg Marketing Board—

Mr. K. D. Wilson—£275 per annum.

Metropolitan Markets Trust—

Mr. W. A. Haynes—£4 4s. per meeting.

W.A. Liaison Officer, Sydney—

Mr. S. W. M. Stilling—£1,315 per annum, and entertainment allowance, £300 per annum.

POLICE BOYS' CLUB.

Donation from General Loan Fund.

14. Mr. HEARMAN asked the Treasurer:

(1) Was a donation of £5,000 from the General Loan Fund recently made to a police boys' club in the metropolitan area?

(2) If so, how much interest is payable annually on the sum referred to and by whom and from what source will it be paid?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Payment of this donation will be made to the Scarborough Police Boys' Club when their building operations require this finance. It will be provided from the General Loan Fund.

(2) Interest approximating £200 per annum will be paid from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

ESPERANCE LAND.

Sales by Mr. Allen Chase.

15. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What is the lot number and acreage of the first parcel taken up by Mr. Chase at Esperance?

(2) What are the names and nationalities of people to whom Mr. Allen Chase has sold land at Esperance?

(3) What acreage does each of these people hold at Esperance and what are the lot numbers of their properties?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Neridup Location 12, containing 61,520 acres 3 roods 10 perches.

(2) and (3)

Name and Address.	Lot Nos.	Area (acres).
Beverley Randolph Galt, Esperance	10, 11, 12, 13, 19 of Neridup Location 12	9,637
George Edward Newton, California	Portion of Neridup Location 12, lying south of East-West Road	0,061
Charles James Correll, California	Lot 14 of Neridup Location 12	1,020
Robert McDonald Hixson, Los Angeles, California	Lot 17 of Neridup Location 12	1,888
Francis Emmett Browne, California	Lot 18 of Neridup Location 12	1,892
Robert Orville Cummings and Mary Elliott Cummings, California	Lot 20 of Neridup Location 12	1,050
Arthur Gordon Linkletter, California	Lots 21, 22, 24, 25 and 26 of Neridup Location 12	9,445
Irving Bernard Hexter, Ohio	Lot 23 of Neridup Location 12	1,985
Allen Tilden Chase, California	Lot 23 of Neridup Location 12	1,985
Warren Hayes Moyer, New Jersey, and Harold Lee George, California	Lot 2 of Neridup Location 12	1,999
Herbert Vincent Hills, California	Lots 5 and 6 of Neridup Location 12	4,045
Robert Paul Winks, California	Lot 7 of Neridup Location 12	2,024
Wilbert Fleming Newton, Pennsylvania	Lots 8 and 9 of Neridup Location 12	4,040

The company has advised the State that the persons to whom land within parcel No. 1 has been transferred are members of the Chase Syndicate who fully appreciate that they must, in respect of the holdings transferred to them, carry out all the obligations of the company under the agreement with the State. Such transferees are analogous to shareholders, and are not settlers within the meaning of the agreement. The transfers were necessary in order that the shareholders may avail themselves of the concessions available to owners under taxation laws of the U.S.A. and Australia.

NORTH-WEST COASTAL HIGHWAY.*Sealing.*

16. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What distance has yet to be sealed on the North-West Coastal Highway between Carnarvon and Northampton?

(2) How many miles of sealing will be done on the North-West Coastal Highway this financial year—

(a) by the Carnarvon Branch M.R.D.;

(b) by the Geraldton Branch M.R.D.?

(3) When is it anticipated that the sealing of the North-West Coastal Highway between Carnarvon and Northampton will be completed?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) 186 miles.

(2) (a) Carnarvon district: 44 miles.

(b) Geraldton district: Nil.

(3) It is not feasible at this stage to conjecture when the sealing between Carnarvon and Northampton will be completed.

EDUCATION.*Financial Benefit of Leaving Certificate Exhibitions.*

17. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Will he give consideration to increasing the financial benefit of Leaving Certificate exhibitions, as no upward alteration has been made since their inauguration in the year 1914?

(2) Are students who win exhibitions also awarded scholarships under the Commonwealth scheme, or does the winning of the one cut out the other?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. The new type of exhibition is a straight-out prize and not a living allowance, and bears no relationship to the previous purpose of the exhibition.

(2) Exhibition winners may also be awarded Commonwealth scholarships.

TRANSPORT.*Loading Permits, Prosecutions, etc.*

18. Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many permits have been issued for the year ended the 30th June, 1958, allowing axle loadings in excess of 17,000 lb.?

(2) What areas of the State do these permits cover?

(3) How many prosecutions have been initiated against Government vehicles for the year ended the 30th June, 1958?

(4) How many prosecutions have been launched against private contractors who are working for the Government for the year ended the 30th June, 1958?

(5) How many prosecutions have been launched against private contractors working for the Government whose vehicles are loaded by or under the supervision of a Government Department?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Nil; but there are 220 additional loading permits in existence applicable to tandem axle vehicles only, some in excess of 22,000 lb., which is the maximum applicable gross load on a tandem axle, and is dependent upon the type of vehicle and the route to be travelled. These permits cover quite a number of road districts; and the routes to be followed are, in each case, subject to approval of the Main Roads Department and the local authorities.

(3) Nil.

(4) No record.

(5) No record.

RAILWAY FREIGHTS.*Quotes Outside Rate Book.*

19. Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has it become a usual practice for the W.A.G.R. to quote freight rates lower than those shown in the rate book, in order to compete with road hauliers for the carriage of specific goods in specific instances?

(2) How many instances of special quotes outside the rate book have been made for the six months ended the 31st August last; and of these special quotes, how many are still operative?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) No; it is not the usual practice. Specially reduced rates are quoted in specific instances to ensure that existing railway capacity is used to the best advantage.

(2) Seven, of which three are operative and three are yet to commence; the other has been completed.

WATER SUPPLIES.*Drilling in the Collie Sedimentary Basin.*

20. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

What progress has been made on drilling to ascertain if sufficient water is available in the Collie sedimentary basin to supply a large power station on the coalfield?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Water Supplies) replied:

The first bore is well advanced and pumping tests are proceeding.

SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS.*Cost of Operation with Chlorination.*

21. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is the cost, per day, of operating the sewage treatment works—

(a) with full and effective chlorination with the present plant; and

(b) at specified lower rates of chlorination?

(2) What is the estimated cost, per day, of operating effectively when the new plant is installed?

(3) What degree of chlorination is being practised at the moment?

(4) Is any variation in this degree of chlorination proposed? If so, to what extent and when?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) (a) £275 per day, with chlorination at 100% of chlorine demand of sewage effluent.

(b) £240 per day, with chlorination at 80% of chlorine demand.

(2) (a) With chlorine demand as per (1) (a): £190 per day.

(b) With chlorine demand as per (1) (b): £180 per day.

(3) The present degree of chlorination is 80% of chlorine demand (obtained by chemical analysis) of the effluent.

(4) Indications are that chlorination at 80% chlorine demand will provide adequate bathing beach protection. If warranted, dosing will be stepped up to 100% demand.

STATE LICENSING COURT.*Admission of Women Members to Fremantle Club.*

22. Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is it correct that the State Licensing Court has recently granted permission to a club in Fremantle to admit women members?

(2) What is the name of the club to which such permission was given, and on what conditions are the women members to be admitted?

(3) Is this permission to be taken as a precedent for other clubs to make similar applications?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied:

This question should have been directed to me. The answer is—

(1) Yes.

(2) Fremantle Club, the conditions of membership being as for ordinary members as defined by the Licensing Act.

(3) The Licensing Act does not provide an authority for the court to discriminate in respect of the admittance of men or women as members of a registered club. However, before any application or amendment to rules is approved involving an extension of membership, the court must be satisfied that the accommodation is satisfactory.

MANIANA HOUSES.*Refusals to Occupy.*

23. Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many vacant houses are there at Maniana?

(2) What is the total number of applicants who have refused accommodation when offered at Maniana during the past 12 months?

(3) What has been the main reason given for such refusals?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Of 300 homes, 8 are vacant (on offer).
- (2) 58.
- (3) (a) Too far from city or area unsuitable—23.
- (b) Houses too small or unsuitable—11.
- (c) No reason given—19.
- (d) Leaving metropolitan area—4.
- (e) Made other arrangements—1.

Throughout the State the refusal rate is approximately 1 home in 3 offered.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Noxious Weeds Act Amendment.
- 2, Argentine Ant Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 3, Land Act Amendment.
- 4, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

THE HON. J. J. BRADY (Minister for Police—Guildford-Midland) [4.51] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill containing amendments requested by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the main purpose being to provide more adequate penalties in keeping with the current value of money. The Act at present provides for minimum penalties; but on the advice of the Crown Law officers, it is proposed to remove this provision.

From experience, the Crown Law Department has found that the fixing of minimum penalties in other Acts has led to injustices on a number of occasions. I am personally aware of injustices resulting from the infliction of a minimum penalty when a conviction and costs would have been adequate. It is much preferable to permit the Bench to fix a penalty after consideration of all the circumstances in mitigation without being fettered by a minimum.

The Bill therefore deletes the minimum provisos, leaving such penalty to the discretion of the courts. At the same time, however, it increases the maximum penalties and it will be noted it is proposed that an existing penalty of £25 shall become £50; and a £10 penalty shall become £25.

Section 5 provides for compensation to be paid for injury caused to animal, person or property by a person convicted of cruelty. The amount of compensation is limited to £10, but the Bill proposes to remove the limit and leave such matter to the jurisdiction of the court. The penalty

of £5 provided in Section 22 of the Act is apparently considered adequate as the society made no request for a change in this instance. The minimum penalty provision is, however, removed by the Bill for reasons previously stated.

To enable magistrates and clerks of courts and other persons concerned with the administration and enforcement of the Act to familiarise themselves with the change in penalties and the change in name of the society, it is proposed that the amending Act shall come into force on a date fixed by proclamation. The name of the society has changed since the Act was last amended, and it is now known as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Western Australia (Incorporated). The Bill therefore contains the necessary amendments.

Section 24 of the Principal Act relates to the inspection of traps at reasonable intervals. The society requested, and it was agreed, that this section would be made clearer and therefore improved by adding after the word "trap" the words "snare, or other device".

The society suggested other amendments, but it is felt that those contained in the Bill adequately cover the position for the time being. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Roberts, debate adjourned.

COLLEGE STREET CLOSURE BILL.

Second Reading.

THE HON. L. F. KELLY (Minister for Lands—Merredin-Yilgarn) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: Normally a measure of this kind would be brought down a little later in the session when the Road Closure Bill was before the House. However, there is some urgency about the matter of getting this road closed. Therefore, the Bill has been brought along a good deal ahead of the normal time.

College-st. is adjacent to Perth Modern School in the City of Subiaco. Because of the necessity to acquire more land for extension and additions to Perth Modern School, it has been found necessary for the area contained in College-st. to be made available. This street separates Perth Modern School site from the Thomas-st. school site. It is not a very wide street, and it is envisaged that once it is closed provision will be made for pedestrian traffic for which it is now used.

The Subiaco City Council is in perfect accord that this closure should take place. College-st. connects Subiaco-rd. and Roberts-rd., and would not inconvenience anybody because of the fact that pedestrian

traffic will be covered in the proposal for the new building. It is a very simple measure and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

ACTS AMENDMENT (SUPERANNUATION AND PENSIONS) BILL.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

THE HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.01]: As explained by the Premier, when introducing this Bill, it is not a large one; but it is of real importance to a number of pensioners who are awaiting adjustments of their pensions. It includes an amendment covering the legislation passed last year, which was found by the Crown Law Department not to be of any real value in achieving the desired objective.

Prior to the 31st December, 1957, each pension unit in the case of persons covered by this amending Bill was worth 15s. per week, up to eight units, and 12s. 6d. per unit thereafter in pension, so that a person who had contributed for four units, on retirement became eligible for a pension of £3 per week which, with the supplementation of £1 per week previously granted to meet increased cost of living, gave a pension of £4 per week.

As from the 1st January, 1958, a pension unit was increased in value to 17s. 6d. per week and the supplementation ceased. This had the result, in cases where pensioners had previously drawn a four-unit pension (i.e., four times 15s. giving £3, plus £1 supplementation—a pension of £4 per week) that under the new rates (i.e. four units at 17s. 6d. per week without supplementation) they received only £3 10s. per week. Government employees can elect to retire either at the age of 60 or 65, so that an employee who reached the age of 60, say, in October, 1957, but who had, say, long service leave of six months to clear, did not legally cease duty until April, 1958, and if he were entitled to a four-unit pension he drew only £3 10s. per week, instead of £4 per week, which was the rate applying in October, 1957.

An employee who had remained in employment beyond the age of 60 by Government request, and who reached retirement age about the time of change from the old to new rates, would have been similarly penalised. The Bill is designed to prevent any reduction in the amount

payable and to pay retrospectively to the 1st January, 1958, the reduction which has in fact been suffered.

Strictly speaking, the amendment cuts across the rule of no retrospectivity which has always been rigidly adhered to, particularly as those who paid for only four units should, when the cost of living increased and with it their wages, have taken out more units to meet increased cost of living on retirement.

For instance, a person drawing an eight-unit pension received, under the old rate of 15s. per unit, £6 per week plus £1 supplementation, making in all £7 per week. With the new rate of 17s. 6d. per unit and without the supplementation, he still receives £7 per week and more, of course, according to the number of units. Those principally affected are approximately 250 employees retired from the Railways and the Tramways. The increase in expenditure will not, of course, be a continuing one.

In regard to the 1871 Act; a person who retired in 1953 on a pension equivalent to two-thirds of his salary at retirement, for example, £800 at 31st December, 1957, received as pension this sum plus £52 per annum supplementation. With the application of the Nicholas formula as from the 1st January, 1958, those in the £800 category were not under the formula entitled to any increase so they lost £52 per annum. The amendment similarly will restore this reduction with retrospective application. Approximately 30 or 40 people are involved and again the increased expenditure will not be a continuing one. I support the second reading and trust that the Bill will iron out existing anomalies, rectify the errors of the past and bring the whole matter up to date.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Hon. A. R. G. Hawke (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title and citation:

Mr. BRAND: I take this opportunity to ask the Premier what will be the position in regard to the pensioner who is receiving more than £1,000 per annum.

Mr. Hawke: As I understand it, he will continue to receive the same pension as previously.

Mr. Brand: I take it he will not suffer any reduction?

Mr. Hawke: No.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

LAND TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

THE HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.8]: I am afraid that my position in regard to this Bill is perhaps even more clearly defined than it was in regard to the original measure, which was introduced in 1956, on which occasion I took the opportunity of opposing it. I feel that I must do the same on this occasion, as it seems to me that the present is certainly not the time to impose any further burden on those who are the holders of improved agricultural land; because in many instances they are suffering the effects of depressed prices and greatly reduced returns, in so far as their production is concerned.

I would suggest, for example, that the average price of wool has fallen by no less than 5d. per lb. since the May sales. At that time I doubt that the average price of 48d. per lb.—from which, of course, would have to be deducted the various charges—was a payable one and I am perfectly certain today that the average price of 43d. per lb., from which the average charges would have to be deducted, is not a payable one either. So whilst there were strong arguments against this proposal two years ago, there are even stronger ones at present.

The Treasurer, in the course of answers to questions in the early part of this session, advised that the total collections for land tax, for the year ended the 30th June, 1957, was £1,421,795. In the course of his speech on this Bill he advised that the total collections from the tax imposed on improved agricultural land was approximately £300,000. Included in that £300,000 there was £100,000 which replaced—if one may use that word—what was formerly the vermin rate. I give the Treasurer the assurance that, so far as I am concerned, if it is necessary to pass any legislation—after this Bill has been defeated—to reimpose the vermin rate I am quite prepared to support him in that move.

Mr. Bovell: Provided it is used for the eradication of vermin.

Mr. WATTS: I was about to go on, if the hon. member will let me do so, to say: because it will be expended—as it was before—on the Agriculture Protection Board.

