

but nevertheless I shall miss him greatly, and I join in the message of condolence to the late hon. member's relatives.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [4.53]: I join with other members in expressing my profound sorrow and regret at the death of our dear and esteemed friend, Vernon Hamersley. I cannot talk on a subject of this kind, but, on behalf of my two colleagues, I wish it to be known that we join with other members in expressing our deepest sorrow and sympathy to the members of his family.

The PRESIDENT: On an occasion such as this, words are a poor substitute to convey one's sentiment towards a full-sized man such as was the late Mr. Vernon Hamersley. For over 34 years I was associated continuously in this House with the late hon. gentleman. All I have to say in that regard is that he was all that a good parliamentarian ought to be. We have this consolation, as have also his sorrowing relatives, that he had lived his allotted span and more, and that he died in harness, as I am sure he would have wished to do when he responded to the call we must all answer. He was everything that a good father, a good husband and a good citizen ought to be. I am sure that when people come to look back in retrospect on his life, they will be satisfied that he did not live in vain, however much we may miss him. The question will be put in the usual manner.

Question put and passed; members standing.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): As a mark of respect to our late colleague, Mr. Hamersley, I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 24th October, 1946.

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

QUESTIONS.

DRUNKEN DRIVERS.

As to Taking Fingerprints on Arrest.

Mr. **DONEY** asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary: Is there a regulation drawn under the Police Act or any other Act which permits a constable to arrest a person for alleged drunken driving and, thereafter, to take that person's fingerprints before the trying of the case before a Magistrate's Court?

The **PREMIER** replied: Yes.

NOXIOUS WEEDS.

As to Experiments for Eradication.

Mr. **BRAND** asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, In a Press report of the field day activities at Merredin Research Station, it was stated that complete success had been obtained in eradicating heavily growing double-gees from an experimental plot. Could he say what method was used in this experiment?

2, What was the result of experiments made with sprays as a means of eradicating Rapistrum weed at Nangetty Station?

3, As a result of the experiment, was it possible to assess the cost per acre of using such sprays?

The **MINISTER** replied:

1, A commercial chemical spray "Dinoc," has proved very effective in destroying

double-gees in the early growing stages. The spray is applied at the rate of two gallons per acre in 200 gallons of water, the solution costing 30s. per acre.

2, "Methoxone" has given outstanding results in the destruction of cruciferous weeds such as Rapistrum, but this material is not yet available commercially in Australia. "Dinoc" has given encouraging results, but experiments are incomplete.

3, Indications are that the cost would approximate £1 per acre for chemical sprays.

COAL DEPOSITS, ERADU AND IRWIN.

As to Progress of Tests.

Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Is the work being done by Mr. Higgins at Eradu coal deposit area still proceeding?

2, If so, what depth has been reached?

3, Has the method of using cylinders proved successful in coping with the flow of water which has been the problem of past endeavours to obtain necessary information?

4, Is the work of boring still proceeding at Irwin deposit area?

5, If not, why was the work discontinued?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Latest advice was to the effect that the hole was down approximately 60 feet. The Assistant State Mining Engineer is at the moment inspecting operations and will report on his return to Perth.

3, This method will not be tested until the heavy flow of water is actually reached. This has not yet occurred.

4, No boring was done at Irwin. The work done comprised 180 feet tunnelling, testing of an old shaft and sampling.

5, Results indicated inferior coal not satisfactory for railway purposes.

COUNTRY HOSPITALS.

As to Number Closed and Staff Shortage.

Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Health:

1, How many country hospitals are at present closed down—(a) because of staff difficulties; (b) for any other causes?

2, What percentage of country hospitals is working on reduced staff?

3, Has the new Nurses' Award had the desired effect of increasing the number of applicants to be trained as nurses?

4, Are training facilities sufficient to absorb all applicants at present applying?

The MINISTER replied:

1, (a) Two; but others are carrying on only by rosters of resident married nurses.

(b) Nil.

2, Approximately 95 per cent.

3, Uncertain, as other factors are involved.

4, Yes.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, Bulk Handling Act Amendment.

2, Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment (No. 2.)

3, State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment.

4, Electoral (War Time) Act Amendment.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

MR. OWEN (Swan) [4.36]: As has been explained by the Minister, the purpose of the Bill is to amend the Act to provide for a compulsory foliage baiting scheme in furtherance of the attempt to control fruit-fly. Anyone who has attempted to grow fruit in a fruit-fly infested area will be familiar with the ravages caused by this pest. Possibly many members of this Chamber who have fruit trees in their back-yard have watched the fruit set and develop to maturity, and having then found fruit infested with the larvae of fruit-fly, have

felt disgusted with the pest. Many people are not familiar with the manner in which fruit becomes infested but are of opinion that the pest comes there by spontaneous generation. For the information of the House, I may mention that the fruit-fly itself is equipped with a sharp ovipositor which can puncture the skin of the fruit and enable the female to lay her eggs beneath the skin where they would be unnoticed by the average person until they hatch and develop into maggots. Quite a lot of research work has been done with a view to discovering the most effective method of combating the fruit-fly and the best way in conjunction with orchard sanitation is considered to be by baiting the foliage of the trees so that the fly will partake of the bait and be poisoned. After the fly has emerged as a fully-developed insect, its chief purpose seems to be to feed for a number of days before mating and commencing the egg-laying cycle and, during those first few days when the fly is looking for food, it readily partakes of the poisoned bait. The best poison has been found to be sodium fluosilicate.

If the Bill becomes law, the proposal is that instead of growers doing their own baiting, it will be done under a community compulsory scheme. In commercial fruit-growing when adequate control methods are adopted the actual value of the fruit lost by the ravages of the fruit-fly is comparatively small, but the work involved to the fruitgrower and the loss of reputation suffered if his fruit is found to be infested with the fly, may be considerable. The effect of marketing infested fruit is to lower the price to depression level for the fruit of that grower, or even for fruit from that district. The Minister explained what happened several years ago when the Governments of Colombo and the East Indies, in their desire to exclude fruit-fly from their areas, placed embargoes on the importation of our fruit. Fortunately those embargoes were overcome, although it was stipulated that before fruit was actually taken into those countries it had to be cool-stored for a specific time at low temperatures. Fruit-fly has also a rather bad effect in the interstate market. I might mention that South Australia in particular is absolutely free from fruit-fly and quite severe steps are taken there to see that fruit from fruit-fly infested areas in Western Australia are not distributed in that State.

Just recently a citrus grower in the Chiltering district had an opportunity to dispose of 10 tons of Seville oranges in Melbourne at £25 per ton but because of the uncertainty of the shipping position he proposed to send the fruit by rail. Of course, it had to pass through South Australia. The regulations of the South Australian Department of Agriculture will allow fruit to go only by the northern route through South Australia so that it does not come in contact with any of the fruitgrowing areas. It is also stipulated that such fruit must be kept in a sealed truck during its journey throughout the State. Furthermore, the authorities will not allow any fruit at all to pass through the State unless it comes from a fruit-fly free area—that is, from an area where fruit-fly has not been reported within three years within a radius of 50 miles. They are rather jealous of the fact that they have no fruit-fly in South Australia and take all necessary precautions to keep it out; and after all we cannot blame them. On the local market, fruit-fly infested fruit or fruit which is from a fruit-fly infested district is not allowed to be transported to the southern parts of the State. This imposes some hardship not only on the consumers in those southern parts but also on the growers of the fruit in the district of origin.

The compulsory baiting scheme is to some extent still in an experimental stage. At various times in the past community baiting schemes were established in four districts but they were necessarily of a voluntary character, and although quite good work was done in controlling the fly in those areas, unfortunately, because of lack of support by the growers, it was not possible to continue the schemes long enough to obtain a true picture of their efficacy. I feel, however, that with a compulsory baiting scheme in which all commercial orchardists, and backyard orchardists in any prescribed area who have any trees at all, must participate, and contribute to the cost, there is a good chance that the control of the pest will be tightened up quite a lot. It is not expected that all fruit-fly infested districts will rush the opportunity to try out this scheme. I feel that some areas will be opposed to it; but I consider that others in the near metropolitan area will be only too willing to give it a trial, and from the experience so gained some indication will

be obtained as to whether it is worth while extending the plan to other districts.

I consider that the 60 per cent. majority it is necessary to have before a scheme can be introduced in a district is only right; because, as the Minister explained, if only a bare 51 per cent. were required, it would be almost an even go and there might be quite a lot of feeling against the scheme. The previous voluntary schemes fell down because the growers did not support them as they could have done. I think that in the 1931-32 experiment in the Armadale and Gosnells district, the bait used was arsenate of lead in conjunction with molasses and water; but that was not nearly as effective as the present baiting methods. On the score of economy in those areas, only one tree in seven was sprayed so if, as reported, those schemes were barely successful, in view of the circumstances I feel that a compulsory scheme with present-day methods will be very effective.

I can visualise some difficulties in carrying out a compulsory baiting scheme in some districts. Where a district is closely settled and there is not much time lost in travelling between orchards, there is every possibility that the charge of 3s. an acre will adequately cover the cost. But in some areas, where the orchards are fairly scattered, I think that the time lost in travelling between them will prove rather expensive and there may be some attempt—it will depend on the local committee administering the plan—at a partial scheme. I do not think that would be as effective as a full scheme; although it may be necessary, on the ground of economy, to try some partial scheme under which, instead of baiting all the trees throughout the fruiting period, where there are only an odd few—say loquat trees or apricot trees, among citrus trees—they would be left to be baited by the orchardist himself. There is also the question of the in-between seasons, when the stone fruit is finished and the citrus season has not started—there might be apple trees, pear trees and fig trees which are scattered amongst other trees, and the cost involved in baiting them might not be covered by the charges that are to be levied.

If the cost were 3s. per acre over the entire orchards concerned, it would be rather expensive on the orchardists, and if

the charge were $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per tree baited it would not cover the cost of sending a man out to bait half a dozen trees. The amount of 3s. an acre might sound infinitesimal until it is realised that, in order to give adequate protection to the fruit a tree must be sprayed or baited every six days during the period whilst the fruit is approaching maturity until it is mature on the tree. The average number of times a tree must be baited is ten, so the annual cost would be in the region of 30s. per acre. But even 30s. an acre does not sound much when compared with a return from the fruit of sometimes up to £100 an acre. However, the eradication of fruit fly is only one part of the campaign against pests. There are many fungal troubles and there are other insect pests that cause considerable damage. So the 3s. per acre per baiting will be seen to be only part of a considerable cost in the eradication of pests that has to be met by the fruitgrower.

The fruitgrowers of Western Australia are rather unique inasmuch as some years ago they asked the Government to tax them in order to provide inspectors to police the Plant Diseases Act in an attempt to control fruit-fly. As a result they now pay a tax of 2s. per acre for that purpose. If the Bill is incorporated in the Act an additional amount of 30s. per acre will have to be paid by growers in the infested areas so that their contribution towards the control of fruit-fly will be very heavy. I might mention that the fruitgrowers in the southern areas are quite happy at present to pay their 2s. per acre orchard registration fee so as to keep the fruit-fly in the areas north of, say, Donnybrook and Narrogin. They are to be commended for their attitude in voluntarily accepting that tax. But it would do much to further the control of fruit-fly and lessen the burden on the already heavily taxed orchardist if the Government could see its way clear to contributing towards the control of fruit-fly. If the Government could contribute to this compulsory baiting scheme on a pound for pound basis we would be sure to get a much better control of fruit-fly than at present, and there would be a far greater chance of eradicating it from the State.

This matter is really one of national concern because fruitgrowing is an industry which contributes much of its wealth to

allied industries such as the timber industry, in the purchase of fruit cases, and the railway and other transport organisations, for the transport of fruit, and it provides a lot of oversea credit in normal export times. In addition there is a danger of some of our newer industries suffering. Take, for instance, the growing of tomatoes. Although tomatoes have never been reported in this State as being infested with fruit-fly, it was reported from America that during an outbreak of fruit-fly in a portion of that country tomatoes, as well as many other sorts of fruit, were infested with the Mediterranean fruit-fly. The tomato industry in Geraldton has come into prominence because considerable quantities of tomatoes are exported to the other States and its welfare should not be jeopardised. There is the possibility, too, that the banana industry of Carnarvon, which has been brought up to its present stage after years of hard times, might be adversely affected if fruit-fly were allowed to continue as it is today. I earnestly suggest to the Government that it could do a lot to help the industry by contributing to the fund to allow of compulsory fruit-fly baiting.

As I mentioned before, some opposition has been raised. The Swan electorate, in which one of the main industries is that of fruit-growing, is in what is known as the dirty area; the fruit-fly infested area. In spite of the fact that the growers are adversely affected by the presence of the fly, some have raised opposition to a scheme of this nature. The growers, apparently acting on the principle that an Englishman's home is his castle, feel that a person's orchard is his private concern, and they do not look with favour on anyone coming into it and rushing round spraying the trees.

Mr. Fox: It would be all right if they could keep the fruit-fly in their orchards.

Mr. Thorn: And if you could keep it in your backyards.

Mr. OWEN: Most of the growers, however, know of the advantages to be gained by controlling fruit-fly, and a scheme of this nature if properly tried out would, I feel, soon prove its worth and so overcome that opposition. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.55]: This Bill provides for compulsory spraying, and it naturally has a saving clause which provides that a poll is to be taken of the growers. There must be a 60 per cent. poll in favour of the provision for spraying. I am glad that clause has been included because under the conditions of the Bill not too much spraying will be done.

The Minister for Lands: You are pessimistic.