In those circumstances, of course, it will be expended as the hon. member suggests—on the destruction of vermin. So I will have no objection to that. Consequently, I am not sure whether we require such legislation or whether this vermin rate is merely suspended while the land tax is assessable. Whatever it is, I am quite prepared to subscribe to the collection of that rate again if this land tax is not collectable. However, that leaves us only an

amount of £200,000 which is really in dispute. Hon. members will realise that I got that last figure as a result of doing a little mental arithmetic, namely, by taking the approximate figure of £300,000, being the total collections for the year of the tax on improved agricultural land and deducting therefrom the £100,000 which has relation to the vermin rate, leaving £200,000, to which I am definitely opposed.

The Treasurer, in the course of his remarks, made reference to the alternative of this £200,000 being collected by additions to railway freight rates. He also made some slight allusions to water rates. However, I am prepared to deal more specifically with the question of railway freights at the moment.

I find, from the last available report of the railway commissioners, that the total revenue obtained from the transportation of goods and livestock—and that excluded parcels of mail and oddments of that character—was £11,697,627 for the year ended the 30th June, 1957, which was the last year on which I can obtain the necessary particulars. It is perfectly clear that certainly not more than 20 per cent.—and probably only about 12 or 14 per cent.—of that was represented by charges made certainly not more than 20 per cent.—and against Government departments for Government traffic which is merely an interchange of charges from one pocket into another.

So I am prepared to be generous and to say that 80 per cent of that total will represent the revenue derived from the public for the transport of goods and livestock. Of course, although this is only incidental to my argument, as everyone knows, the greater part of that—probably as high as 90 per cent.—is paid by the people in the country districts because the habit is, if they are despatching goods from the metropolitan area or from some other despatching centre, that the freight charges are added to their costs and if they are despatching goods to the metropolitan area or to the port or to some other export place, the cost of the freight is deducted from the returns that they get; so, in the net result, almost the whole of the charges are levied upon the people in the country districts.

However, the point I wish to make is this: If we take the very conservative figure of 80 per cent. of £11,697,000 as being the portion paid by the general public, as opposed to inter-departmental charges for transporting done for Government departments, we find that it would require an increase in railway freights of 2.1 per cent. in order to compensate for this £200,000 which I am suggesting should not be collected and will not be if, by reason of the vote of Parliament, this Bill should not be passed.

So it works down to a question of approximately two per cent. that is in issue and I venture to suggest to the

Treasurer that he has not the slightest justification, nor has he the slightest intention, of increasing railway charges by 2.1 per cent. in order to compensate for the figure that he would not collect, if this Bill is not passed, in the manner that I have suggested.

The sober situation is this: That the Treasurer has collected—quite apart from the tax on improved agricultural lands in this measure if it were passed—a sum of £1,121,000. If that were the amount which is in issue, I could, in addition to the amount represented by the tax I am discussing, appreciate to some extent, anyway, the observations of the Treasurer on Tuesday last in regard to this question of railway freights.

However, in the circumstances, and on the very conservative calculations that I have made, it is quite obvious to me that there is no necessity whatever for the imposition that the Treasurer referred to in his remarks. I do not think that it is necessary for me to labour this question for very long. I have already made it quite clear that I do not believe that the agricultural industry—which would be mainly affected by this particular tax—is at the present time in the position to pay any further impositions than it has to pay at the moment; except that I concede—that, by the passage of a measure similar to this, for a matter of 18 months or two years at the end of 1956 the vermin rate went by the board; and also, in view of the fact that it is used for a specific purpose—namely, for the destruction of vermin, which, if not controlled, can occasion very heavy losses to agriculture—we are justified in reinstating that tax if such reinstatement is necessary. Otherwise, I feel that there is little or no justification at the present time for the reimposition of this measure, and I do not propose to support the proposal.

Mr. Brand: No matter how small the sum, once it is imposed, that is the danger.

Mr. WATTS: It is very difficult to lift; and, in fact, almost impossible. However, I do not even feel disposed this time to support the remaining clauses of the Bill. I admit there is nothing wrong with them. They are, in themselves, quite desirable; but unfortunately they have been tagged on to this major proposition which appears so harmlessly at first sight at the end of the Bill, having reference to paragraph (g). Therefore they form part of the major measure, the greatest principle of which I find it most difficult to agree with at this stage.

So far as I am concerned, I think I should oppose the second reading. If the measure should, by any chance, be defeated; and if the Crown Law Department still believes that the reforms to which it referred in the minor clauses of the Bill

are necessary, they can be put before us in another way. If they were not mixed up with the land tax I would be quite happy to support them; but as the position stands, I feel I had better not.

The position is this: So far as I am concerned the Treasurer will have to do without this additional tax. Nor do I think he is justified in increasing rail freights, which he would not be entitled to increase by more than 2.1 per cent. I suggest, therefore, it would be rather ridiculous to increase the freights by that amount.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [5.22]: I rise to oppose this Bill which, as has been amply explained to this Chamber, is for a continuation of a land tax specifically on improved agricultural land. In presenting this measure to the House, the Treasurer has, more or less, said "You can either pass this Bill or accept something else in lieu thereof", the inference being there will either be increased rail freights, water charges, or some other form of tax peculiar to the rural section of the community.

Mr. Potter: That is right, instead of letting the city dweller carry the whole burden.

Mr. COURT: If the hon. member will sit back calmly for a moment I will demonstrate to him that is not quite the position. The question of rail freights, water charges—and in fact all other charges—should be treated as a separate issue. As far as the rail system is concerned we have to take into account the economics of that system, the role of the railways in the varying fields of production and development, and the effect—on tonnages of freight carried—of the freights actually charged.

I cannot imagine a worse time in Western Australia for a suggestion of an increased tax or charge in the rural area to be put forward. It is well known what has been the experience in primary industry. Some sections which were regarded as being affluent as recently as two or three years ago are today in serious bother. I am not suggesting that every farmer is in financial difficulty, but the industry as a whole has undergone a dramatic change in the last two or three years, and particularly in the last two or three months when the recovery we expected with the commencement of the new wool sales did not take place. However, in spite of the reaction of world markets, it is important that we do not stop in our tracks from sheer fright, just because wool prices have declined. We know from experience that there is a series of ups and downs, and in a State such as ours we have to press on with development, both primary and secondary.

This extra tax is just another that could discourage development at a time when we want to give people all the encouragement

to go ahead and take a bit of risk. We must also bear in mind that the people in the rural areas have absorbed the rail closures up to this point of time, and it seems to be fairly reliably indicated in many cases, if not in all cases, that they have incurred some increase in costs through that action rather than a decrease in transport costs.

It has yet to be demonstrated to me that they have in any instance received a material saving in transport costs as a result of rail closures. We must acknowledge that in the very lowest estimate made by the Minister for Transport in introducing the rail closure motion the saving to the Government as a result of the rail closures was to be much greater than the net revenue which this taxing measure would produce. After deducting the vermin tax, which has been suspended, and which we all agree should be reinstated if the land tax is not re-enacted, the net revenue to the State is £200,000.

One of the disadvantages of a land tax is the fact that it is not related to the ability to pay. There are many taxes of this nature admittedly, but that does not make any of them good. We hear constant criticism against the payroll tax. We, on this side, have expressed criticism of the payroll tax because it is not related to the ability to pay and is considered to be a tax on every business concern, irrespective of any profit or loss which might be incurred.

Mr. Graham: The petrol tax, the beer tax—the whole lot of them, including the dog tax—will come under this category. There is no question of ability to pay.

Mr. COURT: I am not saying there is, but that does not make it any more correct to impose this tax on an industry which is languishing at the present time.

Mr. Graham: There are other businesses languishing, too, but they have to pay their proportion of rates and taxes.

Mr. Hawke: This is not a new tax.

Mr. Brand: I am asking the Minister for Transport what new tax is being imposed on this section.

Mr. Graham: New or old, it is still a payment.

Mr. COURT: If I might interrupt—

The SPEAKER: Do not interrupt; just carry on.

Mr. COURT: The member for Subiaco referred to the burden being carried by the metropolitan area. He should bear in mind that it is part of the Government's current policy to entice overseas firms to come to Western Australia. As a result of representations made by the trade mission, very considerable concessions will be made. I refer to Hansard, page 30

of this session, where the Leader of the Opposition is shown as having asked the Premier the following questions:—

(1) Is it correct that the trade mission led by the Deputy Premier at present overseas is offering incentives for industries to come to Western Australia on the following basis:—

Cash grants in certain conditions of up to 20 per cent. of establishment costs;

interest-free loans up to 10 years and guaranteed additional loans if required;

free factory sites;

essential road, railway, water and power services to factories;

guaranteed housing for workers?

(2) Has any estimate been prepared of the likely cost to the State in the event of all or any of the firms approached deciding to commence activities in Western Australia?

(3) What provision has been made or what funds are available in the event of these incentives having to be met? The Premier's answers were as follows:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The preparation of an estimate covering the likely cost to the State would not be of any worth-while value. In any event, no estimate could be prepared, as sufficient information could not become available until the firms in question had developed at least preliminary estimates of establishing costs and the like.

(3) Some provision will be made in the current year's loan programme. Most of the financial help to be made available by the Government is likely to be required in the financial year 1959-1960, and those years which will succeed 1959-1960.

If the number of industries to be attracted by the trade mission is of any consequence, and they are not some nominal industries, it is logical to suppose that these contributions towards their establishment here will be very substantial. They have got to be found out of the State's revenue. At this point of time the Premier has admitted that he does not know what the amount will be, but provision will be made in the appropriate year.

Now we are not suggesting for one minute that we should refuse to stand the cost of establishing industries here. We will have to find the cost of establishing the necessary services for these industries. It is reasonable, I think, to suppose that the majority of any industries that come here and will benefit from this scheme, will unfortunately be established in the vicinity of Perth.

If they were going to be established further afield in accordance with our policy of decentralisation—and I hope the

Government's policy is one of decentralisation—it would be so much the better; but we have to assume that most of these industries would want to hug the existing developments. It has been suggested, for instance, that one of the biggest industries the Deputy Premier has had discussions with, would want to establish right alongside Kwinana. If it worked on this proposition alone—or any part of it—it would absorb a sum of money in any one year which would make the amount of £200,000 look like chicken feed.

Mr. Johnson: It will come from loan and not from revenue.

Mr. COURT: Some might come out of loan, but if the member for Leederville stops to think for a moment he will agree that a goodly portion of the costs will, in fact, have to be met out of Consolidated Revenue. Admittedly, if there are developmental works to provide services, they could be met out of loan money; but if a study is made, it will be found that a considerable portion of the cost will be a direct charge on Consolidated Revenue; and I would suggest that if the industries are of any magnitude, they are going to absorb in the city areas infinitely more from Consolidated Revenue than the amount that is proposed in respect of this tax, after allowing for the recoupment that will take place from the vermin tax.

There is another very important factor when considering this measure. We have not at this time the Estimates in front of us. It is logical to suppose that with the extra money that has been announced from the Grants Commission, and the extra money from the Commonwealth reimbursement and supplementary grant, the budget for Western Australia for this year will be in the vicinity of £60,000,000.

Surely it is not beyond the ingenuity of the Government of this State to devise some rearrangement of expenditure and revenue which will take care of an item of £200,000. I am sure that if there was some pressing need which arose overnight we would devise ways and means to curtail expenditure or reallocate it to meet the situation. However, we have to make this decision today without the Estimates before us. It is a most extraordinary situation to be in, because we cannot consider this particular taxing measure in relationship to the overall finances of Western Australia; and I think members will agree that it is a most unusual and undesirable situation in which to find ourselves.

Let us examine the figures that we do know. According to last year's Estimates the Treasury advanced the figure of £1,330,000 as the expected collections from land tax for the year ended the 30th June, 1958. In point of fact, in answer to questions, the actual amount was stated to be £1,421,795, which is £91,795 in excess of the original estimate.

I suggest that practically the whole, if not the whole, of that extra amount has come from land outside the improved agricultural land. All throughout the discussion on the amount of revenue to be obtained from the tax on improved agricultural land, it has been freely in my mind that the figure was approximately £300,000, ignoring the vermin tax contribution.

In this next submission, the Treasurer has told us that he expects this taxing measure to be responsible for an income of £300,000. Therefore it would appear that there is no serious change in the original anticipated figure from the improved agricultural land, and the figure now estimated by the Treasurer as the potential source of revenue from such lands; and that is a deduction—and I think a fair one—which brings me to the point that the additional £91,795 received in the year ended the 30th June, 1958, has come from land other than the land which is the subject of this taxing measure. That dismises from the £200,000 net revenue aimed at—in round figures—£100,000, or half of the total aimed at.

The experience of land tax in recent times is one of continually increasing revenue, not only from the extra rates in the £ imposed, but also from this process of revaluation. It is going on all the time; and although the Government—or the Treasurer on behalf of the Government—has announced that there is a policy of allowing valuations to settle down from time to time within given areas, through the whole of the State, this process is going on.

I would suggest that with the rather dramatic development of some of our suburban and country town areas, which will still be subject to land tax even if this measure is defeated, it is not unreasonable to suppose that from the collections for the year ended the 30th June, 1959, an automatic increase from valuations alone will produce the other £100,000 to make up the full £200,000 that this measure seeks to achieve.

Just to summarise that particular point: £100,000 approximately was collected in the year ended the 30th June, 1958, from land other than improved agricultural land in excess of the estimates. It is logical to assume that for the current year the further increase will at least take care of £100,000 because of the departmental practice of revolution.

Mr. Potter: Can't rural people make some contribution towards agriculture research stations, or have we got to do it?

Mr. COURT: One would think that the rural population makes no contribution whatever. If the member for Subiaco would just contemplate for a moment he would realise they make their full contribution to the income tax of this country.

Mr. Potter: Everybody else does, too.

Mr. COURT: Agreed. They make their full contribution to the income tax of this country, and they also make their contribution through the use of the transport system. They make their contribution to many other services that they use. One would think they had everything turned on for nothing.

If the economy of Western Australia were divorced from our primary production there just would not be any Western Australia; and many years will elapse before it can get itself into a state where it can be substantially independent of the rural industries. We have the situation in the Eastern States where they have shown their resilience because of the great expansion of secondary industry. But even there they are sensitive to reactions in the rural income. In Western Australia the position is even more acute, and therefore any measure of this nature has to be taken into account against the background of the overall rural income of Western Australia; and I would suggest that in Western Australia it is even more sensitive than in other parts of Australia. It is in that atmosphere that we are considering this Bill tonight and therefore I oppose the second reading.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.40]: I opposed the original measure when it was before the House because it reinstituted a tax on rural land; and nothing has happened since then to make me change my attitude or my objections to this legislation now. As a matter of fact, there is considerably less justification for taxing improved agricultural lands now than there was when the Treasurer originally introduced the measure. As other speakers on this side of the House have already mentioned, the rural community is very much less prosperous at present than it has been for a good many years.

Mr. Oldfield: And so is everyone else.

Mr. PERKINS: Perhaps other people are less prosperous because the rural community is less prosperous; and it seems peculiar reasoning to try to improve the lot of the people referred to by the hon. member for Mt. Lawley by seeking to depress further the income of those actually engaged in rural production. I believe that the Treasurer would be well advised to let this measure go by the board.

I can quote a great many instances of where this tax on improved rural land is causing considerable hardship. In a great many districts, particularly in areas where a great deal of new land is being developed, we have the ridiculous position of people not showing a net profit at all from their farming operations; and in a great many instances they are earning less than the basic wage declared by the Arbitration Court in Western Australia. Yet they are asked to pay State land tax. Surely that is a ridiculous position!

The difficulty is that it is impossible for the Taxation Department to alter its land valuations as the prosperity of the farming industry goes up or down. As we all know, the values established by the Taxation Department are those worked out from a basis established a great many years ago, and varied as officers of the Taxation Department think that the sales of land in districts which have come under their notice justify such variations. But it is only natural that such alterations in value are very gradual. I think hon. members will recall that I raised this point when the legislation was previously before the House.

Mr. Graham: How would this tax bear upon the member for Roe?

Mr. PERKINS: It is a tax which I do not like; and I do not think any other land-owner likes to pay it either.

Mr. Graham: Who likes any tax if it comes to that?

Mr. PERKINS: If the Treasurer does not collect this tax it will mean that land-owners farming improved rural land will perhaps show a greater net profit, and therefore they will be attacked by the Federal Treasurer through the ordinary income tax channels. Surely that is a better way of collecting taxes than by this clumsy and unfair method of land taxation! I think even the Minister for Transport will agree that it is very much fairer to tax people through the medium of income tax, where they pay according to their income, than to adopt a system of taxation which is liable to tax people when they are not earning any income at all.

Mr. Graham: There is a school of thought that maintains that the only fair taxation is that based on land values.

Sir Ross McLarty: That was Henry George's idea; that went by the board 100 years ago.

Mr. PERKINS: I know a lot about that theory, too; but I think the Minister for Transport will agree that it has severe limitations—and one might make even more severe criticism of it than that.

Mr. Graham: What amount of tax would be paid by the average farmer under these proposals?

Mr. PERKINS: That is a very difficult question to answer, and I am afraid I could not tell the Minister.

Mr. Graham: You were talking about the burden on the farmer and I was wondering how big or small it was.

Mr. PERKINS: On the averaged-sized wheat farm, I would say it would amount to £15 to £30 per property.

Mr. Graham: And that is going to make or break a farmer!

Mr. PERKINS: I would not like to be very definite about it. The amount could vary considerably from district to district; and I have no doubt that in some instances, where land values are very high, those figures could be doubled.

Mr. Graham: I pay approximately that amount for my little quarter acre.

Mr. Oldfield: Ratepayers in Mt. Lawley are paying £75 in rates for a quarter acre.

Mr. PERKINS: There does not seem to be any point in extracting £15, £30 or £60 from a farmer who perhaps is earning less than the basic wage, or even has no income at all. I reiterate the point that it is a clumsy and unsatisfactory method of collecting the necessary money to keep the State solvent.

Mr. Potter: What method did they have before the war?

Mr. PERKINS: If the Taxation Department were able to revalue all improved agricultural land at present, the Treasurer would find that his estimate of the collection from the proposed tax would be very much less than the figures which he has quoted to the House, and also the figure which was collected during the year in which the tax operated.

As I said previously, there is a very strong objection throughout the rural industry to this particular form of taxation. When it was imposed many years ago in Western Australia it was greatly resented by the rural industry; then, during the depression years, the Government of the day—the Mitchell-Latham Government—was responsible for abolishing the tax; and, about 18 months ago, the present State Government was responsible for reintroducing it.

Mr. Graham: It was removed during a period of crisis.

Mr. PERKINS: I see no reason for its reimposition at the present time.

Mr. Graham: You had 25 years of unwarranted holidaying.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister for Transport is entitled to his point of view; but I suggest he come out and have a look at the conditions in some of the agricultural areas. If he did, I am certain he would change the opinion he holds at present. I am absolutely sure he would change that opinion. I can produce correspondence for his perusal, from settlers in new areas. Recently I asked questions of the Minister for Lands and Agriculture inquiring if he were prepared to alter the Lands Department's upset prices on certain blocks—in the Hyden area, for instance.

Some of those people quoted figures on outgoings of up to £80 or £90 a year, as fixed charges for conditional purchase repayments, land tax, and local authority rates. I know to my certain knowledge that in this particular instance the people

concerned are not working at a net profit at present. In view of those figures and the difficulties I have outlined, I make no apologies whatever for opposing this Bill; and I hope Parliament will not agree to it.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [5.53]: I rise to oppose the reimposition of this land tax on three particular points. The first point of my objection is one of principle. The tax in question is imposed on capital assets, and has no relation whatever to the earnings of the person concerned. In so far as it affects the primary producer it is a sectional charge against him. I feel sure everyone will agree that it is a most unfair method of taxing. No one quarrels at having to pay a tax according to one's earnings, but it is a bad principle to tax a person before he even commences to earn. It is a principle to which I feel we should object very strongly indeed.

There is no relation to the ability of the primary producers to pay. The introduction of such a tax at this moment is very ill-timed. If we look at the various primary producing industries—and I look at those best known to me in my electorate; namely, milk-producing and potato growing—we will see the heavy cost of production which these people must face. For instance, there is the impost of irrigation rates and drainage rates, to name only two.

Let us take as an example the butterfat producers who have always had a lean spin. Recently they received a cut of 4d. per lb. in the price of their butterfat. Those settlers whose milk production goes to Nestles Ltd. recently had a cut in price of 8d. per lb. butterfat; and the potato producers are also having a very lean year indeed—they are receiving a pittance of £24 a ton for their No. 1 grade potatoes.

This tax completely ignores the ability of the producers to pay; or their lack of it. When we consider the many difficulties I have enumerated, not only in the electorate I represent, but in other districts as well, it becomes quite apparent that this tax is a most unfair one. Let us look further afield. As mentioned by the leader of the Country Party, there has been a substantial drop in the price of wool. For all these reasons, I cannot see how the reimposition of this tax can possibly be justified.

When the Treasurer introduced the measure in 1956, he expressed the view that because of the conditions obtaining in the primary industries at that time, the primary producer was well able to pay the land tax—a tax upon his capital assets. In principle it is a very bad tax, as I mentioned earlier; and on this occasion its reimposition cannot be substantiated in the least. Because of the falling income which the primary producer is receiving, he is the one who will be most affected by the tax in question.

The third point, which we cannot overlook, is the taxation field of local authorities. Throughout the State, and because of increasing costs over a period of time, local authorities have sought to increase their rates—certainly their land rates—to the extent where these rates have become a very heavy burden upon the landholder today. This has become a particularly heavy burden upon the primary producer. Slowly, but surely, very substantial charges have been made against these people. We all appreciate that to enable them to carry out their various functions the local authorities must have money. If their costs increase, then their charges must offset those increased costs. It is very wrong, however, that the Government should enter the field of the local authority because, in the main, it adds a further burden to the farming community.

The unimproved capital value of land in the Harvey district has been steadily increasing. In opposition to the land tax measure in 1956 I stated that much of the Harvey land had an unimproved value of £40 per acre. Today I find that the unimproved capital value of that same land has risen to as much as £50, £60, and, in some cases, even £70 per acre. The income from this land is not sufficient to justify the terrific tax that would be placed upon it, because of its high unimproved capital value.

Accordingly, I see no justification at all for reimposing this particular tax. I see no justification for doing so on three main points. The first is one of principle. We should not tax the assets of a person before he commences to earn. The second point is the ability of the primary producer to pay, because of his falling income.

Mr. Graham: You tax a worker before he puts up his house, whether he can pay or not. You have supported that over the years.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The third point on which I object to this measure is that the Government is entering the taxing field of the local authority. In reply to the Minister for Transport, I would say that one should pay according to one's earnings.

Mr. Graham: No.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: If one has a high income one expects to pay a high tax.

Mr. Graham: That would apply to only one in a hundred.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: My view is applied particularly to primary producers whose earnings come from their land. The land is the primary producer's source of income; and, accordingly, it is wrong that this charge should be made on that asset.

Mr. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [5.59]: I think other speakers have covered the different circumstances in which landholders find themselves today, as compared

with the situation that existed, and the prices obtained, when this tax was first imposed. Members will recall that we, in Opposition, consistently opposed the imposition of this tax. At the time of its introduction the Treasurer pointed out that he needed money and had to have some taxing avenue. He felt that the imposition of land tax on unimproved agricultural land would bring in some of the money he required for the purposes of the Treasury.

In introducing the measure, he implied that he had to have more money; and if the tax were not agreed to, he would have no alternative but to increase rail freights. If my memory serves me correctly, somebody interposed by interjection that our rail freights were comparable with those in the Eastern States and that the Grants Commission was not unduly perturbed. The Treasurer more or less said, "I need more money and will have to get it by increased rail freights if you do not agree to this measure."

At that particular time I said the suggestion that the rural community generally could pay additional taxation was one which did not meet with the approval of this side of the House. The position today is that the rural community can not face up to increased costs in any form; and the tax that has been imposed by this measure is one that has had a distinctly deleterious effect on people who are developing their properties. The man who has his land but has yet to develop it to a point where it is a paying proposition is particularly unfortunately placed by this tax. He would also be put in a bad position if the Treasurer increased rail freights. Unfortunately, the threat of rail freights seems to have had an appeal to certain members of another place; and if one were to read the debates of that Chamber, one would notice they felt it was a choice of two evils.

Even a small increase in freight rates, as pointed out by the Leader of the Country Party, would actually bring in far more money than the tax under this measure. However, I suggest that the rail freights we are paying in Western Australia today are quite comparable with those in the Eastern States, and it is most undesirable that we should give any consideration to increasing them. When one takes into account the freight rate per ton mile and the average distance over which commodities are hauled, one realises that any addition to these rail freights is unwarranted. There is no reason why farmers of this State should be asked to pay more in the way of rail freights than their counterparts are being asked to pay in the Eastern States.

There has been some talk in this Chamber of the fact that farmers are being subsidised. I do not dispute that they are getting some subsidy in the form of rail freights and in other ways. They even

get income tax concessions which are not normally available to members of the public generally. However, this is not done purely for the benefit of the farmer.

All Governments have given these subsidies because they realise that it is to the advantage of the country to maintain agricultural production at a high level, as it enables sufficient of our commodities to be sold overseas to maintain a stable and healthy economy in Australia. It is not intelligent to suggest, as has been done by interjection, that we are giving too much to the farmer. These inducements are given to the farmer because it is in the interests of the country for that to be done.

At this particular time it is in the interests of the country to reduce costs, because unquestionably we are pricing ourselves out of the world's markets. We find additional costs are mounting and that today the price of wool has slumped very considerably; and while certain members of the Government may not take a very serious view of this at the moment, I suggest that they will do so in 12 months' time. Wheat farmers are not particularly happy; in fact, they are distinctly unhappy.

We are also pricing ourselves out of the world's markets with potatoes. The outlook for the potato growers is not as bright as it was perhaps 12 months ago. I refer also to the fruit-growing industry, which is quite important; and which, owing to an increasing number of pests and the greater selectivity of overseas markets, is finding sales more difficult to achieve, while prices are lower; not to mention the fact that the costs of production are becoming higher due to the much more expensive spraying programme that is necessary. I think the present is a most inopportune time to increase the costs of the man on the land, particularly in view of overseas market trends.

I referred to a comparison of our freight costs with those in the Eastern States; and it is interesting to note that the second greatest tonnage hauled on our railways, according to the latest available report of the Railway Department, relates to fertilisers, and the figure is 400,000 tons odd. It is interesting to see how our figures compare with those of the other States.

Disregarding the 50-mile limit, and commencing at 100 miles, it is found that we haul fertiliser 100 miles at 4.01d. per ton mile, the figures for the other States being—Victoria, 2.48d.; N.S.W., 3.84d.; South Australia, 2.16d.; Queensland, 3.78d.; While the Commonwealth railways haul fertiliser 100 miles at the rate of 2.22d. per ton mile. Therefore, anyone who suggests that our freight rates are not fully comparable with those of the other States should consider those figures.

Our average haul of fertiliser in this State is 137 miles. It is true that our freight rates taper off steeply; but even

at the 200-mile mark we find that our rate is not much below the rates in the other States; and, in fact, it is not below all of them. In Victoria the rate on fertiliser at 200 miles is 1.84d. per ton mile. In New South Wales it is 2.40d.; in South Australia it is 1.65d.; in Queensland 3.50d.; in Western Australia 2.68d.; while the Commonwealth rate is 1.71d.

It will be seen that in regard to fertiliser—which next to coal is the biggest single item hauled on our railways, all of it going to the farming community—up to 200 miles there is only one State which charges more per ton mile than does Western Australia. I feel that it is clearly established that our freight rates, on the average, are fully comparable with, and in many cases above, the rates paid in the Eastern States.

There is no justification for suggesting that country people are having their commodities hauled at a particularly cheap rate; and no justification, either, for the suggestion put forward when this legislation was introduced, to the effect that had this tax not been placed on the farmer heavier rail freights would have had to be charged; because I would point out that the figures I have just quoted refer to November, 1957, and there have been some freight increases in the Eastern States in the last 12 months. When this tax was first imposed in Western Australia, many of the Eastern States railway systems had lower rates than those I have quoted.

The Government appears to think that the imposition of this tax does not matter; and that it can just put a bit more burden on the farmer, and that he can put up with it anyhow. That was the attitude of the Treasurer when introducing the Bill; but I repeat that the situation of the farming community today is much worse than it was when this tax was introduced, and there is no justification—and never has been any—for the suggestion that freights should have been increased had Parliament not imposed this tax. The tax is even less justifiable today than it was when first introduced.

I believe the Government will have to recast some of its thinking as to the desirability of imposing additional costs on the farmer and as to the farmer's capacity to pay. The Government's efforts should be directed towards reducing the costs of production, rather than to thinking it can simply impose additional costs that the primary producer will have to pay.

There is nothing statesmanlike about that; and it would be far more desirable to institute economies and reduce the cost of commodities, which must sell in open competition on world markets, than to add anything to the present burden of the primary producer. We should do everything possible to reduce the costs of production, instead of increasing them. Whilst the reimposition of this tax may not in all cases involve a tremendous amount, in

many instances it will represent a considerable figure, and it falls most inequitably—

Mr. Potter: What would it average on the farms in your electorate?

Mr. HEARMAN: That is like asking what is the average weather. The farms range from about 20 acres to 2,000 acres in size; so how can one average it?

Mr. Potter: I am referring to farms down your way. I mean—

Mr. HEARMAN: Does the hon. member know what he means? It will mean about £1 to me—

Mr. Potter: How many acres have you?

Mr. HEARMAN: A bit over 1,000 acres. Previously we had the vermin tax, which was spent in assisting us to get rid of rabbits and so on, but on top of that we also had all sorts of other taxes. Rates have gone up tremendously; and instead of the £8 or £9 I used to pay, I now pay something over £100. However, I will not discuss my personal affairs for the benefit of the member for Subiaco. I repeat that the costs of the farmer have risen considerably in all directions.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [7.30]: Before tea, a number of short but effective speeches were made by members in opposition to this Bill. I intend also to join those who are offering and who intend to offer opposition to the measure. Firstly, I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the increases that have been made, in quite a number of directions, in rural areas since a Bill similar to this was introduced in 1956. For instance, water rates have been steeply increased.

When I was in my electorate during the week-end several people approached me with their assessments and expressed surprise at the large increase in the rates and asked me what I was going to do about it. I said that the only thing I could advise them to do was to see the Treasurer and take their assessment with them in order to show him.

Mr. Graham: What was the size of the assessment?

Sir ROSS McLARTY: I can only tell the Minister that they were very steep increases. That cannot be denied. Also, irrigation rates have been tremendously increased. The member for Harvey can tell the House about that. Then, too, drainage rates have been stepped up; and local government rates, owing to increased valuations, have been steeply increased. Further, as has already been pointed out, owing to the increased land values, land tax has certainly been increased very steeply.

I ask the Treasurer: How often is it intended that land should be revalued? I would like to know because we can be certain that no matter how often these revaluations are made, steep increases always follow; which means, of course, that the Treasurer gets more and still more money. It has been pointed out, too, that even where losses have been made by farmers this tax must still be paid. Apart from these greatly increased costs which boost the cost of production, we find that the price of primary products has suffered a steep decrease.