Mr. THORN: Yes. I fully appreciate the curse of the fruit-fly and do not underestimate the trouble that it causes to the fruit crops. It also produces a very distasteful effect upon people when they find it in any fruit that they purchase. This scheme, at 3s. an acre, will be very costly.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is the maximum.

Mr. THORN: Yes. Unless we can enter into a scheme that is going to clean up the backyard orchards, this suggestion will not be fully effective.

Mr. Fox: Chop the trees out if the people will not keep them clean!

Mr. THORN: I am in favour of that. In the areas in close proximity to the Swan district, namely Bassendean, Guildford and Midland, people have gone in extensively for fruit trees in their backyards. Some grow as many as six and ten trees. We have had discussions in the House as to the distance that the fly travels. At one time the department went to the extent of marking flies in order to determine how far they travelled. The late Government Entomologist, Mr. Newman, claimed that the fly travelled only three or four miles. Well, I absolutely disagree with that, but I am only a novice in this matter. I claim that the fly, in suitable weather and with a good breeze, can travel much greater distances than three or four miles. I believe that the backyard orchards in the Guildford, Midland and Bassendean districts are supplying a lot of fly to the adjacent fruit-growing areas.

The Minister for Lands: They do enough damage at Leederville, anyway.

Mr. THORN: Yes. Most backyard orchards have what we call carrying on trees. They start off with an early peach and might have a late peach and other varieties that keep fruiting until the citrus fruits

come in. Those who have had experience of this vermin know that it is necessary to have different varieties of fruit trees carrying the fruit through the season to enable it to be present when the early fruits come on in the next season.

Mr. Withers: That is the real trouble.

Mr. THORN: Yes, and that is what we have to overcome. If the Bill made provision for close policing of the backyard orchards and endeavoured to clean out the vermin there, as in the commercial orchards, it would be doing a great deal of good. Another point I want to mention is that the bait used is fluosilicate and it is used in a preparation of sugar and water because it will only mix with sugar. It will not mix with treacle, honey, or any of those things. Sugar has to be used.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: And fruit juice.

Mr. THORN: That is the attraction of the bait. The method is to go through the orchard, or the backyard, and put one or two dabs on the foliage of each tree or vine. But under the Health Act the use of fluosilicate on wine grapes, or any others used for commercial consumption is not allowed. That is a point that will have to be overcome. Whether the fruit-fly attacks wine grapes, or not, the growers are instructed not to spray them, otherwise they cannot be manufactured into wine.

The Minister for Lands: It should give the wine a bit of "kick".

Mr. THORN: Yes, but it is against the Health Act. The member for Swan mentioned spraying every six days. First of all growers pay the registration fee of 2s. per acre for the inspection to be carried out, and now they are being asked to pay 3s. per acre for the spraying of the trees.

Mr. Withers: And very cheap, too.

Mr. THORN: On a 20-acre vineyard it would cost £3 for one spraying. As the work has to be carried out every six days it would cost £12 per month. The grape crop in the vineyard lasts from December until May, so provision would have to be made for six months' spraying.

Mr. Owen: But not of the whole orchard or vineyard.

Mr. THORN: No, but certain portions of it would have to be sprayed, so the system would have to be kept going. Taking it

right through, it will be fairly expensive, and when a poll of the growers is taken I am afraid it will be against the spraying.

Mr. J. Hegney: Could the growers themselves do the work more cheaply?

Mr. THORN: Yes, but the point is that they evade doing it. That is the idea of the compulsory spraying. Without reflecting on my grower friends, I say that particularly one section of them are quite dishonest in the matter. They boil up a few grapes and go to the extent of spraying the mixture on the trees, so that it will be seen there when the inspector comes round, but there is no fluosilicate or anything else in it, which means that it is useless. That is what they do.

Mr. J. Hegney: There is a black market in everything these days.

Mr. THORN: The idea of compulsory spraying is to ensure that the work is carried out effectively, but it will have to be left in the hands of the growers and I am afraid the polls will not favour it. The W.A. Fruitgrowers' Association—the apple and pear growers—are very keen on this measure, and I do not blame them, because at present their orchards are, practically speaking, clean, and they are going to do all they can to keep them clean. They are to be commended for that. I believe that, as they have the biggest representation on the Fruit Fly Council, they will naturally press for compulsory spraying.

Mr. McLarty: Do you think every tree should be sprayed?

Mr. THORN: That is a matter of opinion, but I do not think it essential that every tree be sprayed. However, if the bait is sprayed on to every tree it is there to deal with the flies that settle on those trees. I have often thought that if we were contented with border spraying, and border-sprayed every acre, that would be most effective, and it would greatly reduce the cost. If we border-sprayed every three or four acres in a vineyard I think that would be effective to a great extent.

Mr. J. Hegney: Is the fruit fly very prevalent in the grape-growing areas?

Mr. THORN: No, but owing to people not cleaning up their vines, in the case of the late export varieties, fruit fly was found fairly extensively in the areas concerned a few years ago. Such pests occur in cycles.

There is a bad year and then perhaps three or four years that are not so bad. Fruit fly infestation runs in cycles, just as is the case with any other pest.

Mr. McLarty: What has been the effect of two wet winters consecutively?

Mr. THORN: Over the last year or two the fly has not been very bad in the Swan district. I and my fellow growers have marketed the peach crop without finding a sign of the fly, but I believe the regulations and the compulsory baiting have done a tremendous amount of good in that district. The extra number of inspectors put on and the regular inspections carried out have gone a long way towards cleaning up the pest. I am confident that the Swan district today is much cleaner than it was before the Act was amended to provide for extra inspectors and extra inspections. It is essential to force every grower to pick up his fallen fruit and destroy it. If one picks up a piece of fruit that has fallen to the ground, and cuts it open, three or four maggots are found in it. In no time those maggots go into the ground and germinate into flies again. The regulations specify that such fruit must be burned or boiled, and those methods kill millions of the pest.

I am pleased to see that the Royal Commission made certain recommendations in this matter, on which I think the department is probably acting. That is the position, as I see it. Naturally the apple and pear growers are pushing this matter as hard as they can, because they will not have to pay the spraying costs. They are paying registration fees but will not come under this measure, because there is no fly found in those areas. When the growers concerned work out the cost of the spraying I do not think there will be many polls in favour of it. A grower can spray his own orchard more cheaply than it can be done under this system, but the point is that the provision would have to be policed all the time to see that the work was carried out.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It would be difficult to police.

Mr. THORN: That is so.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is like the trapping of rabbits.

Mr. THORN: The extra inspectors that have been put on are interested in their districts and are paying close attention to the

matter, but the areas are too big for them to carry out the work properly. Although we need more inspectors, those that are on the job are doing their work well and conscientiously and are endeavouring to eradicate this unpleasant pest. I support the second reading of the Bill. The whole idea behind the recommendations of the Fruit Fly Council is its desire to see the pest kept down and the spraying carried out. I think the only sure method of having the work done is by a system of compulsory spraying, but I do not think it will be too successful at the polls.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [5.10]: I support the second reading. During the sittings of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the eradication of vermin, evidence was taken from a number of fruitgrowers, and some of those located close to the metropolitan area strongly favoured legislation providing for compulsory baiting of fruit trees. The commission recommended that compulsory baiting should be carried out within a radius of 100 miles of the Perth G.P.O. and that this should be done under a five-year plan. According to the evidence tendered to the commission, witnesses believed that if such a scheme were put into operation, there would be a very good chance of completely eradicating the fruit fly.

The commission was convinced that people having a few fruit trees in their backyards were a menace to the industry. Unquestionably some of those people make no effort at all to eradicate the fruit fly, and, unless a scheme for compulsory spraying is adopted, I do not think such people will ever be satisfactorily dealt with. I favour compulsory spraying. The proposed charge of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per tree for backyard orchards is very reasonable indeed and I do not think any objection can be taken to it. The member for Toodyay pointed out that the charge of 3s. per acre for commercial orchards might prove to be very expensive.

The Minister for Lands: How many peach trees would there be to the acre?

Mr. McLARTY: In a citrus orchard there would be about 80 trees to the acre. The member for Swan would be able to give the Minister more definite information. A question arises whether it is necessary to spray every tree in an orchard. From the

evidence given to the Royal Commission, we gathered that the spraying of every tree was not necessary and that it would be sufficient if a certain number of the trees were sprayed. If this is so, I wonder whether there is any need to impose the charge of 3s. per acre, though admittedly that is to be the maximum charge. The Bill has been asked for by the commercial orchardists, who are the people making a living from the industry, and their views should receive consideration.

MR. HILL (Albany) [5.13]: As a commercial apple and pear grower, I wholeheartedly support the second reading. The members for Swan and Toodyay are also fruitgrowers and to them the fruit fly is very familiar. I am very pleased to say that I am not familiar with fruit fly and, further, that I do not want to become familiar with it. The fruitgrowing industry is a very valuable one to the State. Present indications are that we shall have a record crop during the coming season. Should we experience a reasonably wet summer, the crop may amount to $2\frac{1}{2}$ million cases of apples and pears. This industry pays out a larger percentage of its gross returns to other industries than does any other agricultural pursuit. If shipping and cases were available, the cost this year of providing cases for our apples and pears would be close on £150,000.

The existence of the apple and pear industry is threatened by the fruit fly, which is one of the worst orchard pests that is known. British naval strategy aims first at keeping the enemy in his own ports or, if he comes out, sending him to the bottom. The fruitgrowers' strategy is to keep the fruit fly in the infected areas and, with a view to carrying out that policy, it has been made unlawful to send fruit from the metropolitan area to the southern end of the State. Unfortunately, to police this law is impossible. A motorear when passing through the Swan electorate might pick up a parcel of fruit and, on reaching Donnybrook or Mt. Barker, the occupants of the car might throw out some of the fruit and, in consequence, orchards in those districts would run a grave risk of becoming infected.

For this reason the fight against the fruit fly must be waged in the orchards around

the metropolitan area. To provide funds to carry on this fight, growers of apples and pears have voluntarily taxed themselves. I disagree with one remark made by the member for Murray-Wellington. We have discussed the fruit fly problem at our executive meetings and I am afraid that the eradication of the pest is impossible. I understand that in one of the States of America, fruit fly was eradicated, but at a cost of £2,000,000. All we can aim at is control, and we want to make the control as effective as possible.

Some of the talk about spraying is inaccurate. When I spray my trees, I use a 2 h.p. engine and wet and cover every part of each tree, at a pressure of 200 or 300 lbs. per square inch. This method, however, is more correctly described as baiting. The idea is to go around with a hand spray and lodge the bait on the tree with a view to poisoning the fruit fly in that manner. I not only support the Bill, but also appeal to members to assist fruitgrowers in every possible way to control this very troublesome and expensive pest.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—LAND ALIENATION RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.20] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to continue for a further year the operations of the Land Alienation Restriction Act, which expires at the end of the year. It will be remembered that in 1944 the Leader of the Opposition introduced a Bill which imposed restrictions on the alienation or transfer of land under the control of the Crown. The Bill, with certain amendments, was accepted by the Government and passed. The Act gave legal force to what really was being done to a very large extent by the Lands Department; that is, the department was refusing to alienate

land which was suitable for the purpose of returned soldier settlement. The effect was that those lands were held for the purpose for which the Bill was introduced.

In view of the difficulty being experienced at the moment in obtaining sufficient sheep and wheat lands for soldier settlement at a suitable price, we believe, as a Government, that it would be in the interests of the scheme to continue this Act for another year. It is obvious that however much a departmental officer or the Minister may desire to discharge a function of this kind, it is much easier to do so if he is backed up by statute. He can simply say, "There is the law, and that is all there is about it." I do not consider it necessary to make a long speech. We have found the Act to be an essential piece of legislation as the Leader of the Opposition introduced it, and we are anxious to continue it for a further 12 months in the interests of soldier settlement. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE HOUSING.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 64 had been agreed to.

Clauses 65 to 68—agreed to.

Clause 69—Community facilities:

Mr. McDONALD: I have some amendments on the notice paper, in form similar to amendments which I moved in relation to Clause 21. Those amendments were not acceptable to the Committee. Nevertheless, I would move them again, were it not for the fact that the Premier has been good enough to show me a form of amendment which I understand he has in contemplation himself. May I ask if that is so?

The Premier: Yes, it is.

Mr. McDONALD: The Premier's amendment goes some distance towards affording a landowner the protection which I think this measure should give, but I consider I should move my amendment.

The Premier: I would debate it, but would not agree to it. I could give the hon. member adequate reasons why, too.

Mr. McDONALD: I can probably guess the reasons the Premier would give. Unless some provision is made for notice, legal difficulties might arise. The Premier's amendment will, I understand, do something towards meeting the desire which I have in putting my amendments on the notice paper. In the circumstances, I will not move my amendment, but will await the amendment the Premier suggests.

The PREMIER: In commenting generally on this clause and on the principles of notice and appeal, I can see many weaknesses and many disabilities likely to arise if the amendment of the member for West Perth were agreed to. I explained last evening that if it were decided to resume land, the course to be followed would be to consult with the local authority and take steps in conformity with the provisions of the Town Planning Act. We would have the knowledge and assistance of the Town Planning Board in re-designing and re-subdividing any area so resumed. I fear that there might be malpractice, which has taken place in the past; we might find that a fictitious value has been put on the land because of options that had been given to persons over it for all sorts of weird purposes not valid at all. Sales would take place to give added values in certain instances and the Crown and the community would therefore be prejudiced because of the false position then obtaining.