The other evening the Minister for Lands told us that for the 1957-58 season the average price for wool was 60d. a lb. The last general rate was just under 45d. a lb. and at the last sale in this State, which was in August last, wool brought an average price of 43d. per lb. Therefore, the average price at the August sale shows that there has been a drop in the price of wool of 17d. per lb. Yet the Treasurer will admit that the same values are still placed on the land despite the fact that the income has been reduced to a tremendous extent in many instances.

If there were any scientific application of the tax, some consideration should have been given to these indisputable facts. However, I do not think that the primary producers in this State can hope that there will be any reduction in land values generally. It was also pointed out by the member for Harvey that there has been a steep drop in the price of butterfat. I have already told the House that many of the producers in the irrigation and drainage areas have had their rates greatly increased.

Although he knows it, because he represents a constituency which has a large farming population, I would like to point out to the Treasurer that apart from all these heavy taxes and charges, farmers, in very recent times, have been mulct in heavy additional costs. I can think of some of my own costs; and any member representing a South-Western electorate will, I am sure, have had the same experience as I have had. We are now being compelled to install a spraying outfit in order that we may treat our cattle for this new infestation of lice. I know that, in my own case, the cost of this spray amounted to £300. That is a pretty heavy impost to place on the average farmer who will, I believe, be compelled, in his own interests, to install this spraying outfit.

The other day, I noticed in an article that the Chief Inspector of Stock said that he thought it possible that this innovation might be made compulsory. If it is, there will be no question that every farmer will be involved in this additional cost, which will, in turn, be added to his total cost of production. Again, only in recent years, not only have farmers been compelled to prevent diseases by the spraying and dipping of stock, etc., but, also, the spraying

of pastures has amounted to a very heavy cost indeed. It is only during the last year or two that we have found farmers, in greater numbers, having to spray their pastures against red mite, lucerne flea, webworm and other pests. If they did not, they would find they would have no pastures, because these pests to which I refer attack the most valuable fodders—the clovers which farmers are trying to grow, and which they are finding, in many cases, very difficult to grow because of some lack or deficiency in the soil. However, when they do succeed in growing them, they have to contend with these pests.

One can name quite a number, other than those I have referred to. For instance, we have the grasshopper; and then we have to spray to keep down the weeds in an attempt to keep crops and pastures clean. I have often heard it said that farmers should reduce their costs of production. The way in which we are going will not give any possible hope of farmers reducing those costs despite all the scientific work and research which has been put into this field of production, and which has proved to be of great benefit to farmers in general. We are still faced with heavy costs of production, which are increasing; and added taxation will, of course, become part of those costs.

It seems to me there is no scientific application in regard to the imposition of taxes, and it appears that a search is made and some avenue is found which does not bear a tax. Immediately that discovery is made a tax is imposed. I do not think there is very much left for the Government to tax, but all the time we are in danger of further taxation being imposed.

Mr. Kelly: I remember reading some time ago about the "Taxus Rangers."

Sir ROSS McLARTY: If the Minister will look at pages 17, 18 and 19 of No. 2 Hansard of this session he will see that a question was asked by the Hon. Mr. Griffith in another place as to what increased taxes and charges had been imposed since 1953. I do not want to burden the Minister or this House by reading the great list of taxation and charges which have been imposed since 1953; furthermore, I would find the task far too exhausting. There is an opportunity for the Minister to find out what his Government has imposed by way of taxation and charges since 1953, if he wants to.

Mr. Court: Five columns were needed for the list.

Sir ROSS McLARTY: It is time we resisted the imposition of additional taxation. Surely there is a limit; and I think that limit has now been reached. The more funds the Government can get, the more tax it can collect from the people, the more it spends and the more extravagant it becomes. The Government is

like a schoolboy. If the father of that boy is prepared to hand out anything the boy wants, it will be taken and spent, and the boy will spend it extravagantly. That applies equally to the Government.

Mr. Sleeman: Where is the Government spending it all?

Sir ROSS McLARTY: It is time we stopped becoming "yes" men and stopped agreeing to every imposition of tax the Government likes to introduce.

Mr. Graham: I think it is time that hon. members stopped asking the Government for hand-outs for this and that.

Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not know that we are asking for such hand-outs. In a State like this which, in the main, is very largely dependent upon primary production for its revenue and prosperity, the Government is not handing out too much to the farming community. This State is in a different position from the other States of Australia in which are found large industries. Those industries are increasing very considerably.

I think industry is bound to increase in those States; because with cities like Sydney, of 1,750,000 people; and Melbourne with pretty near that figure, huge markets are found at their doors. Business and enterprise look to the closest market available, because often that is the best market. In Western Australia that situation does not apply, and for a long time to come we in this State will be very largely dependent upon our primary products. That being the case, surely the logical approach is to encourage primary production and not add further burdens to it.

During the past few years it has been my experience to notice that rural areas are being expected to bear a greater share of taxation than they should be asked to bear. As one hon. member pointed out tonight, the man in the country pays both ways if there is any increase in rail freights. He pays for the goods coming in and also for his products going out. The primary producer cannot get away from that; and, of course, any increase becomes an added burden.

At this stage there is every justification for objecting to the taxation referred to in the Bill. When the Bill was introduced last session the Treasurer used a threat. I say that with justification. He said that if the Bill was not passed, he would have to increase rail freights. That argument had some effect on that occasion; but on this occasion his argument has been debunked completely by the Leader of the Country Party, who told us that if the Treasurer wanted to make good the loss of £200,000 he could do so by increasing rail freights by 2 per cent.

Mr. Graham: Would you support that?

Sir ROSS McLARTY: If freights were to be increased by that percentage, the farmer would be better off than by having to pay the land tax. I would remind the Minister for Transport that in view of the increased valuations on properties, the land tax to be imposed will be very much heavier. The land tax is now being imposed permanently. I wonder how far people will tolerate the argument of the Treasurer, used on a number of occasions, that, "If you do not give me this, I will not be able to give you that"? How far does the Treasurer propose to go in that direction?

I believe that not only with this Government, but with other Governments as well, the time has come when a stocktaking should be made with regard to expenditure and taxation. If that were done I am sure many economies could be effected. So far as the sum of £200,000 is concerned, if the Government got right down to bedrock and made a thorough investigation of expenditure it would discover, without hurting anyone, that this amount could be saved without much difficulty.

Referring to the two amendments mentioned by the Treasurer when introducing this Bill, in my opinion he could introduce a separate measure to cover them. That would have been the proper course for him to adopt. I feel we would be justified in rejecting the land tax; and in so doing we would be acting in the interests of the State. I oppose the measure.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [7.49]: I rise to oppose this measure. So far as primary producers are concerned it is most ill-timed. I have no doubt that the Treasurer is scratching for money.

Mr. Thorn: He is always scratching for that.

Mr. OWEN: He should raise it in another direction.

Mr. Hawke: A statesmanlike approach!

Mr. OWEN: Everyone knows the position of the primary producers at present, particularly in relation to wool and sheep. One speaker told us this evening that because the price of wool has gone down so badly the sheep markets are disorganised in the country areas.

Mr. Nalder: Down as low as 5s.

Mr. OWEN: Very low, I believe. In some places they cannot get a bid for them; and it has been necessary to cancel a few sheep sales to stabilise the position. It is ill-timed to introduce this measure to again tax the primary producer even on his improved property.

In my own particular district, although some might say the price of fruit is high, crops have been so short that the orchardists, and the farmers in general, are not getting even their usual amount of income from the land, and they are forced to pay

out more and more in taxation. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat did refer to some of the expenses that the farmer is confronted with; and I think in that regard that the orchardist and market gardener have their fair share of pests and diseases to contend with.

On top of that, as I predicted in 1956, with the increased valuations which we were expecting then, they have come to find—and in the Darling Range Road Board district we have found—that unimproved capital values have gone up between 250 and 300 per cent.; and it does seem that the Commissioner for Taxation very considerably—on his part anyway—withheld the land tax assessments until that revaluation had taken place. It was rather late in the financial year when we got our assessments only to find that the tax had been increased to that amount; and the primary producers there are having grave difficulties in making ends meet.

The orchardist, apart from his normal expenses in cultural operations, packing cases, picking fruit, and all the rest of it, finds that he has many new diseases to contend with—and some of the old ones have increased. I refer first of all to the San Jose scale which mainly affects apples and pears, but does affect all fruit; and because of the agitation which was caused in Europe when one shipment of Western Australian apples was found to be infected in parts, very strong measures were adopted, and now it is proposed locally that not only will any fruit that is found to be infected be refused an import permit, but it will not be allowed to be sold on the local market.

So the grower, if he should be unfortunate enough not to be able to control that scale—and it is very difficult to control—is likely to lose a considerable portion of his crop. In addition to that, there are other insect pests such as white wax scale which involves spraying at least twice. There is the white fly which also needs spraying two or three times; but unfortunately separate sprays have to be used from the one to combat the white wax. There is also the Fuller's Rose Weevil which has to be treated with yet another different spray.

So it seems to be nothing else but pest control facing the orchardist from one year's end to the other. On top of that, the vegetable growers have suffered very badly this season in the low returns at the metropolitan markets. At the present time I think they are the lowest for many years. They were bad enough last year; and although they showed some improvement, they have again slumped and the vegetable gardener is very hard hit indeed.

Referring to the orchardists once more, I would mention that we had quite a lot of discussion in this Chamber only

last week on the fruit-fly; and what a serious pest it is to the fruit grower! When this measure was reimposed in 1956, the primary producers—or at least those producers who were paying vermin tax—were relieved of that tax because it was thought the amount imposed as a land tax was sufficient to cover the vermin tax as well, and supplied many thousands of pounds to the Treasury. The Treasurer in his wisdom saw fit to exempt primary producers from the State vermin tax; and I think at that time he could very well have exempted the orchardists from the payment of their orchard registration fee and the other fees that they have to pay in conjunction with the control of fruit-fly.

Those orchardists have to pay vermin tax; but unfortunately the fruit-fly is not classed as vermin, and they have to pay, in addition to that, many, many pounds in an endeavour to control the fruit-fly. Although I sincerely hope this measure will be defeated, I trust that, if it should be enacted, the Treasurer will see fit to exempt orchardists from any payment in connection with control and eradication of fruit-fly, as he has suggested that the primary producer will be relieved of the payment of vermin tax.

I did mention, on the Address-in-reply, the unfortunate position of many of these people, particularly in the foothills district of the Darling Ranges, where their land values are unduly high, and yet they are not enabled to subdivide their properties because, under the Regional Development Plan, they are classed as rural areas. Many of those properties have capital values of between £50 and £70 per acre—some higher than that—and it can be seen that with the land tax of 2d. in the £1 they will be paying 10s. and 12s. per acre per year, and receive very little, if anything, in return.

In Forrestfield there is a person who has been carrying on grazing for a number of years but finds now it is just impossible to carry on, and has put his property up for auction sale.

Mr. Graham: All this because of the land tax?

Mr. OWEN: No, this tax in particular.

Mr. Graham: No!

Mr. OWEN: No; it is because of the general increase in costs confronting the primary producer; and, undoubtedly, the land tax was the last straw which made this man decide to sell out.

Mr. Graham: Probably the least straw!

Mr. OWEN: But, unfortunately, because that land cannot be subdivided into residential lots for which it is eminently suitable, it must remain in lots of at least five acres in extent, and he will not be able to reap the benefit of the higher values that have been applying to residential lots only a little more than half

a mile from his holdings. It therefore appears that he will be penalised in all directions. This particular person was engaged on a grazing proposition; but owing to the low returns that he has been getting lately, he is in a very unfortunate position.

Further up the hills, where the return per acre from the land is a little higher, growers will still be faced with the payment of 8s. or 10s. per acre for land tax, on top of all the other taxes and expenses that they have to meet. I feel, too, that many of them will be forced to give up agriculture; and, if that is so, I do not know what will happen to the district because that is the main source of income for the area—small farms, orchards and market gardens. I hope that the Bill will be defeated, and I shall certainly vote against it.

THE HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Treasurer—Northam—in reply) [8.11]: We have heard some very strange approaches to this Bill, both today and when it was being debated a few days ago. The Leader of the Opposition told us that the passing of this measure, and the continued collection of a net amount of £200,000 per annum approximately, by way of land tax on improved farming lands, would injure the cause of decentralisation by imposing what he called additional costs upon primary producers.

In the first place, I would like to say that the cost would not be additional. It is not a new tax but it would be a continuation of a tax which was paid last year and the year before. However, regarding decentralisation, I would point out that the non-collection of this £200,000 would be more likely to injure the cause of decentralisation than would the collection of it. Should the Government not be able to get this sum of money, obviously it will not be able to give the same amount of service as it would have been able to give had the present Bill been approved by Parliament and become law.

The Leader of the Opposition said he recognised the difficulties of the Treasurer. He admitted that this sum of £200,000 could not be done without, and then went on to suggest that it should be obtained from all other sections of the community—in other words, taxation, charges, fees, and the rest of it, should all be increased upon all the other sections of the community, to the extent of £200,000 per annum, in order that the Treasurer might not be denied money which he urgently needs and in order that the farmers as a section in the community should not have to pay that sum.

Mr. Brand: I said nothing of the sort. I suggested that you could save it by cutting some of your costs.

Mr. HAWKE: The Leader of the Opposition said what I have just quoted him as saying—

Mr. Brand: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. HAWKE: —and the records of Hansard will prove it up to the hilt. It might be that at the time the Leader of the Opposition did not realise the implications of what he was saying. It might be that he now wishes that he had not said what he did say.

Mr. Brand: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. HAWKE: However, he is responsible for having said it; and hon. members of this House, when last week's Hansard becomes available in printed form, will be able to see that my interpretation of what he said is correct.

Mr. Brand: If you cut the costs of administration you could save more than £200,000.

Mr. HAWKE: Of course we could!

Mr. Brand: Then why don't you set about doing it?

Mr. HAWKE: We could do it until we started cutting costs in some direction which affected the hon. member's electorate; and then he would rush with a deputation to the Minister concerned, urging the Minister not to reduce that expenditure but, if possible, to increase it. We all know about this approach. The hon. member for Murray is smiling very knowingly in the back seat. He knows it. I was delighted to hear his free-and-easy speech on finance a few moments ago, and I hope he will be delighted to hear my comments on it in a few moments.

Mr. Graham: We will.

Mr. HAWKE: The Leader of the Country Party, the hon. member for Stirling, made some rather delightful comments about this measure, and I would like to spend a moment or two on them. He told us quite correctly that railway freights are paid, in the main, by people in the country districts. I think it would be safe to say that they are paid almost entirely by people in the country districts.

Mr. Watts: Ninety per cent. is my estimate.

Mr. HAWKE: Yes; the hon. member went on to say that the great majority of railway freights were paid by primary producers; and that also would be correct. He went further and said that should this Bill fail to pass, the Government, in order to make up for the loss of the £200,000 per annum involved, would, if it thought of increasing railway freights, have to increase them by only 2.1 per cent. That, of course, would be for a full year, and not for the balance of the financial year which now remains available to us.

Mr. Watts: I think it would; it is only about 1.9 for the full year.

Mr. HAWKE: Let us compromise and say that it would. He then went on to say that there was apparently no necessity whatever for the Government to have this money. So here we have the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the Country Party, disagreeing on a fundamental issue in the set-up! The Leader of the Opposition quite openly and frankly admits that the Treasurer needs this £200,000, while the Leader of the Country Party says emphatically that there is no need whatever for the Government to have it, and therefore the Government would be acting most unwisely and most unjustifiably if it were to increase railway freights, in the event of this Bill failing, by even 1.9 per cent. or 2.1 per cent.

Maybe at this stage I should take hon. members into my confidence and tell them that the draft Estimates covering revenue and expenditure in connection with the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the current financial year indicate a deficit of £2,000,000. I quite agree that the Leader of the Country Party was not aware of it when he said there was no need whatever for the Government to have this £200,000. However, in view of the fact that the draft Estimates indicate the situation to which I have just referred, clearly and beyond any possible shadow of successful contradiction, the Treasurer and the Government of the State undoubtedly need this sum of money.