But in regard to the appeal side, I listened very attentively to the arguments presented by members last night, and, although I could not agree to the clause suggested by the member for West Perth, nor entirely with the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I do not wish in any way to be unfair in regard to giving a person the right to challenge the commission insofar as his legitimate claims to ownership of that area and its retention are concerned. Being anxious to overcome that position, I have prepared an amendment which will cover the cases likely to arise in the future, and which will give any appellant a fair hearing and, indeed, the right to retain his property if he can prove his case. The first part of the amendment, down to paragraph (c), deals with the case of a person who has knowledge of the resump-

tion and may appeal against it prior to its taking place. The next part deals with the position after the land has been acquired and is awaiting transfer to the Crown. I would point out that in the second case there are three months between the notice of resumption and the issue of a title, so there will be no difficulty in a likely appellant's being able to have his case considered in those circumstances. I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be added as follows:—

(2) (a) Subject to paragraph (d) of this subsection, any owner, at law or in equity, of land sought to be compulsorily acquired by the Commission under the provisions of this section may, within the time and in the manner prescribed, appeal to the Minister against such acquisition on the grounds that the land so compulsorily acquired—

(i) is being used by the appellant as his principal place of residence; or

(ii) is intended by the appellant to be used as his principal place of residence and that he owns no other land suitable for such purpose; or

(iii) is intended by the appellant to be used as the principal place of residence of his child or of a near relative mainly dependent on him, and that neither the child nor near dependent relative, as the case may be, owns any other land suitable for such purpose.

(b) The Minister may in his discretion allow or dismiss such appeal either wholly or in part and subject to such terms and conditions (if any) as he thinks fit and, subject to the next succeeding paragraph, effect shall be given to his decision according to its tenor.

(c) Within the time and in the manner prescribed by rules of court, any appellant who feels aggrieved by the decision of the Minister may appeal to a Judge of the Supreme Court against such decision, and the Judge, after hearing the case for the appellant and the case for the Commission, and after considering public and community interests, may allow or dismiss such appeal either wholly or in part, and may impose such terms and conditions (if any) as the Judge thinks fit, and the decision of the Judge shall be final and conclusive.

(d) Where—

(i) the Commission has prepared plans for the subdivision of the land within any area,

(ii) such plans have been approved by the Town Planning Board constituted under the Town Planning and Development Act, 1928, and

(iii) the Commission has compulsorily acquired such land for the purposes of this Act—

then no owner of land within such area shall have any right of appeal against such acquisition, but the Commission shall make available to any such owner who, within the time and in the manner prescribed, applies for a house within such area, a suitable block under and subject to the provisions of this Act.

I have endeavoured to have that amendment designed to meet all the circumstances which are likely to be encountered by owners requiring land for their own use or for the use of a son or other near relative dependent upon them. It is designed to give such people an opportunity to appeal against resumption if they have no other land they intend to use for such purposes. In all cases where the present board has bought in large areas and in a wholesale way blocks in outer-suburban districts, there have been instances of owners, upon receiving notice, having stated that they do not desire to have their land resumed, and in every instance where a person has been able to show that it was his intention to build upon such land, either for himself or for someone else, the board has made the necessary adjustments and the person has had the right, if the area subdivided has met the requirements of the Town Planning Act, or if it has been satisfactorily re-subdivided, if not previously subdivided in accordance with the Act, to have an area allotted to him of equal value to the one resumed. However, it is certain that the members of the board cannot live for ever, and cannot remain in office for all time. Those members have administered the Act sympathetically, fairly and decently, but it is wise, I think, as was suggested by members opposite, to provide against the possibility of future harshness in administration.

Mr. McDONALD: The Premier has gone some distance towards meeting the point I raised yesterday. In principle no person, corporation or Government instrumentality, however wise or well-meaning, should at any time have the last word in dealing with other people's lives or property. I welcome the amendment because it does afford some protection. It gives the home owner a chance to get the view of some other person as to whether or not his land shall be taken. But the amendment does not go far enough. The most important

case would probably be that of a home-owner whose land was sought to be taken compulsorily. I am prepared to believe, however, that there may be men—not many—who have land which they desire to use for commercial, manufacturing or even primary producing purposes. Such land might be something that the owner had built up for 20 or 30 years and might represent his life work, and it is possible that it might have such features that it could not be replaced. In these circumstances I think it is fair to have the views of the commission, acting no doubt in the very best of faith, on the matter of public or community interest weighed up on the one side and the position of the land-owner weighed up on the other by some competent impartial tribunal. In order to meet such a case, I move—

That the amendment be amended by adding a paragraph to propose new Subsection (2) (a) as follows:—“(iv) is being used for commercial or manufacturing purposes or for primary production, and its acquisition would impose great hardship on the owner.”

The first three paragraphs deal with the home-owner who is given a certain amount of protection. My amendment deals with a man who owns land used for commercial, manufacturing or primary producing purposes. He would only get protection if he could satisfy the tribunal concerned that the acquisition of his land would impose great hardship on him. This would not weaken the reasonable powers of the commission and might be a safeguard worthy of inclusion.

The PREMIER: I cannot agree to the amendment in its present form. I can see what the hon. member is endeavouring to cover, but it is obvious that if the clause were made as wide as he suggests it would be possible for a whole plan of a subdivision of a suburban area to be affected because great hardship was imposed on the owner of a certain area. I do not hesitate to agree that consideration should be given to the position of such persons, but hardship can be so readily and easily established that we should provide that such a person should be allocated an area equivalent in value, and suitably situated elsewhere. It might even be beneficial to him to get away from a district designed for residential purposes. I would be quite prepared to discuss with the

member for West Perth the point that he is endeavouring to make, but his amendment leaves the position so wide as to be dangerous. If the hon. member will agree to what I have suggested I will assure him that I will discuss the matter with him.

Mr. McDONALD: I accept the invitation of the Premier to discuss the matter. I am the last person to say that any subdivision should be held up by the selfish attitude of some land-owner, and I am prepared to have anything in the Act that will prevent a community scheme, or one of public interest, being held up by the selfishness of any individual. But under the amendment of the Premier the tribunal would not only take into account great hardship in the case I mentioned, but would also weigh the considerations of public and community interests. In the example instanced by the Premier the matter of public or community interest might outweigh the considerations of personal hardship. The Premier's suggestion that an amendment might be drawn under which if a man's land is taken in the circumstances I mentioned some compensating provision should be made in the way of an alternative site, might be feasible. With the consent of the Committee, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment on the amendment for the purpose of discussing it with the Premier.

Amendment on amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

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

Clauses 70 to 75—agreed to.

Clause 76—Protection of Board and officers from personal liability:

Mr. McDONALD: I have an amendment on the notice paper, the object of which was to strike out lines 24, 25 and 26, which contain the provision restricting any right of action against the commission to actions brought within six months. I previously explained my view, that the public should have exactly the same right of action against the commission as it has against the public. The public have no protection through a six months' limitation to action. I do not propose to move the amendment as it appears

on the notice paper. However, I move an amendment—

That in line 24 the word "six" be struck out and the word "twelve" inserted in lieu.

That is not quite what I desire, but it will improve the present provision by bringing the term into line with that prescribed in the existing Crown Suits Act, which imposes a 12 months' limitation in the case of actions brought against the Crown under that Act.

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

Clause 77, Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [5.55]: I think members generally will accept my view that this Bill deals with the costliest and most spectacular public works project ever foreshadowed by legislation in this State. If that project is pursued with vigour—as I have no doubt it will be—and with that sound judgment which seems always to apply to Mr. Dumas' planning and execution, and certainly with scrupulous regard for fair play in assessment charges, I then foresee that it may be not only the costliest but also the wisest project. That is to say, that it may secure such heavy increases in primary production as will benefit both the people and the Treasury, and bring to trade generally in this State that same stimulus and prosperity that have characterised the introduction of similar schemes, particularly in Victoria, in South Australia and in at least one of the other States of the Commonwealth.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is a statesmanlike utterance, and I am pleased to hear it.

Mr. DONEY: Another result that is quite likely to accrue—though it will be many years before we are able to judge whether it has or has not accrued—is that there may be a large increase in population such as was mentioned by the Minister, during the course of his remarks on the second reading, a week ago. We must not, how-

ever, delude ourselves that a scheme, designed to bring water to something like 60,000 people, and to the stock running on 12,000,000 acres of land, and which must stand up to the water needs of double and perhaps treble that number, will be without its share of trouble, misunderstanding and opposition. I think members will agree that that is indeed the fate of all big schemes of this kind. I hope it is thoroughly understood that every prospective beneficiary under the scheme has the right to complain and criticise.

The Minister for Lands: They will assume that right whether they have it or not.

Mr. DONEY: If they assume it they have it. I see no distinction between the two. I am pointing out that criticism and opposition are the right of every person in any way connected with the scheme, and particularly of participants. I say also—the Minister for Lands might not agree with this—that it is only by opposition of this type, opposition wisely directed, that big schemes ultimately become suited to the needs of the people they are to serve.

The Minister for Lands: I agree with that.

Mr. DONEY: To add here and prune there, to re-shape again and again; all that, in cases such as this, is absolutely inevitable. Indeed, one might say it is only by a miracle that it could be otherwise, and I am hopeful that the Minister in charge of the Bill will look at the matter from the point of view that I have indicated. I, like my colleagues on my right, and one or two others around me, live in areas to be served by the proposed scheme. I know—and I am known by—the people of those areas, and I have the most painful recollections of the experiences of the inhabitants of Narrogin and other Great Southern towns and also of the people in the centres to the east and, I may add, north and south of the town I have named. During certain periods of drought, the people I am referring to on occasions had no more than the merest trickle of water for roughly half-an-hour a week—not half-an-hour a day. When even that trickle failed to materialise, members will understand that there must have been very substantial sufferings. Often, as I well know, even little babies could not be washed; the cooking troubles

of housewives were severe, and frequently sufficient water for a cup of tea was not available to families living in the higher parts of the town. Garden flowers and shrubs and lawns around most houses died; mine included.

I admit that the Country Water Supply Department on those occasions adopted every old and many new expedients in attempts to distribute fairly and evenly such water as it was possible to convey into the district from outside, but nevertheless the trouble was impossible of complete solution for the reason that the big central dams in that part of the State, with the sole exception of the Wellington dam, had gone dry. During the years I have been a member of this House, I have mentioned these matters many times, and I do so again on this occasion only so that those members who live in the city or at least away from the wheat belt might adopt during the currency of this discussion a more sympathetic rural outlook than is the habit with some of them. Members must understand that when I make reference to what happened in Narragin, precisely the same suffering or experiences would have been shared by the people of Katanning, Pingelly, Brookton and many of the towns eastward of the Great Southern. Farmers further east had some harrowing experiences, while their domestic woes were on a parity with those of the people in the towns.

A repetition of such experiences year after year ultimately prompted Great Southern members to submit to the Government an idea that those towns could be served—and for that matter saved—by means of a water scheme based on Mundaring. Admittedly—and I mention this for the information of the Minister in particular—our calculations did not at that time embody treatment of farming troubles by pipe-line methods. Anyhow, the Government did not take kindly to the proposal, as I believe it feared that if the Mundaring reservoir were too heavily drawn upon for country purposes, the people in the metropolitan area might go short. Still, the seed sown by the Great Southern members eventually bore fruit, to the extent that the Government, in which the member for Mt. Hawthorn was Minister in charge of country water supplies, formulated a scheme not altogether unlike the one before us. After the scheme had been

thoroughly investigated by competent engineers, however, it was found that the cost would be too great for the Treasury to shoulder and the whole idea was jettisoned.

Further dry seasons ensued, and it became apparent to Great Southern members and to the Government and for that matter to all thoughtful people that large expenditures of public money upon water schemes to cater for all the wheat belt needs were absolutely imperative if the Great Southern and north-eastern districts—the two big wheat growing districts—were not to fade out as worthwhile units in the general economy of the State. I think it appropriate to say that never before in my public life in this State or in other countries have I exercised my mind upon calculations, investigations, deputations, persuasions and the like to the extent I have on this vital question of providing a water supply for the Great Southern districts, vital and basic, not only in this country but in all countries. It seemed to me—and no doubt to my colleagues—particularly before the war, that life was just one long procession of speaking, thinking and reading always on this one subject—water supplies.

We used to think of this problem in terms of reservoirs and dams for the impounding of local rainwater; but the experience of this and other countries has shown that there can be no complete answer to the water supply problem in droughty districts by that means, for the reason that droughts empty the water storages and there are all the other troubles that ensue; that is to say, stock die, sheep in particular. It frequently takes three, four, five or more years to build up the flocks again, with proportionate losses to stock-raisers and to the public purse. This sort of thing taught everybody, I suppose, that it was impossible for people of the outback, and for that matter of the towns as well, to rely upon a fluctuating rainfall. There have been—I admit only on very rare occasions—variations as wide apart as around three inches for one year, and up to 30 inches in another. Therefore, to depend upon that very variable rainfall is only to look for failure. It became obvious to us and to anyone at all interested in the matter that the only way successfully to carry on dry farming and stock-raising was to use river water which otherwise would have rushed out to sea. At any rate, we now have the Bill before us and it would

appear, from what we read in the Press each day since the Minister introduced the Bill, that opinion throughout the country districts is rapidly taking shape.

There seem to be three points of view which, though not exactly discordant, certainly do clash a little, but which to my mind are nevertheless capable of being harmonised. To this end, those members who have examined the notice paper will have seen that some of my colleagues and I are submitting amendments. The points of view I refer to are these: The towns must have the Bill because they must have the water or fade out. Many farmers want the water and are prepared to pay a reasonable rate for it, while others do not want more water because they already have enough and therefore do not want to pay for what they do not want. The other point of view—or rather the statement of the Minister—is that unless both country and town dwellers will take and pay for the water, there will be no scheme at all.

I have already intimated that the task confronting members is that of reconciling the somewhat variable points of view. I think members should commence by recognising that farmers who have laid out some hundreds of pounds in order to secure for themselves an adequate water supply can hardly be expected to view with pleasure the idea of paying in future for water which they do not need; although, of course, it is always on the cards, as the Minister pointed out, that ultimately they might need it. I think the Minister has realised that that stand by some of the farmers is a reasonable one, because he has, without pressure having been exercised upon him, reduced the 5d. per acre rate to 3d. per acre in approved cases. That rebate—it is set out in the Bill—shall obtain for five years as from the commencement of the scheme. The Minister's recognition that these hardships do exist prompts me to hope that he may be coaxed by and by, when we get into Committee, to extend the term of five years to seven years, and also that in approved cases he might be prepared to reduce the 3d. rate to 2d.

Mr. Triat: You are an optimist.

Mr. DONEY: I do not mind admitting it, not that there is any need for optimism. I believe I shall be quite safe in relying upon the judgment of the Minister. He knows as well as I do—better than the member inter-

jecting does—how very real is the point I am submitting. I tell the truth when I say I believe I have reason for expecting that the Minister will come our way a trifle in this matter.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DONEY: Before tea I was suggesting to the Minister that there was need for certain rebates in rating in order to recompense those farmers who, at their own expense, have provided themselves with sufficient water. Following that up, I would point out that the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme and the projected comprehensive agricultural areas scheme now under discussion will, if this Bill be enacted, jointly operate under the Country Areas Water Supply Act. I find that the reconstructed rates for those pieces of territory that were hitherto served by the Goldfields scheme will now be 3d. and 2d. per acre in respect of 760,000 acres and 4d. and 5d., I think, for the remaining 637,000 acres. I believe it correct to say that those rates of 3d. and 2d. do not represent rates that were rebated because of expenditure by the farmers in those areas on water services, but are normal rates; and if that be so, I am sure the Minister will see the wisdom of not exacting any more than the 2d. rate in the case of those farmers I have referred to who are already fully supplied. I would draw the Minister's sympathetic attention to that matter.

I would like to suggest to members that despite what some seem to think, there is absolutely nothing whatever abnormal in this conflict of views in respect of big public works in the raw, as it were. So far as my experience goes, it has never been otherwise; and I do not think it can very well be otherwise. Certainly it has always been so in respect of the Eastern States schemes to which I have referred and, for that matter, certain rather well-known American schemes. Always, it seems to me, by means of rebates, concessions, discounts and the like, these differences have been ironed out, and I have no doubt that in the case under review they will be successfully ironed out. I am given to understand that the Dard-anup irrigation scheme, when it was first launched, aroused the bitterest opposition from those settlers whom the scheme was designed to benefit. But I understand that

now that same scheme has brought, I do not know about fortune but at least satisfactory incomes to the participants, there is no opposition to it whatever. I have no doubt that the member for Murray-Wellington will be able to inform the House that a similar state of affairs might be related with regard to the irrigation schemes in his part of the State.

Yesterday I submitted to the Minister without notice a question bearing upon those reticulations that are referred to sometimes as the ultimate reticulations at the point where the piping enters the property of the individual to be supplied. It was not possible for him then to give to me or to the House any information on that point with regard to the Great Southern section of the scheme. I know, of course, that it takes quite a deal of time to provide information of that type, and I merely express the hope that the information will be available to us before we enter upon the Committee stages. I fervently hope the scheme will be given a chance to demonstrate its value. I have faith in projects of this type. I think that the effectuation of this particular measure cannot fail to stimulate wheatbelt trade and production. It might be said of it, too, that it will bring population and prosperity to rural centres; and—I think this view was expressed by the Minister himself—it will bring wide expansion in the goldmining industry, and for that matter, too, it should have a highly beneficial effect upon this State's export trade.

Reverting again for a moment to the question to which I have just referred, I would point out to the Minister that members, unless they have that information, are not really sufficiently informed upon the number of farmers who are right on the scheme and cannot therefore escape rating, and the number who are over the prescribed distance from the scheme and will not come under the rating regulation. If we can have that information by the time we commence the Committee stages, so much the better for the discussion that will thereafter ensue.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [7.39]: When introducing this Bill, the Minister said it dealt with a huge undertaking, as also did the member for Williams-Narrogin in the

course of his remarks. I do not think anyone can seriously question the accuracy of that statement. In fact it is a Bill to authorise the commencement of the largest work that has been proposed in this House during the time I have been a member. It aims to provide people in towns situated along the Great Southern and other districts with water and to supply agricultural areas surrounding those towns. As was pointed out by the Minister, it also aims to provide water from Dalwallinu in the north to Borden in the south. In any remarks I may make, it would be presumptuous of me to go outside the confines of my own electorate, so that any remarks that I shall pass on the Bill will deal with the possible effects of the proposal within the boundaries of the Pingelly electorate.

No scheme that has been introduced into the House since I have been here has better illustrated the need for the appointment of a public works committee than does the present one. The work of such a committee would be to examine the scheme thoroughly and report to Parliament so that members would have before them the whole details before discussing it. We have no report of that nature at present. I admit that we have the report presented by the Minister and it is a painstaking and comprehensive one, and I compliment those responsible for drawing it up. There is a point in that report to which I shall refer, and on which I venture to say the whole scheme depends as far as it applies to the agricultural areas, and that is the economic point of view which has not been sufficiently dealt with. There is another reason why this scheme should have been referred to such an independent committee. When we were debating the motion dealing with the establishment of such a committee, the member for East Perth queried its advisability on the ground that it could not get any evidence other than that which existed in the Public Works Department.

We have had many schemes for water conservation in the southern parts of the State. For instance, there is the Pingelly scheme which is a hopeless failure. A few years ago a scheme was commenced at Narrogin by which a bituminous surface was laid down to enable the dam to supply the needs of the town. That has proved a failure because it does not give the necessary water. Just before the war commenced

a scheme for my own town, Pingelly, was investigated. I am a layman and not qualified to express an opinion on such matters so I said nothing about it, but few people could visualise that the proposal would be the means of supplying the needs of the town. Consequently I was pleased, from the public point of view, when the scheme was discontinued. I think it would have been another failure. These results justify me in saying that these matters should have been referred to an independent committee to deal with thoroughly and advise members on all aspects. The economic effect of this scheme has not been sufficiently gone into.

At the moment there is the usual clamour that arises when schemes such as this are brought forward. If a town has no water it will adopt any scheme regardless of its general effect. Of course the usual doubts arise in our minds as to whether the expenditure involved will be justified. That point was mentioned by the Minister in referring to the Goldfields water scheme, but I remind members that we have had failures in the past. Large sums of public money have been, if not wasted, at least unwisely spent. I need only refer to the Group Settlement and the soldier settlement schemes after the first World War. Those schemes were failures because they were not critically examined before being put into effect. The method of utilising the group settlement lands was revolutionised after further discoveries had been made.

I am pleased to note that an examination of the present proposals may yet take place because I understand that before the Commonwealth Government will consent to make a financial contribution to the scheme it will appoint a committee to visit the State and hear evidence from the people concerned. If the evidence leads the committee to believe that the scheme is a sound one then I have no doubt it will be recommended to the Commonwealth Government. That is the angle from which I wish to approach this subject. I am not opposing the scheme. As to the first part I am giving it every support I can, but as to the second part, I think it should not be adopted by Parliament until there has been this investigation. I hope to prove the justice of that attitude before concluding. The scheme is divided into two proposals, one to supply water to the towns along the Great Southern and in other areas—but again I am referring only to my own

electorate—and the other part to supply water to the agricultural districts.

During his speech the Minister said that there were two schemes which were complementary and that the installation of one would substantially benefit the other. That is the view I hold. There are two schemes and if we can put one into operation and later on the other is justified we can carry on with it. Doubts were thrown upon that idea recently when a statement was made, and subsequently denied by the Minister, that Mr. Dumas had told a conference that the people had to accept the whole scheme, or none.

The Minister for Works: Is the hon. member discussing the Bill now before the House?

Mr. SEWARD: We have two Bills, and I am following the lead of my colleague, the member for Williams-Narrogin, who discussed the scheme. I am not certain that it was correct, but the Speaker allowed the discussion and if it is not right I shall abide by the Speaker's ruling. I was under the impression that we would discuss the two Bills as one.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed. The two schemes are very much wrapped up in each other.

Mr. SEWARD: That is my reason for embarking on that line of debate. Mr. Dumas made that statement and, although it was denied for Mr. Dumas, the Minister subsequently verified that we had to accept the two schemes as a whole, or none. I want to deal with the question of the towns some of which, along the Great Southern, will not be able to continue without a water scheme.

Mr. Triat: The towns will not carry the scheme on their own.

Mr. SEWARD: I will deal with that point in a moment. The Minister described the Pingelly water as being fit only for the roughest domestic use, but it is not fit for that purpose. It cannot be used even for stock or gardens! The member for Williams-Narrogin has said that Narrogin must have a water scheme so, apparently, other towns along the Great Southern require a similar service. I support, as strongly as I can, the construction of a scheme, at the earliest possible moment, to serve these towns.

Mr. Cross: You will be highly delighted with this scheme, then.

Mr. SEWARD: Since I have been in the House we have endeavoured to have such a scheme established but our only hope seemed to be the utilisation of Mundaring Weir, and we were told that that was out of the question because the water there was required for the northern areas and the Goldfields. Therefore the only possible scheme for these towns seems to be to get water from the Wellington Dam. The Minister has told us that that is not possible, unless we have the whole scheme, and I want to deal with that aspect for a moment. I dispute that statement, and will give particulars of a scheme, put into operation in South Australia during the war years, which was practically on all fours with that which we are considering in relation to the Great Southern towns. The South Australian scheme was built by the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., and it had to service districts to the north of Adelaide and as far as Whyalla. The pipe line covered a distance of 223 miles.

If our scheme goes from the Wellington Dam to Narrogin and from Brookton to Tambellup, the distance involved will be 220 miles, so the schemes will be practically the same except that the volume of water to be supplied in South Australia was much greater. There the project had to supply 900,000,000 gallons per year to districts north of Adelaide and 1,200,000,000 gallons per year to Whyalla, whereas in this case the scheme has only to supply 351,860,000 gallons to the Great Southern, including an allowance for the extra population which it is estimated will have to be carried. In the South Australian scheme the total was 2,100,000,000 gallons, as against 351,940,000 gallons per year. The Adelaide scheme was estimated to cost £3,122,000, while the scheme here is estimated to cost £2,601,000. If South Australia could put in a scheme of that magnitude during the war—it was constructed between 1941 and 1943, the first pipe being laid in 1941 and the first of the water arriving at Whyalla through the pipes in 1943—what is to prevent this State undertaking a similar work now? In the financing of the South Australian scheme the Commonwealth Government paid £37,500 per year, and the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. £40,000 per year. I venture to say that if the urgency of our scheme is established—and I have not the slightest doubt it can

be—the Commonwealth Government will be as ready to give financial assistance here as it would be to the larger scheme, if it happened to be adopted.

Another feature of this proposal that does not fill me with confidence is that the water is to be pumped by means of electricity from the South-West power scheme. That project has not yet been started and it may be some considerable time before the work is completed. I was recently speaking to a local government officer from one of the areas concerned, and he expressed the opinion that it would be ten years before the water reached the town where he lived. If that is so, I do not know what we are to do in the meantime. To put in a scheme to serve these towns would, on the figures I have quoted, cost £2,700,000. I notice from a question recently asked in the Legislative Council that the South Fremantle power scheme is reputed to be going to cost £2,600,000. I do not think a Bill was introduced into this Parliament to sanction that expenditure and yet the work has been undertaken. If a work of that magnitude can be undertaken, without bringing it before this House, I see no reason why the scheme to which I refer could not be undertaken, apart altogether from the agricultural water scheme.

I strongly support the proposal to put this scheme into operation. I refer now to the proposal to take the water to the agricultural districts concerned. The proposal is to reticulate water from the Wellington Dam through the agricultural areas east of the Great Southern line and, to a small extent, on the western side. The question agitating my mind is whether the money involved could be spent in a different way to bring greater benefits to the agricultural community. The Minister said that the scheme when established would bring incalculable benefits to the farmers in the districts concerned. It is said that because water had to be transported in dry years we have to put the scheme into operation to enable those districts to carry on in future dry years, but I do not think that argument applies. I want to deal with the economic benefits of this scheme because if it cannot be justified on economic grounds, it cannot be justified at all. The Minister made the statement—

I think it can be said with every degree of justice that living on farms and even in country towns where reasonable water facili-

ties are not available has been responsible for the gradual growth of a strong disinclination on the part of many people to continue to live in the country.

I do not think that is quite correct. I admit that lack of water is a great hardship or disability, but I think that lack of decent housing and other amenities is to a greater degree responsible for the disinclination of people to live in country districts than is the alleged lack of water.

Mr. Cross: Did you say they are complaining of lack of housing?

Mr. SEWARD: If I may be allowed to proceed—

The Premier: You are quite capable of doing your own growling.

Mr. SEWARD: The Minister suggested that the scheme would bring into production much more country, and intensify present production, but I do not think that is so. It is not lack of water but lack of feed for stock during the summer that is the trouble in my district. Statistics will prove that, showing a cereal yield of about 11 bushels per acre, and a carrying capacity of one sheep to three acres. If this scheme will improve those figures, it will obviously be of benefit, but I do not think it will do so. It cannot be suggested that cereal crops will be irrigated from the scheme. The Minister said that it would increase the number of sheep by about 1,100,000, but I maintain that that will not be of benefit to the farming community in the southern part of the State. According to the Select Committee that went into the question about 18 months ago, the trouble is not that we have not enough sheep, but too many in the agricultural areas of the State. From now until December the Midland market will show consignments of from 20,000 to 30,000 sheep coming in, with the result that they are sacrificed at a few shillings per head. That is the trouble in the agricultural areas.