In the free-and-easy fashion to which we have become accustomed, the hon. member for Nedlands solved all the problems with an outflow of words which left everybody in some doubt and some confusion as to what he was really talking about.

Mr. Brand: Ha, ha!

Mr. HAWKE: He referred to the land tax, as contained in this Bill, as an increased tax or an increased charge; whereas, as I mentioned a few moments ago, the same tax has been operating now for two years.

Mr. Court: But it terminated under the law on the 30th June. It is a new tax—an additional tax.

Mr. HAWKE: I say that this is an attempt to continue in operation a tax which has been operating in each of the last two years. It is remarkable how the hon. member for Nedlands, and the hon. member for Murray, particularly, say that taxation is too high—something with which we might all agree. It is also remarkable how they attack, and have attacked every proposal put forward by this Government for the raising of revenue; and yet, at the same time, we find them, when the necessity arises, defending to the last breath in their bodies any sort of taxation which the Federal Government imposes upon the people of this State, or the other States of Australia.

Mr. Bovell: For instance?

Mr. HAWKE: I wanted to keep this until later on, when I was dealing with the comments made by the hon. member for Murray on this Bill, but I will bring it in now: The hon. member for Murray, even during the last State election campaign, and when he was Leader of the Opposition, went out of his way to defend the new and heavy taxes which were put upon the people of Australia by the Federal Government early in 1956.

Sir Ross McLarty: I was not very enthusiastic about that.

Mr. HAWKE: I am sure that we all appreciate the fact that the then Leader of the Opposition, now the hon. member for Murray, is telling us for the first time that he was pushed into doing what he did at that time.

Sir Ross McLarty: Not pushed!

Mr. Brand: Why was it so wrong to impose that tax and so right to impose this one?

Mr. Watts: I am afraid the Premier does things to his friends sometimes.

Mr. HAWKE: Friendship is a great thing, and I think there should be more of it; but I am hoping that even now hon. members of the Opposition will show some practical friendship to the Government in connection with this Bill and assist in having it passed unanimously in this House, and then using some influence upon their colleagues in the Legislative Council in order that it shall be passed there, too.

Mr. Hearman: I think you said that with your tongue in your cheek.

Mr. HAWKE: The hon. member for Nedlands talked quite a lot about incentives to manufacturers. I listened very carefully to the point of all this and I subjected it to whatever mental analysis I am capable of subjecting a proposition; and the answer which I received was nil.

Mr. Court: I wondered why you looked so harassed.

Mr. HAWKE: There was no point or logic in it; there was a beginning to it, but no end.

Mr. Court: Yes there was.

Mr. HAWKE: Obviously if the proposition which the hon. member for Nedlands submitted was legitimate, it was an overwhelming argument in favour of this measure, and not an argument against it.

Mr. Court: That is nonsense.

Mr. HAWKE: His contention was that if the financial and other incentives offered by the Government to potential manufacturers in this State succeeded, the State would have to spend a great deal more

money than it was spending at present; and clearly, if that were to become the position, undoubtedly the Government and the State would require considerably increased revenue and not £200,000 per annum less.

Mr. Brand: The hon. member for Nedlands was suggesting that charity begins at home.

Mr. HAWKE: By a sleight-of-hand type of argument, plus a great amount of guesswork, the hon. member for Nedlands caused this £200,000 and the need for it to disappear entirely. He wiped out the necessity to have £100,000 by one argument; and then, by guesswork, he wiped out the necessity to have the other £100,000 and said, in effect, "There you are! You do not need the money at all. Drop the Bill and let us all be friends."

Mr. Court: I amazed you with the simplicity of it.

Mr. HAWKE: Then we had the hon. member for Murray. As he was talking away I listened to him with sheer delight. I then compared the present member for Murray with the gentleman who was Premier and Treasurer of Western Australia from 1947 to 1953.

Mr. W. Hegney: What a tragedy!

Mr. HAWKE: Tonight the hon. member not only strongly condemned any increase in taxation, but also wholeheartedly condemned all taxation.

Sir Ross McLarty: Oh, no!

Mr. HAWKE: Oh, yes! He said that all Governments thought about these days was tax, tax, tax.

Sir Ross McLarty: I think it should have been you who was called the Tax-us Ranger.

Mr. HAWKE: He even likened Governments to spendthrift sons of wealthy men. He told us that when these sons of wealthy men were sent to school, all they did all the time was to dun their fathers for more spending money. He went on to say that the position of the fathers in that set-up was the same as the position of the taxpayers vis-a-vis the Government. The hon. member went on to complain about increases in water rates, increases in irrigation rates, and increases in other types of rates.

Sir Ross McLarty: I am not the only one complaining, either.

Mr. HAWKE: The hon. member said that instead of taxing people the Government should get down to bedrock and save money by economies. Now we will have a look at this same person who was Premier and Treasurer of Western Australia from 1947 to 1953.

Mr. Watts: He only used whips; you have used scorpions!

Mr. HAWKE: If hon. members will look at Hansard Vol. 143, pages 433 and 434, they will find the terrific difference in outlook between the hon. member for Murray as such, and the hon. member as Premier and Treasurer of Western Australia.

Sir Ross McLarty: The older he gets the wiser he gets!

Mr. HAWKE: I would say that the older he gets, the older he gets. I would not for one moment try to hold up the proceedings in this House by reading all these increases in taxation which the hon. member for Murray imposed on farmers and the public of Western Australia generally.

Sir Ross McLarty: But like the Mikado, you have a little list!

Mr. HAWKE: We find on page 433 of Hansard for the year 1956 that railway fares and freights in September 1948 increased overall by 20 per cent. In August 1949 we find there was an increase of 7½ per cent. on country lines for fares and freights, except wheat and superphosphate, which were increased by 4d. and 1d. respectively on a ton mile. In May 1951 fares and freights increased in the country by 30 per cent., and in the suburban areas by 40 per cent. There was a lot of increase in tramway fares; but this one is interesting: We find that workers' fares were increased by 100 per cent. from February 1951; 50 per cent. from November 1951; and 20 per cent. from July 1952.

Mr. Brand: In your time the cost of Government printing went up 267 per cent.

Mr. HAWKE: Later on in this list we find that water rates increased; irrigation rates increased; sprinkler irrigation rates increased; and drainage rates increased. We also find that increases were imposed even upon pawnbrokers and bottle-o's. So it is clear beyond doubt that the hon. member for Murray takes an entirely different attitude when he is a private member, with no financial responsibility at all for the Government of the country, from the realistic, practical attitude he adopted when he had the responsibility of the Government resting very heavily on his shoulders.

Mr. Court: Before you finish, are you going to explain where my figures regarding land tax were wrong?

Mr. HAWKE: I simply say that in view of the fact that the draft Estimates for the coming financial year in connection with the Consolidated Revenue Fund indicate a deficit of approximately £2,000,000. I hope the hon. member for Nedlands, if no-one else on the other side of the House, will exhibit some degree of financial responsibility in connection with this Bill.

Mr. Court: What about the specific thing which you almost said was nonsense? You did not use those words, but

you implied as much. I think you have a duty to say where my figures were wrong.

Mr. HAWKE: The hon. member's figures were wrong because they were not appropriate. If this Bill is not passed, the Government will receive £200,000 less during the current financial year than it would if the Bill became law. It does not matter what figures the hon. member produces or what arguments he puts forward or guesswork he indulges in—he cannot explain away the fact that this Bill, whether it passes or is defeated, represents £200,000 per annum.

Mr. Court: No-one is disputing that. But you are getting a big increase in land tax from the sheer process of the revaluation of land, other than land affected by this Bill.

Mr. HAWKE: The complete answer to that is that the draft Estimates of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the current financial year indicate an approximate deficit of £2,000,000.

Mr. Court: That may be so; but I am coming back to my figures, which you said were just a guess. I would like to know how wrong the guess is, because I think your Estimates will demonstrate it is nearly right.

Mr. HAWKE: I do not think so. The cold, solid, hard fact in this situation is that the Government will receive approximately £200,000 per annum by way of revenue if this Bill passes. On the other hand, if the Bill fails to pass, the Government will receive that much less during the current financial year. Obviously, if the Bill fails to pass, and the Government receives £200,000 less, it will have no option but to reduce the provision of services to the public to that extent. I would like to say that the State does treat farmers very fairly; and, in many instances, very generously in Western Australia. This applies to all Governments in this State, irrespective of political colour.

For instance, railway freights have been very heavily subsidised for a great many years. They have been all the more heavily subsidised in more recent years. I remember, not so many years ago, when it was agreed by practically everybody that the railways should at least meet their running costs. While we all know that the railways have not anywhere near reached, or met, their running costs in recent years, to the extent they have not met those costs the operations of the system have been subsidised.

The point made by the Leader of the Country Party comes in here. The point is that practically all the railway services are provided for country areas, and for country people; and the great majority of

them for primary producers. Therefore the subsidy given to the railway system has been very great.

We also know that water supply systems in country districts failed to pay by very large amounts over the years. The more water supplies there are in the country the greater the loss, naturally. We know, too, that school bus services are provided in great numbers in country districts; that these services travel over great mileages every week; that no charge is made for the services they give; and this financial year those services alone will cost at least £1,000,000.

In addition, the Department of Agriculture provides several free services and other near free services. Other items of similar character could be mentioned. I would say that even the services I have mentioned would cost the State £5,000,000 a year. If all the services of this character could be analysed and the total cost worked out, I think the figure would be nearer £7,000,000 per annum. Yet when the Government comes along with a proposal of this kind and asks that farmers contribute £200,000 a year, there is an outcry of protest.

Surely it is only a fair proposition to ask that farmers, in relation to this tax, should meet in some small measure the cost of the very substantial and free services which the State provides to them year by year, and which are increasing all the time in number, expenditure and in cost to the State.

In view of those circumstances and facts I certainly trust that there would develop in those members opposite who have opposed this Bill some degree of financial responsibility. It would be an act of utter financial irresponsibility to oppose this Bill and to deny the Government this revenue. As I said when introducing the measure, should it be defeated, then there are only two alternatives open to the Government, particularly in view of the large estimated deficit shown by the draft estimates for the current financial year. Those two alternatives are, firstly, either to obtain the £200,000 from other avenues; or secondly, to reduce Government expenditure on essential services by that amount.

In theory it is easy to favour reduced expenditure, but it has been my experience, and I am sure the experience of other Ministers who have been in the Government, that once expenditure is reduced in any direction there is an outcry from those who are directly affected.

Mr. Brand: I have heard you say the Commonwealth Government should reduce expenditure. You talked about their expenditure as being extravagant. The principle is the same.

Mr. HAWKE: I can prove it is extravagant.

Mr. Brand: No doubt it can be proved that this State Government is in a degree extravagant.

Mr. HAWKE: If the hon. member can indicate some specific line of State Government extravagance, and can mention it specifically, and not in general terms, I shall be very pleased to take a very close look at the position. However, it is not enough to talk generally about these things. We have to be practical if we are to be politically honest in trying to assess what is the right step to take.

I sincerely hope and trust that members will reconsider their attitude to this proposal. It is reasonable. It is essential from the point of view of the financial needs of the State. I hope that Parliament will approve this legislation and enable the tax to continue.

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

Ayes—24.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hall	Mr. Potter
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Toms
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes—16

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Wild
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Cornell
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. Crommellin
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Mann
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Thorn

Majority for—8.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Hon. A. R. G. Hawke (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Section 10 amended:

Mr. BRAND: This is the clause which would reimpose the tax and is the one to which we are opposed. The balance of the Bill is worthy of some support; but it is suggested that if the Treasurer desires these amendments, he should bring them down in a separate Bill.

Obviously the Treasurer was ill at ease tonight; and whilst he chided the hon. member for Murray for having a changed

outlook as against when he was Treasurer of the State, exactly the same thing could be said about the hon. member for Northam when he was Leader of the Opposition. He opposed every attempt by the McLarty-Watts Government to increase taxes or charges, although presumably they were being increased for the same reason as the Treasurer now claims.

The Treasurer played on words about my admitting that £200,000 is required by the Treasury. Of course it is! More than that is required. But because we have a large anticipated deficit of £2,000,000 in the forthcoming Budget, that does not justify the Treasurer imposing another tax.

By some close scrutiny no doubt it could be proved that the Treasurer could save that £200,000 in quite a number of ways. It is difficult for anyone to stand here and say right now where the money could be saved, but I am sure that is the position. If only an amount of £200,000 were required from the man on the land, I could not imagine there would be too much opposition to it; but we know that once a tax is imposed, it is never removed.

I asked some questions of the acting Minister for Works as to what percentage of the increased income of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department could be attributed to increased land valuations, and he admitted it was 47 per cent. The hon. member for Nedlands was charged by the Treasurer as not proving his point. The hon. member for Nedlands was emphasising that whilst we are prepared to subsidise industries from outside the State in order to get them here, we should be prepared to subsidise and help primary industries to the extent of £200,000.

The Leader of the Country Party pointed out that £200,000 could be obtained by a very minute increase in rail freights, and went on to make the point that for the sake of £200,000 the State should be prepared to stand behind the primary industries. The hon. member for Blackwood and the hon. member for Murray pointed out the difficulties which are facing the primary industries because of a fall in income owing to lower prices outside Australia, as well as steeply increased costs, which could be traced back to such a tax as it is proposed to reimpose.

Whilst the Treasurer merrily attacks the Commonwealth Government for imposing taxes, we appreciate that they ultimately contribute to the increased cost structure, and we do not want to aggravate the position by imposing a tax such as this in Western Australia.

If this Bill is passed it will mean that a new tax burden is imposed on a section of the community—a section which at this stage might need added financial assistance in order to increase production and create an incentive for people to live in

the country. If their taxes are increased we cannot bring about decentralisation, and people will stay in the city.

The Treasurer said that he could spend £200,000 on services for people in the country. Of course he could; but he did not say he would! We have evidence that that seems to be the last thing in his mind, particularly as regards septic tank installations for children in country schools.

Seeing the Treasurer drew attention to certain increased taxes made during the McLarty-Watts term of government, I might well refer the House to two or three pages of Hansard of the present session. I draw the attention of hon. members to Hansard No. 2, pages 16, 17 and 18. There they will see some increases in percentages which are amazing and astounding.

Mr. Watts: We will give you an extension of time to read them all.

Mr. BRAND: I would not like to keep the House that long, but will make reference to some of them. They are as follows:—

State Shipping Service—Intra-state basic freight increased approximately 50 per cent.

Bills of Sale fees—100 per cent.

Local Court fees—100 per cent.

Title Office fees—75 per cent.

Lands and Surveys—60 per cent.

"Government Gazette" Subscriptions—267 per cent.

Public Health—Fees for septic tank plans 100 per cent.

Medical Department—Theatre charges approximately 50 per cent.

State Hotels—

This should be interesting—

—House charges for State hotels were increased 16 per cent., except Cave House—

and I do not see why they should not have been included.

An hon. member: That affects about 2 per cent. of the population.

Mr. BRAND: Further figures are as follows:—

Education Department—Technical school fees raised by approximately 125 per cent.

Police—Firearm licences increased 200 per cent.

Agriculture—Grade herd recording fees 30 per cent. increase. Butter grading charges increased from one halfpenny to 5/8ths of a penny per box

and we know how the dairying industry is struggling. That last figure represented 12½ per cent.

Sir Ross McLarty: I marvel how he finds them all.

Mr. BRAND: Continuing—

Forests—General fees increased 200 per cent.

Railways—Inter-system—

Mr. Andrew: You all increase charges.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member should have spoken the other night. I might draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the Treasurer was the only speaker on that occasion. Not one hon. member opposite supported him.

Mr. W. Hegney: Like the position you were in the other night.

Mr. BRAND: Continuing these figures—

Railways—Inter-system fares increased 20 per cent.