By far the greatest number of sheep today are held in the agricultural areas, with the result that there is no market for them when they are disposed of off shears. Consequently we must direct the sheep policy of this State more to fat lambs, with the greatest number of sheep being carried while there is plenty of feed and water during the winter months, and a minimum number during the dry summer months. If we cannot

justify this Bill on economic grounds we cannot justify it at all. Any member who travels through the agricultural districts knows that there are thousands of sheep in the paddocks which are sheep in name only, emaciated animals, in many cases. The poor quality of sheep held by farmers is largely due to the tactics of the Agricultural Bank and the stock firms in financing men not on the quality but on the number of them. The more sheep they hold the more finance they get. We must alter that practice in order to get them on the basis of having animals capable of producing more revenue. With only 75 per cent. of the present number of sheep but sufficient feed to carry them through the summer, the farmers would get a better return.

As I said earlier, it was alleged that there was a shortage of water in the southern parts of the State, and that this scheme was going to remove it. I do not think that is so. Unfortunately, where the shortage of water occurs is outside the area to be served by the scheme. In proof of that, I will give a few names of places where water has had to be transported during the past four or five years. In 1941, water had to be trucked to Lake Biddy, Lake Grace, Buniche, Beenong, Candlelight, Karlgarin, Moulyinning, and Pingelly. Pingelly is the only one of those places that comes within the confines of this scheme, and it was only sent there because there was no town water supply. None of the other places comes within the boundaries of the scheme. In 1942, water had to be trucked to Lake Grace, Lake Biddy, Buniche, Beenong, Kuender, Neendalling, Mablle, Moulyinning, Tarin Rock, Kukerin, Duggan, Pingrup, Karlgarin and Bullaring.

Mr. Withers: Where did you say that water came from? Was it from Katanning?

Mr. SEWARD: There is only one place out of that long list of names to be served by that scheme. It does not matter where it came from, from Northampton or Broome, only one of those places will be benefited by this scheme. It will still be necessary to cart water to these other places.

Mr. Withers: From where?

Mr. SEWARD: It would have to be transported.

Mr. Withers: Not from Albany, and other places like that.

Mr. SEWARD: In 1943, there was no trucking. In 1944, only one place, Bul-laring, out of the five places to which water had to be trucked came within the confines of this scheme. In 1945, there were three places out of ten, namely, Kondinin, Nar-rogin and Pingelly, to which water had to be carted and which come within the boundaries of the scheme. Therefore, the scheme is still going to leave these places with the prospect of carting water. No matter where it has to be carted, the farmer has to have water for his stock and the scheme is not going to relieve those localities that are outside its boundaries. The farmer who has to cart water for his stock is doomed from the start and cannot farm successfully. I am not going to say that even all the farmers within the boundaries of the scheme have an adequate water supply, but they could have if they had dams of sufficient size to carry water. Many of them have no dams—by far the greater number. When going through that area two years ago with the Minister for Works, we met a number of farmers who, at the end of one of the worst summers experienced, did not have to cart water, because they had water in their own dams.

I know of places where dams have carried water through the summer for many years, because they are roofed and looked after. Of course, we had the rainfall. I admit, as the Minister indicated, that our rain is not spread over many months, but falls in the midwinter months when the fall is fairly rapid, so there is not the slightest doubt that for nine out of ten years there will be an ample water supply to fill the dams and supply water for the properties without the cost involved in participation in this scheme. It is all very well to endeavour to knock a scheme down, but one has to put up something in its place. There is one paragraph in the report to which I have referred which is most extraordinary for such a well-drawn document as this. The reference is to rock catchments. Many of the districts to which I have referred have rock catchments in their areas, and those are the places from which farmers have drawn their supplies, and on which they have been dependent for many years in lieu of establishing dams on their properties. The paragraph in question is as follows:—

Regarding rock catchments, the original popular conception of their high run-off effi-

ciency has been exploded. Experience has shown that with light rainfalls the catchments do not run—in summer, because the rain evaporates straight off the hot rock; in winter, because the rain water is held in the innumerable small irregularities (or “dimples”) in the rock surface, or percolates underground through fissures and joint places in the rock itself. The incidence of the rainfall is the controlling factor, and unless the falls follow one another fairly rapidly, the catchments will not run.

That is a most extraordinary statement. I do not know where they got the idea from. I do not think there is the slightest doubt as to the value of these rock catchments. There are many of these in the eastern end of my electorate, and they are very fine undertakings. At one place, Holt Rock, I happened to be present while a tank was being built. During the night a shower of rain fell and I asked the foreman if the fall had been measured. He said it had not but that he estimated it at less than one point. Notwithstanding that small shower, the water was running three-quarters of an inch deep in the walls around the rock. On another occasion I visited the same locality and the tank was dry.

On the following Sunday, there were 60 points of rain, and the tank, which holds 500,000 gallons of water, was three-quarters full. These tanks provide a magnificent source of water supply. How the committee came to the conclusion it did, I do not know. It must have based its conclusion on the results of an inspection of some unsuitable rock catchment area. It is easy to speak against a scheme, but one has to put forward something to take its place.

Having pointed out that the rainfall is ample within the Pingelly portion of the scheme to fill dams, I maintain that the amount of money which is to be spent on the agricultural part of the scheme could be used in the building of houses and in the putting down of dams, and thus creating a better position for the farmers and making them more satisfied with their lot. I visited a house in the agricultural areas a few weeks ago, the roof of which would be 60ft. by 75ft. On the ten-inch rainfall this would provide 23,400 gallons of water in the year. There is represented a domestic supply straight away. The Minister in his estimate laid down as the requirement 300 gallons a day. That is a very liberal supply for a family. I was asking a farmer

member of another place what he thought about it, and he expressed the opinion it was twice as much as was necessary. Then there are the sheds and out-houses attached to a farm, and all these added to the homestead would be capable of catching 35,000 gallons a year, thus ensuring the domestic supply. If the scheme that has been adopted in Victoria were applied here, a supply would be available that would not be vulnerable in wartime. If we had large reservoirs established as set out in the Bill, they would be vulnerable. By having water supplies established throughout the country, they would be available at any time, whether we were at war or otherwise.

These are my views on the scheme. I give my support to that portion of the proposal which provides for giving a water supply to the towns, and I think, based on the South Australian experience, it should be quite possible to establish that scheme on its own without extending it to the agricultural areas. As to the agricultural areas, I do not say the scheme should not be extended to them. I am not egotistical enough to pit my views against those of the engineers, but I do say that we should have a very exhaustive inquiry into the economic effects. If this scheme is going to increase the productivity of our country and thus enable the farmers to bear the charges entailed by it, it will be all to the good. Members should not overlook the fact that the farmer will have heavy charges to bear. I think the Minister dealt with a 1,000-acre unit farm.

I understand that the Rural and Industries Bank Commissioners will not entertain the idea of financing a 1,000-acre farm unless it consists of the richest of land. I was talking to one of the commissioners recently and he laid it down that the minimum area should be 1,500 acres. To reticulate a 1,500-acre farm—I do not know just what size pipes would be used—would cost, I should say, £400 or £500. Then there would also be the yearly commitments for the water, and so the farmer would have to step-up his production greatly before he would be in a position to bear the extra liability. I hope that the committee appointed by the Commonwealth will examine the project exhaustively and take evidence from the people concerned, because they are the ones in a position to give the information. If those people favour

the scheme and consider that it should be carried into effect, I am certain that members who read the committee's report will be only too ready to support it.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [8.11]: At the outset I wish to remind the Minister and the House that, owing to the vast distances in our State and the differing conditions that occur therein, there is bound to arise a difference of opinion on matters not very important, yet sufficiently important to require consideration. From the northern end of my electorate to the electorate of Pingelly, the distance is as great as or even greater than that from Land's End to John O' Groats. In that area differing conditions prevail and those varying conditions demand different methods of treatment.

The member for Pingelly has told us that in the major portion of his electorate, he is concerned to obtain an adequate water supply principally for the towns, though there is one part of his electorate in which he desires to get a supply for the agricultural properties. I, on the other hand, am chiefly concerned about getting a water supply for the farmers and incidentally a supply for the townspeople. The conditions prevailing in my district are different from those existing in other parts of the State. Consequently, one member is asking for a water supply principally for the towns in his district; another, mainly for the fruit-growers in his district; and another, for the wheatgrowers in his district. Therefore we should bear in mind that we are not living in a small State and that the conditions differ greatly in the various areas.

A reference to the immensity of this scheme has been made by the member for Williams-Narrogin and the member for Pingelly. To me the project is immense, not because of the amount of finance involved, but because of the national benefit that will accrue from the provision of a reticulated water supply throughout the rural areas. When I first entered this House I said—and I now reiterate—that needs and not means must be the impelling force if we are to achieve anything. If we are going to permit our endeavours to be circumscribed by consideration for means, we shall remain as we have been for the last few hundred years and make money our god rather than give attention to the needs of our people. Un-

doubtedly it will be to the advantage of our national economy if a reticulated scheme is installed.

The Minister for Justice: What will be physically possible will be financially possible.

Mr. LESLIE: That naturally follows. I am concerned at the trend of events in our agricultural districts, and that is why I welcome this action on the part of the Government to provide a reticulated water scheme in the agricultural areas. I refer the House to the publications by the Government Statistician that appeared in "The West Australian" on the 12th and 18th October of this year. One is headed "Livestock in Western Australia; decline in 1945-46." The other is headed "Land used in Western Australia; analysis of acreage under crop." To anyone interested in the future of this State, I say that those statistics make very sorry reading and may well cause one to wonder where we are heading. I feel concerned because of the value of water for stock purposes in my district. Under the item dealing with livestock in Western Australia appeared the following:—

Whereas in 1944-45 the number of sheep in the State totalled 10,049,587, in 1945-46 it had declined to 9,765,983.

A similar decline has occurred in the numbers of other stock. But there is one saving feature—and one only—namely, that the number of breeding ewes has increased. So there is one ray of hope; we are not definitely on the downward road. There is apparently one avenue by which we may save this major industry from falling into a definite decline.

Because of conditions that prevailed some years ago, the State Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, rightly or wrongly decided to apply a change of policy to certain districts of this State. One of those districts was the northern portion of my electorate. The Government decided that wheatgrowing in that area must be curtailed and, instead, it was to become a stockraising area, and today it is known as the north-eastern stockraising area. I was particularly interested when the Minister spoke of bringing a water supply to those areas. On page 17 of the report men-

tioned by the Minister when introducing the Bill, the following statement appears:—

The unsatisfactory position respecting water supplies in the country districts, which has existed over a number of years, has further deteriorated during the past four years. The future of farming operations in certain districts is affected to the extent that the stock-carrying capacity of the farm is not measured by the amount of stock feed available, but by the limited amount of water which can be conserved under present conditions.

For the last four or five years, I have expressed the view that the carrying capacity of the north-eastern stockraising area is limited only by the amount of water than can be conserved and supplied in that area.

Mr North: Are you for the scheme?

Mr. LESLIE: Definitely, except that I think it should be extended into the areas now excluded. The part of the State that has been turned into a stockraising area, because of the Government's policy—not the farmers'—is not included in the proposed scheme, and consequently the settlers will be unable successfully to carry on their farming operations. That feature makes the proposal very unsatisfactory to me. It is, moreover, a very great disappointment indeed to the farmers, who had the faith, confidence and hope that the Government would assist them to the fullest possible extent by ensuring them a reasonable water supply. I know the Minister can reply that the Government has very generously, over a period of years, provided a large number of concrete water tanks to supply the needs of those farmers. There are, I think, speaking roughly, about 40 of such tanks, each holding 500,000 gallons, but I would again refer to the Minister's statement about the unreliability of the rainfall. It is for that reason that the concrete tanks, useful as they are, cannot assure a supply which could be obtained from a reticulated water scheme. In addition to the cost in actual money, that is, expenditure on petrol, tyres and wages, there is the cost in time and the inconvenience caused to the farmers by having to cart water over long distances, to the neglect of their farming duties, which in present circumstances they are unable to carry on with any degree of comfort.

One of my pleas to the Minister therefore is that he shall make provision for a reticulated water scheme to these agri-

cultural areas because of the special claim they have on the Government. I hope that early consideration will be given to their inclusion in whatever scheme is introduced. At the present time there are in that district about 300,000 sheep, roughly. I have not been able to ascertain the exact number. A few years ago the district was not carrying a third of that number; and I venture to say that had we a water supply we would have three times that number within a couple of years. We have the feed, but not the water. Let me tell the House, with the greatest of pleasure, that these north-eastern districts, which have been so largely wrongly condemned, are once again a shining light in Western Australia's agricultural production.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LESLIE: We are having a good season; we had a good season last year and the year before and we shall continue to progress because we now have competent farmers conducting their farms by good methods. We have good country, and all that is required is that the Minister should put the water there. We will give Western Australia prosperity.

The Minister for Works: With a decent spring rainfall, you would have had a bumper season.

Mr. LESLIE: I am afraid that if that had happened, there would have been too much grumbling about the amount that Mr. Mears would be interested in; he would get too much of the profit. I ask the Minister to request the Commonwealth committee, when it is in Western Australia investigating the scheme, to visit these areas and consult with the local authorities and the farmers. Let the Committee look at the figures and consider the production. Let it go on to the farms. I am prepared to let any body of experts investigate these areas as far back as they like; I am quite satisfied the claims of the district for consideration in respect to water supplies will be conceded.

The Minister for Works: The proposed boundaries of this scheme are capable of alteration.

Mr. LESLIE: I am aware of that fact, but the point is that the plan is a 10-year plan. We are afraid that for the first 10 years an attempt will be made to adhere

strictly to the boundaries of the plan now provided for. Moreover, the Government will always have the excuse that these areas were not provided for in the original plan, and that until such times as the necessary adjustments and modifications can be made, the Government cannot extend the scheme. I know that is so, because today, so far as the reticulated water supplies in part of the area are concerned, the farmers cannot get an extension. When the scheme was constructed, the area that it was to supply was not considered. It cannot be extended now because the pipes are not big enough or strong enough, or because the pumping plant is not capable of pumping the water over the hills. There is always some excuse. If the Minister will look at the plan on the wall of the Chamber, he will find that even portion of the Bencubbin line between Gabbin and Koorda is excluded from the scheme. The exclusion of that small portion is tragic.

The Minister for Works: I promise to put that portion in.

Mr. LESLIE: Good! That is something! We might now get an extension to Bonnie Rock. I was pleased to hear the Minister, when he spoke on one of the Bills, say that the Kodj Kojin area would be given prior consideration in the scheme. I interjected that there were farmers today who were paying water rates but who could not obtain an adequate supply of water. The Minister agreed that he knew such circumstances existed. Therefore, before there is talk of new schemes, it is only honest to satisfy the demands of the farmers who throughout all the war years, have put up with a shortage of water, but have nevertheless paid water rates. When materials and workers are available, the first thing to do is to make certain that existing water supplies are made adequate to the demands upon them. Of course, all good things have their bad points, and one bad point about the Bill—

The Minister for Works: Is that the water is not free!

Mr. LESLIE: I would say that that is not a bad point. It is something we would like, but do not for a moment expect. We are really reasonable people in the outback areas and it is the fact that we are so reasonable that makes it possible for so many people to get away with so much, so far as we are concerned. I feel that the rate of

5d. per acre has been fixed by the Minister because that is the amount of the average collection. He has come to the conclusion that because farmers have been able in the past to manage to pay 5d. per acre, that is the amount they can manage to pay in the future. But I would remind the House that many of those water rates have been paid by the farmers at very great cost to them personally. They have managed to pay them when they could not afford to do so. Circumstances demanded that in order that they might have even a comparative crust to live on they must maintain what small production they could, and in order to maintain that production they had to pay the rates. So to suggest, as I think the Minister has done and will do, that because they have managed to pay 5d. in the past it is reasonable to assume that is the economic basis on which they can carry a water supply in the future, is no argument whatsoever.

The Minister for Works: That has not been my reasoning at all.

Mr. LESLIE: It is remarkable that the figures happen to coincide. The average rate collected over all these years is just under 5d. and the Minister has fixed the rate at 5d. It may be a coincidence. I accept the Minister's explanation; but I say that if it is coincidental it is only proof that the figure is fixed at too high a rate and should not be made the basis for a charge in the future. There is undoubtedly going to be a lot of opposition from individuals to the introduction of a reticulated water scheme throughout the country areas. There is only one way in which that opposition will be successfully overcome, and that is by the Minister conceding in full the principle he has conceded in part in this Bill in connection with water rates on properties where a water supply is already available.

Mr. J. Hegney: It would not be a concession at all then; it would be a gift!

Mr. LESLIE: It is not going to be a gift, even then. I am not suggesting that no charge should be made on any land where a water supply can be taken when it is wanted by the farmer, but I do suggest that merely because a water pipe passes a man's boundary he should be obliged to pay a water rate whether he uses the water or not, is wrong. If that principle is to be applied, why not impose a special tax upon every landowner past whose boundary an

electric wire carrying electric current passes?

Mr. Withers: And a telegraph wire.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes. Why apply the principle in one instance and not in another? Water is a national necessity. So are telephones, railways and electricity, but we do not say that if we establish a railway line past a man's door or put a telephone or a telegraph line or an electric wire past his property that man is to be rated whether he uses those conveniences or not. We go to the extent of connecting a house with electric wire and—

Mr. J. Hegney: A man generally pays for it.

Mr. LESLIE: He pays the same as the chap outback.

The Minister for Works: How does the Electricity Department pay its way?

Mr. LESLIE: The users pay for the current.

The Minister for Works: Of course they do! And we will make the users of water pay for it.

Mr. LESLIE: If the Government is going to make the users pay the economic value of the water to them, we have no argument with the Government. If the users are to be made to pay the economic value of the water to them we shall be home on the pig's back. We will say "yes" to the Bill right through and will not worry.

The Minister for Works: They would have to pay ten times more than they will under this Bill.

Mr. LESLIE: No! I am quite content to make that rule.

Mr. J. Hegney: Many people in the metropolitan area would not get water at all if those that owned vacant land did not have to pay water rates.

Mr. LESLIE: They only pay a nominal water rate. I pay a water rate in the metropolitan area, and I get a miserable lot off water for it. But that is beside the question. The point is that we apply a principle in connection with certain public services; but now, because there is an opportunity to do some heavy charging in one direction, we propose to break that principle. What is the Government going to do in connection with electricity supply? Is it going to rate all people past whose land

the electric power line will run, whether they take electric current or not? If that principle is to be adopted in regard to the water supply scheme, the Government, to be consistent, must apply it to the electric power scheme. In fact, let us extend it to our telephone system and our railways and everything else! When the Bill reaches the Committee stage I propose to move that the charge for the water shall be based—

The Minister for Lands: When are you going to Melbourne?

Mr. LESLIE: I shall be here to do this! I shall move that where there is an adequate water supply for the farmer's purposes the farmer shall pay for the amount of water he uses.

Mr. Rodoreda: You cannot do that.

Mr. LESLIE: Whether I can or not, I am going to do it. Not only is the economic argument attached to this, but I am satisfied—

The Minister for Lands: You always were!

Mr. LESLIE: As a matter of fact I am not satisfied in this case. But I am certain that we will not be able to supply by this conservation of water along the coastline the whole of the demands of the outback areas. We must encourage conservation of water in those areas.

The Minister for Works: On the basis of your argument, the farmers, instead of paying 2s. 6d. a thousand would pay about 22s. 6d. a thousand.

Mr. LESLIE: The farmer would pay what is the economic value of the water to him and the rest would be on the same basis as the charge for the railways. That is to say, the nation would pay. The country would make up whatever deficit there was.

Mr. Watts: That is Mr. Ward's proposal in regard to the uniform gauge.

Mr. LESLIE: I do not know whether Mr. Ward welcomes my company or whether I welcome him, but it is pretty strange company all the same. That is the only basis, however, on which we can work in this case. It is necessary to encourage farmers outback to conserve water wherever and however they can. Many years ago I suggested to engineers in the Water Supply Department that the proper way to go about an investigation into the supply of water to

outback areas was to ascertain the amount of water required and then to see where and how it could be conserved. That is the natural process. It is the natural course in almost everything. If I go to a tailor for a suit, he measures me before cutting from the piece of cloth. If I want to build a house the builder requires to know what I want before purchasing the materials.

If we want to introduce a water scheme on a national basis we must first find out what is required and then how we can get it. I was advised by the engineers at that time that if they did that, the demand would be so great, that it would be impossible to conserve water to supply the whole of the economic needs of the outback areas. That was astonishing, and it made me realise that we have to encourage the conservation of water, not only in these two or three dams but everywhere, and that must be done both for economic and defence purposes. If we adopt that policy, then the cost of the scheme will not be anywhere near as great as has been indicated by the Government. I do not say it will be a commercially profitable proposition, but it will be nationally beneficial and an economic possibility to the farmers if the charges are reasonable. On the principle that it is not fair to expect a man to keep a dog and bark himself, a farmer should not have to contribute to this scheme if he has an adequate water supply on his farm.

If that principle is not adopted, the first thing that will happen is that if a man has a good supply of water he will neglect it and avail himself of the water passing by. He will say to himself, "I have to pay something for this water, so I will have the whole lot." I therefore propose to move that the basis on which the charges shall be assessed shall be that of a holding rate, as in the case of telephone rental or the deposit for electric light, and that the other charges shall be according to the amount of water used. I am quite prepared to go as far as to say that these conditions may be limited only to those farms where an adequate water supply to the satisfaction of the Minister exists, and that in all other areas the normal rating shall apply. Even with that I am not too happy, but it will go part of the way towards what we want.

Mr. Triat: Do you think the farmers are conferring a favour on the Government by letting it put in the scheme?

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, I think farmers would be conferring a favour on the Government by letting it put in the scheme. The hon. member should realise the sorry condition the State would be in if farmers decided to be less co-operative.

The Minister for Lands: They are more co-operative than are their representatives.

Mr. LESLIE: I believe they are prepared to co-operate here even to the extent of making sacrifices in the interests of the national economy, but they are not going to be the only horse that is pulling the whole load; leaving aside the amount that will be received from the Commonwealth. It is too much to expect the farmers to pull the State cart alone. I support the second reading of the Bill and commend the Government on introducing it. I regret that one or two small items that have occasioned criticism have crept in, and I hope the Government will adopt our suggestions.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

MR. DONEY (Williams—Narrogin) [8.44]: This Bill is not one that calls for very much in the way of debate.

The Minister for Lands: You said all you want to say on this Bill on the previous one.

Mr. DONEY: I can find nothing in it that I wish to contend against. Its provisions are set out with reasonable clearness. I cannot claim that I have studied the Bill with the object of understanding it very exactly, nor do I think I am competent either to oppose it or even, perhaps, understand it, because it has been drawn by highly competent engineers after a vast amount of investigation over a long period. Anyone desiring to criticise their work would need to be as competent as their investigations have made them.

Mr. Watts: This is like a tax Bill.

Mr. DONEY: As my colleague reminds me, this is in a sense a tax Bill, and for that reason, and to that extent, it does not need the same amount of discussion as is likely to fall to the lot of the other Bill.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 16th October; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £140,300:

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [8.47]: I wish to say a few words on the Crown Law Estimates. In previous years I have made my remarks somewhat brief, and sometimes too brief because I have been criticised not for holding up the Committee but for letting members off too lightly. I would like to say something about the functions of the Crown Law Department. I fear there are many members who do not realise the work done by its officers. I have heard it said that to be in the Crown Law Department is more or less a sinecure, but it is nothing of the kind.

Mr. Abbott: Not even for the Minister for Justice?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, and not for any of my officers. If the hon. member arrived at his office as early as do a number of my officers, he would be at work well before 9 o'clock every morning. I will outline a few of the department's functions, which have been increasing each year, and especially during the war years. During the last 12 months such increase has been marked by the expansion of the Crown Law activities in various directions. I refer to the third-party insurance risk in connection with motor vehicles. That office has gone ahead rapidly, with a large increase in the number of cases on which the officers have to give advice. The advent of the Rural and Industries Bank Act added to the work of the conveyancing branch considerably, being really a counterpart of the private trading banks. I am not complaining, as I am very pleased with the progress being made in these matters. Although we have not had much support in the installa-

tion of these various instrumentalities the improvement has been rapid and the work of the Crown Law officers has been greatly expanded.

The State Electricity Commission Act also increased greatly the work both in the conveyancing section and the giving of advice. Both the State (Western Australia) Alunite Industry Partnership Act and the W.A. Meat Export Works Act have added to the volume of business. The inauguration of the Wundowie project also increased the work of the Crown Law officers, as did the Albany Freezing Works Agreement Act and the various marketing Acts such as those governing the Egg Board and the Onion Board. Work on the conveyancing side expanded substantially during the war years, there having been an increase of over 200 per cent. in that direction since 1944. The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and the land settlement legislation have, together with other work of the conveyancing department, meant increased activity as well as the preparation and registration of documents of security for the Department of Mines and the Rural and Industries Bank, hire purchase agreements of various kinds, leases and licenses for Government departments, dealings with escheat of land, and sundry other agreements and indentures. When the Landlord and Tenant Act was introduced by the Commonwealth we were requested to appoint an officer to advise the public. The work got beyond that officer and we had to engage another to carry on the work. He had not only to deal with the landlord and tenant legislation, but with the increase of rent restrictions legislation, and so on.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is not the Minister for Lands in charge of that?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, that is within my province.

The Minister for Lands: I have sent your letter down.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: So much overtime was involved that in May, 1945, we appointed another officer. For the eight months ended the 31st August he had to investigate 3,500 applications under that legislation, and that was exclusive of telephone calls. That shows that the public has taken advantage of the officers appointed to advise them. Those officers are

not complaining in any way, but I thought it was well for members to understand how their work has been increased in recent years. They have carried out their duties willingly and I thank them for the services they have rendered. The Crown Law Department in this State has fewer officers but they do as much work as those in the Crown Law Office of any State in the Commonwealth.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is too strong.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is not too strong. It is a matter of fact. We have investigated the position and have found it to be so. The Titles Office has been affected to a greater extent than have many other departments by the conditions at present prevailing. During the war there was considerable delay in the registration of various documents, in the adjustment of partnerships and matters pertaining to deceased estates, but now all that work is coming along and is causing congestion in that department. There has been a rush of work connected with building sites in the last 12 months, involving the registration of thousands of transfers, with new certificates, which has kept the Titles Office very busy. As indicated by the increased number of mortgages registered, building is calling for finance and the Workers' Homes Board and other financial institutions are showing considerable activity. When more building material and manpower are available there will be a still greater demand for building, and there will be no relaxation for that office.