Well, I do not want to embarrass the Treasurer any further.

Mr. Hearman: He is beyond embarrassing.

Mr. Hawke: I will have to read some more of the increases of the hon. member for Murray!

Mr. BRAND: The Treasurer read the best of them. Continuing my quotations: Turnover tax was raised 1½ per cent. That has something to do with s.p. betting.

Mr. Hawke: The member for Dale could tell you something about the winning bets tax.

Mr. BRAND: There was the country water supply—Harvey, Collic and Waroona—which increased 33½ per cent., not forgetting that all the way, the farmers are paying increased transport costs, and the Treasurer has reduced the transport subsidy by one-seventh for the last two years. According to what he has stated, he will continue to do so for another five years, and subsequently ask the people in the country to bear the full transport costs.

No wonder hon. members on this side of the House look upon the imposition of this tax as dangerous, not so much on account of the sum involved, but because, once it is imposed, it will be increased on a very important section of the community, who are contributing to the economy of the State.

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

Ayes—23.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Brady	Mr. Molr
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hall	Mr. Potter
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May
Mr. Leatham	

(Teller.)

Noes—15.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. I. Manning
Sir Ross McLarty	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Cornell
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. Crommelln
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Mann
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Thorn

Majority for—8.

Clause thus passed.

Clause 6, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Housing Loan Guarantee Act Amendment.
- 2, Constitution Acts Amendment.
Without amendment.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

THE HON. H. E. GRAHAM (Minister for Transport—East Perth) [8.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill embodies some amendments to the Government Railways Act which the Government feels are necessary prior to what I might term a long-term appointment of a commissioner of railways being made. Hon. members will recall that during the last session of Parliament certain amendments were effected, principally for the purpose of disbanding three-man control under a commission and reverting to a single-man administration. This Bill confirms that position, but it attends to one or two other matters as well.

The Act at present provides that an appointment shall be for a term of seven years; and the Bill lays down that the term of appointment of a railway commissioner shall not exceed a period of seven years. Hon. members will appreciate that there is a difference because of the terms of the Bill. I think it will be appreciated immediately that if a Commissioner of Railways were to reach the age of say, 59 years, it would be impossible to reappoint him because, under the Act, it is necessary for him to retire at the age of 65. It is interesting to note that in the other railway systems of the Commonwealth—Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia—there is a provision that the term of appointment shall be for a period not exceeding seven years.

In the Commonwealth railways there is a limited period not exceeding five years. The only exception is Tasmania where the appointee continues until the age of 65

unless, of course, he is removed for certain reasons which are usual in the matter of heads of departments and others where they suffer certain disabilities or commit certain breaches. In addition to the initial appointment of seven years, it is proposed that the same procedure shall continue, and that subsequent appointments shall also be for terms not exceeding seven years.

About the only other provision worthy of mention is that it is sought to tidy up a section of the Act dealing with what one might term a misdemeanour—that is to say, where the Commissioner of Railways becomes involved in receiving some emolument, payment, reward or commission arising out of his official duties and because of his association or interest with an outside concern. The Royal Commissioner investigating railway matters recommended certain steps which are embodied in this Bill, in the same way as he recommended the action in connection with the term of appointment along the lines that I have already outlined. I do not think there is any need for me to go into any detail in regard to the matter I have mentioned, but it will be seen that in the Act if a misdemeanour is committed the commissioner is subject to Section 25 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act. I think it will become immediately evident that there is an anomaly on account of that reference.

Mr. Brand: How long has the present commissioner got to go?

Mr. GRAHAM: I will come to that in a moment. The Royal Commissioner points out that nowhere else in Australia are there the niceties that are set out in our Act. The amendment contained in the Bill is almost word for word with what appears in the Commonwealth Railways Act. I might mention that this is also being made to apply to officers of the Railway Department generally in connection with which there are certain limitations at the moment. This Bill rewords the section in a better form.

By and large, that comprises the Bill, except that I omitted to state that with the consent of the Minister, such consent being given in writing, it will be possible for the Commissioner of Railways to enjoy emoluments or commissions. I do not desire to go into detail in connection with that, but it could quite easily be that there are certain circumstances under which a disservice would be done to the commissioner, and most definitely to the department, if the commissioner had perhaps been responsible for some invention and device which was being used commonly by railway services; it would virtually mean that Western Australia would be denied these devices or inventions or, in order to take advantage of them, it would be necessary to dispense with the services of the commissioner.

Mr. Brand: Some publicity was given regarding the possibility of an advisory committee of businessmen. Was that considered by the Government?

Mr. GRAHAM: A whole lot of matters were considered by the Government, and I think the point has been pretty well covered by the fact that only recently an appointment was made of an officer whose prime and principal function is to watch every aspect of railway finances.

I do not want to be drawn out in connection with that, but I feel that hon. members themselves could give very many instances of where one section of the railway service seemed to be completely out of touch with other sections or branches. Overall I think I can assure hon. members that the Government, through its Minister for Railways, and with the advice being tendered to him by his chief executive officers and from the various reports being received from the Royal Commissioner, is keeping under check and under consideration and attention the very many matters appertaining to the railways. I am positive that we can expect an improvement not only in the financial position but also in the general service rendered by the Railway Department.

I am sure many hon. members of this Chamber would agree with me that at present, compared with two or three years ago, there is a very marked and noticeable improvement in the spirit and attitude of railway employees. I am informed that many commendatory remarks have been made by customers large and small in many corners of the State which are served by the department.

There has been some comment regarding the action of the Government in deferring what I might call the making of a long-term appointment of a railway commissioner. I think, however, that the action of the Government has been consistent and logical. Under the amendment made to the legislation last year, a person could not fill the position of commissioner in an acting capacity for longer than six months. Accordingly, Mr. Brodie was appointed and his six months' term expired a couple of months ago. It would have been ridiculous, I think, to appoint him to the position permanently as he is due to leave the service next month.

Therefore, Mr. Marsland was appointed to hold the position in—should I say—a stop-gap capacity—naturally enough, I do not reflect upon him when I use that term, because he is a well-qualified and experienced man and commands considerable respect—in order that he may be consulted for the purpose of assisting the new appointee contemplated in the amendment contained in this Bill.

Mr. Marsland is due to retire in June of next year; that is to say, he is due to commence his leave, which he must exhaust before he reaches 65 years of age. Perhaps

I should point out that there is an agreement with Mr. Marsland that, following the calling of applications for railway commissioner—and the intention would be to appoint a commissioner for a term of seven years—if necessary, and if he is not successful in obtaining the appointment, that he, Mr. Marsland, will retire from his position as commissioner at an earlier date. Naturally enough, he would be retained in the employ of the Railway Department because of his value to it and in order to assist the new appointee who may or may not be a person already engaged in the Western Australian railway service.

I do not want that misconstrued. There are opposite points of view in regard to this. One point of view is that there is wisdom in obtaining someone who is completely outside and completely removed from the Western Australian railway service. The other point of view is that the top positions of any department should be available to be filled by those who are already serving in that department if they have the knowledge, experience and general capacity. In any event, it is the intention of the Government to call applications on a broad basis and, naturally enough, the decision made will be based on the calibre of those who are offering.

Mr. Court: How do you propose to call applications and when will they close?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am unable to answer that question with any accuracy, but I can assure the hon. member that the Government will waste no time in calling applications. The period allotted for the lodging of such applications will be sufficient to allow persons in various parts of the Commonwealth to become appraised of the situation and to enable them to submit their applications before the closing day. I am only hazarding a guess, but possibly towards the end of this year or early in the New Year the Government will be giving consideration to the appointment of a new railway commissioner.

Mr. Watts: Why must the approval of the Governor be obtained for his resignation?

Mr. GRAHAM: Reverting to a point discussed earlier, that provision was made to cover the position whereby a commissioner has perhaps done something he should not have done and he is then given the opportunity to resign as an alternative to being dealt with in another way. In addition to that, the Royal Commissioner felt that if the approval of the Governor were necessary, that might have the effect—to some slight extent, at any rate—of encouraging the person to remain in the service. However, if there is any point in regard to that which needs greater clarification, it can be discussed in further detail in Committee.

The Government intends to be as generous as the finances of the State and the responsibilities of the position warrant in

regard to the new appointment. I do not think I am breaching any secret when I say that the salary resolved upon was £4,750. There are several ways of looking at that. Some may think that, for a gigantic undertaking such as the railways, the salary is insufficient; but as was mentioned in discussion with the Minister for Railways a few moments ago, another way of looking at it is that the figure of £4,750 is some £15 a week more than the Premier receives, and it is almost equal to what the Governor receives. I think it will be found, too, that it compares reasonably well with the salary paid to commissioners of railways in the other States.

The figures available to me from a recent report show that in Queensland the commissioner of railways is paid £4,375; in New South Wales the figure is £5,875; in South Australia it is £4,500; and in Tasmania, it is £3,000; although, I suppose that is hardly comparable. The figure for a Commonwealth commissioner of railways is £5,000. In Victoria the Act provides that the commissioner may be appointed at a salary not to exceed £6,000, although the present chairman of commissioners in that State receives, I understand, £5,500.

I think, taken all in all, it should be an opportunity to attract from elsewhere a person of a high standard and with high qualifications; and if the choice be from one within the State and from within our own railway service, there ought to be sufficient inducement for that person to apply himself with the utmost vigour in an endeavour to place the railways department and its operations on an even more satisfactory basis than it is at present.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did you say earlier that you intended to call applications from persons residing overseas?

Mr. GRAHAM: I did not say that.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do you intend to?

Mr. GRAHAM: I could not answer that specifically, but I am certain that the intention is to call for applications throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. As in all things, this Government, no doubt, will give preference to the local product, but at the same time it must have regard to the responsibilities of the position and the desirability of obtaining the best possible man for it. I think that is all that need be said in connection with the matter, and I commend the Bill for the consideration of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hearman, debate adjourned.

Message.

Message from Lieut.-Governor and Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

NATIVES (STATUS AS CITIZENS) BILL.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd September.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [9.15]: The criticism levelled, and the suggestions made, in this House last year must have had very little impression on the Minister for Native Welfare because he has presented us with another measure which is exactly similar to that introduced last year. It has the same quality in 1958 as it had in 1957—the quality to get us nowhere, except in circles. I will read the vital words to the House. They are as follows:—

On and after the coming into operation of the Natives (Status as Citizens) Act, 1958, a native has the same rights, privileges, and immunities and is subject to the same duties and liabilities, as a natural born subject of Her Majesty, except if and while he is declared to be a protected native.

It will be noticed that the wording there makes citizens of natives. We then have added the word "except." It reads "except if and while he is declared to be a protected native." While that phrase remains, this Bill, giving citizenship rights, can be regarded at best only as a mirage. When the native gets those rights he will find there is no substance in the privilege at all, because immediately citizenship is granted by this Bill it is taken away by the phrase I have read.

The Bill provides it shall be taken away, and there shall be another class of native called the protected native. Being called a native need carry no stigma whatever, because many of these people—admittedly too few—have proved their capabilities in several ways as quite good citizens. To label them as protected natives is, I contend, proof of failure. It means, tried but rejected. I for one will never vote for such an infliction on our natives.

My plea for granting citizenship to all natives who obtain a very minimum of evidence that they can carry the responsibility has been ignored. To my mind it would be far more satisfactory than the degrading system of cancelling so-called citizenship—which is not really citizenship at all, because it is subject to cancellation. I have with me a copy of a report by the special committee on native affairs. A very peculiar situation arises in connection with this, because, when we look for the terms of reference we find the following:—

Appointment of committee. On the 30th October, 1957, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, passed the following resolution:—

That in the opinion of this House an investigation should be made for the purpose of ascertaining the cost involved in providing adequately for the requirements

of the natives in Western Australia, to what extent Commonwealth assistance is necessary to enable these requirements to be fully met and that representations be made to the Commonwealth Government accordingly, and that such investigation shall be undertaken by a committee of five persons appointed by the Minister whereof not more than three shall be civil servants.

As a result of this legislation the Minister for Native Welfare appointed the following persons to act as a special committee:—

F. E. Gare, Department of Native Welfare (Chairman).

E. C. Gare, W.A. Native Welfare Council Inc.

Dr. D. J. R. Snow, Public Health Department.

G. F. Thornbury, Education Department.

Mrs. K. Wilson, Australian Labour Party.

If members listened carefully, they will have noticed that that committee was not asked to report on citizenship at all. Its scope was entirely different. The committee was to deal with financial aspects, administration and the care of the natives. Accordingly, we have a report from a committee which was not appointed to have anything to do with citizenship, dealing with citizenship. On page 17 of that report we find that the committee had this to say—

We feel to continue to withhold full citizenship from the native minority is unchristian, undemocratic and un-Australian.

Hon. members will notice that the words used are "full citizenship." There is no mention whatever in the committee's report on citizenship that there should be protected natives. The committee says that to continue to withhold full citizenship is "undemocratic, unchristian, and un-Australian." But it does not say anything about protected natives; nor does it say when that shall be done, or how long it shall be delayed before citizenship is given.

So, from the committee's report, there is no warrant for protected natives; nor is there any warrant for urging any citizenship for natives at all. But I will deal with that a little later. The Minister must have very grave doubts about the desirability of granting his special brand of citizenship, because he has not indicated one single benefit that could be derived by the community or the natives.

One would surely expect that in urging the acceptance of such a Bill the accruing benefits would be clearly stated. Yet we find the closest the Minister came to that was in his remark that the adoption of this measure will provide an entirely new

order for a group of people who, due to the colour of their skin, are subject to discriminatory legislation and special restriction. There is no indication of the nature of this new order that the Minister mentioned.

I would ask a few questions. How many native children will it save from drifting back after their school years to the careless ways of their parents? How will it teach natives hygiene and sanitation? How will it lift them to a life of favourable acceptability? How will it convert their humpies into homes? How will it inspire them with Christian virtues? How will it educate them? How will it supply health services and expansion of mission work?

There can be no new order for the native people within this Bill, because it is empty of anything that will promote full native participation in our community life. That is what we are seeking. Referring to the other half of the Minister's remark—that the natives are a group of people subject to discriminatory legislation and special restriction, the implication is that the discrimination is against the native. But that is quite incorrect.

Last year £500,000 was spent on native welfare. I would like to quote from the report of the special committee on native matters. It is headed, "The case for assistance". On page 9 of the report we find the following:—

It is sometimes argued that there is no justification for extending the natives' benefits beyond those available to other members of the community. This view overlooks the fact that the aboriginal has suffered such extreme disabilities and injustice in the past that common humanity demands that he be given some appropriate recompense.

I agree that such assistance is most desirable, but I do suggest that the existence of that very need proves that the situation cannot be met by this Bill. The additional assistance to natives forms no part of citizenship status and is not in this Bill. Do I have to go beyond this case for assistance which I have quoted to prove my contention that this "half-cocked" citizenship offered in this Bill ignores the basic needs of natives, which have to be provided by a discrimination—one which selects the natives for help in many directions which cannot be provided for the ordinary citizens? If we do need further proof let me refer to the report of the committee on page 5. It says —

Too often, the life of the average native, in the southern part of the State at least, is characterised by dirt, inferior housing, gambling, instability and excessive drinking with all its complications. His children are unduly exposed to sickness, attend school irregularly and leave at the earliest

opportunity. Largely because of these factors there is no reason to believe that the rising generation will differ materially from the present one unless urgent steps are taken to change those conditions.

I ask this question: Does this Bill change those conditions?

Mr. Bovell: No! Of course it doesn't!

Mr. W. A. MANNING: The hon. member is right in voicing an emphatic, "No." The report condemns the Bill because the latter takes no steps in carrying out the wishes of that committee. What it does prove, is that the native has a particular and peculiar need of his own, which can only be met by methods adapted to those particular needs.

Although we are dealing with citizenship in this Bill, the only points raised by the Minister as being associated with citizenship are two—liquor and voting. Surely citizenship is based on something of a grander conception than that. What a poor outlook for our country if these are the only two things that matter under citizenship.

Regarding the first it seems to be a relatively unimportant one in a sense because strong drink is of no value to the native, and obviously has the same ill-effect whether he is classed as a native, protected native, or a citizen. Changing his title will not change the evil effects; it will only change the mode of securing liquor.

On the other point of voting, the Minister gets over the difficulty in a very remarkable way. Incidentally he was also quoting the committee at that particular time. This is the statement made by the Minister in regard to tribal natives—

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

What a remarkable privilege it must be to tribal natives! The best point of the Minister is that they would have nothing to fear for some time to come. Eventually it would seem they will have something to fear; but in the meantime they will not. That will be the effect of the vote on tribal natives.

The other point deals with natives in settled areas. The Minister says this—

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

Now the Minister asks us to support the stand for granting votes to all natives and then proceeds to show how ineffective this right will be then applied. Surely some of the commonsense that he attributes to the Electoral Department needs to be exercised before it gets that far. Are we to make laws, which, in the Minister's own words, cannot be applied; and, in one case, will not be applied? Is it any wonder that I call this type of citizenship a mirage with no substance? The Minister's own words will confirm that view.

All these difficulties support my contention, which I made last year, for a definite plan of granting citizenship on an individual basis. Under such a scheme natives could be given citizenship status in a manner similar to the granting of naturalisation papers to new Australians. Such a plan to widen the scope of our Native (Citizenship Rights) Act has not been adopted. I urge again that that Act be improved so that encouragement is given to natives to gain their citizenship rights. Furthermore, I suggest there be a 10-year programme of assistance and promotion of citizenship.

At the end of 10 years all natives not already granted citizenship rights would be included; and thereafter there would be no distinction and no provision for protected or any other type of natives. I submit that would be a definite plan. I shall make some further suggestions later on.

The proposals submitted by the special committee will take three years to get under way; that is, even presuming the Commonwealth Government supplies all the £2,400,000 within the time. It is a very big presumption that that will be done. In addition, there would need to be provision for housing, so a large sum of money is involved.

As I said, the plan would not get fully under way for at least three years, and 10 years would not see the programme completed. It might take 20 years, but in 10 years' time sufficient progress should have been made to justify the wiping out of restrictions on full citizenship. I think that should be a definite commitment and everything should be done in the meantime to carry out that plan of preparation.

I support my contention by quoting an article entitled, "The Aborigines and Torres Islanders of Queensland." This report was written by the Western Suburbs Branch of the United Nations Association, Brisbane; and it has just been published. I quote from pages 52 and 53. It states—

A new programme should consider the following basic questions:—

(1) The granting of full citizenship status and the elimination of any racial discrimination.

(2) The provision of financial, technical and educational assistance to raise the living standard to that of white citizens.

(3) The development of self-reliance and self-advancement by the coloured people.

Regarding the full citizenship status, controversy is concerned not with whether this advance will occur, but rather as to its manner and speed of achievement. It is probably true that a few coloured people would suffer if there were an abrupt transition to citizenship without preparation. It may also be true that some will make mistakes and fail to gain from the change. This can be largely avoided by preparation, and sympathetic and tolerant assistance by the community as a whole. If this is done Queensland and Australia cannot fail to gain from the contribution of those coloured people and their children who are able to take full advantage of citizenship.

From the aspect of Australia's dignity before the United Nations, and from humanitarian and social aspects, the problem is an urgent one. Therefore a target date for full citizenship should be set now.

Action can then be taken to plan and publicise the change to effect it in the best possible manner.

From the evidence of that quotation, which is a fairly well balanced report, it can be seen that citizenship is a big thing to be thrust on unprepared natives. They are not ready for it; and to achieve it correctly, planning is needed and time is required.

I suggest that with serious planning and careful use of time, full citizenship can be achieved in ten years, as I have already outlined. In the meantime, there are 63 recommendations of the special committee on native matters, and these should be dealt with. In addition, our claim for assistance from the Commonwealth Government should be pressed with vigour. If we, as a State, have obligations to our natives under the Charter of the United Nations, as mentioned by the Minister, then who committed us? The Commonwealth. Is it not right that the people of Australia should share this responsibility?

I recently asked the Premier a question in regard to his submission to the Commonwealth and in what form it had been made, and he said:

A copy of the report together with a written request for a special grant has been forwarded to the Prime Minister whose reply is now awaited.

I suggest that if we are going to ask the Commonwealth for £2,400,000, an appeal should be made in person and not by letter. If the Premier were concerned about this matter, he should have taken the request personally or sent over a deputation

to represent him in order to fully present the case. I do not expect that we can receive a sum of that magnitude by the means which have been taken.

In regard to the United Nations Charter, I would like to quote one or two points. The Minister argued that natives are entitled to citizenship under Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and this was quoted. It is as follows:—

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country directly or through freely chosen representatives.

This quotation was taken from a series of 30 articles, each of which forms part of the complete Declaration. If we take one article, surely we must look up the other articles! If we do so, we find two others which concern us very much. I will quote article 25, which is as follows:—

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.

I will now quote Clause 1 of Article 29, which is as follows:—

Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

Clause 2 of Article 29 states—

In the exercise of his rights and freedoms everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

When we look at the Declaration of Human Rights we find that the Government has taken only one aspect into consideration. There are also required a standard of living, duties to the community, and such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others. Therefore, citizenship is not just a matter of having a say in government; it is a matter of being citizens of the community and bowing sometimes to the needs of others and accepting responsibility in the community. How are our natives at the present time able to do these things?

The Minister has presented us with a Bill dealing with citizenship. But what has he done about the other recommendations of the committee, of which—as I have already mentioned—there were 63? The other day I asked the Minister a question concerning these 63 recommendations made by the Special Committee on Native

Affairs. I asked him how many and which particular ones had been implemented. The reply was as follows:—

The recommendations of the committee were based on the provision of the necessary funds by the Commonwealth Government. The committee estimated that over three years £3,898,600 would be required. The State on the present basis of providing £500,000 annually will enable some of the recommendations to be wholly or partly implemented.

Many of the recommendations refer to practices and policy which is already established within the department.

Other recommendations are subject to current action including—

(a) A Bill as at present before the House.

The remaining answers, summarised, were as follows:—

Plans for a children's hostel at Hall's Creek, valued in the report at £100,000;

a mission at Roebourne, valued at £100,000;

the Education Department has been pressing for a school at Pindan valued at £4,000;

an institution for the personnel of Alexandra Home with a capital cost of £40,000; and £7,000 annually for three years—that is, £21,000.

I would like hon. members to notice that the items mentioned by the Minister as being considered are subject to, "sufficient funds," "suitability of site," "no finality"—or the qualifications of all of these—and total only £246,100. However, the total recommendations involve £3,898,600. Therefore, there is plenty of scope for other activities in the 63 recommendations of that committee. The Minister says that some of these are already established practice within the department. That may be so, because some of them are established to a degree. However, each one of the 63 recommendations involves an expenditure of money.

I suggest that this special committee did not have in mind any such action as the Government has taken in presenting us with this Bill on citizenship rights. I am going to quote from the report of this committee, at page 107. It reads as follows:—

The broad objective should be the integration of the native minority with the Western Australian community; and all future policies should be framed to hasten the attainment of this objective. Simultaneous effort in all related fields should be the aim.

I am rather interested in that word "simultaneous," because when I look at the dictionary I find that it means "at the same time." So there are 63 recommendations made by that committee, and

it recommends "simultaneous" action on all of these. I am sure that word "simultaneous" did not just get there by accident because the committee had no need to put it there whatsoever. It could have said "consecutive action" or "action as money is available." It has not said that, but has said "simultaneous."

It does not recommend that the natives be given citizenship rights first and that then the other 62 recommendations should be implemented. Not at all. It is something that has to be done as a whole; and that is where this Bill is entirely wrong, and contrary to the recommendations of the committee. It is part of a co-ordinated plan and the recommendations cover a very wide field—health, education, social welfare, housing, missions, reserves and administration.

I think that the report reveals how very thoroughly the committee has gone into the native problem. If its recommendations and a citizenship programme are instituted simultaneously as part of the whole, I can visualise a steady rise in those worthy of citizenship rights, the attainment of which I consider should be encouraged. As I said earlier, some improvement should be made to the Act, something that would encourage the natives to secure their rights. The other part of the programme is the preparation of the whole community for a 10-year target, when, if planning has been effective, the majority of the natives will be able to understand what it is all about; at the present time they do not.

"Unchristian," "undemocratic" and "un-Australian" are words which have been applied to the withholding of such citizenship rights as this Bill provides, and which are at best a very doubtful acquisition from the natives' point of view. How easy it is to give something away which costs us nothing! And that is what this Bill is doing. Of the 63 recommendations, this one is selected. What about the other recommendations, each and every one of which will cost us something to the tune of very nearly £4,000,000 in three years?

The annual expenditure on native welfare is approximately £500,000, and the special committee says—

This outlay has provided little more than ameliorative measures. A continuing increase can be avoided only by achieving success in a policy of integration and this could be accomplished by bold measures including the allocation of considerable finance for a time.

That is from the report. Hon. members will notice that the committee does not suggest anything like this Bill will achieve integration. Bold measures, including finance, are necessary; something which hurts; not a gift which costs nothing. This is something which is necessary, unfortunately, in order to cater for the welfare of the natives of the State; and we

have to face up to the fact and not dodge our responsibilities by giving them something that is worthless.

When we have carried out the recommendations of the committee we will be able to speak on a different note from what the committee has suggested and will be able to call our treatment of these people Christian, democratic and Australian. As might have been guessed, I oppose the Bill.

MR. GRAYDEN (South Perth) [9.50]: This is one issue on which I must differ from the Opposition. Whilst there are many shortcomings in this Bill, things with which I do not agree—I intend to support the measure—and I hope that the Minister will agree later to amend the Bill in Committee. I think that one point that does emerge from this controversy is the fact that the Opposition has no united policy on this question of citizenship; because whilst I am quite certain the Liberal Party in this House will oppose this Bill—and oppose, therefore, the giving of citizenship rights to natives—we have the Federal Minister for Territories, Mr. Hasluck, recently making a statement to the Press in which he said—

The Commonwealth has given a positive and visible lead to the States in native welfare legislation. The current West Australian proposals are a most encouraging sign that the lead which the Commonwealth has been giving in the Northern Territory have not gone unregarded.

The Press report from which I am quoting, continues—

Hasluck was commenting on Legislation now before the W.A. Parliament to grant natives full citizenship rights by birth, except those declared protected natives.

He said that a welfare ordinance, agreed to in the Northern Territory in 1953, gave full citizenship rights to all people except those who were considered to be in need of special care and assistance.

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

And so the statement goes on; but there is no point in continuing to read it.

I do not think that the Minister for Territories is being very fair in claiming any credit for this legislation, because I am quite certain that if credit was due it would be due to the present Government. I think it is courageous legislation even though it has many shortcomings. But it does, as I mentioned earlier, emphasise the point that the Opposition has no united policy on this particular question. In the State Parliament we have the Opposition opposing it, and in the Federal sphere we have the Minister for Territories

saying what a wonderful thing it is. If I were the Minister for Territories, I do not think I would be too anxious to associate myself with this particular Bill.

It does two things: It panders to the politicians and the publicans. It gives the natives the right to vote and to drink. It takes away from the natives the right to their own children, and it takes away from all natives, protected or otherwise, the right to any property.

So we have the legislation which claims to grant a new status to aborigines in Western Australia, giving them on the one hand the right to go into a hotel and the right to vote, and at the same time taking away the fundamental human rights—the right to their own children and the right to property.

The two sections that I refer to are firstly the clause in the Bill which amends section 35 of the principal Act; and the amended principal Act, if this Bill goes through, will read this way—

The Commissioner may undertake the general care, protection, and management of the property of any native, or "protected native" and may—

- (a) take possession of, retain, sell, or dispose of any such property, whether real or personal;
- (b) in his own name sue for, recover, or receive any money or other property due or belonging to or held in trust for the benefit of a native, or "protected native", or damages for any conversion of or injury to any such property;
- (c) exercise in the name of a native or protected native any power which the native might exercise for his own benefit;
- (d) in the name and on behalf of a native, or protected native, appoint any person to act as attorney or agent for any purpose connected with the property of the native;
- (e) require a statement in writing from any person who has had any contractual transaction or financial dealing or dealing in property with a native or protected native of any such transaction or dealing during the period of one year preceding such requisition.

And then following these sweeping powers which the commissioner has to enable him to take away, sell or otherwise dispose of the property of any native, whether he is protected or not, or whether he has the citizenship rights which are bestowed by this Bill, there is a sop section included

to give the impression that the preceding section, which I have just read, is limited. This sop section reads as follows:—

The powers conferred by this section should not be exercised, except in the case of minors, without the consent of the native, or protected native, except so far as may be necessary to provide for the due preservation of such property.

In other words it will be the Commissioner of Native Welfare in Western Australia who will decide whether any action is necessary to provide for the preservation of the property belonging to a native. This is all-embracing legislation.

I think it was two years ago that the Minister for Native Welfare in this House introduced a Bill which was calculated to do exactly what this legislation is setting out to do—deprive the natives of their rights by giving the commissioner over-riding power over their property. Apparently that legislation caused such a stir in Trades Hall, and elsewhere, that it was hastily withdrawn by the Government; but, despite the fact that it was withdrawn on that occasion, we find that under the pretence of giving natives citizenship rights, the same thing is being introduced through this Bill. It is an astonishing state of affairs!

I think the Minister will be aware of the fact that there are about 75 officers in the Native Welfare Department; and last year 35 of them were dismissed or retired—many of them were probably dismissed for misconduct. However, obviously 35 of them were not capable, or were not considered to be capable, of discharging the duties of native welfare officers. As a consequence 35 of them were either asked to retire, retired voluntarily, or were dismissed. Yet they are the type of people who are to exercise this power over the property of natives throughout Western Australia.

I say that because in the legislation there is a section which enables the commissioner to delegate his responsibility; and he does that, of course. When he came before a Select Committee, which was held not very long ago, he did not want to give evidence because he said, "I have a man in that particular area and I have delegated my responsibility to him." The particular section in the principal Act which deals with the delegation of responsibility reads—

(3) (a) The Commissioner may, in relation to a matter or class of matter, delegate, in accordance with the regulations, all or any of his powers and functions under this Act, except this power of delegation, so that the powers and functions delegated may be exercised by the delegate in the whole or a part of the State in accordance with the delegation.

(b) A delegation under this subsection is revokable at the will of the Commissioner and does not prevent the exercise by the Commissioner or the Minister of their respective powers and functions under this Act.

(c) Where, by the provisions of this Act, the exercise of a power, or the discharge of a function by the Commissioner; or the effective operation of a provision of this Act, is dependent upon the Commissioner being of a certain state of mind, whether it be that he thinks certain matters fit, or is of a certain opinion, or is satisfied as to certain matters, or otherwise, and the Commissioner has, under this subsection, delegated the exercise of the power or the discharge of the functions to a delegate, the delegate, if he is of that state of mind, may exercise the power or discharge the function, and the provision of the Act becomes effectively operative, as if his state of mind were that of the Commissioner.

So we have this clear power of the commissioner to delegate responsibility; in other words he can delegate his responsibility, in any portion of the State, to any of his 75 officers who are distributed throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia. It is quite easy to imagine, therefore, that if an officer in Wyndham falls foul of some native, he has only to submit a report to the commissioner in Perth saying, "This native did so and so and I think we should look after his property," and that officer can take the property from the native, sell it or dispose of it, or do anything he likes with it, notwithstanding that that native has rights of citizenship bestowed upon him by this Bill.