One of the worst aspects of the trouble at present is shortage of accommodation. That was unavoidable during the war, but the Government is now making every effort to provide more space. At present officers are not accessible to each other and it is difficult for them to carry out their work as quickly as they would like to do it. The delay causes disagreement and misunderstanding on the part of the public and discontent among the officers concerned. The work of the Public Trust Office has increased from its inception. It commenced with 11 officers and today there are 57. People in both the town and country areas have sought help and advice from the Public Trustee, particularly regarding the administration of estates, which is always a problem to inexperienced persons.

Any person can have a will drawn up free of cost by a legal officer at the Public Trust Office provided he makes the Public Trustee his executor. Many people have taken advantage of that facility. Wills drawn and lying in that office are today of far greater number than was anticipated when the office was inaugurated. The Public Trustee, through agents for his office, usually the clerk of courts, has been of considerable assistance to country people, saving them the time and money that would have to be expended to make a visit to the city. Country people may go to the agent and arrange for him to transact their business with the Public Trustee. Usually the agent is the clerk of courts, who is fairly well versed in the business and is ever willing and ready to help the people.

The estates of quite a number of deceased Servicemen have been executed by the Public Trustee practically at no cost. This work involved a considerable amount of labour and expense. Still, the office does not complain about that; it has been proud to do the work. Another satisfactory function of the Public Trustee is the payment of workers' compensation money to dependants. Any money held by that official earns interest at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This is a very creditable return because the security is gilt-edged. Unless those dependants invested the money in ways that would involve the taking of a certain amount of risks, they would not be able to obtain a better return.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is it all put into war loans?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: A good deal of it is, but how much I do not know. The office of the Public Trustee has suffered considerably, especially in the last 12 months, from the fact that it was a war-time creation and had been started with a number of temporary officers. These officers had become trained in this specialised work. However, they are under the Public Service Act, and the Public Service Commissioner had to take them into account when making promotions in the Service. Thus the office has lost a number of temporary officers who were first-class men but who had to be replaced by returned Servicemen, good men and quite capable mentally and otherwise, but lacking the experience of

those who had been trained in the office. Consequently, the new men have not been able to cope with the work to the same degree. Instead of a man being able to deal with 50 files per day, we find that a returned man on starting is lucky if he is able to deal with 40. Thus the turnover of the office has not been as good as it should have been owing to its not having all expert officers.

I am of opinion that there should be promotion only within the office of the Public Trustee for by that method alone shall we be able to obtain the greatest efficiency. While the staff is brought within promotional changes for the Civil Service, it will be difficult to get the office on a really efficient basis, simply because the incoming men are inexperienced in the work. I think this office should be brought under conditions similar to those governing the staff of the Rural and Industries Bank whereby promotions are confined to that particular institution, unless in special circumstances an officer is permitted to transfer to another department. Admittedly a new office such as this must pass through the teething stage and must take time to settle down, but had we been able to retain the services of the temporary officers who had been engaged since the inception of the office, I believe we would have shown a much bigger revenue. In saying this, I am not reflecting in any way upon the staff. I care not how competent an officer may be; if he has had no experience in this work, he cannot do it with the same rapidity and efficiency as can an experienced man who has specialised in it for some time. I hope that it will be possible to bring down an amendment to the Public Trustee Act to provide that promotions shall, as far as possible, be confined within that office.

The work of the Supreme Court has increased considerably, especially in divorce and criminal jurisdictions. I do not know that such an increase is to be welcomed; nevertheless it has occurred and has made much work for the judiciary.

Mr. Seward: According to the divorce figures in last night's paper, we occupy a rather unenviable position.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is unavoidable. In 1942 we passed a Jury (Emergency Provisions) Act which provided for juries of six, except when capital charges

were being dealt with. The war may be considered to be over and we have reverted to the old Jury Act which provides for a strength of 12 jurymen.

Hon. N. Keenan: You are contradicting the High Court by saying that the war is over.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Quite so, but we regard it as being over for jury purposes and have reverted to the provisions of the Jury Act of 1912. The Probate Office shows an increase. The revenue from this office is always problematical and may be either above or below the estimate, but in late years the richer men of the community seem to have been passing on and the revenue from probate has shown a considerable increase.

For the second successive year, the High Court held a sitting in Perth early in September. There were three appeals, of which one was settled out of court, one was dismissed, and in the other case judgment was reserved, but that appeal has since been dismissed with costs. Four applications were made for special leave to appeal from judgments of the Supreme Court, of which three were dismissed and one was adjourned sine die at the request of the appellant. I am pleased that the High Court has decided to visit this State every 12 months. During the war its visits were infrequent as it was difficult for the judges to get here, but we have been promised that in future they will visit this State to hear appeals at least once a year.

The business of the Companies Office has increased very considerably, the registrations for the past year—55 in all—having exceeded those of the four preceding years. Many of the registrations were of new companies. Under the National Security (Capital Issues) Regulation, a company with a capital under £10,000 can be formed and registered without reference to the Commonwealth Treasurer. Many companies are taking advantage of this regulation. Any company with a capital over £10,000 must have the approval of the Commonwealth Treasurer before it can be formed and registered. The Business Names Act was passed in 1942, and since then there have been 6,000 registrations under it. In the last 12 months there were 1,700 new registrations. The number of associations incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act has shown an up-

ward trend, the registrations for the year having exceeded the aggregate of the three previous years. Members will therefore realise that the business of the Companies Office has considerably increased, and that is an indication that we are getting back to normal times.

The accommodation at the Companies Office is worrying us, but we hope to get other accommodation for the Public Trustee. If we are successful, we can, of course, extend the accommodation for the Companies Office in the present building. That would very much help to ease the situation. I hope to have the new Companies Act proclaimed on the 1st January, 1947. There is a section in the Act which prohibits its proclamation for 12 months after the war; but I will introduce a small Bill to have the Act proclaimed. I hope it will be passed, as it is essential that we should have uniformity in company law. The existing statute is hopelessly out of date. I know many people are looking forward to the proclamation of the new Act. I think we should proclaim it at the earliest possible date for the protection of the people.

The Licensing Court is doing its best to compel hotels to provide modern accommodation and sanitary conveniences. Some hotels are almost hopeless. Their construction is out of date. During the war hotelkeepers could not secure help and in some instances they allowed the hotels to become dilapidated. Some hotelkeepers seemed really to forget that hotels existed for the convenience of travellers. The Licensing Court is reminding them of that fact and is doing all it can to bring the hotels up to a reasonable standard. As I said, many hotels are badly constructed and will require much alteration to make them suitable for residential purposes. Travellers are entitled to good accommodation; they expect it and I feel the Government should do everything possible to remind hotelkeepers that hotels primarily exist for the convenience of the public.

Mr. Watts: There are some signs of that being so now.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The majority of the hotels in Western Australia are well managed and the proprietors are doing their best to serve the public. I know the difficulties hotelkeepers have had to contend with. It has been difficult for them

to get staffs and to obtain materials required to put their buildings in a reasonable state of repair. I realise also that many hotelkeepers should not be in the trade at all, because they forget that the travelling public should be considered. They are only after the profit which they can make from the bar. Capital expenditure and maintenance costs are now much higher, and the profit from providing accommodation for travellers is not nearly so great as that which can be made from the bar. I assure members that the Licensing Court is aware of the position and is making a genuine effort to bring the hotels up to date.

Mr. Watts: You have given the court a new office.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Many hotels have been inspected and the alterations ordered have been made. I congratulate the Health Department on what it has done in this respect. The Liquor Inspection Branch of the Police Department has also been active in that regard. The Health Department and the Liquor Branch of the Police Department are reminding hotelkeepers of their responsibility to the public. I have been reminded that fly-proof doors and fly-proof windows for kitchens and dining-rooms have deteriorated, but this matter could not be remedied as the hotelkeepers were unable to secure supplies of wire.

Mr. Read: They are doing away with the dining-rooms!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: In some instances that may be so, but the real reason was because staff could not be obtained for the country. I know that to be so from personal experience. I own a hotel and today I received a telegram from Salmon Gums, as well as several letters, asking me to try to get an employee. We are not mean in the salaries we pay and we give our employees every comfort, but we find it almost impossible to get anybody to go to the district. It is not attractive enough and the distance from Perth is too great. Girls do not like leaving the metropolitan area because of the attractions of the city. If we do happen to secure a girl, she may stay three or four months and then go back to the city. I do not blame these young people. Probably I would have done the same myself when I was their age, but I

did not have their experience. I was kept in the back country and stayed there so long that I did not mind whether I lived in the city or in the country. If I had my way, I would be in the country.

The Minister for Lands: You were a gay young spark!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I did not have the opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister cannot discuss it on this Vote.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: My colleague, with his brilliant smile, has always been a gay young spark, and I wish I had his influence over the fair sex. My colleague on my left is also judging me by himself. As a result of the inspections that I have mentioned, about 50 plans for alterations have been submitted to the Licensing Court since January for alterations generally and principally in regard to sanitation and bathrooms. I think that every hotel should have a hotwater service, where possible, and if that is not possible there should be sufficient heaters for the convenience of travellers. The Licensing Court is giving due consideration to that matter. Most of these reports and complaints will be dealt with by the court at its annual sitting, and if hotel proprietors will not comply with the Act and make every effort to give the services required of them, they can be dealt with on that occasion and will not have their licenses renewed. I am not reflecting on hotelkeepers as a whole; because, generally speaking, hotels, especially in the metropolitan area and in most of the bigger centres, are well managed and well looked after, and the licensees have done everything possible to assist the travelling public.

There is an objectionable feature of metropolitan hotels which, I think, has to a certain extent been unavoidable. That is, they have their premises full of permanent boarders, to the detriment of the travelling public, and especially of people coming from the country. I can quite understand that it has been very difficult to refuse accommodation, on account of the shortage of houses.

Mr. Leslie: How many have portions of their hotels closed?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know, but I did hear of one the other day in the metropolitan area that took only £50 for providing accommodation, so pre-

sumably something is wrong there. However, an inquiry is being made and the proprietor will have to accommodate people or will not have a license next year. The court has been very much alive and is doing the best it can with regard to hotels generally. I do not want to reflect on the personnel of the previous court. That court did good work but was very handicapped during the war. It was practically useless during that period because it could not enforce the law. The conditions were such that it was impossible to obtain servants. Manpower was very scarce and renovations and necessary alterations were out of the question. I foresee that in a very short time, when we can secure materials and the necessary labour, the Licensing Court will be overwhelmed with applications. I am told that at present within the metropolitan area it has had applications for £50,000 to be spent in providing accommodation.

Mr. McLarty: That would only provide one decent hotel, would it not?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That might be so, but it would be a considerable addition to the accommodation at the hotels now in existence. I venture to say that when things are back to normal there will be applications amounting to £250,000 for the improvement of hotels throughout the State. I have contacted a number of proprietors and have been told that when they get the material and the manpower to do the work, it will be done. They are anxious to get their hotels back to normal, to cope with the travelling public and give the people the service to which they are entitled.

Mr. Leslie: They have taken good care to get the bar trade back to normal.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think the hon. member must realise, and that he does in fact understand, that it is much easier and cheaper to run a bar than to provide accommodation. To supply accommodation, the proprietor must have cooks, waitresses and so on, whereas in most hotels one man can look after the bar quite efficiently. There is no comparison between the bar trade and the accommodation side of the business of a hotel. A man who runs a hotel, as I do, realises the position.

Mr. Leslie: A licensee only has a bar because he has a hotel. The hotel must come first.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hotel should come first, and it will when the Licensing Court finds it possible to ensure that that can be achieved. During the war it was not possible; but surely, just because it is not possible for a licensee to keep the dining-room open, members would not expect him to close the bar! If it were more difficult to conduct the bar trade than to provide accommodation, I would say, "Close the hotel."

Mr. Triat: Some are only beer-houses, not hotels.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I agree that some are. They are the ones we want to get rid of. It does not matter what business we consider, we can always find a few that will not comply with the rules. We have some members of Parliament who are better than others. Some do more work than others; some are more conscientious than others. The same applies to hotels.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister must not reflect on other members.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am not reflecting on them.

The CHAIRMAN: The Standing Orders provide that a member must not reflect on another member.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am sorry if I have done so. But I say there is a difference between myself and my friend on the left, though I hold him in high esteem.

The Minister for Lands: Go on with your Estimates!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am going to. I did not mention the personnel of the court. The present chairman is Mr. Millen. He has had a good deal of experience in administrative work and is doing a good job. His two colleagues, Mr. Wauhop and Mr. McGrath, are working well together. I have heard it said by members that the court has nothing to do, but if they had rung Mr. Millen today, he would have told them that there is a jolly lot of work to be done. He is down there in the morning and the court is kept busy all day trying to restore hotels to their pre-war standard. I feel pleased with the work the court is doing, and if things go on as they are now, the members of that court will not be idle but will be working for their full three years. When things are placed on a proper basis, I shall not mind if they slacken a bit.

Regarding the personnel of the Crown Law Department, which I forgot to mention at the beginning, when Mr. Walter Dwyer resigned from the position of President of the Arbitration Court, owing to the limitation of years, he was succeeded by Mr. Dunphy, at that time the Crown Solicitor. Later, Sir John Northmore resigned as Chief Justice of Western Australia, and he was succeeded by Sir John Dwyer. The vacancy in the judiciary was filled by the appointment of Mr. Walker, who was then the Solicitor General. Mr. Good took Mr. Dunphy's place as Crown Solicitor, and later was appointed Solicitor General, being succeeded as Crown Solicitor by Mr. D'Arcy. Today in Mr. D'Arcy's place we have Mr. Neville as Crown Prosecutor and Mr. Walsh as Assistant Crown Solicitor and Assistant Crown Prosecutor. We have a fine cricket team there because these officers play cricket and they are willing to do their best for everyone concerned in their jurisdiction. They work harmoniously together and everyone does his job.

I get down to my office reasonably early—never later than 8.30 a.m.—and on three or four occasions each week there are other persons already working when I arrive. Members will, therefore, realise that the Crown Law officers, and those of the Licensing Court, are doing their best for the people of the State. The Estimates are shown in the revenue and expenditure statement, but I will run briefly through some of the figures so that the information will be available to those who get "Hansard." The revenue expected to be derived from Probate, Law Courts, Departmental, Land Titles, Crown Law and Public Trust Office, is estimated at £403,000 as against £393,684 received last year, and the following statement shows the expected increase and decrease under the respective headings.

	Collections 1945-46.	Estimate 1946-47.	Increase	Decrease
	£	£	£	£
Probate	262,280	260,000	2,280
Law Courts	75,655	80,000	4,345
Departmental—				
Crown Law	8,480	9,000	511
Land Titles	34,819	40,000	5,181
Public Trust Office	12,441	14,000	1,559
	<u>£393,684</u>	<u>£403,000</u>	<u>£11,506</u>	<u>£2,280</u>
Net increase: £9,316.				

I am hoping that the Public Trust Office increase will be larger than is estimated

because I feel sure that if we can get a bigger turnover there we will show better returns. If a business is being run without trained staff or specialists, the same volume of work cannot be done, and the revenue suffers as a result. The expenditure on salaries last year was £101,856, and this year's estimate is £119,550, which is an increase of £17,644. The increase is due to a reclassification because most of the officers have received additional amounts in their salaries in accordance with the increased cost of living which, of course, is quite right. I have not any more to say on the Estimates, but there might be a few questions asked as to the increase in expenditure. The whole increase has been justified and has been investigated thoroughly. It is due to the circumstances and conditions prevailing today.

Members will notice that there has been a big falling off in the revenue of the Trust Office. That has occurred because when the office was created many temporary officers were appointed to it and they were subsequently trained. Many of them, after serving their country, returned and under the Public Service Act had to receive promotion in accordance with their years of service. There is no question as to their efficiency, or their brainpower, but they have not had the necessary experience. We are hoping that that position will be rectified. The Public Trust Office is a baby of mine and I want to see it thrive, and I think it will. I notice that where there is an estate that will not pay, our legal friends will have nothing to do with it, but send it to the Public Trust Office. The same thing applies to the private trustee companies. We have no alternative but to do the best we can in the circumstances. That position should be rectified by providing a minimum charge for these estates. The Public Trust Office should not be compelled to handle any estate under a fee of, say, £5 or £5 5s. A job at a lower cost than that is not a payable proposition. Today those who deal in that sort of business will not take any work that does not pay, and such work is referred to the Public Trust Office. That has occasioned much loss.

Mr. Watts: That is only the work that the old curator did.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: He did not show a profit.

Mr. Watts: He was not there for profit-making purposes.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We expect to balance the budget and if we cannot do that we will find ourselves in the same position as does the Commissioner of Railways. His costs have been going up, but when we speak of increasing rates and fares there is a hullabaloo, and the same thing will apply to the Public Trust Office.

Mr. Watts: Up to date no-one has criticised the Public Trustee Office for not paying.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But they will if we do not correct the position and put the office on a businesslike basis. I have heard in this Chamber much criticism of various departments. I am not going to mention them now, but members know that that is so, and whatever gave rise to the criticism probably occurred through no fault of the officers or the administration, but really through that of the Government and Parliament.

Mr. Watts: But your departments are giving services and not making profits.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We are rendering a service but we do hope to balance the budget, and we are expected to do so. I think members will grant us that, at least. There should be a minimum in relation to many of these estates.

Mr. Leslie: The private companies only charge on income.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, but they will not take estates unless they are payable.

Mr. Leslie: I beg to differ.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have been in business, and I did not do too much for nothing, any more than would the member for Mt. Marshall. I commend these Estimates to the Committee and hope members will give them favourable consideration.

[Mr. Rodoreda took the Chair.]

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [9.41]: I do not propose to take up the time of the Committee for long. I congratulate the Minister at any rate on changing from what he

said was to be a short introductory speech to one of considerable length, even if somewhat diffuse. I congratulate him also on the fact that he has, as he now tells us, an excellent team in his office: all young men, and some of them very young men who have of course to learn their work. But it is satisfactory to know that, on the present experience that the Minister has had of them, he is more than satisfied. In fact, I am reminded of the historical comparison in the history of England, in the days of Lord Palmerston. Queen Victoria was a young woman, and the Constitution was very old, and there was the position of having a young Queen and an old Constitution. The Minister has his young team, and the old head of the department, so I presume he might possibly achieve a success as great as that achieved many years ago.

Now, to get down to serious matters, it is no use telling us about the operations of the Licensing Court, because they are limited by law. One matter in which almost every member is interested is the licensing law. Our present licensing law is an absolute farce, and could not be anything else. It was originally passed, I think, in 1911. At that time, although I was a member of Parliament, I was not a Minister, but I pointed out to the Ministry of the day that to imagine that one licensing law would be applicable to the conditions all over Western Australia, with its huge area, was an absurdity. What is perfectly right and proper for the government of licensing premises in Perth is an absurdity on the Goldfields, in the far North, and in other places. I suggested then—and have waited all these years for the suggestion to bear fruit—that we should have regional laws, a licensing law for certain regions where the circumstances permitted it to apply, and where the law could therefore be administered, as it cannot be today. No-one imagines that the law is at present administered on the Goldfields.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The trading hours are different.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Go up there on a Sunday and see the position.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They are different under the law.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Can the member for Geraldton tell me what the difference is under the law?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I said the trading hours on the Goldfields are different from those in Perth.

Hon. N. KEENAN: On the Goldfields the hours of trading are those that the convenience of the people has, over half a century, demanded, and the police, being reasonable people, do not attempt to enforce other trading hours. Therefore they have trading on Sundays, though the law, as printed, does not allow it. That is a matter that I would commend to the Minister, who says he now has a young and enthusiastic team to carry out the work that is in arrears. No work is more in arrears than is the bringing down of a licensing law that would be suitable for Western Australia. Even in France, which has a very small area compared with that of Western Australia, there are different licensing laws for different parts of the country.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But with 40,000,000 people.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so, but the area is not comparable. There are many reasons that could be urged—I do not propose to cover them tonight—why a matter of such great importance should receive attention. If a licensing law is to be framed it has always appeared to me that we might well consider adopting principles, regarding the sale of intoxicating liquor, somewhat similar to those applying in England. There are certain houses there where it is absurd to ask for accommodation. They are licensed under the English law for the sale of liquor at certain hours. They are not hotels, but what is generally called public houses—in other words, they are drinking places. In certain parts of Western Australia there is undoubtedly a demand not for accommodation, in the sense of dining-room or bedroom accommodation, but simply accommodation for drinking.

Drinking is not a vice, until it is abused. For that purpose there might well be considered the adoption of the liquor laws governing that occupation in the United Kingdom. In Western Australia parts of the State are practically deserted at some times of the year, being crowded out during other seasons. I refer to places such as Albany, which is thronged with tourists at certain times in the year. In such places we might well grant licenses for certain

seasons of the year. At Mundaring Weir there is an hotel. The manager of that hotel told me that his establishment is deserted in winter but well patronised during the summer. He has to maintain his staff over the whole of the year and keep the house open to cater for people who do not want to go there.

Again we might follow the example of other countries and grant licenses for certain periods of the year. Then a licensee would be obliged to supply accommodation as prescribed during those periods but could, for the rest of the year, close the hotel. In some areas in France the hotels are crowded during the summer season, or even during the spring or autumn, but are closed down in winter. That enables a better class of accommodation to be given to the public, as the publican has not to make good during one part of the year the loss which he would otherwise occasion through having to remain open for the whole year.

I notice that nearly all the increase in these Estimates is purely and simply in the clerks' division. In the case of the Supreme Court office, for instance, there is an increase of £3,500, with an increase of 11 in the staff. In the Electoral Department there is an increase of £2,500 in the pay of the clerks, while the number of employees is increased by seven. In the Land Titles Office there is an increase of 21 clerks—the number has just doubled—and the amount has increased by £8,500. Under the heading "Magistracy," there is an increase of 24 clerks and an increase in the estimate of £7,000. Of Supreme Court clerks, the number has increased from seven to 14 and the expenditure has doubled. In the Public Trust Office, the number of clerks has increased from 24 to 40 and the amount has increased by £5,500. All this increased expenditure occurs in the division of clerical work. The heads of departments are practically on the same footing as they were last year and are the same in number. What increase in remuneration is shown is very small. In fact, if there is one item in the Estimates that is open to criticism, it is the small amount paid to the magistrates. There are six magistrates and the average salary paid is £800 a year.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That would not represent the whole amount for all of them.

The Minister for Justice: All their salaries have been increased.

Hon. N. KEENAN: With two lots of information, one official and one non-official, it is difficult to know which to accept. Is any magistrate in receipt of more than £800?

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: From what Vote?

The Minister for Justice: The magistrate of the local court receives £1,020, but that does not appear on this Vote.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Well, evidently there are exceptions. The Minister does not seem to know whether the figures appearing on these Estimates represent the whole remuneration or whether they are contributions only.

The Minister for Justice: There has been a considerable increase since the Estimates were compiled.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Of course increases since then could not appear on the Estimates. Judging by these Estimates, it is disappointing to find this most onerous and responsible work paid at a rate far lower than work not so onerous and responsible.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There are two classes of magistrate, resident and stipendiary.

Hon. N. KEENAN: There we have more non-official information.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is not non-official. I know.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I regard it as non-official. What is the position regarding the Electoral Office? A considerable increase is shown in the number of clerks and the amount has increased by £3,594.

The Minister for Justice: That is due to the impending general election.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I make no objection to that, but I should like to know when the department will be in a position to make the rolls available.

The Minister for Lands: I received mine yesterday.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We have had three Ministers for Justice already. Surely there is not a fourth!

The Minister for Justice: The department is doing everything possible and getting the rolls printed as quickly as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Minister reserve his information until he replies and will the member for Nedlands address the Chair instead of addressing everybody else?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I stand rightly corrected. When the Minister replies, I hope he will give us an approximate date when the rolls will be ready. I do not wish to criticise these Estimates in any hostile way, but the Minister has mentioned a lot of matters that invite criticism. One of them was that the main development in the work of the judiciary had occurred in the divorce jurisdiction.

The Minister for Justice: And also in the criminal jurisdiction.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Speaking of divorce, I was disappointed and almost disgusted to read in an Eastern States paper the percentage of divorces in the various States. The figures were afterwards published in a local paper, and Western Australia stands high and dry at the top.

The Minister for Lands: As usual, on top.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is not a very proud position to occupy. This is not wholly attributable to the war, because the effect of the war has been felt as much in the Eastern States as here. I attribute it to the somewhat lax view taken of the marriage contract. We have been too ready to allow new conditions under which divorce may be granted, and our latest effort has not been unproductive of results.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I hope this will be a lesson to us not to go any further in that direction. Now I wish to refer to hotels and to ask the Minister to exercise his influence to relieve a position that is growing more and more intolerable every day. On the present supply of materials, it is absurd for the Licensing Court to make orders such as it is doing. A hotelkeeper in Kalgoorlie has been trying to get, not a contract, but a tender for certain work and has found no response, because no contractor is prepared to risk signing a contract with a definite term fixed for its completion in the present state of affairs. The Government will have to make some effort to arrange for supplies of materials and requisites in order that repair work may be carried out, or the Licensing Court will have to be put on one side for the time being. It is impossible to get even

paint. A contractor undertook to paint a considerable amount of woodwork at a hotel and had to pull out because he could not get the paint.

The Minister for Justice: It is possible to get special permits for renovating bathrooms and for sanitary purposes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not know what this man could get or could not get, but what happened was he was unable to get paint. It is the duty of the Minister, before he eggs on the Licensing Court to order that this and that be done by hotelkeepers, as he evidently intends to do, to ensure that there is a supply of materials for carrying out the work ordered.

The Minister for Justice: The court will not be unreasonable.

Mr. Watts: Do not make too many promises for the court.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The court is never unreasonable, but it does things that are unreasonable. I congratulate the Minister on his speech. He covered every ground possible and a great deal one would have thought impossible and has conveyed information that no doubt interested and amused us even if it did not instruct us. I hope when the Minister makes his reply that, instead of such a pleasant speech, he will be more practical and tell us definitely, for instance, when the electoral rolls are to be expected and when they will be available for the public—not the exact date, I do not tie him down to that. Will they be available before the end of January, or is it possible that they will be available before the end of December? Whatever date he likes to suggest, if it is founded on some proper anticipation, will be welcome and will be sufficient.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 29th October, 1946.

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "A", 1946.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts (Section "A") for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1946. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

ELECTORAL—EAST PROVINCE.

Seat Declared Vacant.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:—

That this House resolves, that owing to the death of the Hon. V. Hamersley, late member for the East Province, the seat be declared vacant.

CHAIRMAN (TEMPORARY) OF COMMITTEES.

The PRESIDENT: I have to inform the House that I have appointed Hon. E. H. H. Hall as the third Deputy Chairman of Committees to fill the vacancy created by the death of the late Hon. V. Hamersley.