But this measure goes further. There are many natives in Western Australia who, for years, have struggled and striven to raise themselves to the level of the whites; and they have succeeded in doing it. If this Bill is passed, notwithstanding that they have full citizenship rights—in other words that they have all the rights of the whites over their children and property—they will be in exactly the same category as bush natives. In other words the commissioner at any time could say, "I will sell or dispose of your property, or do anything I like with it, because I think you are not a fit and proper person to look after it." That is the power which this Bill gives to the commissioner.

Mr. Bovell: That sounds like the Gestapo.

Mr. GRAYDEN: It is an incredible piece of legislation. As I said a few moments ago, this type of legislation was withdrawn by the Labour Party two years ago because of protests made by unions throughout Western Australia. Yet the Bill has been

introduced once more, and now there is the pretence of giving natives full citizenship rights.

Mr. Brand: From what you have said so far, I think you should oppose the Bill for all the good it will do.

Mr. GRAYDEN: On this particular issue the Minister, or the Commissioner of Native Welfare, is saying that it is infinitely more important for a native to have the right to drink or vote than it is for him to have the right to his own property. That is the whole crux of the situation.

I think most hon. members will have seen the cartoon which appeared recently in an Eastern States paper. It depicts two natives watching the rising sun and above the rising sun are the words "Full citizenship rights for Western Australian natives" and underneath is the comment "Sunrise in the West." I do not think the sun is rising; I think it is just the light before the dawn.

So much for the question of property. The second specific thing that the Bill does is to deprive natives of the right to their own children—a fundamental human right, if there is such a thing. The particular section to which I am referring is Section 69 of the principal Act and, when amended by this Bill, the relevant portion of that section will read—

The Governor may make regulations for all or any of the matters following (that is to say):—

And then we come down to paragraphs (d), (e) and (f) which will read—

- (d) enabling any native child, or protected native child, to be sent to and detained in a native institution, industrial school, or orphanage;
- (e) for the control, care, and education of natives, or protected natives or both in native institutions, and for the supervision of native institutions;
- (f) prescribing the conditions on which any native children, or protected native children, may be apprenticed to or placed in service with suitable persons.

So it goes on. This Bill is very specific on that point. It seeks to amend the principal Act in the way that I have just mentioned. In other words, at any time, a native, whether he is protected or whether he has full citizenship rights bestowed upon him by this Parliament, can still be told by the Commissioner of Native Welfare, "I am going to send your child to an institution." If the parents are in Perth the commissioner may say, "I am going to send your child to an institution in Kalgoorlie"—or it could be Derby, Meekatharra, or anywhere else—and the parents would have

no redress. That is the power which this measure intends to confer upon the Commissioner of Native Welfare. So these proposed citizenship rights mean nothing at all.

Firstly, the natives will have no rights to property if the Commissioner of Native Welfare so thinks fit. They will have no rights to their children, if the commissioner deems fit to send them away or do anything else with them. So we can imagine what is going to happen. There are 75 native welfare officers stationed throughout Western Australia and the Commissioner of Native Welfare has to remain in his office in Perth. As a result, he has to rely on the reports submitted by these 75 officers. One officer may have had an argument with a native and he may report to the Commissioner of Native Welfare to the effect, "This child should be sent to an institution."

So, no matter how capable a native may be of looking after his own child, on the say-so of a native welfare officer that child could be separated from its parents and sent hundreds of miles away.

Mr. Perkins: Sections 35 and 36 already provide for natives included in that amendment.

Mr. GRAYDEN: This Bill seeks to alter the Act in such a way as to provide that protected natives, or natives with full citizenship rights, will have no rights to their children or to their property. If that is the way to bestow citizenship rights upon them, it is a strange way of doing it.

I think the first thing we in Western Australia have to do for natives is to provide for their necessities of life. We should ensure that they have adequate food, water and medical attention. The report presented by the committee recently was an excellent one. The committee performed a most methodical job. It spent many weeks on its task and spared no effort, and I think that the report it produced was splendid. However, if the Commonwealth Government can be induced to provide the money to be spent—which was a recommendation made by the committee—we can then meet the basic needs of these natives.

Apart from their basic needs, the most important issue concerning natives is the wholesale separation of native children from their parents. Without question, throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia, thousands of children are forcibly separated from their parents. One need only travel to Laverton, Leonora, Meekatharra, or any other outback centre, and if one stands there whilst the native children are being separated from their parents so that they may be sent back to school, one can witness most tearful scenes; and if one could only take a film of the partings and a tape recording of

the conversations between the parents and their children, it would cause a far greater stir than has ever happened in regard to natives in the past.

It is not so long ago that a report was made concerning children who were taken from Greece into Russia to be indoctrinated with Russian ideologies, and the Western world was in an uproar over it. The cries that went up were to the effect that it was atrocious for children to be taken away from their parents and sent to Russia to be taught some strange ideologies. And yet, in Western Australia, we have always indulged in the practice of separating children from their parents because we think it is the best thing for them. We place the children in institutions and consider that we are doing the right thing. However, there are many institutions which are not fit to be entrusted with these young lives.

The Native Welfare Department or the Commissioner of Native Welfare must have considerable contempt for Parliament. I think some of the incidents that have occurred in the last couple of years will clearly emphasise that. To refresh the minds of members I will quote one incident that occurred. I can recall that when the Select Committee went to the Warburton Ranges, the member for North Perth, when he returned to Perth, lodged a complaint with the Department of Native Welfare concerning a little girl named Winifred Golding.

The position was that when the Select Committee was at the Warburton Mission the missionaries said that this girl had been taken to Perth for medical treatment and had been absent for a year. The fact that the Native Welfare Department had not sent her back was having an adverse effect on the other natives because those parents who had children with, say, hare lips, or other physical disabilities, would not allow the children to visit the mission because the parents thought that they would be sent to Perth for medical treatment and they would not see them again.

This girl, Winifred Golding, was sent to Perth and a year elapsed and she had still not returned to the mission. As a result, when the missionaries saw the member for North Perth, they apparently looked upon him as a reasonable type of man who would do the right thing by them on behalf of this girl. I am pleased to relate that the hon. member wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Native Welfare in regard to the fate of this girl. However, I think that was three years ago.

I have raised this case because, when I was passing through from Leonora to Laverton about four months ago, I saw some natives on the side of the road; and after getting into conversation with them, they mentioned that Winifred Golding was still at the Kurrawang mission—that is, three years after she had been sent away from the Warburton mission.

In the last session of Parliament, a number of questions were asked about Winifred Golding. Therefore, for three years, the Department of Native Welfare has defied Parliament with respect to that girl. That is only one case, but there are many of them. There are hundreds of children who are separated by hundreds of miles from their parents, and they will continue to be separated until they are 21 if the present state of affairs continues. By the time they are 21 they will have forgotten all about their parents; and so that separation will become permanent.

Mr. Bovell: Is Winifred Golding back at the Warburton mission now?

Mr. GRAYDEN: No; she is still at the Kurrawang mission. At the Forrest River mission in the Kimberleys, the missionaries will not have a bar of having children separated from their parents, because they say it is the surest way to breed child delinquents. They adopt the view that if the children are taken away from their parents—who exercise very close control over their offspring in most cases—and they are put into a mission to be indoctrinated with all sorts of beliefs which are useless to them when they leave school, the results will be that those children will have no allegiance to anyone. The point is that they have not been set any example by their parents; and they are the ones who cause trouble.

The attitude of many missionaries is not what it could be in regard to children who are—as I say—forcibly separated from their parents. I do not like to speak adversely of the Kurrawang mission because, in many respects, that is a wonderful institution; but this is the sort of thing that obtains there. The mission is only a few miles off the main road and a few miles within reach of Kalgoorlie. It was not very long ago that a highly qualified native was invited to the home of the missionary. Whilst he was there a little child fell over in the dining room, so he picked it up and said, "Go back to your mother and she will kiss it better," or something along those lines.

The child was immediately taken from the parent and the man in question was rebuked. He was told that the native children of this mission have to call the superintendent of the mission, father; and his wife, mother; and that the parents of the children have to be called by their christian names. That is a rule of the mission. When a child comes into the mission he has to call the superintendent, father; the superintendent's wife, mother; and its own parents by their christian names. It is rather silly when we know that such names as Sadie, or Big Foot Jimmie exist.

The policy there is to teach contempt for the parents of children, and for their native way of life. That happens in a comparatively well-run mission. Not long ago

the Minister made a tour of the Warburton Ranges, and he went quite close to Ernabella Mission. Subsequently the departmental officers who accompanied the Minister called in at Ernabella, as also did the journalists. They all gave very good reports of the mission, because it is a very well-run institution indeed. If it is not the best mission in Australia, it is certainly one of the best.

At the time we were out making the inspection, one of the officers of the mission was a married man with four children. It was discovered that he was having sexual relationship with the mission girls. What a fantastic state of affairs that was, particularly when it existed in such a well-run and well-conducted mission!

Mr. Graham: How do you know that?

Mr. GRAYDEN: There was a court case as a result of it, and the girls made statutory declarations to that effect. I mention that fact merely to show that even in the best-run institutions that sort of thing happens. About three weeks later several children on that mission died through malnutrition. All this happened after the official inspections were made. The officers from the Department of Native Welfare in Western Australia called at that mission but did not detect anything wrong, because these things are very hard to detect.

This Bill proposes to give 75 officers of the Department of Native Welfare, scattered throughout Western Australia, the right to say whether a native shall have full citizenship rights or not; whether he can manage his own property, or whether he is going to dispose of it. The measure is going to give 75 officers of the department the right to say to a native, "You did not do the right thing yesterday, so we are going to send your children to an institution."

If that is what the Bill proposes then I think it is high time we tightened up the relevant legislation. I do not think there is any doubt that that is what the Bill intends. It gives them the right to drink and the right to vote; and it also gives the right to the officers of the department to say what they will do with the property of any native in Western Australia, or with the native's children.

In his speech the Minister made one or two statements. In opening he said—

Once again it is my privilege to introduce a Bill, the passage of which will provide a new order for a group of people who, due to the colour of their skin, are subject to discriminatory legislation and special restrictions.

Later in his speech the Minister said—

The Bill acknowledges the principle of equal dignity and rights as propounded by the United Nations Charter of Human Rights to which Australia is a signatory.

The clauses contained in this Bill are not in accord with the sentiments expressed by the Minister. There can be no question about that. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which he has quoted, is particularly specific on the rights of human beings to their own properties, and also on the sanctity of the family. There are many aspects of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which refer to that question, but I do not wish to labour this point.

I repeat, that I think this is courageous legislation; but, as I have endeavoured to point out, it has extraordinarily serious shortcomings. The Minister gave the impression that there were adequate safeguards, or words to that effect; and that the Bill did not contain such provisions. It was obvious that he was not aware, when he introduced the measure, that those provisions were contained in the Bill in the form I have mentioned. That being so, I cannot see why the Minister should have any objection to amending the two offending clauses.

If the Minister was not aware that those provisions were in the Bill then, obviously, he did not want them in the Bill; which means that the Labour Party does not want them in the Bill. So it would seem that he should be in agreement with the deletion of those two clauses, at least in respect of natives who are granted citizenship rights under this measure.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [10.22]: I desire to make some observations on this legislation. I was particularly interested in the lengthy report submitted by the committee that inquired into the problem of natives. I thought it was a very excellent report indeed. I believe that a tremendous amount of work and thought went into its preparation. However, I see little in common between the report and the Bill as presented to Parliament. Today if a native attains a certain standard he can obtain his citizenship certificate.

The committee of inquiry recommended that citizenship be granted immediately to all natives. This Bill provides a restriction and in doing so makes a complete switch from the present approach to citizenship. Today if the native is educated to understand the responsibilities of citizenship, and he can live up to the white man's standard, he has no difficulty whatever in being rewarded with a citizenship certificate. But this Bill provides that if the native is unable to meet the required standard, or live like a white man, or if he is not educated, he is to be penalised by having his citizenship taken from him and is to be declared a native.

I suppose the natives in this State will fall into two categories. The first would be the tribalised, or nomadic, natives who very often are out of touch with white people; and the others, the poor unfortunate who live on the outskirts of the city

and in most of our country towns. Many of the natives now living on the outskirts of the metropolitan area and the country towns already have all this Bill can give them, but they are the ones who are largely the major problem to our community today.

Therefore the provisions of this Bill offer nothing whatever which would be of help to these people. Citizenship under the Bill, of course, would give all natives, educated or otherwise, two things—the right to vote and the right of unrestricted access to liquor. On the first score of voting, unless a native was educated, he would not have any idea what it was all about. On the second, most natives seem to have a great desire for drink. We know all too well the effect of liquor on natives.

The member for Narrogin made some very sensible suggestions as to what might be done for the native population. It was a very sensible approach indeed. It is necessary that we have an objective, something which we set out to achieve. I believe that the granting of citizenship to every native should be the ultimate objective, but there is a long road to travel before that can be achieved. We should endeavour to see that every native child in Western Australia of school age receives an education. That might be a tall order. Of course it is; but it is a very laudable objective.

If these natives are to have citizenship rights they must be educated to know what it is all about, therefore the first approach is to see that they are educated and to see that their children go to school. Once the children had been through school and reached, say, the seventh grade, a citizenship certificate could be given to them automatically. Those who had not been through school and had not received a certificate in that manner should be able to obtain it if they meet the required standards laid down today.

I think the approach which we are following at present of working among the natives through the mission stations is the right one. The missions not only carry out their great welfare work among the natives, but also give them citizenship training which is so very desirable and which stands them in such good stead later on in life.

Another aspect to which attention should be paid is the training of natives for suitable employment and the need to find them suitable employment. They should be encouraged to mix freely, and above all encouraged to be clean. There is no doubt in my mind that one of the objectionable features of the native today, if that is the right term to use, is his lack of hygiene. Any person, irrespective of the colour of his skin, is acceptable in almost any home if he is clean; if he is not clean, no matter what

his colour, he is not acceptable. Therefore, the great problem today revolves very largely around the standard of hygiene.

At this stage every possible encouragement should be given to the Christian missions to reach further out and to get in touch with natives who today are on the outskirts of civilisation. Because of the welfare work which they undertake and the training which they impart to the natives, they would be the most desirable first contacts with the natives, although there are not many natives in Western Australia who have not at some time come into contact with white people. That is because of the parties which go out in search of minerals. Most of these parties report that the natives require both medical and food assistance.

A study and research should be made of the natives as a people with a view to learning their natural and racial talents. Most races have particular talents and gifts which, if developed, make them leaders in particular fields of learning. These people would no doubt be leaders in their particular field; therefore more research and study could be given of the natives than is undertaken today.

Turning to the Bill, the point which concerns me most is the approach to the granting of citizenship. I see no difference in the methods of granting full citizenship in this Bill and in the legislation which already exists. Today the native is rewarded by the granting of a citizenship certificate. Under this measure we penalise him. I would say that nothing could be more calculated to destroy the self-respect and self-confidence of aborigines than a declaration that a native is deprived of citizenship.

Most of the natives who today have not been granted citizenship rights will be the first in line to be declared as natives; therefore nothing will be achieved because virtually the same number of citizens and natives will result, except that under this Bill they will be declared natives. Then there are the small groups of natives to be considered, like those who have refrained from seeking citizenship because of the implications. Some are not prepared to accept the responsibility; others say they are not prepared to lay themselves open to the many requests made of citizenship holders, such as the obtaining of liquor for those without citizenship.

To sum up, I would say that the flowery speech made by the Minister when he introduced the Bill in which he told us about the Utopia for the aborigines which the Bill proposes, completely fades into oblivion on close scrutiny of the Bill. I have no hesitation at this stage in opposing the measure.

On motion by Mr. Lapham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 10th September, 1958.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Presentation.

The PRESIDENT: I desire to announce that, accompanied by several members, I waited on His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator and presented the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech, agreed to by the House. His Excellency has been pleased to make the following reply:—

Mr. President and hon. members of the Legislative Council: I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament.