Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 1st November, 1960

CONTENTS

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

KEWDALE SCHOOL

Completion Date

1. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Education:

   (1) What was the original contract completion date for the Kewdale school?

   (2) On what grounds was an extension granted to the contractor?

   (3) What is the proposed new completion date?

   (4) Is he aware that the contractor after having received his extension of time, withdrew practically the whole of his labour force from this job?

   (5) Are there any penalty provisions associated with this contract?

   Mr. WATTS replied:

   (1) The 24th October, 1960.

   (2) I am informed the contractor has not been granted an extension.

   (3) About mid-December.

   (4) No.

   (5) Yes; and I would suggest that any further information desired be sought from the Public Works Department.

LAND TAX

Revaluations

2. Mr. TONKIN asked the Treasurer:

   When were properties in Nedlands, Dalkeith, Subiaco, and Floreat Park last revalued by the Taxation Department for land tax purposes?

   Mr. BRAND replied:

   The properties were last revalued by the Taxation Department for land tax purposes as follows:—

Nedlands and Dalkeith	1955-56
Subiaco	1959-60
Floreat Park	1957-58

BRUCE ROCK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Extensions

3. Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Education:

   (1) When were tenders called for extensions to Bruce Rock Junior High School?

   (2) What additions are covered in the proposed extensions?

   (3) What is the anticipated post-primary enrolment for 1961?

   (4) What is the present disposition of all pupils attending the school?

   (5) How many children are transported daily to Merredin?

   (6) When is it anticipated that the proposed extensions will be ready for occupation?

   Mr. WATTS replied:

   (1) Tenders will be called on the 22nd November, 1960.

   (2) 1 classroom, 1 multi-purpose post-primary room.

   (3) 57.

(4)—

	Accommodation			Enrolment	
	Staff room	Year	III	2	
		,,	II	10	12
1.	32 x 25	,,	I	18	18
2.	32 x 25	Grade	7	37	37
3.	32 x 25	,,	6	28	
		,,	5	16	44
4.	40 x 23		5	16	
		,,	4	25	41
5.	45 x 30	,,	4	10	
		,,	3	28	38
Old school 6.	24 x 24		2	37	37
7.	24 x 24		1	32	32
					250

(5) Nil.

(6) May, 1961.

GIVING WAY TO THE RIGHT

Amendment of Regulation: Reason and Result

4. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is he aware of the article in *The West Australian* of the 8th October, 1960, which contains a statement made by the Chairman of the Safety Council that Western Australia and Victoria are the only two States with the rule that the first vehicle into the intersection has the right of way?

(2) If so, why was the rule changed from the vehicle on the right having near priority at the intersection?

(3) How many deaths resulted in this State, at intersections, because of failure to give way to the right and what was the number of injuries?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Regulation No. 190 was not basically changed, but was amplified to provide for improved traffic movement. The regulation still provides that where vehicles are approaching an intersection in such circumstances and at such speeds that if they were so to continue they would be likely to collide, or to create a dangerous situation, then the driver of the vehicle having the other vehicle on his right side shall reduce his speed and, if necessary, stop so as to yield the right of way to the other vehicle.

The more recent amplification of the regulation provides for the situation where one vehicle has already entered the intersection. It states that where a vehicle is about to enter an intersection, the driver of that vehicle shall yield right of way to any vehicle which has already entered the intersection from a different road. The reason for this amplification was that many drivers were developing a habit of assuming that they had an overriding right of way at an intersection, if they were approaching from the right, even when they were some distance from the intersection. Consequently they maintained high speeds and it was very difficult for vehicles from side roads to obtain entry into the heavily-trafficked main highways because few vehicles would give way to them.

Similarly, the old regulation made no provision permitting ease of entry for vehicles from the left-hand approach roads into weaving sections, such as are provided in the Narrows approaches. Without amplification of the regulation, a driver from the right-hand approach road would assume right of way even if another vehicle had already moved into the intersection ahead of him, and efficient operation of these essential weaving sections would thereby be spoilt.

(3) It will require considerable time to extract these particular statistics. A detailed investigation of intersection accidents in Perth is in train by the Main Roads Department.

VERMIN TAX

Contributions and Expenditure

5. Mr. W. A. MANNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

What amounts are—

(a) contributed through vermin tax;

(b) expended by the Agriculture Protection Board;

in the following areas:—

(i) South-West Division;

(ii) Eucla Division;

(iii) Eastern Division;

(iv) North-West Division;

(v) Kimberley Division?

Mr. NALDER replied:

(a) As divisional statistics are not maintained by the Taxation Department, it is not possible to give State vermin tax collections for individual regions. However, it has been assessed that collections from the agricultural areas are about £90,000; and those from pastoral areas, about £10,000.

(b) Sums expended by the Agriculture Protection Board from the Vermin Act Trust Fund for the financial year 1959-60 are as follows:—

(i) South-West Division: £83,506, of which £25,849 was recouped.

(ii) Eucla Division: £9,558.

(iii) Eastern Division: £10,779, of which £1,163 was recouped.

(iv) North-West Division: £27,866, of which £3,980 was recouped.

(v) Kimberley Division: £7,373.

Recoups are mainly for group inspectors and doggers specially appointed, for whom road boards pay two-thirds of the cost. The North-West Division recoup also includes £1,064 for baits bought by the Agriculture Protection Board on behalf of road boards.

PERTH-KALGOORLIE RAILWAY

Freights on Sugar, Fruit Essences, and Aerated Waters

6. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Does he consider that the rail freight charges from Perth to Kalgoorlie of 228s. per ton on fruit essences, and 178s. per ton on sugar, which are used in the manufacture of aerated waters, are reasonable, when the charge on aerated waters is 130s. 6d. per ton?

(2) In order to assist goldfields manufacturers, would he give consideration to reducing the freight charges on fruit essences and sugar?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) and (2) The freight rate for aerated waters includes the conveyance of not only fruit essences and sugar, but also the volume of water which is mixed with these components to produce the drinks. The freight charges also are paid on the weight of the bottles containing the aerated waters and the cases in which they are packed. In addition, further freight charges are payable when the cases and bottles are returned to the manufacturer.

When these factors are taken into account, it will be appreciated that the freight rates on ingredients as against the manufactured aerated waters are equitable and should favour the local manufacturer.

CAR STEALING

Incidence

7. Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the incidence of car stealing increasing or decreasing?

(2) How many cars were stolen from the 1st July, 1959, to the 31st December, 1959, and the 1st January, 1960, to the 30th June, 1960—

(a) in the metropolitan area;

(b) outside the metropolitan area (both periods separately)?

Offenders Charged and Penalties Imposed

(3) How many offenders were charged for the thefts—

(a) in the metropolitan area;

(b) outside the metropolitan area (both periods separately)?

(4) Of the offenders charged, how many were under the age of 18 years in each of the two areas (both periods separately)?

(5) Of these offenders, how many were—

(a) fined;

(b) sent to gaol;

(c) committed to institutions (both periods separately)?

(6) Of offenders over 18 years, how many were fined and how many sent to gaol (both periods separately)?

Mr. PERKINS replied:

(1) Slight decrease on 1959 figures.

(2) Vehicles stolen from the 1st July, 1959 to the 31st December, 1959—445 vehicles.

In the metropolitan area: 389 vehicles.

Outside the metropolitan area: 56 vehicles.

Vehicles stolen from the 1st January, 1960 to the 30th June, 1960—419 vehicles.

In the metropolitan area: 371 vehicles.

Outside the metropolitan area: 48 vehicles.

(3) Offenders charged for the thefts were—

(a) in the metropolitan area (during the first period)—209 offenders.

(b) outside the metropolitan area (during the first period)—50 offenders.

(a) in the metropolitan area (during the second period)—146 offenders.

(b) outside the metropolitan area (during the second period)—41 offenders.

(4) 154 offenders in the metropolitan area (during the first period).
20 offenders outside the metropolitan area (during the first period).
96 offenders in the metropolitan area (during the second period).
21 offenders outside the metropolitan area (during the second period).

(5) Of these offenders (during the first period)—
(a) 2 were fined;
(b) 17 were sent to gaol;
(c) 151 were committed to institutions.
(during the second period)—
(a) 1 was fined;
(b) 8 were sent to gaol;
(c) 102 were committed to institutions.
During the first period 4 offenders were either placed on probation or dismissed as first offenders and during the second period, 6 offenders.

(6) During the first period—
(a) 11 offenders fined;
(b) 74 offenders sent to gaol,
During the second period—
(a) 20 offenders fined;
(b) 50 offenders sent to gaol.

TRANSFER EXPENSES

Differentiation Between Civil Servants and Schoolteachers

8. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Education:
(1) What are the essential differences between transfer expenses allowed to civil servants as against those allowed to schoolteachers?
(2) On balance, which group is favoured by such differences?
(3) Is it intended to place both groups on the same basis in future?
(4) If not, what are the main reasons for maintaining the differences which now exist?

Mr. WATTS replied:
(1) The essential difference is in the basis of allowances payable while travelling to and after arrival at the place of the new appointment as follows:—

While Travelling

Meal allowance where less than a full day and night is involved:—

Teacher

6s. 3d. for teacher for each meal.
Plus 3s. 2d. for wife for each meal.
Plus 3s. 2d. for each child for each meal.

Civil Servant

8s. for officer only for each meal.

Allowance where a full day and night or more is involved:—
25s. daily for teacher.
Plus 12s. 6d. for wife.
Plus 12s. 6d. for each child.
For officer only: 46s. daily for salaries up to £1,886 and 49s. daily if salary exceeds £1,886.

After Arrival

(a) 50 per cent of hotel expenses for family if awaiting arrival of furniture.
(b) £5 per week for a married man who has to board while seeking married quarters. Maximum period of three months. Further payment may be made at the Minister's discretion.
(c) Boarding costs for single teachers in excess of £6 per week reimbursed up to a maximum of £2 per week if salary below £1,100. Payable for a maximum period of one year for a continuous appointment in one place or for an aggregate of two years if more than one appointment or locality is involved.

For officer only—
46s. per day for salaries up to £1,886; 49s. daily if salary exceeds £1,886, plus 4s. daily in each case north of the 26th Parallel. Payable for 14 days after arrival unless transferred to married quarters. If unable to secure accommodation within 14 days he may be reimbursed living expenses at a rate and for a period approved by the Public Service Commissioner.

(2) This depends on circumstances.
(3) No.
(4) Main reasons are difference of conditions of service. The present method in the Education Department is of greater benefit to a large number of married teachers subject to numerous transfers.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING

1. Married Persons (Summary Relief) Bill.
On motion by Mr. Watts (Attorney-General), Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

2. Veterinary Surgeons Bill.
On motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 27th October.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [4.45]: This Bill, which seeks to amend the Lotteries (Control) Act, is quite a simple one. I endorse the remarks made by the Chief Secretary when he introduced the Bill last week. It will enable an instrumentality such as the State Electricity Commission to have some financial accommodation from the Lotteries Commission. Of course, the Lotteries Commission was set up some time before the State Electricity Commission. The provisions of this Bill will enable the Lotteries Commission to invest in such an authority as the State Electricity Commission and in Commonwealth inscribed stock, or in any security if the repayment of the moneys thereby secured is guaranteed by the Crown in right of the State. This would apply to any other State instrumentality that may come within the meaning of this definition.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Chief Secretary) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—Section 9 amended:

Mr. TONKIN: It seems to me the purpose of this Bill is to enable the Lotteries Commission to invest in the proposed totalisator agency board. The Minister shakes his head.

Mr. Hawke: Is that what it was?

Mr. TONKIN: It looks to me as if it were deliberately framed for that purpose. It is a strange coincidence that this idea should be born at the same time as a proposal is going through for a totalisator which will gamble. I direct attention to the wording of this clause. It says—

> Subsection (2) of section 9 of the principal Act is amended by substituting for the words, "in Commonwealth Inscribed Stock in its name" in lines eight and nine the words, "in its name in Commonwealth Inscribed Stock or in any security if the repayment of the moneys thereby secured is guaranteed by the Crown in right of the State.

It will be recalled that one of the provisions in the totalisator Bill was that the Government would guarantee loans to the board. The Government argued that the clubs should not be called upon to find this money, even though they said they were going to. The Government proposes to back the totalisator board and guarantee its loans, which immediately brings it within the purview of this Bill. If this Bill were carried it would enable the Lotteries Commission to invest its funds in the totalisator board. So it is left open to the possibility of losing these funds—or some of them—for a considerable time.

I ask the Minister straight out: Has this Bill been worded in this way in order to permit the Lotteries Commission to invest in the proposed totalisator board, which is going to gamble?

Mr. Brand: It is the usual wording to cover any lending requirement. It could be the University or any other institution that would take advantage of the borrowing powers.

Mr. TONKIN: Will the Government object to a provision in the Bill excluding the Lotteries Commission from lending money to the totalisator board?

Mr. Brand: We do not propose to agree to any such amendment.

Mr. TONKIN: The Treasurer's statement appeared somewhat reasonable in that it is the usual wording.

Mr. Brand: Why exclude the commission?

Mr. TONKIN: I will tell the Treasurer. The totalisator board will use half its turnover to gamble as a bookmaker; and it is also going to invest money as a punter. Is it right that people who subscribe to the charities organisation and buy lottery tickets should be providing funds that the Lotteries Commission may invest in the totalisator board for the purposes of gambling? I say it is wrong.

If the Government wants to back the loan of the totalisator board, all right. It has to take the responsibility for that and meet the liability if it arises. But let the totalisator agency board go to the usual financial institutions for this money with a Government guarantee. Do not let it go to the Lotteries Commission and tie up money which should be used for some other purposes for distribution amongst those people who require benefits from the Lotteries Commission, because this money might be tied up for years.

I want to know what single argument the Government will advance to support the proposal that the Lotteries Commission should invest money in the totalisator board, if there is an argument in support of that proposal. It cannot be for the rate of interest that is to be obtained for the purpose. The fact that the Government will not guarantee to exclude the Lotteries Commission shows it has in mind the possibility, or maybe the probability, that the Lotteries Commission will use this facility. I move an amendment—

> Page 2, line 5—Add after the word "security" the words "not being a security of the Totalisator Agency Board".

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: There is no necessity whatsoever for the amendment. The Deputy Leader of the Oppositon is indulging in flights of imagination for which there is no reason at all.

Mr. Tonkin: You are assuring me of that?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am giving a full assurance.

Mr. Tonkin: What is an assurance worth?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Will the honourable member not take my assurance?

Mr. Tonkin: Not any assurance from the Government. There is too much past experience to guide us.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Why not?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order! The Minister will speak through the Chair.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Is the honourable member talking about the introduction of some other legislation?

Mr. Tonkin: I am talking about the Government and its assurances.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: How does the honourable member know they will not be carried out?

Mr. Hawke: They have not been.

Mr. Tonkin: On past experience.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Who said they were assurances anyway? Obviously the honourable member will not take an assurance from me.

Mr. Tonkin: You are not in a position to give one.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This is the first intimation we have had that Lotteries Commission money would be invested in the totalisator board. In any case, the Lotteries Commission does not come under the direct control of the Minister in that regard. It is up to the commission to invest its moneys as it wishes.

Mr. Tonkin: That is why I said you could not give an assurance.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The honourable member was referring to other legislation.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order! The Minister will speak through the Chair.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: At the present time the Lotteries (Control) Act stipulates that any excess money shall, after it has been placed in the appropriate banking accounts, be invested only in Commonwealth inscribed stock. Rather than have the Lotteries Commission restricted to that avenue of investment, it was felt wise to allow it to do its best for the State by permitting it to invest in State loans and any loans run by a semi-Government or Government institution. The Government never had the slightest intention—

Mr. Tonkin: Why object to the amendment?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Because there is no necessity for it. We are not going to pander to the honourable member's flights of imagination in this respect. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. TONKIN: I will leave it to the Committee to judge whether the Minister gave any valid reason why this amendment should not be accepted. He started off by attempting to guarantee that the Lotteries Commission had no intention of investing money in the totalisator board. Then he completely cut the ground from under his feet by saying it was a matter for the commission to decide. If that be so, the Minister would not be in a position to prevent the commission from investing in the totalisator board, if it wished to take advantage of this amending Bill. The passing of this amending Bill would give an indication that Parliament approved of the idea; and the Lotteries Commission would be entitled to take advantage of this provision and invest its money in the totalisator board.

Mr. Watts: What for? The totalisator board has equally attractive fields of investment.

Mr. TONKIN: I suspect that the charities commission may take the view that the money it obtains is easy money obtained from gambling; and if it loses it in another form of gambling, it will not matter.

Mr. Perkins: You have a very fertile imagination.

Mr. TONKIN: What is the Government afraid of if there is no chance of the Lotteries Commission investing in the totalisator board?

Mr. Watts: I regard it as an insult to the Lotteries Commission and to the Government to include this amendment in the Bill.

Mr. TONKIN: I regard as an insult the explanation the Attorney-General gave about an assurance in regard to the Electoral Districts Act. The point is, that the Government side has not an argument as to why this amendment should not be made. It is most undesirable that the facility should exist for the Lotteries Commission to tie up its money with the totalisator board. The totalisator board might find some difficulty in raising the funds it wants for gambling purposes. Some institutions would not lend money to the board even though there was a Government guarantee, because the totalisator board is going to gamble as a bookmaker and a punter, besides running a tote. If the board finds difficulty in raising the money, it may go to the Lotteries Commission; and in my view it should not be permitted to do so.

The Minister said there is no intention of the Lotteries Commission investing in this way. The only objection the Deputy Premier has is that the amendment is an

insult to somebody. Do not let us be ticklish about insults; let us have a look at the legal situation. If there is no intention of the Lotteries Commission to invest in this way, and if it is an insult to suggest that it will do so, why not accept the amendment and lay it down that the Lotteries Commission shall not be permitted to invest in this manner; because the present Minister, being human, will one day die—and so will the Deputy Premier—and despite what they have said, it is not binding on somebody else who comes along subsequently.

We have to determine the principle of whether it is desirable that the Lotteries Commission should be permitted to invest its money in a totalisator board; because this is a Bill to permit the Lotteries Commission to invest money. That is its purpose. Apparently the Lotteries Commission is seeking other fields of investment; and this Bill is to enable it to do that.

We should say to the commission, "You can invest in Government-backed loans, but we do not think you ought to invest in the totalisator board." That is, if we think that way. Apparently some members of the Government think the commission ought to be permitted to do that. Well, I do not. I hold very strong views on that point; because this money is entitled to be used for charitable purposes—not gambling purposes.

Mr. Watts: Exactly. And that is why the Lotteries Commission would never invest in such purposes.

Mr. TONKIN: It could not do so before. But the passage of this Bill would enable it to do so.

Mr. Watts: It could invest in Canterbury Court; but it is not likely to do that.

Mr. TONKIN: The Government is on very weak ground if it takes the view that one need not insert something in an Act because people are unlikely to do what one is proposing to say they shall not do. That is much too unreliable a course to follow.

I believe we have to lay down what we think the commission ought to do; and I do not think it ought to be permitted to invest in the loans of the totalisator board. Whatever other Government-guaranteed loans it may invest in, I do not think it ought to use its money for that purpose. The Minister's reply was not worth anything.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do you think the Lotteries Commission would, of its own volition, invest in the T.A.B.?

Mr. TONKIN: It is not for me to think whether it would or would not. I want to ensure that it cannot.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do you think there would be the slightest possibility of its happening?

Mr. TONKIN: I do. I think that if the totalisator board is having difficulty in raising loans, and it needs the money, it will go where it can get it; and it might be easier for it to get the money from the Lotteries Commission than from a bank or an insurance company. And if there is nothing in the law to prevent it, what could we do if the Lotteries Commission decided to lend the money? What could the Minister do?

Mr. Watts: Precisely nothing.

Mr. TONKIN: That's just it—precisely nothing! Well, I do not want to be in that position.

Mr. Brand: The Lotteries Commission has been a responsible group all the way through, handling hundreds of thousands of pounds—in fact, millions, in the ultimate. Why suddenly suggest it is not going to be responsible?

Mr. TONKIN: If Parliament says it can do so, the commission would not be irresponsible in investing in the totalisator agency board.

Mr. Brand: The way you talk, it appears you think the commission would be taking a most irresponsible action.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not want to shut the door after the horse has gone. The Government is trying to show there is no possibility of this happening; that the commission is made up of responsible men, and they would not think of it. But do not stop them. That is the Government's attitude.

Mr. Watts: You started off by saying that the Government had practically arranged this. That was your first line of attack.

Mr. TONKIN: I have to admit to a suspicion that it was suggested by somebody associated with the proposed totalisator agency board. If that suspicion is ill-founded, I cannot help it. But I would remind the Government that it recently passed a Bill allowing the police to arrest a man on suspicion without a warrant. One has to keep track of what is possibly running through the minds of the members of the Government. I am simply asking that Parliament should declare that the totalisator agency board is not a security in which we feel the Lotteries Commission ought to invest. The Minister says the commission has no intention of doing so—would never think of it. The Deputy Premier says it is an insult to suggest it. Parliament should not make it possible for the commission to do so. It is a very simple matter, and would not upset anybody.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

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

Ayes—21.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Moir
Mr. Brady	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Curran	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Evans	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hall	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Toms
Mr. Heal	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	*(Teller.)*

Noes—25.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Mann
Mr. Brand	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Burt	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Naider
Mr. Court	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. O'Neil
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Owen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Dr. Henn	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Lewis	*(Teller.)*

Majority against—4.

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading

On motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Chief Secretary), Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 27th October.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [5.15]: Since 1905 there has been little occasion to make any serious amendments to the Fisheries Act. A few amendments were made in the early stages; but subsequently there has been very little alteration to the parent Act. I think a reprint was made to include the early amendments, following the introduction of the parent Act in 1905.

In recent times the fishing industry has been regarded as being of major importance to the State, and the importance of its position at present cannot be overstressed. Great strides have taken place in the industry during the past decade, and during that time we have seen a transition period; because, whereas wet fish were previously the main source of supply, there has been a change-over to crayfish, with an ever-increasing importance attaching to the crayfishing industry.

The emphasis is—and it has been for some time—on crayfish because great quantities have been captured in recent years. As a result, we have been able to develop a sound position on the overseas market; and I think it is imperative that we should maintain the high standard that overseas buyers have learned to expect in regard to Australian crayfish. In order to maintain that position, close supervision of the industry is essential.

For years the Fisheries Department has endeavoured to keep a close rein on the activities of this industry. Its conservation methods have been very rigid, but they have been quite just; and the activities of the inspectors have been of a high standard.

Of course, most fisherman play the game. It can be said that many of them view the industry on a long-term basis because they recognise that their livelihood is at stake, and they can only ensure the protection of their livelihood by regarding the industry on such a basis. However, there are in this industry, as in many others, a small percentage who disregard the law and violate almost every code of the industry. Conservation means nothing to men of that calibre.

It can be said that all fishermen are a bit selfish, but those who disregard the law are much more selfish than the better types of fishermen. Many of the lawbreakers know a close look-out is kept in order to detect the small fish that are disposed of for manurial and other purposes; and because of that they consider it is quite smart to deal in undersized fish. Of course, they do themselves, their mates, and the industry a great deal of harm in pursuing that course.

What they do adds to the task of the inspectors; and their task is always difficult because the detection of breaches in this industry covers a wide area. Our coastline is a long one, and we have relatively few inspectors or officers carrying out this work. Over the years, the department has been concerned about protection work; and the inspectors themselves have, for a long time, been of the opinion that unless their ranks are considerably increased there is very little chance of their achieving total success.

Some years ago it was suggested that because of the inaccessibility of our beaches and the almost total inadequacy of the equipment used by the inspectors, detection in many cases was practically impossible. The inspectors knew that illicit handling of small fish was going on, but they could do little in the way of getting to grips with the people trading in undersized fish. At that time the department decided to provide better equipment in order to give the inspectors a reasonable chance of being able to do the detection work that was necessary to get the evidence required to bring to court the people who were trading in undersized fish.

The trading in undersized fish was most pronounced with crayfish. The amendments in the Bill are designed to close all of the apparent gaps that have been discovered over a period of years in regard

to detection of these offences; and the disposal of undersized crays has been the major difficulty.

It is pleasing to see in the Bill that not only is the person who is responsible for the capture of undersized fish to be put in his right perspective, but also the people to whom he disposes of the fish. This is important because over a period it has been difficult for the inspectors to ascertain the origin of many of the undersized fish. Although they were able to trace the fish, they were not able to sheet home their origin, and so prosecutions were difficult.

I think that of all the crimes in the fishing industry that of stripping female crayfish of spawn is perhaps the worst; and it is the one that can do the industry the most harm. It is surprising to know that many of the undesirable types of fishermen have, for a long time, indulged in this practice. It is a regrettable feature in the make-up of the average person of the type who resorts to such a low method of making an income. The clothing of the inspectors with more power, and the stepping up of the fines for this offence should have a deterrent influence.

That portion of the amending legislation covers most of the heavier penalties; and I think it will be welcomed by all decent types of fishermen—and there are many in the industry who are decent people and who, in no circumstances, would stoop to the level that some others do. So the provision of heavier penalties is an improvement on the present position.

It is rather discouraging for an inspector to spend long hours in the darkness endeavouring to trace somebody who is transgressing, only to find, after having got what looked like an open-and-shut case, that when he gets to court his case is rather incomplete in that he is not able to have the prosecution taken to its logical end; or else the fine imposed is so small that it is not a deterrent.

The amending legislation provides not only higher fines but also for the suspension of fishermen's licenses for varying periods according to the number of previous convictions. I think that is the crux of the situation; and this is one factor that will act more as a deterrent than any other that I can imagine. A man will often pay a fine and hope to recoup it by the continuation of an illicit deed. But the suspension of a license is something that will pinch most; and it will undoubtedly cause many of the people who deal in undersized fish, and who have committed other breaches, to stop and think before they further contravene the Act.

The definition of the term "tail" is important. Undoubtedly the present set-up has caused some confusion in the matter of prosecutions, because frequently cases have gone against the inspectors, although everyone concerned probably knew full well that the persons being prosecuted were definitely guilty. But the looseness of the definition of the term "tail" has proved a stumbling block in the matter of sheeting home many of these misdemeanours.

I do not know whether the provision dealing with labelling as a means of identification will prove to have the full value that the Minister desires. It may be rather difficult to gain much advantage from this provision; and it may not assist very much in reducing the amount of illicit business that is taking place, because the people who engage in this type of business depend on catching small fish and disposing of them without their going through any known quarter.

Therefore, whilst I think the precaution contained in the Bill is a good one and will make easy the tracing of fish that pass through legitimate channels, and perhaps it may mean that we will have sounder records because of the methods adopted in connection with labelling, I feel that it will not be of much use in regard to the chap who does not put his undersized crayfish through the market.

I notice the Bill contains a provision under which the inspectors will be clothed with more powers in the matter of confiscating fish. It is essential that the inspectors be clothed with full powers in this regard, because they have a difficult and arduous task in tracing people who are on the wrong side of the law. Because of their intention to seize the catches in dispute, many of our inspectors have received rough handling from some of the people they were apprehending. Unless an inspector is much handier with his fists than the transgressor, very often he will come off second best.

Again, in endeavouring to discover breaches of the Act whilst they are on the water, inspectors have been badly handicapped because of the poor type of craft at their disposal. On one occasion I happened to be with one of the inspectors who, through his binoculars, was able to detect a fisherman, in open waters, committing a breach of the Act. At the time we were not more than half a mile from this fisherman; but because the inspector was known to him, immediately he turned tail when he saw the inspector's boat approaching. The boat in which the inspector and I were travelling had a speed of approximately five miles per hour, but the fisherman's boat was able to travel about 15 miles per hour, and thus he was able to show a clean pair of heels to both the inspector and me.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There is a case on record of an attempt being made, by fishermen committing breaches, to ram the inspector's boat.

Mr. KELLY: Yes; that is so. I think it is on record that there have been several cases of such attempts in the last few years.

Mr. Sewell: And this year, too.

Mr. KELLY: It is essential, therefore, that the inspectors should have at their disposal a craft suitable for the work, especially fast enough to overhaul the boat of any fisherman who is committing an offence. Very often the inspectors find themselves in a tight corner; and, from a departmental point of view, they should be given every assistance by members in this Chamber.

I have no complaint whatsoever with the Bill. Its provisions cover matters which have been fully discussed departmentally over a period of time; and some of them have been recommended by the Fisheries Advisory Committee, which has closely examined fishing problems. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [5.33]: I intend to support this Bill, and I draw the attention of members to the speech of the Minister when he introduced the Bill last week. It will be found that his speech was very comprehensive and gave a good picture of the industry, particularly the crayfishing section. This evening we have heard the member for Merredin-Yilgarn giving us some interesting facts on this industry, and also pointing out the need to tighten the control measures governing its activities.

We all know that there are no-hopers in the industry, and that there are some individuals who are nothing more nor less than pirates. If nothing is done to curtail their activities we will have the same thing happening to our industry as what has been happening in South Africa and off the coast of South America. We should take all necessary steps to ensure that that does not happen to our State, because we know the value of the crayfishing industry to Western Australia and to Australia generally. In this strain, I speak for Geraldton particularly, because the crayfishing industry has helped to put that town on the map.

Having discussed the contents of the Bill with members of the Fishermen's Association over the week end, I would point out to the Minister that they have agreed with its provisions, but wish it to be emphasised that they consider more inspectors should be appointed; because, at present, it is impossible for the existing inspectors to ensure that proper precautions are taken to guard the industry against the no-hopers and the pirates. That applies particularly to what are known as the freezer boats, and the bad practice indulged in by some of them in stripping the female crayfish of her spawn. Anybody who has had anything to do with the industry realises the grave danger of treating female crayfish in that way.

I emphasise to the Minister again that the people who have the welfare of the industry at heart, and who depend upon it for their livelihood, are anxious to see it kept on a safe and sound footing; and it is their opinion that this can be done by the appointment of more inspectors, and by providing them with a better type of boat which will give them more chance of policing the Act as it should be policed.

At first glance it might appear that the penalties set out in some of the provisions of the Bill are a little severe, but anyone knowing the industry is aware that the only way to control its activities is to prosecute those people who have no interest in the industry and do not care if they destroy it. I commend the Bill to the House.

MR. HALL (Albany) [5.35]: Like the previous two speakers, I commend the Bill to the House. Perhaps there are some clauses that should be amended in Committee, but I shall refer to them when the time comes. In his second reading speech the Minister covered the activities of the industry very fully and emphasised the seriousness of undersized crayfish being taken from the waters, and the drastic effect on the industry if this practice is continued.

If members have read the newspapers of the last few days, and today's issue in particular, they will have found that there is still some confusion over the correct way to measure crayfish. The authorities have not come to any agreement on the question, but the Minister is hoping to have some device adopted with which crayfish can be measured correctly. Those are points which should be carefully watched.

The Minister's concern can be appreciated fully when one reads the article contained in the October, 1960, issue of the *Fisheries Newsletter* which points out that 8,500,000 dollars came into Australia from crayfish exports, a large portion of the export trade being contributed to by this State. Therefore I do not think anyone in Western Australia would deny that this industry is valuable to this State and the Commonwealth in general; and that there is a need for its protection to the full, as aimed at by the Minister with this Bill.

Lined up with crayfishing in this State is another section of the fishing industry which operates within the Albany electorate. I refer to the works which are engaged in the canning of salmon, and the effect their activities could have on the industry generally. I would remind members of this House that I have been given replies by the Minister to the questions I asked relating to the importation of salmon heads into this State. I do not seek to ridicule the Minister for his answers to those questions. But I would mention that I took some further steps by arranging to have questions asked in the Senate on the same subject; and although I obtained an

answer which was a little more comprehensive, it did not clarify the situation to the extent I desired.

I was aiming at establishing whether we were losing to other States or other countries, by not importing salmon heads into Western Australia, a great deal of money that could be retained within the State. A newspaper article, appearing in *The West Australian* of the 8th July, 1960, is pertinent to the question. It reads as follows:—

> Govt. Lifts Duty on Cray Bait.
>
> Import duty on bait brought into W.A. for the crayfishing industry will be lifted immediately by the Commonwealth Government.
>
> Fisheries Minister Hutchinson, who has been pressing for removal of the 1d. per lb. duty, was told of this decision yesterday by Commonwealth Customs Minister Senator Henty.
>
> "This is good news for the crayfishing industry, which is fighting all the time against increased costs", Mr. Hutchinson said.

Perhaps that is good news for the industry. But I think we should look a little further than our needs and ask: Where are all these salmon heads coming from?

After reading that article I asked the Minister for Fisheries some questions; and, as can be seen from the Minister's answers, the information I received was not very enlightening. The questions I asked were—

(1) What tonnages of salmon heads were imported into this State for the crayfishing industry in 1958-59, 1959-60?

(2) Of the tonnages imported, how many tons came from foreign countries?

(3) What are the names of the countries from which salmon heads were imported?

(4) What tonnages were imported from other States, and what are the names of the States and the tonnage per State?

The answers were—

(1), (2), (3), and (4). This information is not available to the Fisheries Department.

I have said previously that I did not wish to throw the complete responsibility on to the Minister for Fisheries in this State; so I referred the questions to Senator Willesee, who asked the following in the Senate:—

(1) What quantities of salmon heads or other materials used for crayfish bait were brought into Western Australia during the period 1958-59 and 1959-60 from—

(a) other States of Australia;

(b) overseas countries?

(2) From which States and/or countries were they obtained?

Senator Gorton, for the Minister for Primary Industry, furnished the following information in reply to those questions:—

> Salmon heads and other types of crayfish bait used in Western Australia have been obtained from South Australia and also imported from the United Kingdom, Canada and Hong Kong. The Commonwealth Statistician does not record this information as a separate item, and I regret I am therefore unable to provide the honourable senator with detailed particulars of the quantities and sources of supply of crayfish bait imported into and used in Western Australia in the last two years.

The SPEAKER: Has this anything to do with the Bill?

Mr. HALL: Yes; I think it has a lot to do with the Bill, because we are importing salmon heads into this State when we could be using another form of bait as a substitute. My argument is that we are sending money out of the State unnecessarily and thus depleting it of funds that could be used to good advantage within the industry. I think that refutes any argument that what I have been saying has nothing to do with the Bill.

My other argument is that we owe a great deal to the fishing industry in this State because it is contributing such a large amount towards building up the Commonwealth's asset in the form of export trade. I also asked the Minister a series of questions about lost fishing vessels, and I will quote those questions to the House. They appear in the *Parliamentary Debates* of the 4th October, 1960. My first question was—

> How many cases of lost fishing vessels—

The SPEAKER: I do not think those questions have anything to do with this Bill. That is a matter for the Harbour and Light Department.

Mr. HALL: If fishing vessels are lost—

The SPEAKER: I am not saying that the questions have nothing to do with the fishing industry, but that they have nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. HALL: In that way, Mr. Speaker, you are certainly pruning my remarks on the Bill. However, I would certainly say that lost fishing vessels must constitute a loss to the industry generally.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member's speech must relate to the Bill.

Mr. HALL: Well, in that case, I must conclude my remarks Mr. Speaker, by stating that I support this measure.

MR. CRAIG (Toodyay) [5.44]: I do not want to delay unnecessarily the passage of the Bill through the House; but I feel I should make a few comments about the crayfishing industry because a major part of the crayfishermen's activities is carried out in my electorate, at Yanchep and Lancelin Island. Like the Minister and the members who have spoken this evening, I consider that the activities of the regular or permanent fishermen do not warrant the imposition of these severe penalties, because their livelihood depends upon the manner in which they fill the requirements of the Bill. It is against the type of fishermen who have been referred to as the irresponsible type that I direct my remarks. The method of inspection of catches is the main cause of concern. Regarding inspection on the large freezer boats, and also during processing in the factories, I consider this to be quite satisfactory.

Stricter supervision should be made in cases where catches are brought to shore, loaded on to road transport, and carted to centres in the metropolitan area for treatment. There is no reason why some of these bags cannot be off-loaded en route. Sometimes a fisherman might cart his catch in his own vehicle, and dispose of the catch through other than the normal channels.

Many of the irresponsible type of crayfishermen are seasonal workers who desire to earn some money in a short period of time, while they are free of their normal employment. They might be men on long-service leave. Two or three of these men could team together, hire a crayfishing craft, and go out fishing. They have no permanent share in the industry, and they stand to lose nothing by adopting illegal practices. Further, these fishermen fish close to shore and force the regular fishermen further out to sea. Quite a few of the regular fishermen have been forced to operate on the edge of the continental shelf, which is about 37 miles from the shore at Lancelin.

A stricter form of inspection should be imposed, particularly in respect of the public being found in possession of undersized crayfish if the penalties prescribed in the Bill are to become law. The public are rather ignorant of the regulations covering the size of crayfish. Over the years I have accepted a number of undersized crayfish. I am led to this belief after listening to the remarks of the Minister during the second reading. I doubt whether the Minister himself can determine, at a glance, that a crayfish is up to the regulation size.

So, to some extent, the public has to be protected. That can be achieved if the number of inspectors is increased; or alternatively it can be achieved if some method is evolved to enable inspection to be carried out from the point where catches are loaded to the point of unloading.

A further method which could be adopted is to carry on a regular check of fish shops, by keeping the owners informed of the regulations. I cannot help but feel that many undersized crayfish are disposed of through the fish shops, and that in many cases the proprietors are just as ignorant as the public. The Minister should give some consideration to this aspect. My proposal may be of some assistance to the industry. I support the second reading. I consider the Bill to be a very good one, and essential for the preservation of the crayfish industry.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [5.50]: Without reiterating the remarks which have already been made by other speakers in this debate, I would like to make a small contribution. I think the measure is worthy of commendation, although I have one reservation which I shall mention later.

Legislation is undoubtedly required to assist this very valuable industry—valuable particularly from the point of view of the dollars which it brings into this country. I would rather sell our crayfish tails to earn American dollars without conditions than sell the industries in this State for American dollars with conditions attached. As was pointed out by other speakers, millions of dollars are associated with this industry. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been invested in plant and equipment by people living in and around the electorate I represent, and in the electorate of South Fremantle. Generally these men are conscious of their valuable contribution to the economy of Western Australia in general, and of the Fremantle area in particular.

As far as I can see, this legislation will assist the men engaged in this industry to protect it. I would suggest that the decent fishermen need that assistance. Like the farmer who has to take a long-term view of the industry in which he is engaged, the crayfisherman also takes that view. Just as the farmer would be ill-advised to farm his property poorly, from the point of view of the future of the land and the production which will flow from it, so the decent crayfishermen are very conscious of the industry in which they are engaged, and of the necessity to ensure that the wrong type of fisherman does not deplete the stock of crayfish upon which the industry depends for its livelihood.

I would have liked to see in the Bill some limitation as to the permissible distance from the shore that crayfish can be caught. The member for Toodyay referred to some permissible distance and to the fact that many small operators fish close to the shore. I have lived on the coast for most of my life, and I have been

out on fishing expeditions on many occasions, so I am aware that much of the spawning is done close inshore. If members have seen a crayfish in spawn, they will appreciate that about 100,000 eggs are attached to the female.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Up to 500,000 eggs.

Mr. FLETCHER: I was being conservative when I estimated the number at 100,000 eggs. Even if one crayfish in spawn is taken, it can mean the loss of a great number. Admittedly 90 per cent. of the eggs may be devoured by some form or other of sea life, and perhaps only 10 per cent. survive. Even on those figures, the wanton taking of a crayfish in spawn will be a tremendous loss to the industry and to the State. A provision which prescribes the distance from shore within which crayfishermen cannot operate will serve the industry well.

I want to relate a personal experience which concerned the Denison area, and in which the Premier may be interested. Recently when I was there on holidays I witnessed the following episode early one morning: A taxi which had a Perth number plate pulled up on the foreshore. Five bags of undersized crayfish were loaded on to that taxi—two or three in the boot and the rest on the back seat. When I asked the person concerned where the crayfish were going, he said, "These will be on sale outside the Ozone Hotel, Perth, at 9 o'clock tonight." He made that statement, and I repeat it here. I personally witnessed that incident.

On my return journey south from Geraldton I witnessed another incident. A blue Austin utility came out of a bush track from the direction of the coast. In the back of the utility were bags of crayfish which I reasonably assumed contained undersized crayfish, because the whiskers of the crays could be seen sticking out of the bags. I do not claim for sure that they were undersized, but that would be a reasonable assumption; otherwise they would have been taken to the metropolitan area by normal transport in the normal way.

If that sort of thing goes on, I suggest to the Minister and to the department that the inspectors—who are so zealous in scrutinising what occurs in crayfish craft, and who prosecute the fisherman for having, say, five undersized crays among the hundreds in his catch, which may have been included carelessly or thrown into the catch by an employee—could be used to better purpose by devoting more of their time to finding out what is going on close to the shore or on the shore, watching the main roads, and keeping a closer check on the transport coming from the direction of the coast. I suggest the Minister look into that aspect.

Reference has been made to freezer boats, and I mentioned that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been expended on plant and equipment by those engaged in the industry. I suggest that the Freezer Boats Association is not—and I emphasise this—associated with any malpractice in the industry, such as the taking of undersized crays. I know many of the men associated with these craft. They have expended huge sums of money on plant and equipment. One freezer boat could cost as much as £20,000.

I cannot imagine that people who have invested such huge sums will ruin the industry on which they depend for their livelihood by engaging in malpractices. By catching undersized or spawning crayfish they would be adopting a very shortsighted policy. I believe it is the small operator who, in the preponderance of cases, handles undersized crayfish, and there should be greater supervision of these operators.

I now want to refer to one particular provision in the Bill. I have discussed this with some of the men engaged in the industry—men living in my electorate. It relates to the type of receptacle in which crayfish may be transported. The term used is "bag, basket, box or other receptacle." The provision states—

> In any prosecution in which it is material to show that the person charged is the person who delivered the fish, proof that a label bearing the name of that person was attached to a bag, basket, box or other receptacle shall be *prima facie* evidence that such person delivered such fish.

Some of the men engaged in the industry are a little concerned at this provision. A receptacle may be washed off the deck or superstructure of a crayfish boat during heavy seas. It could be washed ashore and picked up by another boat. If the finder should use that receptacle to hold undersized crayfish, and if in the process of the crayfish being transported the catch were detected by an inspector, then the receptacle would be *prima facie* evidence that the undersized crayfish belonged to the owner of the receptacle. I ask the Minister to look at this provision in an endeavour to give innocent parties some protection in instances such as the one I mentioned.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Before you leave that aspect, in connection with the case you mentioned it is open to the person concerned to prove that the container did go overboard or that something of a like nature occurred.

Mr. FLETCHER: There is some concern in relation to this matter, and I hope that I have adequately expressed that concern. As I said, that is the only reservation I have with regard to this Bill. I believe it is commendable because it does attempt to assist the industry and those engaged therein.

MR. HEAL (West Perth) [6.1]: I support the Bill, but there is one point to which I would like the Minister to give some consideration. We all know that penalties are necessary for the offences outlined in this measure, but I would like the Minister to explain the last line of proposed new subsection (1a) of section 24 of the Act.

It is stated that "any inspector may seize the same". I want to know whether that means that the inspector may seize the whole of the catch of the offender or just the crayfish which are undersized. If the inspector is to be permitted to seize the whole of the catch, I feel that the provision is a little harsh. After all, there may be £400 or £500 worth of crayfish in the load concerned; and while I consider that a person who has committed an offence under the Act deserves punishment for doing so, I think that if he is going to be fined £50 or £100 and lose his license for three or six months, he should be allowed to retain those crayfish which are of the correct size, in order that he might sell them.

I believe that under the transport set-up, one truck may be transporting consignments from four or five other fishermen. If one lot contained some undersized fish it would be very harsh if the inspector had the right to confiscate the whole load—including the crayfish of those fishermen who had only the correct-sized fish. It may be possible to clarify the matter a little more in the Bill; I do not know. But I think it should be clarified.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [6.3]: Like the previous speakers, I support this Bill in principle. It has been necessary for a long time. While I am not particularly interested at present in the crayfishing aspect, I am very interested in the round fish side, which is the means of livelihood of one of the towns I represent. I believe that the number of factory boats which are operating in the outside waters may be processing a large number of undersized fish, especially with the trapping and the trawling which take place. I am not referring to the prawn or scallop trawling, but to the trawling by fishing boats.

I do not altogether blame the boat owners for processing undersized fish as it is only natural, because undersized fish caught that way by them are usually injured to a certain extent and would probably die if returned to the water. However, I do believe that there should be some control over the trawling and trapping so that the undersized fish are not caught so easily. This occurs very extensively in Shark Bay, as the Minister well knows; and if regulations governing catching of fish in the outside waters by these factory boats were more strictly enforced, the fishing industry would be preserved to a great extent.

I agree that the Fisheries Department has not enough inspectors or boats. Like the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, I can also relate an experience which an inspector had. He went out to one of these boats, which came up from another town during the snapper season. He was advised that a certain boat had an undersized net on it. He managed to board the boat all right, and he saw the net. There was no doubt that it was there.

However, as soon as he boarded the boat, one of the fishermen—an extremely well-built man—sat on the net and told the inspector to go for his life and do what he liked. The inspector was only a lad, having not long completed his cadetship, and he could do nothing as far as the net was concerned. He did notify Perth, and subsequently the boat was located and the net seized.

I related that incident to point out that two inspectors should be on these patrol craft to provide protection and to witness any breach of the law. I know that because of the growing size of the factory boats which are operating all along the Western Australian coast, and the range which they have, the Fisheries Department has to keep its own boats up to the same standard. Although our research boats are of this standard, our inspection boats have little or no hope, particularly in the area I represent. If regulations such as are envisaged in this Bill are to be policed, the department must have the boats and men capable of doing the job. With those remarks I support the second reading.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—Minister for Fisheries—in reply) [6.7]: I would like to express my thanks to those members who have spoken on this Bill, and to state how gratifying it is that such a responsible approach has been made. It is conceivable that some would have adopted the stand that the penalties included in the Bill are so harsh as to merit disapproval. However, members have taken the long view and have realised that the penalties are being provided in the interests of the conservation of a very important industry.

Mr. Brand: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The fact that there have been so many speakers who have expressed general approval of the measure indicates the responsible approach they have taken to the Bill. I do not believe this measure will be the be-all and end-all of success in preserving the crayfishing industry, but I think it was inherent in all the speeches that it would do a lot in this regard.

The Bill endeavours to take steps to ensure that inspectors will be able to ascertain which fishermen are dealing in undersized crayfish. It also provides, as I have already said, for heavier penalties and, indeed, the suspension of fishermen who engage in certain malpractices.

I was particularly pleased with the remarks of my predecessor in office, the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, who pointed out that he doubted whether the labelling clause, designed to ensure that some knowledge would be had of the consignor, would be completely efficacious. I, too, feel that it is unlikely it will be 100 per cent. successful, and probably some anomalies will occur because of the difficulty of ascertaining this fact or that fact. However, whilst granting that there will be doubts and difficulties, I would point out that a great deal is expected under this clause.

The member for Geraldton said he felt it would be wise for the Fisheries Department to recruit and employ more inspectors. I feel that would be of great value; but if it were done we would be faced with the problem of just how many inspectors would be required to police properly the whole of the crayfish industry. Other members have pointed out the department's deficiences in this regard, too; but I feel that once they examine the situation so far as the number required to carry out the job properly is concerned, they will realise it would be far in excess of the number that could reasonably be employed by the department.

Sir Ross McLarty: What about closing certain waters?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Waters are closed. That is one of the ways of conserving the crayfishing industry. The waters are closed at present.

Sir Ross McLarty: I am thinking of their being closed for a lengthy period.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: They are closed for the spawning season.

Sir Ross McLarty: What about for a lengthier period?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That would pose a great many difficulties. If it were done, the livelihood of the fishermen would be jeopardised. We must explore every other avenue possible before taking that action. Following the remarks made by the member for Geraldton about the dearth of inspectors, I would say that the inspectors are endeavouring to work themselves even harder than previously in order to apprehend those who indulge in the crime of stripping the female crayfish of spawn; and this will be achieved by a microscopic examination of cray tails taken at random from various crates.

The member for Albany made mention of salmon heads for baiting. Although I know that you, Mr. Speaker, will not allow me to talk at length on this subject, I feel that if the honourable member knows where salmon heads can be obtained in any great quantity, he should contact either the department or myself at a later stage, and he will be informed of a certain firm he can contact.

The members for Toodyay, Geraldton, and Fremantle mentioned that they would like to know that the measures under this Bill would be fully implemented. They all stated that they felt a greater number of inspectors would be necessary for this, and I have already covered that matter.

The member for Fremantle stated that it would be very important not to denude the waters of undersized crayfish because of the long-term employment of the fishermen in the industry, and with that I agree. I have noted the point he made in regard to spreading the inspections to such places as hotel doors, and that will be done as far as is possible.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The member for West Perth had a query in regard to what he termed the very harsh penalties imposed under the Bill. The query he made was whether all crays would be seized if a proportion of crayfish in the catch were undersized. That is so. If one-twentieth of the total are undersized the whole lot of the crayfish may be seized. The purpose of that, of course, is to prevent fishermen from taking undersized crayfish; that is the whole purpose of the harsher penalty.

Among other things, the member for Gascoyne made a point in regard to traps being used at Shark Bay for the taking of snapper and the catching of undersized fish there. It is true that some are taken; and although at this juncture I cannot give much information to him, I can say that the question of restricting entry to certain inshore waters is being considered in regard to factory ships, processing ships, and catcher ships that go north to fish in those waters.

Mr. Norton: The detecting of undersized fish, when the fish are filleted, is practically impossible.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes. If the honourable member can think of a way to overcome that, I would be interested to hear of it. I reiterate the point I made when I commenced to speak: I am pleased indeed that members, from my predecessor down, have appreciated the real point behind the legislation that is being introduced, and I congratulate them on their reasonable, practical, and responsible approach to the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Fisheries) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—Section 3 amended:

Mr. HALL: Tonight the member for Murray raised a point in regard to close waters, with which section 3 deals. I take it that the interpretation of "crayfish tail" will follow the interpretation "close waters" in the Act, and it appears to me that one will have some relationship to the other. Could the Minister explain the position?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Clause 2 merely covers another interpretation, "crayfish tail," which will follow the definition of "close waters" in section 3 of the Act. The definition of "crayfish tail" has no real relationship to the definition of "close waters."

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Clause 4—Section 24 amended:

Mr. CRAIG: I refer the Minister to proposed new subsection (1) (a) of section 24, which deals with boats, vehicles, aircraft, etc. Can the Minister tell me whether the paragraph also covers transport by railway train?—because cray tails do come from Geraldton to the metropolitan area by train.

Mr. NORTON: I should also like the Minister to clarify the clause, because it is an all-embracing one. It stipulates practically all forms of transporting perishable goods, and it seems rather harsh and unreasonable, as I think the Minister will realise if he looks at it more closely.

An aircraft operator, or a transport operator of any kind, is operating on behalf of a number of persons. In the load he carries there might be 20 different consignments. Yet, according to the clause, if one-twentieth of the consignment is found to be undersized fish the whole of it can be confiscated, even though only one lot contains undersized fish.

Mr. HALL: While on the same clause, I would like to ask the Minister whether the words, "a person who without lawful authority" include a person who has purchased crayfish, or who has had crayfish given to him.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is referring to anybody carrying out duties under the Act, such as inspectors and so on.

Mr. HALL: It does not affect the purchaser?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: No.

Mr. KELLY: Paragraph (c) states—

> brings into Western Australian waters or into the State any fish.

I am unable to interpret fully the actual meaning of the paragraph. We know that over a period of years a good deal of exploratory work has taken place in many of the waters adjacent to some of our furthermost islands. If the position were to be fully analysed it would be found that quite a considerable quantity of fish come from beyond the three-mile limit. The two previous paragraphs seem to me to cover the position, and consequently I cannot see any reason for including paragraph (c) in the Bill.

It is obvious that some of the fishing areas west of the Abrolhos Islands would not be within Western Australian waters, and many of the grounds which fishermen are exploring would be in the same category. I would like the Minister to tell me why, in view of the fact that paragraphs (a) and (b) seem to cover the position, he has included paragraph (c).

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Firstly, the member for Toodyay raised the point as to whether a train would be covered by paragraph (a). I think it would be included in the term "vehicle". However, I will make an inquiry; and if there is any necessity to include the word "train" I will see that that is done in another place.

Sir Ross McLarty: The clause states "has in his possession or control." A person has no control over a railway train.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That could well be so. However, I will make inquiries and I give the honourable member an assurance that if there is any necessity for the inclusion of the word it will be done in another place.

Mr. Craig: I will accept your assurance.

Mr. Heal: You are lucky.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I think the member for Gascoyne made a very good point when he stated that all crayfish could be confiscated if one-twentieth of the whole consignment on a vehicle or aircraft happened to be undersized. My interpretation of the clause is that that would refer only to the consignment of a particular fisherman, if one-twentieth of his consignment were found to be undersized.

Mr. Sewell: Wouldn't the label clause cover that?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That is so; that would establish the ownership of the crayfish. I do not think that in a court of law the whole consignment of crayfish left in an aircraft or vehicle would be seized. It certainly would not be approached in that manner by an inspector of the department. It would be the consignment of the fisherman.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn asked why it was necessary to insert a clause referring to fish being taken inside Western Australian waters. It may be recalled that it has been argued before that undersized fish taken outside Western Australia may be landed without fear of prosecution of the fisherman. I think that in New South Wales there was a case recently where fish caught outside the State jurisdiction came within the State laws. The provision should be left as it is.

Mr. KELLY: I think the Minister has missed my point. At the end of paragraph (a) of proposed new subsection (1) of section 24 specific mention is made of the fact that the fish are taken within Western Australian waters or elsewhere. The same wording is used at the end of paragraph (b) of that subsection. This covers all fish. Then paragraph (c) says—

> brings into Western Australian waters or into the State any fish.

There is no mention of "elsewhere". It would seem to me therefore that (c) is redundant.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Without paragraph (c) we could not get at the fishermen.

Mr. KELLY: The earlier part of the provision covers the operative side.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The inspector may not find the fish until they are in the aircraft.

Mr. KELLY: That is also provided for in paragraph (a); so it is not necessary to provide for fish that come from outside the prescribed area. My recollection of the Fisheries Act is that our authority ends at the three-mile limit. We have no jurisdiction beyond that; and this provision would not make our jurisdiction any more legal. The Commonwealth has complete jurisdiction over waters outside the three-mile limit.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The Commonwealth laws are made to conform with State laws now.

Mr. KELLY: I think paragraph (c) of proposed new subsection (1) is redundant. I would now like to refer the Minister to proposed new subsection (3a) in paragraph (d) of this clause. Some of these fishing parties have as many as 200 craypots. The daylight hours are employed in constantly pulling up the pots, and during the flush season a lot of small and undersized crays come up all the time. The fishermen generally throw into a basket or container what they consider to be marginal crays, and there may be several such baskets or containers. These are kept there for inpection later. It would be easy for an inspector to find 200 or 300 crayfish in such boxes awaiting further inspection; and if he wanted to be officious he could rule that the men had 20 per cent. undersized crays, and they would be liable.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I appreciate the point made by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn. However, in such circumstances the inspector would not throw the book at the fisherman. There is always an understanding that marginal crays will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Concerning the honourable member's reference to paragraph (c) I would point out that the Crown Law Department has been asked to cover the circumstances of the case I mentioned of undersized fish taken outside Western Australian waters coming within the provisions of the Act, and the fishermen landing them being liable to prosecution. Paragraph (c) should not be excluded.

Mr. NORTON: I would again like to refer to proposed new subsection (3a) in paragraph (d) and ask the Minister to have another look at it, with a view to amending it in another place if necessary. I suggest that the owner of a vehicle—and by this I mean aircraft, ship, and so on—who is operating as a common carrier should fill in a note in respect of the consignment he is carrying, bearing the name of the consignee or consignor in order to identify him.

If this were not done a man could be carrying, as a common carrier, fish which had been purchased from various fishermen; and if it were found that one-twentieth were undersized he would be liable. The fish could have been purchased from the market, and the container could still have the previous label on it, and yet the common carrier would be liable if he were found with such a receptacle containing undersized fish.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not think there is any necessity for this. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would refer members to subsection (2) of proposed new section 24B. This is the label clause, and it will be sufficient to enable an inspector to determine the consignor.

Mr. Norton: It might have been sold at the markets and still bear the label or brand.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I cannot see the point.

Mr. NORTON: If the brand or identification were not removed from the receptacle after it had been purchased from the market it would mean that a purchaser would be liable for somebody else's misdemeanours; because once he had purchased the container of crays it would become his property. The transport operator could quite easily be the purchaser of the container of fish bearing a previous label; so what would happen in such a case?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The prosecution would apply only to the consignment a purchaser bought. If fisherman A. sold to a consignor crayfish one-twentieth of

the total of which was undersized, then both the fisherman and the purchaser would be liable because they had dealt in undersized crays.

Mr. Norton: The whole of the consignment would be forfeited as well.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I said I would make it a point to determine that only the consignment of the one fisherman would be liable to total seizure. But the consignment from fisherman A. would be liable to seizure if one-twentieth of the total number of crays were undersized.

Mr. FLETCHER: On page 2 of the Bill "crayfish tail" is defined as meaning the abdomen of a crayfish when severed from the carapace. Therefore I assume that paragraph (c) could be used for the purpose of inflicting a penalty in cases of separating the head from the tail, as distinct from the whole fish.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

> Page 3, line 18—Delete the word "twenty" and substitute the word "fifty."

I am sorry I have to move these amendments, but the proof reading of the Bill was not as sound as it might have been, and the proper amendment was not inserted. The amendment I have moved conforms to the original idea of raising the penalties to a point where they would prove to be a deterrent; but the word "twenty" in the Bill is the maximum amount now provided in the parent Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

> Page 3, line 20—Delete the word "twenty" and substitute the words "twenty-five".

This is another mistake which appears in the paragraph.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

> Page 3, line 20—Delete the word "fifty" and substitute the words "one hundred".

I would remind members that this penalty conforms to that in the second paragraph of page 6 of the Bill.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 7 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILLS (5)—ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Northern Developments (Ord River) Pty. Ltd. Agreement Bill.
2. Prevention of Pollution of Waters by Oil Bill.
3. Plant Diseases Act Amendment Bill.
4. City of Fremantle (Free Literary Institute) Act Amendment Bill.
5. Esperance Lands Agreement Bill.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1960-1961

In Committee

Resumed from the 27th October; the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair.

Vote—Railways, £2,538,000:

MR. HAWKE (Northam) [8.10]: The Loan Estimates are always a matter of considerable interest to members of the Committee. In the first place, they provide an opportunity for those who are so inclined to deal in broad principle with borrowing as a method of financing State development; and, in the second place, they give all members of the Committee an opportunity of bringing before the Government the potentialites—if I dare use the word—of their respective districts. Under that heading members can again bring under the notice of the Treasurer the wonderful opportunities for development in this district, that district, and the other district, and make very strong appeals to the Treasurer to spend more money in the particular districts.

I propose not to discuss the broad principle of financing State development out of loan moneys mainly because, when the Revenue Estimates were before us, I took the opportunity of speaking for a fair length of time upon the huge indebtedness which has been built up in Western Australia through the years, particularly over the last 20 years; and of the very solid interest burden which has developed and which is now a substantial burden upon the annual revenues available to the Government in the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

There was a time when large amounts of public indebtedness were a source of worry; and when large public interest Bills caused considerable concern. That was in the days when £1,000,000 was really £1,000,000. However, in the intervening period, which covers the war and the post-war years, millions of pounds have lost their significance, even to us in Western Australia; and unless one talks now in thousands of millions of pounds, one finds it very hard to get anyone to become at all interested when discussing the matter in relation to the general problem which it is in public affairs.

I think the attitude in the minds of many people today is that posterity can look after these problems. The point is made that most of the money invested has created assets; and has led to considerable development in many directions; and all these things are beneficial to succeeding generations, and therefore each generation as it comes should have some of the worry and some of the responsibility of helping to bear the financial burdens of that period. Whether that is wise, in all the circumstances, is something about which I have no intention of speaking this evening.

The Treasurer when introducing these Estimates to the Committee told us that this financial year Western Australia had been allocated by the Loan Council £21,640,000 in all, including an amount of £3,000,000, which had been allocated for Commonwealth-State Housing activities in this part of Australia. He also told us that loan repayments to the Government were expected to bring in approximately £1,590,000.

On the basis of those figures, it appears as though the Government will have for expenditure on general loan undertakings, not including housing, an amount of slightly over £20,000,000. I would not say for one moment that the amount in question would meet all the legitimate needs of the State during the current financial year, and certainly the amount would not meet all of the requirements which are put before the Government from time to time.

The loan programme of works as outlined by the Treasurer appears largely to be a programme based upon foundations which were laid previously; and it would be only logical for me, in the circumstances, to say that the programme outlined by the Treasurer for this current financial year has, in broad outline, my approval.

We find that the Railways Department still makes heavy demands upon the loan funds available to the Government. In this regard I would say that when I first became Treasurer of the State I did develop the idea, in the early years, that after we had made available for railway capital expenditure a few millions, the demands of the department would lessen substantially, and that in the not-too-distant future a point would be reached where the Railways Department would not make any heavy financial demands upon our loan funds. However, it did not take many years in the Treasury for my hopes in that direction to be dashed.

I have since come more and more to the conclusion that the Railways Department will always remain a department which will make substantial demands upon the loan funds. I suppose, when we think more deeply about the railway system, that situation is to a large extent understandable. This department is very large and widespread. It provides essential transport services over many miles of railway lines; and most importantly of all, it does handle huge quantities of bulk freights which could not be handled at prices payable to producers except on the railway system.

We had an opportunity of comparing the situation in that regard a few years ago when road transport had to be used exclusively for the haulage of wheat in this State. The charges which road hauliers had to impose in transporting that wheat were very heavy indeed—so heavy that Governments had to subsidise the producers in regard to the charges which were imposed.

When we also realise that the Railways Department has to establish and maintain its own tracks in good order out of its own financial resources—out of the loan funds which are made available to it by the Government—we see another important factor which makes it necessary for this department year by year to be allocated substantial amounts of loan money.

Road transport is in a much happier situation in that regard, because the Main Roads Department spends huge sums of money annually in establishing and maintaining good main roads; and the local authorities—mostly road boards—spend their ratepayers' money in establishing and maintaining in quite good order most of the district roads. So we see clearly that motor road transport has a very great advantage in that respect when compared with the railways.

It is true—and I hope I am not anticipating the member for Murray in this—that owners and operators of motor road transport pay very substantial sums of money to the Commonwealth Government in the form of petrol taxation, and to the State Governments in the form of vehicle licenses, and so on.

The Treasurer provided us with quite a substantial amount of detailed information in connection with the operation of the Railways Department; and in so doing gave members of this Committee—who are more interested in railway affairs generally than other members—an opportunity of being fairly fully informed as to the directions in which loan moneys will be spent this financial year in relation to the railway system as a whole.

The Treasurer told us, in connection with the operations of the State Electricity Commission, that anticipated expenditure for the current financial year is approximately £3,300,000. He told us that £500,000 of this amount would come from the General Loan Fund; and £1,450,000 from loans which would be subscribed publicly, with the balance of approximately £1,400,000 coming from the commission's own resources.

I am rather interested to know just what the commission's own resources are in this regard. Would this suggested amount of £1,400,000 be loan moneys, or capital moneys which were available to the commission during last financial year and

which were not expended during that period; or are they moneys which the commission has accumulated under some other heading? I would be pleased, when the Treasurer is replying, if he would make it clear to members of the Committee just how this large amount of money has accumulated in the hands of the commission and therefore is available for capital expenditure during this present financial year.

I was interested in the few words which the Treasurer had to say about the progress being made with the construction of the large-scale power station at Bunbury. The fourth and final unit will be commissioned, so the Treasurer tells us, during the winter of next year. This power station has been under construction for quite a substantial period; and it will, of course, become a very vital generating station in the activities and the operations of the commission in the south-west portion of the State. In addition, I understand it is also connected up to the metropolitan scheme, and therefore can be of value in that regard as well.

The Treasurer also told us it is intended to call tenders for the construction of a new large-scale power-generating station at Collie. Obviously Collie is strategically well placed as a centre where a large-scale power-generating station should be established; and I am sure we will all watch with interest the calling of tenders in connection with this large-scale project, and also, in due course, watch with interest the construction of the station and its subsequent operation for the generation and distribution of very large quantities of electric power.

The Treasurer gave us information concerning the progress made with the construction of the comprehensive water supply scheme. It is clear from what he told us that this scheme is moving on towards total completion. It certainly seems ages ago since the first Bill in connection with the comprehensive water supply scheme was introduced in this Parliament.

Mr. Brand: My word it is!

Mr. HAWKE: It was before the war, if I remember rightly. The Bill did not receive the approval of Parliament on that occasion.

Mr. Brand: It was after you introduced the Bill—the original comprehensive scheme.

Mr. HAWKE: The Bill was approved in the Legislative Assembly—

Mr. Brand: Yes, in 1945.

Mr. HAWKE: —but it was held up in the Legislative Council. It went to a conference of managers of the two Houses, and was lost in the conference. The main basis of opposition in the conference was on the ground that the scheme was not required in the Great Southern portion of Western Australia. Fate took a hand fairly soon after that and quickly convinced those who considered that the scheme was not required in the Great Southern areas, with the result that they became advocates of a scheme which was not as comprehensive as the one originally sponsored, but which was nevertheless a scheme of very great importance, particularly to townspeople in that part of the State.

I am glad to say there was never any worthwhile opposition in the areas which were then to have been covered by the northern section of the scheme. The townspeople in the northern section—and also the farmers in those areas—were extremely keen to see the scheme approved by Parliament, and to see the work put in hand as early as it was practicable to do so.

So I think we might all rejoice today in the fact that Parliament did subsequently approve a lesser scheme, and that that lesser scheme is now nearing completion. In this regard we should also offer a word of appreciation to the Chifley Commonwealth Government, and to succeeding Commonwealth Governments, for the substantial amount of financial help which they made available to assist Western Australia to carry that scheme through to a successful conclusion.

Steps have been taken in this State to develop another comprehensive water supply scheme. A governmental request from Western Australia to the Commonwealth in this matter has been submitted, the request being for financial help on a pound for pound basis, I think. For some reason which is not clear to me, the present Commonwealth Government has turned the request down. I hope that is not by any means the last word of the Commonwealth Government in the matter. I am sure the present State Government will resubmit the request for financial help from the Commonwealth.

When we talk to Commonwealth Ministers and to Commonwealth members of Parliament about Western Australia, they all agree that water is our greatest requirement. All of us in Western Australia agree with that as well. Therefore the provision of more water supplies in this State is a matter of first-class State importance, and a matter of considerable national importance.

In that situation it should, I think, be the duty of the Commonwealth Government to join with the Government of this State for the purpose of ensuring that water supply development should go on unceasingly in Western Australia. I think there should be no end to this matter.

The need for increasing quantities of water will continue to exist for a great many years to come. All of the improvement which we see taking place from time to time in the development of pastures means that more sheep can be carried to

the acre of land which is already developed; it also means that increasing numbers of stock per acre will be carried on new land which is being brought into cultivation from year to year.

So that situation alone will establish an urgent need for increasing quantities of water to be made available; and any Commonwealth Government seized with the necessity for progress and development, not only in this State but in other States, should be glad to grasp an opportunity of helping financially, and in any other way, to ensure that greater and still greater development of water supplies takes place from year to year.

The Treasurer also gave us some information, necessarily brief, regarding harbour developmental plans in connection with the more important outports such as Bunbury, Geraldton, Albany, and Esperance. It is good to note that the hinterland of the State is developing constantly, and is therefore setting up a need for harbour facilities at those places to be developed in order that more and more trade might be done through those outports.

It is so easy in these days for centralisation to increase and for industry and population to grow out of all proportion in the metropolitan area, leaving the country areas—and in this particular aspect of the situation, the outports—struggling to win a place in the sun and to obtain the volume of trade which should rightfully be theirs.

I do not this evening wish to talk at any length about centralisation or decentralisation; they are words which have been used, and misused also, in many situations. Suffice it for my purposes to say that the magnet of centralisation has tremendous drawing power—a drawing power far beyond that which it should possess.

Some people seem to think that centralisation is brought about by conscious effort on the part of the Government—and I am not speaking of this Government in particular. However, I think centralisation is brought about much more by the conscious effort of other people. Naturally the capital city of a State is substantially populated; it has to be so populated to become the capital city. Once the capital city becomes substantially populated, it naturally provides a good market for industry, and for trade and commerce.

The capital city is placed where the centre of Government is situated. Naturally the capital city population is right up against the Government, as it were, geographically; and it is in a position to dictate to the Government all the time, and to influence the Government. Consequently it becomes difficult for Governments to hold the balance fairly as between the capital city requirements and the requirements of all the rest of the State put together.

There is the further angle that it becomes essential for the Government to provide many vital facilities for a capital city's population, because, as I have already said, that population is big; it is growing all the time; and it is concentrated in a small area of country. From the angle of hygiene and health alone, it becomes an inescapable duty of the Government to make sure that water supply facilities, drainage facilities, sewerage facilities, and hospital facilities—just to take a few examples—are provided and constantly maintained in order to keep up with the increase in population that takes place in a capital city.

Another vital factor in this matter is that a capital city is the financial centre of the State or the country of which it is the capital. It is the centre or headquarters of the banking system of the State; the headquarters of the insurance system, and so on. I think it can also be said that most business concerns which intend to establish business undertakings, prefer to establish them in the capital city.

I have already given some reasons why that is so—the big capital city market; the large population; the fact that the capital city is the financial centre; and so on. Another reason is that the capital city is usually the social centre, and the wives of business people prefer, I think, to be in the capital city in order to be in the social life of the community as it is carried on in the capital city rather than to be shall I say, at Dongara, Norseman, Northam, or some other place in the country.

Mr. Nulsen: That is where they should be; somewhere down there.

Mr. HAWKE: However, it is encouraging to find that additional loan moneys are being made available this year, as they have been in previous years, to enable greater harbour development to take place at the outports I mentioned a few moments ago.

I noticed that the Treasurer, at one stage of his speech, said that a remand home for the Child Welfare Department is to be established at Point Heathcote. I presume this will be a remand home for girls. I am not expecting the Treasurer to answer that remark off-hand, because I will have an opportunity of obtaining the information from the Minister who acts in this Chamber on behalf of the Minister for Child Welfare, when the Revenue Estimates for that department are before us in a few days' time.

The only other part of the Loan Estimates I wish to discuss has relationship to the north-west of our State. The Treasurer told us that the Commonwealth Government is making £5,000,000 available under special legislation passed through the Commonwealth Parliament to

assist in promoting development in the north-west—in those areas north of the 20th Parallel of south latitude.

I think the member for Murray, the Attorney-General, and I might claim a little credit in this regard. We were appointed by this Parliament, some years ago, following a motion moved by the late Mr. Ackland, to go to Canberra as an all-party committee to put up a case for the greater development of the north-west of our State, and to request the Commonwealth Government to make substantial sums of money available. The late Mr. Rodoreda was also a member of that delegation. We had a mixed reception at Canberra on that occasion.

Mr. Brand: You never get anything else.

Mr. HAWKE: We were received rather enthusiastically in regard to some of the matters we put forward; but when we suggested that sugar cane might be grown economically in an Ord River irrigation scheme which we proposed, the reception was not quite so good from one of the then Commonwealth Ministers. He told us, in effect, that sugar cane would be grown at Ord River in Western Australia only over his dead body!

It is correct to say, however, that the Prime Minister was greatly interested in what we had to say, as were most of the other Ministers. We came away believing we had made an impression and that, in due course, the seeds which we had sown as an all-party delegation from this Parliament at that time would germinate —or at least some of them would—with beneficial result to our north-west in particular; and, through that part, to the State generally.

The Treasurer told us of the projects which have been approved by the Commonwealth Government under the joint Commonwealth-State scheme. Those projects are the construction of a deep-water port at Black Rocks; the construction of a new berth at Wyndham jetty; the reconstruction of the old section of Wyndham jetty; investigations in the Napier Broome Bay area; and a diversion dam scheme on the Ord River. So I think we might all rejoice in the fact that the Commonwealth and the State are jointly proceeding to carry out substantial developmental undertakings in the north-west of the State.

Undoubtedly, in itself, the carrying out of these projects will be of considerable help in that part of the State. Much of the work necessary to establish these undertakings will be done in the north-west, providing considerable employment in those parts and thereby circulating a substantial amount of money in the towns and centres concerned which will build up population and add to the general activity in that part of the State. Naturally, when all of the projects are completed and put into operation, additional benefits will come into existence and make a contribution to the progress of that part of Western Australia.

Sir Ross McLarty: I think the member for Kimberley was right a week or two ago when he said that the most urgent need up there was good roads.

Mr. Rhatigan: Very much more urgent than the construction of the Eyre Highway.

Mr. HAWKE: I do not desire to be drawn into that controversial argument at this stage.

Mr. Brand: The member for Eyre and I do not think so.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order!

Mr. HAWKE: It is very good to know that the Commonwealth authorities recognise our north-west as now being part of Australia. I think that is tremendously important. It could be one of the greatest gains to flow out of the representations which have been made to successive Commonwealth Governments on this matter over a period of several years.

The fact that the Commonwealth Government has recognised this situation and the Commonwealth Parliament has committed itself, by legislation, to vote money to assist in the greater development of the north-west is, I think, a substantial step forward. I have always held the view that the north-west, as such, will never continuously carry greatly increased population except on the basis of substantial mining development. My view in that direction has been held because mining does provide substantial employment on the spot; whereas nearly all of the other activities now being carried out in the north-west, and those planned for the north-west, do not provide anywhere near the same ratio of on-the-spot employment as mining.

From time to time we have been greatly encouraged by news which has come to us regarding mineral development in the north-west. On one occasion, not so many years ago, we were all thrilled to pieces by the news which came from that direction in regard to oil having been discovered. When that news came we thought, "Here is great development for the north-west", because it was naturally concluded that much of the monetary wealth which would come from oil would be reinvested in that part of the State.

However, that oil find was a very great disappointment. It is almost unbelievable that it would be the only place in all that area where oil would exist. Anyone could go there on any day now; and if he could contact one of the employees of the company concerned, and had enough influence, that official could take him to Rough Range No. 1A drill hole—I think it is—and he would unlock a wheel and turn it on, and the oil would flow out of the

pipe down the creek. Furthermore, that oil would run continuously for weeks, even months—and maybe for years—if it were allowed to do so.

Yet that was the only spot where oil was found. I understood, at the time—and more recently, too, from company reports—that about eight of those holes producing oil would be required to make the field economical from the point of view of developing it as an oil-producing field. So although it is difficult to hope that many more discoveries of oil will be made up there, nevertheless we must hope that such will be the case.

Sir Ross McLarty: The company has spent plenty of money.

Mr. HAWKE: Yes; as the member for Murray says, the company has spent huge sums of money in the north-west trying to discover oil in payable quantities. The last figure I heard, about nine to 12 months ago, was that it had spent over £14,000,000.

Mr. Kelly: It is over £16,000,000 now.

Mr. HAWKE: The expenditure of £16,000,000 for a bunch of holes in the ground is a most discouraging sort of experience. Nevertheless, the company is still pursuing the chase. It is still carrying out drilling activities in the north-west; and I understand it will, in the near future, also be carrying out drilling activities fairly close to the metropolitan area.

Sir Ross McLarty: It has spent a tremendous sum of money on road construction.

Mr. HAWKE: Yes; it has done that, too. Mr. Speaker, the Loan Estimates, as presented to us by the Treasurer, in broad outline, have my support.

MR. NULSEN (Eyre) [8.54]: In a different way, I am going to have a few words to say on the Loan Estimates. I would point out to the Treasurer that if something is not done in regard to the development of some of the areas of Western Australia, we will not need the Loan Estimates in a few years to come. In my opinion Western Australia is too big an area to develop satisfactorily under the administration of any one Government, if the potentialities of the State are to be exploited to advantage. Also, we must not forget what is now the forgotten inland which is capable of carrying people worthy of its productivity. We must populate this State, or endure perdition.

It was not long ago that, owing to our financial position, the Government had to take steps to close down some of our railways, thus taking away all incentive from those people who are producing the real wealth of the country. In the closing of those lines, I was not concerned about the loss of passenger traffic, but about the loss of freight traffic. When the State starts to close down railway lines on account of the State being too large to be developed as it should be, then, in my opinion, we are going from bad to worse. In the early days of America's development, railway lines were constructed ahead of agricultural development.

I am quite serious when I say that unless something is done to develop this huge area we have to look after we will be facing greater problems than we are today. For instance, the member for Murchison represents an area as big as New South Wales, which State carries a population of nearly 4,000,000. Yet the honourable member's electorate does not contain any more than 4,000 people. When we realise the importance of this fact and that the policy of all Governments of this State is decentralisation, I think we must recognise that it is not possible for us to develop our huge area and hold on to the State in face of the needs of our Asian neighbours who are so close to our boundaries.

In my opinion we should give all the incentive possible to the people who are at present residing in the country. We must adopt a more judicious view towards the increase of population in the outback areas of the State. Our Asian neighbours, who are not very far from our Australian boundaries, number 1,350,000,000; and, as a result, they are land hungry.

In this State we have 624,588,800 acres, only a small portion of which has been cleared for cultivation. We hear people say we have a terrible lot of waste land; but in my opinion such areas can be developed only if we are provided with the means of doing so. I feel that unless we can do something in this direction our Asian neighbours, who are starving, are entitled to take the country from us.

I would point out that Japan has a population of 345 persons to the square mile. From the 1959 figures, which are contained in the year book, it is seen that we have a total population of 713,583, of whom 382,000 reside in the metropolitan area. That city population is spread over an area of 191 square miles; that is, we have 2,000 people to the square mile in the metropolitan area. If we were to take the population of the metropolitan area from the total State population, we would not have half a person to the square mile.

Our neighbours, although of a different skin colour, are human beings and have the right to live. Biologically they are the same as we are, except for the colour of the skin. We must populate this State of ours, or we will become dominated by the coloured races of Asia. I speak in this strain only to make people realise what the position will be in a few years' time if nothing is done. If we do nothing we will be unlucky to be white, because there is every possibility of our being dominated by the coloured races.

If we leave the land undeveloped, the neighbouring peoples will say, "If you cannot use it, why can't we make use of it?" I think they are entitled to say that. This State is too big for one Government to develop. I shall give some figures to make a comparison with the other races and countries of the world. Numerically the coloured races are in the vast majority. The population of the world is increasing by 48,000,000 to 50,000,000 a year. The rate of increase of the coloured people is greater than the rate of increase of the white people.

I do not want people to think that the coloured races could not be as good as we, physically and mentally, if given the opportunity. Perhaps at the present time they are behind us because they did not get the same start as the white races. When they do get started, and when Communism gives them a great kick-off, there is no doubt that they will go ahead. They will not then forget—especially the educated ones—how they were treated in their days of distress.

Centralisation is a curse to any country. It has broken down civilisations before today. We in this State must decentralise as much as we can. There is only one method, and that is to split up this State. Western Australia has 975,920 square miles, or 32.8 per cent. of the whole area of Australia; yet we have only 7½ per cent. of the total population. In this respect Australia is in a bad enough position, but Western Australia is far worse off. The metropolitan area of Perth is only small, yet it contains 2,000 persons per square mile. It was explained by my leader that the metropolitan area is like a sponge on the country districts. It takes a great deal from the country, but does not reciprocate in the same proportion. Over 80 per cent. of the productivity of this State comes from the country areas for export.

I have taken my figures from the *Official Year Book of Western Australia* for 1959, so I am not exaggerating. Many attempts have been made in New South Wales to achieve secession and the creation of new States. It is some 309,433 square miles in area, or not quite one-third of the size of Western Australia. It has a population of nearly 4,000,000 yet it is seeking the establishment of new states. New England in that State has been looking for secession for a long time. I agree with the desire of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition expressed by interjection on one occasion last year, when he asked: "When will we get separation?" I shall give examples shortly to show that the States of South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland had a very difficult task in seceding from New South Wales.

Western Australia must be split up into two or three states. That cannot be done straightaway; but as a start we could have one more state, and add others later. The cost of transport and freight is too high, as are the other expenses of production in the country. I say this State is too big in area for one Government to control efficiently.

I have made a comparison of the population and area of Western Australia with those of the other States. This State is 37 times larger than Tasmania; it is over three times larger than New South Wales; it is 11 times larger than Victoria; it is just short of 1½ times larger than Queensland; and it is over 2½ times larger than South Australia.

Tasmania carries a population of 13 persons to the square mile; New South Wales, 12 persons to the square mile; Victoria, 31 persons to the square mile; Queensland, 2 1/7 persons to the square mile; and South Australia, 2 ½ persons to the square mile; but W.A., not quite three-quarters of a person per square mile. The Western Australian figure includes the population in the metropolitan area.

If Western Australia had the same density of population as the other States the population would be much greater. With the density of Tasmania, Western Australia would have a population of over 12,500,000. If we had the same density as New South Wales, we would have 11,500,000 people. If we had the density of population of Victoria we would have over 30,000,000. If we had the same density as Queensland we would have over 2,000,000; and if we had the same density as South Australia we would have over 2,500,000 people. I do not say that Western Australia should have as high a density of population as some of the smaller States, but we should have a reasonable population. Here we have not even three-quarters of a person per square mile, in a State which is one-third the size of Australia.

Mr. Bovell: How many new states do you suggest?

Mr. NULSEN: For a start, one. These comments are put forward only as food for thought. Probably I shall not be on this earth when a separate state is brought into existence in Western Australia. In view of the experiences of other countries, I know how hard it is for any section of a State to secede from the capital city.

Mr. W. Hegney: The Northern Territory has a population of some 20,000 and an area of 523,620 square miles.

Mr. NULSEN: That is so. That country cannot be developed from Canberra. Similarly, Western Australia cannot be developed from Perth, because the distance it too great. A big State like Western Australia cannot be developed efficiently from Perth. It has to be decentralised. Centralisation has been the ruination of other countries and empires. The foundation of Western Australia has been built on centralisation.

In the early days the population of the goldfields were very dissatisfied and they looked for separation. That portion of the

State was developed rapidly, and the population increased threefold between 1890 and 1906. The people there found that everything was going westward. As a consequence, they voted for federation. We would not have had federation on the 30th July, 1900, had it not been for the dissatisfaction of the people in the country.

There has to be an impetus before the population can be increased rapidly. I maintain—and this has been proved conclusively—that if a big State is controlled from one central point, the necessary progress is not achieved, irrespective of the productivity of the land.

This State is too big for one Government to handle. The primary industries must be developed. They are not being developed to the extent they should be developed. I am not criticising any particular Government. I can see the position that is developing, and so can the people of the other States in Australia.

There is too much forgotten land; there are too many people in the metropolitan area; and there is no incentive for people to live in the country. People living in the country expect the same amenities that are to be found in the cities.

Many people prefer to live in the country, but I know of others who went to live in the city and could not be tempted to return to the country—especially the womenfolk. The answer is more states and more capital cities. That is the necessary move if we are to hold this huge State of ours. Ultimately we must have three or four states if we are to develop the land to the fullest extent.

Mr. J. Hegney: Where will the population come from?

Mr. NULSEN: In the same way that the U.S.A. got its population.

Mr. J. Hegney: The Commonwealth Government tried but could not succeed.

Mr. NULSEN: When we do attract people from other countries, they go to live in the cities. They do not go out to the country where 80 per cent. of the wealth is obtained. I do not want it to be understood that I am condemning the cities, because I know they are necessary. But I say that a State like ours cannot be developed from a centralised point. This has been proved by centralising the Government of Australia in Canberra. It has done very little in the Northern Territory, which has a population of 20,000 people in an area of 523,620 square miles. Canberra is not interested in developing that area.

Western Australia is bigger than many of the important countries, which are rich in population and productivity. The areas of these highly-populated countries—England and Wales, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Portugal, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark, Albania, and Belgium—total only 729,310 square miles. It is necessary to total the areas of New Zealand, Victoria, and Tasmania to somewhat equal the area of Western Australia. Members will be aware of the huge populations of the countries to which I have just referred. I am not saying that this State can carry the same population for the same area, but it should be able to carry a greater population than it now carries.

Since Major Lockyer planted the flag at Albany in December, 1826, very little progress has been made. We have been going for over a century but we have a population of only 713,583 according to the 1959 figures. This State must be developed further. There is too much forgotten land. Wherever one goes into the country, one finds forgotten land. The area around Wiluna has a great potential, yet it is forgotten.

We had been preaching about the potential of the Esperance district since 1932 in this House, but no move was made to develop the area until recently. Esperance will be one of the best little towns in Western Australia in time to come. Its productivity is astounding and one would only have to go down there and see the clover to realise the district's potential and the real wealth which exists. I am not going into details regarding Esperance; but I would like to stress the potential of Wiluna, and even Laverton, where there is plenty of underground water. Many citrus trees are grown there, as well as vegetables; and it would astound members to see the town, which is 700 miles or so away from the city. Yet if we asked half the population of the metropolitan area anything about Wiluna, they would not even know where the town was situated. We must split up this State sooner or later.

Primary production must be fostered—there is no doubt about that—because it is the backbone of any country. We must, of course, do our best in regard to our secondary industries; but in balancing our budget it is the primary producer we must look after. We know that all the land in Western Australia is not productive, but three-quarters of it is. I have been through most of the country, and I know perfectly well that three-quarters of Western Australia can be used, and the other quarter could be used indirectly as well. We have a good area. We have gold and other minerals, etc., which can be developed.

I can remember the time when Sir James Mitchell went out so far as Merredin in order to develop the State. The people called him "moo-cow Jimmy"; they ridiculed him because he went so far afield. They said his idea would be a failure. Then later on, when Collier went out as far as Southern Cross and then to the mallee country, he was thought to be absolutely mad; but today those places are producing real wealth. Although a lot of money has been written off in the mallee country, the people there are perfectly satisfied with its development.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do you mean Forrestonia and Lake Campbell?

Mr. NULSEN: Yes. All those places in that area are being developed; and yet a few years ago a person was ridiculed if he mentioned anything about them. I can remember when the idea of developing Esperance was ridiculed. I recall the time when I asked Sir Charles Latham to go to the district, and he informed me in expressive terms that he would only be wasting his time. It was a long time before he consented to go there; but when he did, and realised the area's potential, his report was better than one I could have written myself. Today the potential of the area has been proved.

I was very sorry that a war service land settlement scheme was not developed there. Such a scheme would have been a real asset, because the holdings would have been developed and it would not have cost Australia anything; and in a few years it would have been producing, and returning all that would have been spent there. This scheme has been a huge success wherever it has been put into operation, and I think that within a few years Esperance would make a very nice capital as well. I know that many people have not given much time to this point, and I think they should give more thought to it than they have in the past. The climate there is comparable with that of any other part of Australia.

Australia is extremely vulnerable because more than half its population is situated in its capital cities. Tasmania is the best-developed State because less than one-third its population is in Hobart. In Queensland a little over one-third is situated in the capital, but it should still be less. However, I will deal with that aspect later.

The potential of this State is great. We have nearly 1,000,000 square miles, and I think I mentioned the number of acres earlier. As I said, we have a huge amount of arable country and a lot that has not yet been explored. The Honorary Royal Commission on Light Lands, with Sir Charles Latham as chairman, was responsible for opening up a lot of our huge State. Also, we have Mr. Smart in Mingenew who has done a marvellous job there. However, we are not doing justice to the back country. New South Wales is looking for a separation from Sydney. In Queensland the Nicklin Government has already committed itself on this aspect, but I will explain that later on.

The United States of America has been developed on a very large scale. It consists of 3,026, 974 square miles, has a population of 180,000,000 people, and consists of 50 States. Everything has been done in the United States to assist the people. Railway lines have not been closed there; but if they were, it would not matter, because the roads are provided. When we close our railway lines we should ensure that the roads are built beforehand. If this State is to be developed, and if we are to hold it, we will have to build more railway lines to bring our products into the various centres.

South Australia was the first to separate from New South Wales, then Victoria, followed by Queensland. Legislation had to be introduced by the Imperial Parliament to achieve this, because Sydney would not agree to any separation. Therefore I can realise the problems existing in connection with Western Australia or any other part of Australia trying to gain separation.

It seems to me that centralisation is becoming intolerable in this huge State of ours. We must work and develop our inland, and especially our primary industries. Secondary industries are necessary, and I think that a good job has been done in enticing secondary industries to come to Perth. But the whole trouble is that all the population is centred in a small area—191 square miles, as I have said before, and repeat. In that area there are 2,000 persons to the square mile. But if we were to take the population of the metropolitan area away from the population of Western Australia there would not be half a person to the square mile.

This idea is not being introduced as a party policy. It is being submitted to members only so that they might give consideration to it. This State must be split if we are to hold it. Are we progressive thinkers? Do we look ahead? Have we any future? Have we any regard to the possibility of losing this State—or of losing Australia, for that matter? When we consider the size and population of other countries, we must realise that Australia is really the same size as the U.S.A.; and even Europe is not much bigger. It is only 3,750,000 square miles.

The rapidly increasing population of our eastern neighbours should make us realise that as they become educated they will want to know why they should starve for land and food when there is so much in Australia which has been undeveloped. They will want to be given the opportunity of producing something. We have some people and the ability to do this ourselves and we should do it; but we must increase our population very considerably in the country.

I think I read this morning that at the end of this century there will be over 6,000,000,000 people in the world, and I just cannot see how they are going to be fed. We will have to have a different perspective from that which we have today. We will have to be more astute and do something. We will have to create another virile civilisation; if we do not, Communism will take hold. There is no question about that.

We have now had 26 civilisations, and the 27th is not far off. Unless the white people increase their families instead of decreasing them, they will never survive against the coloured people. I believe that the white people of this world should do something to help families which have more than three children. Such families should be heavily subsidised because, when all is said and done, we are bringing in as many migrants as possible, and it would be far better to populate the country with our people.

Therefore we should help them to help themselves, as it were, in regard to education and every other means. We should give people incentive to have large families.

In the early days in Australia it was seldom that the members of a family were fewer than six, and many families had seven, eight, nine, or even ten members. Now, however, most families consist of only two, three, and sometimes four people.

I would not like to see Communism as the next civilisation. If it is Communist, it will be a coloured civilisation and not a white one. The Roman Empire was broken up because the people were uncontrollable. They flocked to the cities. This could not be avoided as they were attracted by the glamour and luxuries to be obtained in the cities. The people were very reluctant to play their part as far as the country was concerned.

I know that even some of my own relations will not go to the country. They say they are not going to bury themselves; and when they are asked what they would do without the country, they cannot reply.

Mr. J. Hegney: There are a lot of people who are wanting to get on to the land, but who are prevented because of the existing system.

Mr. NULSEN: I agree with the honourable member to a very large extent; but that should not be so. Everyone who wants to go on to the land should be given an opportunity to do so. People should be given incentive and financial help; because when all is said and done, if we had all the money in the world and nothing to eat, we would die; but if we had plenty to eat and enough clothes to wear, etc., it would not matter if we had no money. We realise that in times of war. Governments can find all the money that is necessary then and people have to be engaged on primary production and in secondary industries as well.

Australia is now becoming similar to the Roman Empire and the rate of urbanisation is alarming. This State is sparsely populated, and a new state or states are required. Something should be done in this direction. I do not want people to think that I am disloyal in any way, because I am not. Anyone who advocates the splitting up of a huge State like this is doing so for a purpose—he is trying to help the people and keep Australia white.

In saying that, I do not want anyone to think I despise a person simply because he or she has coloured skin. As I have often said, biologically we are all exactly the same, and I maintain that we are all equal; but we had an earlier start with our civilisation. However, these people are catching up and they are just as able mentally and physically as we are. I am afraid that as they become more learned they will not forget the past.

There is nothing difficult about splitting up a State. From what I can learn it is simply a matter of accountancy and dividing it by boundaries so that the new States can be economically worked as individual units. It requires no special brilliance to perceive the need for this huge State to be split up. If we, as white people, want to keep this country we should fortify and not mortify the people in any way. I have lived in the country most of my life and I know that when people live 300 or 400 miles from the metropolitan area they believe they have been badly done by, and that the people in the city do not care two hoots for them, except for what they can get out of them.

The United States has an area of 3,026,790 square miles and that area is divided into 50 States. If one divides 50 into 3,026,790 one finds that the average size of the States in the United States of America is 60,536 square miles. Naturally some States are bigger than others, but that is the average. The area of Canada is 3,694,863 square miles and there are nine provinces, which gives an average of 410,540 square miles to each province.

The area of Europe is 3,750,000 square miles; and if we divide that figure by 32, which is the number of countries in Europe, it works out at an average of about 117,187 square miles to each country. That is one of the reasons why those huge areas have been developed. I know those countries have been populated for centuries; but, taking Europe as an example, there are 600,000,000 people living there, and altogether the whole of Europe is little bigger than Australia.

Mr. J. Hegney: In comparing Europe with Australia you must remember that Europe was populated before the dawn of Christianity, whereas Australia is only 150 years old.

Mr. NULSEN: I mentioned that. People have been living in Europe since the dawn of time, whereas we as a white race have been living in Australia for only about 150 years; but we cannot possibly develop Australia properly with only the small number of States we have now. Our States are too big. Europe has been able to be developed simply because the average size of each country is only 117,187 square miles. If the people of Europe had tried

to develop the whole of Europe from one centre it would not have the population it is carrying now. The same applies to Australia. We find that the smaller the State the greater the population per square mile.

Mr. W. Hegney: But there are so many nationalities in Europe, whereas in Australia there is only one nationality. That is the difference.

Mr. NULSEN: We have quite a few nationalities living in Australia and we will need a few more if we want to hold it as a white people. I say that not because I do not like coloured people but because we want to hold it as a white people. There is a distinction between a crow and a white cockatoo; and the same thing applies more or less as far as we are concerned. I see no reason why the white cockatoo should not keep his or her colour; or why the black crow should not be allowed to keep his or her colour. Smaller States could be managed more efficiently and developed more quickly. Members might say, "Who would manage the new State or States?"

Mr. W. Hegney: This Government wouldn't.

Mr. Watts: We will make you the first Governor of Forrestania.

Mr. NULSEN: As far as this Government is concerned, it would be able to manage this State, but the new State would be managed by the people of that State, in the same way as we manage this State now and have done in the past.

Mr. W. Hegney: That would be a bad lookout.

Mr. NULSEN: I feel that an undue proportion of the public money is now devoted to the needs of the metropolitan area and to the detriment of country public works, services, and amenities. It was necessary for us to build a new bridge, because we have such a large population in the metropolitan area; and I know this is the capital city and that it belongs to the whole of the State. On the other hand we must remember that 80 per cent. of our revenue is spent in the metropolitan area; while 80 per cent. of our exports are produced in the country to help us balance the budget.

We require a greater dispersion of our population and our secondary industries as well. If we have new States we will have new capital cities; and they, in their turn, will have secondary industries to contend with. We require decentralisation, but decentralisation is only a word; it has never been applied. We have given only lip service to it. What efforts have been made to decentralise? No effort has been made since I have been here, because it has not been possible to bring it about.

Perth, the same as other capital cities, has been developed on the foundation of centralisation; it could not be done in any other way. But if we had smaller States it would not matter so much. The charges for social services, freights, and all that sort of thing would be much lower; and, generally speaking, expenses would not be nearly as high as they are now.

How does Asia view our empty State or country? The Asians must look at it and say, "We are starved for land; and if those people won't do anything with their land, why should they hold it?" I say, too, "Why should we hold it if we don't develop it?"

Some members might ask, "How can new states be established?" We would need to have a boundaries commissioner who would have to give consideration to the economics of setting up a new state. How would a new state be financed? In exactly the same way as the existing states. They would have to receive their revenue and, of course, would have to impose taxation and do the same as the States are doing now. As far as I can see there would be no increase in costs—at least it would be very little—and I would advocate that we have only one House of Parliament. That is a matter for the future, but I believe it would mean a great saving.

Mr. Brand: I think there is a lot to be done before that happens.

Mr. NULSEN: The present system in this State is making a mockery of democracy, particularly with the property qualification for voting for the second Chamber. Under my proposal the cost of parliamentary government would be very much lower, and probably would work out at about 4s. 6d. a head. The railway debts and the like would have to be adjusted and probably we would need a moratorium of five, six, or seven years before these matters could be properly ironed out.

As far back as 1910 T. J. Ryan suggested that Queensland should be divided into three States; and, at that time, Queensland comprised 670,500 square miles. Since then it has been found that Queensland was bigger than it was thought to be, and the area has been resurveyed and 3,500 square miles have been excised from that State, leaving it with 667,000 square miles.

The Rt. Hon. F. M. Forde, who was Australian High Commissioner in Canada, and who became a Labor Prime Minister for a brief term after the death of The Hon. J. Curtin, and who was Deputy Leader of the Federal Labor Party for a considerable period, also advocated the forming of new states. When M.L.A. for Rockhampton in the Queensland Parliament he obtained the support of the Assembly for the following motion:—

> That in the opinion of this Parliament the time has arrived for the remodelling of the Commonwealth Constitution providing for a subdivision of Australia into a greater

number of self-governing States for more economical and effective Government, and also providing an easy method for the people living in any district such as the Central Queensland or the Northern New South Wales to obtain self-government, and that the Prime Minister of Australia be engaged to take the necessary steps to bring about this reform.

Mr. J. Hegney: What date did he make that speech?

Mr. NULSEN: That was made by the Rt. Hon. F. M. Forde.

Mr. J. Hegney: But in what year?

Mr. NULSEN: I am not sure of that, but it was since 1910.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is 45 years ago!

Mr. NULSEN: That might be so. But even if it were 50 years ago it makes my argument all the stronger.

Mr. J. Hegney: It was 50 years ago and nothing has been done about it.

Mr. NULSEN: Whose fault is that?

Mr. J. Hegney: Not mine.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Roberts): Order!

Mr. NULSEN: Mr. Hanlon, a Premier of a Labor Government in Queensland in 1948 said we should have a greater dispersion of states. In 1950 the New South Wales Liberals supported the setting up of new states; and the Country Party and the Liberal Party in Queensland agreed that the time for the separation of States into new states had arrived, and those political organisations supported the proposal because they felt it was fully justified. They said that centralisation and congestion were a curse to the development of Australia.

Water problems are cropping up, too—in the metropolitan area, especially. There will come a time when it will not be possible to get sufficient water to enable the people to carry on even in capital cities. As regards increased population and increased production, it is said that at present we are giving no incentive, and freight rates are one of the matters that should be looked into. At the 1957 Queensland elections the joint policy of the Country Party and the Liberal Party included the following historical pledge:—

> Our parties favour the creation of new States, as we believe their creation would decentralise and stimulate development. Our whole policy is based on bringing about decentralisation, both of people and industries; and the subdivision of our large State into smaller, more compact self-governing units under the terms of the Federal Constitution would effectively bring that about.
>
> For this reason, if petitioned by the people of North or central Queensland, or any part of the State prepared to undertake the responsibilities of self-government, we would undertake the constitutional steps necessary to create a new state."

The parties who gave this pledge now constitute the Government of Queensland. The north and central new state movements propose to take the steps contemplated; therefore new States have become an immediate practical issue.

So it can be seen that Queensland has committed itself. Tasmania has no need to do so, because it is only a small State; but Western Australia must do something about decentralisation. We find that 50 per cent. of the world's population is seriously undernourished, and prosperity still rests on the farms, which are the backbone of any country. Accepted authorities have stated that hunger will increase. Our neighbours around the top of Australia are watching us very carefully. They say we have a very large area which is sparsely populated, and which we are doing nothing to develop. They see no reason why we should hold this vast quantity of land if we are not prepared to work it.

If we are not able to secure the necessary population, we should invite England to take over this land; give her the land for 1s. or 2s. an acre, so long as we are able to get that land into production. If England has not the necessary population to enable this land to be developed, let us go to another white country, such as America, and see what can be done in that direction.

The Americans at Esperance have given a great incentive to development in that part of our State. Apart from this they have shown practical ways of getting the job done; and, what is more important, they are very happy about the position. However, as I pointed out, I think we should first approach the Old Country in an endeavour to have this land developed.

We have the arable land. Quite apart from the millions of acres which are at present being developed at Esperance, there are 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 acres beyond that about which nothing is being done. We should get on with the job of developing that arable land; and the only way to do it is to create more states in Western Australia. As we all know, New South Wales has committed itself to a great extent, though I do not think there is any possibility of New England securing a separation from Sydney.

The Queensland Government says that if the people ask for new states it will be happy to help them.

I invite constructive and severe criticism of what I have said. I do not mind how severe the criticism is as long as it

will result in something being done in this direction. There is no satisfaction in making statements in this Chamber on aspects such as these without some criticism being offered of the suggestion put forward. I do not mind in the least if the criticism is severe, so long as somebody criticises what I have said, and puts up an argument for the splitting up of Australia, and particularly Western Australia, into more states.

Because of the increased population in the world, it is impossible to think in terms of food surplus, and we must also do something about that aspect. Another matter which should cause us to think very seriously is the question of our exports. I am not particularly concerned as to the amount of profit that might be made in this direction, so long as something is done to forward exports from Western Australia.

I do not think I need stress the fact that the Western countries will not hold Asia for very long. There is no doubt that it is moving along slowly, but very firmly; and it will not be long before it will burst into flames of indignation at the fact that we have such a vast area of country which is not developed and which is not populated. It will stress the fact that it wants the land to accommodate its immense population, and that if Australia is not prepared to develop it and populate it as it should be developed and populated, then there is no reason why it should not be taken over by some other country.

I know it will be a long time before anything constructive is done about separation. I also know it will be a big problem to break away from Perth, and go further into the country areas, and populate them to the degree necessary. We know that large financial interests—such as banking organisations, insurance companies, and other big companies—will remain only in areas which are largely populated, as is the case in Sydney.

In the case of Sydney and New England, there is no doubt that New England could quite easily be developed into a State in two or three years; that it could be self-supporting in that time. New England has been battling along these lines for many years without any result at all. We know that Perth is the capital of the State, but we cannot develop Western Australia from Perth; we must go farther afield, into the country. The only way to do that is to split up Western Australia into more states.

It is said that when Queensland broke away from New South Wales it had only 7½d. in the Treasury. Had it not broken away it is certain it would not have developed to the stage it has reached today. Western Australia must do something soon to break away from the present position, with a view to establishing more states. If it does not, then, in the event of my being reincarnated, I will say, "It serves the people damn well right".

Progress reported, and leave granted to sit again.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Railways) [9.55]: I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

A number of amendments to the Government Railways Act have been requested by the commission. In some cases these amendments are intended to clarify the intention of several sections of the Act, and others to alter the provisions of certain sections to comply with present-day requirements.

The opportunity is also taken to bring the monetary penalties provided in various sections of the Act into line with present-day values. The existing penalties have been in force since they were inserted in the original Act in 1904. The Bill provides for the pecuniary penalties to be doubled. No change in terms of imprisonment is proposed.

Section 22 of the Act empowers the commission to fix scales of charges for the various services provided by the department. Subsection (1) (d) of this section provides for demurrage charges on the use of any rolling stock. It now reads—

> The Commission may, with the approval of the Minister, from time to time, by notice in the *Government Gazette*—
>
> (1) fix scales of charges to be paid—
>
> (d) for demurrage on the use of any rolling stock.

Whilst there is no doubt that there is a responsibility for the payment of demurrage charges by one of the parties concerned in the use of the rolling stock, the Crown Solicitor is of the opinion that the wording should be clarified to remove any legal doubt as to who is responsible. Accordingly, the wording of subsection (1) (d) is amended to read—

> Fix scales of charges to be paid by the consignors or consignees of goods for demurrage on the use of any rolling stock.

The next amendment provided in the Bill—that is, to section 23—becomes necessary with the commissioner's decision to have the appointment made of special constables within the investigation section of the Railways Department. Although provision is made in section 74 of the Act for the appointment of special constables, advantage has not been taken of this provision in the past. Two employees are at

present undergoing six months' training with the Police Department, and on completion of the training it is proposed to appoint them special constables. This was recommended by the Royal Commissioner, Mr. A. G. Smith, Stipendiary Magistrate, following his inquiries into the railway investigation section.

The appointment of members of the railway investigation section as special constables will give them proper statutory powers on railway property for carrying out the functions of their office in enforcing the by-laws and also conducting such investigations within the department as may be directed by the commission. In the past, the railway investigation section has carried out investigations and inquiries on behalf of the commission, but in the carrying out of these duties it has been limited by the fact that it is not vested with the proper legal authority. Special constables will have this proper legal authority to carry out their duties.

In other States in Australia, the Railways Department either has police officers from the State Police Department attached to the railways or has members of its investigation section sworn in as special constables with the Police Department. The proposed appointment here of special constables is, therefore, in accordance with the policy carried out in other States. Before such appointments are made, it is first necessary to empower the commission to make by-laws for the powers, duties, etc., of special constables; and the amendment to section 23 is to add a further paragraph detailing the form of by-laws necessary with the appointment of special constables.

Section 24 (7) provides that any by-law relating to the conduct of any person employed in or about a railway may impose a penalty not exceeding £5 for any breach thereof; and such penalty may be recovered by deducting the same from any salary or emolument due or to accrue to him. The amendment to section 24 is to double the pecuniary penalties provided in subsection (7). This is in accordance with the general proposal in respect of penalties.

Section 25 (4) limits the maximum liability in respect of claims for damage or loss of uninsured consignments of glassware, silks, and other specified commodities to £10. To bring this part of the Act into line with present-day values of the articles concerned, it was agreed by the commissioners of all the Commonwealth mainland States at the Commissioners' Conference held in Sydney in 1959, that the maximum liability for such consignments be increased to £25 per package. The increase is designed to relate an old provision in the Act to the change of values of the present. It also clarifies that the liability is up to a maximum of £25 per package and not per consignment. I might explain that there have been arguments from time to time as to what was the commissioner's real responsibility where several packages made up a consignment. This amendment clarifies the position and fixes a maximum liability on the commission in respect of each package, which is the intention of the commission.

The next section of the Bill deals with the right of the commission to quote special freight rates. This, I think, is one of the most important parts of the Bill. An amendment to the Act, by the addition of a further section 26A, is intended to clarify the right of the commission to make special contracts in relation to fares and freight charges. Such action has been the practice for a great many years; and special rates differing from those in the gazetted schedules have been applied when it was evident and established that insistence on the ordinary rates would result either in the traffic being conveyed by means other than rail services; or, alternatively, not being able to be moved at all on account of associated economics.

In the past, this action has been taken under the provisions of section 22 of the Act. However, the Crown Solicitor is of the opinion that the wording of section 22 does not give the commissioner proper authority to do this. The proposed additional section 22A, which is based on similar provisions in the Victorian Railways Act, is intended to clarify the position. It is expected that because of the changed policy within the railway system it will be increasingly necessary for the commission to have the power to enter into contracts in respect of special consignments of freight.

It follows that as he and his officers go out seeking special freight offering in competition with other systems, they will have to compete on an ordinary commercial basis; and unless he has a legal statutory power to go out and compete and enter into special contracts for special consignments, he is exposed to some legal danger in the matter. It is considered by the Government that the commissioner should have the power to go out and compete for business on an ordinary commercial basis. In the past, special rates have been given outside of the gazetted rates, but the practice has not been followed to any extent, and so encouraged the action to be challenged.

One can easily appreciate that if the commissioner and his staff become very aggressive in seeking freight by ordinary commercial competitive methods somebody might challenge the validity of the action of the railways in quoting a special rate for special consignments.

Mr. Rowberry: The next thing is you will be having pressure put on you to sell the railways.

Mr. COURT: I think the honourable member would be sufficiently a realist to appreciate that the chances of selling the railways would be fairly remote, no matter

how anxious any Government might be to sell them. I am sure most Treasurers and most Governments would be very anxious to sell the railways if they could ensure that the service continued, and so be relieved of the responsibility.

Mr. J. Hegney: They would give them away.

Mr. COURT: They would be prepared to give them away if they felt sure the service would continue in a satisfactory manner without being a burden on the Treasury. The amendment to section 34 is to increase the penalty of £50 relating to firearms or dangerous goods to £100. This section provides that no person shall have any right to carry or send by a railway any firearm or other dangerous thing, or any goods which are, by any by-law, declared to be of a dangerous nature, without proper authority to do so.

Similarly, the amendment to section 41 increases from £10 to £20 the penalty provided for unauthorised acts which may injure or interfere with the operation of the railways. An example is the encroaching on a railway by making any building, fence, ditch, etc., interfering with any drain or ditch or watercourse and thereby affecting a railway, or felling of any trees on railway property.

I am referring only to the proposed changes in the monetary penalties and am making no reference to the terms of imprisonment provided in the original Act, because no change is proposed in respect of those terms of imprisonment. However, the monetary penalties, in many cases, have become completely unrealistic because they were inserted into the Act in 1904.

Section 42, subsection (3), deals with offences in connection with level crossings. The amendment to this section is to make suitable provision for level crossings which are now equipped with flashing light warning signals.

Mr. J. Hegney: Doesn't the present law apply to level crossings?

Mr. COURT: It is inadequate at the moment for reasons I will give. At the moment, the provision is related to a distance from the crossing; whereas we have to accept the change in regard to equipment. With the onward march of automatic equipment, other provisions have to be made in the interests of the motoring public.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is less than a quarter of a mile.

Mr. COURT: As it now stands, the provisions of this section prohibit any person driving a vehicle or animal across a railway when an engine or train, etc., is approaching within a quarter of a mile. Where flashing light signals are provided, this margin is not considered necessary; and in some cases it would restrict road traffic movements. Investigations reveal that a minimum of 20 seconds warning by flashing lights of an approaching train would give the best result for railway operations and road traffic movements where flashing light signals are installed. It is impossible with modern automatic equipment to regulate it to distance. Also, the changed speeds of trains have a material effect on the time it takes a train to cover the prescribed distance.

Section 42 (3) applies generally and makes no provision for protected crossings. The retention of the quarter-mile restriction is desirable in so far as unprotected crossings are concerned. Therefore the amendment adds a third passage to subclause (3) which makes provision for level crossings equipped with flashing light signals. The amendment provides that where warning devices are provided at a level crossing, it is an offence to drive any vehicle or animal over the level crossing when these warning devices are operating to indicate they should not cross because an engine or wagon on the railway is approaching the level crossing. Also, the penalty of £50 provided in the last paragraph of section 42 is increased to £100.

The amendment to section 46 is to enable action to be taken against persons who travel on a railway without being in possession of a ticket or pass issued by the commission, or a person authorised to do so, and who leave or attempt to leave the railway without paying the fare. At present there is no section in the Act to cover the offence where a passenger joins a train at a station where he is unable to purchase a ticket and at his destination leaves or attempts to leave the station without paying the fare. The additional paragraph (6) as provided in the Bill, covers this offence.

The need is brought about by the changed methods of operating the metropolitan passenger services. A number of stopping places have been introduced where there are no regular facilities for purchasing tickets; and, in addition, other stations are at times unattended. During the times when there are a number of stations unattended, ticket porters travel on the diesel railcars and issue tickets to passengers. The amendment is entirely due to the changed method of operation. It does not take long for some of the smart Alecks to catch up with a changed method. The original Act did not provide for this set of circumstances; and in view of the evasions practised and attempted, the commission has requested this extra power as some form of deterrent.

Section 48 is amended by increasing the penalty of £10 to £20. This section deals with the offence of unlawfully interfering with the safe working of the railways by causing obstructions on the line, or moving any rollingstock or appliance on a railway without authority to do so. Section 51 of the Act provides for action to be taken if any person employed upon a railway is

found drunk while on duty. It will be appreciated that in operating a transport organisation such as the railways, every care must be taken to ensure that the highest degree of safety is maintained. With the increased density in all forms of vehicular traffic it becomes more essential that safety measures be maintained at the highest level.

The proposed amendment to paragraph (a) is to add after the word "drunk" the words "or under the influence of intoxicating liquor, or of any drug". With this amendment, action could then be taken against employees who, though not actually drunk, are under the influence of intoxicating liquors or drugs. I think it will be agreed that a person under the influence of liquor or drugs would most certainly have his efficiency impaired and would not be able to maintain the high level of safety precautions which are so necessary. The penalty under this section, in line with the other increases, is increased from £50 to £100.

The amendment to section 73 is to clarify the position in respect of two forms of punishment for the one offence; and to place the relationship between this section and section 77 on a proper footing. This is being submitted to overcome an anomaly.

Mr. Nulsen: Two forms of punishment for the one offence?

Mr. COURT: I want to explain why this provision is necessary. The present provisions of the Act, I think, were inserted on account of a drafting error. When the Railways Act was remodelled and amended by No. 78 of 1948, a new provision was added to section 68—now section 73—as follows:—

> Provided that no fine shall be inflicted under this section for any act or omission for which an officer or servant has been punished under section 31 or 32 of the Traffic Act, 1919-1947, and provided that the Commission shall not inflict on any such officer or servant more than one form of punishment for the same offence.

I am quite certain that when that was introduced the intention was good, but it has had an effect which could be detrimental to the employees. This provision is causing considerable difficulty in determining suitable punishment for employees who have committed offences.

If, for instance, an employee is drunk on duty or commits a serious breach of safe-working rules, it is inescapable that he should be immediately suspended from duty. Obviously the officer in charge would suspend him immediately, in the interest of his own and the public safety. Under this Act, this is a punishment; and with the provision quoted it is possible only to reinstate him without further punishment, or take the extreme course of summary dismissal. This is not warranted in all cases and it is desirable that the Act be amended so that an employee may, notwithstanding suspension, be fined, regressed, or transferred. In other cases it may be desired to regress and transfer an employee by way of punishment, but that cannot be done under the Act as it now reads.

Mr. Nulsen: It has been done. I know of one case not so very long ago.

Mr. COURT: At the present time the commissioner is in a very awkward position. A man might have a good record and then commit a breach—it could be quite a serious breach—but once a man has been suspended because of a danger which he was capable of creating the commissioner has the choice of either reinstating him without further punishment or of summarily dismissing him.

If this provision is brought in, it is the commissioner's view—and I concur in it—that it will enable the commissioner to take a sympathetic and more realistic approach to each particular case. We have to accept the fact that when we have a system which employs 13,000 men, not all of them are going to be on their best behaviour. Some may commit a breach, although they have given loyal service for many years; and I think the commissioner should be able to deal with each case on its merits, having regard to a man's record of service.

Section 77, subsection (5), provides for an appeal to the Railway Appeal Board if an employee is transferred by way of punishment involving loss of transfer expenses, but there is no provision in the Act to enable the commission to inflict this form of punishment. The amendment will add this power to section 73.

Under section 74 of the Act the commission may appoint special constables. The Crown Solicitor has, however, pointed out that although this original section foreshadowed the appointment of special constables, it did not provide the machinery for them to be completely effective. This has not mattered up to date, because appointments have not been made. Now that appointments are to be made in accordance with the suggestion in the report on the railway investigation section submitted by Royal Commissioner Smith, it is important to clarify the position.

The amendment to section 74 provided in this Bill is designed to place the Commissioner of Railways in the same position as the Commissioner of Police in respect of liability for acts done in good faith by the special constables.

Section 76 deals with the Railway Death Benefit and Endowment Fund and provides that membership of the endowment fund shall be a condition of employment in the Railways Department. In subsection (4) paragraph (b) an exception to this is provided for such employee who proves to the satisfaction of the commission that he

holds for his own benefit and is maintaining a life insurance policy in an insurance company which would give him an equal benefit to that which he would obtain from the fund.

The endowment section of the fund was formed in 1932 and the provisions for compulsory membership operated from February, 1934, except where outside insurance cover was held. When the State Superannuation Fund—being another State fund—was formed in 1939, the Government Railways Act was amended to provide membership of that fund as a suitable alternative to membership of the endowment section.

The endowment section was formed to replace the earlier established death benefit section, which was not financially sound. The endowment section makes provision for an attractive benefit on the retirement of an employee member at age 65, or a similar benefit to the nominee of an employee if he should die before attaining age 65. The formation of the endowment section satisfied a need for some provision on retirement, as the earlier death benefit section made provision for payment of benefit at death only.

The minimum contribution to the endowment section is 2s. per week or 4s. per fortnightly pay, although employees may contribute for greater amounts with correspondingly larger benefits. The contribution is standard but benefits reduce as age at next birthday at joining increases. The contribution for the endowment fund is much cheaper than that for superannuation and therefore attracts more railway employees. The membership of the two funds is endowment 8,570; superannuation 2,300. The department pays all the management and incidental expenses connected with the death benefit and endowment fund and membership of such a fund can be considered as an advantage to the employee and an incentive to him to remain in the department. As the State has set up this fund it is considered it should have every support from railway employees.

It is considered that for a contribution of 2s. per week from the relatively high average wage per week now paid, in comparison with that payable in 1932, compulsory membership of the endowment section with its attractive benefits should not be a burden on the employee, even if he does have outside life assurance cover.

Mr. Nulsen: Are the employees aware of that?

Mr. COURT: Of the scheme? Very much so. There are 8,570 belonging to one fund, and 2,300 to the other.

Mr. Nulsen: And they are satisfied with it?

Mr. COURT: Very much so.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do they get weekly benefits?

Mr. COURT: The commission pays all expenses of administration. Control is in the hands of elected employees who meet periodically.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do they get an allowance weekly?

Mr. COURT: I could not give the exact figures. I have them in my files, but I have not had an opportunity of studying them. I have not quoted them for fear of any inaccuracy. The work involved in connection with the approving of exemptions and the yearly follow-up to ensure that the outside policy is being maintained is considerable.

Under the present exemption provisions a man has to prove to the department that he has life insurance coverage to give him comparable benefits. That means the department not only has to give him original exemption but has to see that the policy is still carried on and has not been prejudiced in any way; and that it is keeping pace with the benefits he would receive under this particular scheme. It is proposed the department will be relieved of that in respect of future employees.

The amendment provided in this Bill means that future employees will not be exempted from membership of the death benefit and endowment fund by having private life assurance cover; and the department will thereby be saved the considerable work entailed in the constant check on such private policies. The amendment will not affect present employees of the Railways Department, but on the contrary will do much to ensure the continuance of this fund to which so many already contribute. As the minimum contribution is only 2s. per week, compulsory membership of the fund will certainly not constitute any financial hardship on future employees. I stress the fact that this Bill does not protect present employees, but purely people joining the service from now onwards.

Mr. Nulsen: Can they contribute more than 2s.?

Mr. COURT: Yes. I cannot see that the provisions of this Bill are very contentious. The commissioner has requested that amendments be made because railway legislation, like all other legislation, becomes outmoded from time to time. When one does something to improve administration and to step up the commercial methods it follows, one finds weakness in the old legislation. The intention of this legislation is to try to amend some of the old provisions to bring them into line with current practice, and to enable the commissioner to meet the challenge which he and the railway system must accept from other forms of transport.

On motion by Mr. Nulsen, debate adjourned.

Message: Appropriation

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

ACTS AMENDMENT (SUPERANNUATION AND PENSIONS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 25th October.

MR. HAWKE (Northam) [10.26]: This Bill proposes to amend the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, 1938-58, and the Superannuation Act, 1897-1958 in several important particulars. The first amendment deals with the position of females who are contributors to the 1938-58 Superannuation and Family Benefits Act. Under the existing law, females can contribute only upon the basis of retiring at age 60. The amendment to this Bill aims to give them the right to retire at age 65 in regard to contributions to the superannuation fund; and there cannot, I think, be any logical objection to this amendment.

The related amendment, which would apply to male employees as well as females, provides that at least 10 years' service must have been established before retirement to enable the contributor to obtain the benefits of superannuation.

Another amendment—and this is one of the most important of the new proposals in the Bill—aims to increase the maximum number of units available from the existing maximum of 26 to a proposed new maximum of 42. At the present time the maximum of 26 units works out at a total pension per week of £22 15s. When we look at the maximum existing in South Australia, and also the one existing in Victoria, we find in each State a figure of 36 units.

I am rather at a loss to understand why Western Australia should seek to exceed South Australia in the maximum number of units for which contributions might be made; and even more at a loss to understand why we should try to exceed the State of Victoria. If there is one State more than another which should be able to afford a high maximum number of units, it is the State of Victoria. I think we are all aware that Victoria, because of its compact nature and substantial natural resources, should be—and I think is—far better situated than Western Australia to provide a high maximum number of units to which those on the appropriate salaries might be given an opportunity to contribute.

In any event, I think that the Treasurer, when replying to the second reading debate on this Bill, should give us some examples of how these substantial increases in the number of units, for which it will be possible to contribute under the new amendment, work out. At present, all we have set down in the Bill is the range of salary and the number of units, above 26, for which it will be possible for these particular officers to contribute in the future in regard to pensions which they will be able to receive following their retirement from Government employment.

So I ask the Treasurer to have prepared a scale of examples in order that members of the House might more clearly understand what is involved in this amendment. I would point out, however, that the State itself will, from its revenues, make substantial contributions in regard to these proposed increases in the number of units for which high-salaried officers may be able to contribute to the fund in order to receive the increased pensions.

I am one of those who favour the State making more contributions—if the State is to make more contributions—in order to lift the lower pensions rather than make substantial contributions to increase the higher rate of pensions. The principle which I mentioned has, I think, a good deal in its favour.

Another amendment proposes to bring about an increase in the pension payment to the widows of deceased pensioners. As I understand it, this increase in the payment of pensions to widows will work out at 2s. 3d. per week per unit of pension being received by each widow concerned at the time this amendment becomes law. Only two-sevenths of these amounts will be paid from the superannuation fund itself, with five-sevenths being paid by the State.

Here again, we come up against the principle to which I referred a moment ago. In this instance, however, it is made much worse because the State is to contribute five-sevenths of the increase and the fund is to contribute only two-sevenths. Where the widow concerned will receive only a small increase there is not much involved, not even from the State's contribution; but where the widow is at present on a high number of units the contribution from the fund is higher and, naturally, the contribution from the State is very much higher.

I say again that where the State has been committed to make additional payment in order that the pension being received—in this instance, by widows—shall be increased, we ought to give consideration to the question of assisting these widows on more or less an equal basis as against giving those on the lower rate of pensions practically nothing additional from State funds and giving those on the higher number of units a pension considerably increased from the funds of the State itself.

Another amendment in the Bill deals with those contributors who, prior to the 1st January, 1958, were contributing for units in excess of eight units. Under the law as it now operates, these contributors receive 15s. per unit per week on retirement, plus a supplementation of £1 per week. In this instance, the amendment

now before us proposes to abolish the supplementation payment of £1 per week and to increase the weekly value of each unit of pension from 15s. to 17s. 6d. I think I should mention here that the principle of supplementation was introduced by the previous Government to meet the objection —which I raised a few moments ago—to the principle of the State paying out a lot of additional money to provide increased units of pensions and therefore to increase total pensions, with the result that those on the higher rates of pension get most of what the State makes available by way of increased payment.

Under the supplementation system, each pensioner receives the same amount. In our view, at the time—and in the view of Parliament, too—that was a fair and reasonable approach to the situation. As all members know, the situation is one brought about by the increased cost of living. It is understandable that units of pension which were fixed at a rate of, say, 12s. 6d. originally in 1938, would lose purchasing power with the passing of time and the increases in the cost of living. It would also be agreed, as it has been agreed by Parliament from time to time, that something should be done about that situation in order that the pensioners concerned should receive some compensation—not a total compensation—for the increase in the cost of living.

As I have said, previously this situation was met by the system of supplementation, under which all pensioners received the same amount of supplementation. The idea was that all pensioners, more or less, suffered the same disability in regard to the increase in the cost of living. In other words, an increase in the price of bread meant as much to the pensioner on four units as it did to the pensioner on eight units of pension, as was the case with any other increase in an essential commodity. Under this proposed system the principle of supplementation is reversed, because the appropriate amendments in the Bill provide that pensioners shall receive increases based upon each unit of pension they are receiving.

Clearly, therefore, the person who is receiving the least number of units of pension, by way of total pensions, will receive by far the least benefit under these amendments now before us, if they are agreed to. The pensioners receiving the highest number of units of pension under the present Act will obtain the greatest financial benefit should Parliament agree to these amendments. The proposal in regard to this particular part of the Bill is that the pensioners concerned—that is, those who, prior to the 1st January, 1958, were receiving pension units in excess of eight in number—will, in the event of this Bill becoming law, have their present unit value raised from 15s. to 17s. 6d. and the present supplementation of £1 a week, which applies to all of them, is to be abolished.

This proposal would have the effect of reducing the total amount of pension which some of these persons receive at present. That is because the supplementation of £1 a week is to be abolished and the increase of 2s. 6d. per unit of pension, which this Bill provides for, will not, in some instances, make up the £1 which would be lost by the abolition of supplementation. However, the Bill does provide that no existing pension shall be reduced. Therefore, no existing pension will, in fact, be reduced; although, under this formula, reductions would take place, except for the provision in the Bill to the effect that no reduction is to apply.

Nevertheless, the increases which some persons under this part of the Bill will receive will be next to nothing. The only persons who receive worthwhile increases will be those in receipt of the largest number of units of pension.

There is a provision made in this Bill to meet the position of employees who are appointed to offices set up under statute, these offices not being continuous in regard to the persons appointed to them from time to time. According to the explanation given to the House by the Treasurer, it has been found that some persons appointed to temporary offices have completed their statutory period of appointment within, say, three years or five years; and, because they have been accepted as contributors to the superannuation fund, they have thereby established a claim to superannuation payments, which claim could involve the State and the fund in paying out a very large sum of money over a long period of time to those particular persons.

The Treasurer argued that the establishment of a legal claim of that nature, by giving service for only three, five, or even seven years, was a claim which could not validly be supported; and I agree, quite strongly, with the reasoning used by the Treasurer in that matter. This Bill proposes, then, to tighten up the situation in regard to such employees.

In the first place, the Bill lays it down that a pension under the provisions of the 1938 Act will be payable to such persons only where they have not attained the age of 60 years, but have completed an aggregate period of ten years' service with the State. They would be entitled to a pension which would actuarially be equivalent to the contributions made by them and also the share of the pension which would be payable by the State.

Another provision in the Bill relates to persons appointed to statutory offices who have not completed an aggregate of ten years' service. Should this provision in the Bill become law, persons who have not

completed an aggregate of ten years' service will be entitled to a refund of the actual amount of contributions made by them to the fund. I have no objection to this provision, except to raise the point as to whether they should be entitled to a reasonable rate of interest on the contributions they made. I suggest that the rate of interest could be the rate which the fund earned during the period when those contributions were made. I put forward that proposal for the consideration of the Treasurer.

A further provision in the Bill aims to meet the position of persons who are employed by the Government after reaching the age of 65 years. One group mentioned by the Treasurer consisted of stipendiary magistrates. They are entitled to remain in office until the age of 70 years. The Treasurer argued that, because of their continued service, they should be entitled to something above the normal rate of pension which applies to officers who retire on reaching 65 years of age.

In an attempt to reasonably meet the situation of magistrates and other officers concerned, the Bill sets out a table. The table prescribes the percentage of the contributions which these persons shall receive on retirement, over and above the appropriate pension rate provided for in the Bill. As they will be set out in the Act, should Parliament approve of the increase in the maximum number of units to be contributed from the existing maximum of 26 to the proposed maximum of 42, I see no reason for objection to the provision.

Another part of the Bill aims to give some benefit to persons who are affected seriously by invalidity or physical or mental incapacity—where that illness or incapacity has been caused during the course of the employment of the person concerned. Under the existing law no-one can receive a pension under the 1938 Act unless he has given at least three years' service to the Government, after commencing as a contributor to the fund.

Cases have arisen where persons have become incapacitated physically or mentally during the course of their employment, before the three-year period of service has been established. Under the existing law they cannot be granted a superannuation payment; but this amendment proposes to amend the parent Act in such a way as to give them the right to claim a pension in the future. I am sure all members in this House will agree that such persons are deserving of the most sympathetic, practical consideration which can be given to them. There should, therefore, be no opposition to this part of the Bill.

The next amendment with which I propose to deal can be quite controversial. It provides that full pensions shall be paid to re-employed pensioners, and to widows receiving pensions under the 1938 Act. The present law provides that these persons shall receive only the share of the pension which the fund itself provides, and not anything from the share payable by the State which would be payable to them if they were not re-employed. The proposal is that where these pensioners are re-employed they shall receive the full pension, as well as their full wage or salary; and that where widows in receipt of pensions under the Superannuation Act are employed by the State, they shall receive the full pension payable to widows, as well as the full wage or salary for the work they are doing.

The Treasurer told us that this amendment had been included in the Bill because the existing law has operated harshly in some cases. In my view it will be necessary for him to cite these cases and to give a reasonable amount of detail in respect of them. I am not able to see how any harshness could have arisen in relation to these persons.

Let us take firstly the pensioners who are re-employed; presumably they are employed on a full-time basis. They will therefore receive a full wage or salary for the work they perform. We all know that wages and salaries are reasonably high today, although not necessarily as high as they should be in relation to the cost of living. I cannot imagine any justification for paying to a re-employed pensioner the full salary, plus his share of superannuation from the fund to which he is entitled, plus the share which the State would pay, if the pensioner continued to remain on his pension and was not re-employed by the State.

Mr. Roberts: The pensioner would receive that if he was employed in private enterprise.

Mr. HAWKE: Of course he would. That is all right. If he is employed by private enterprise and receives the pension as well as his salary, that is all right. That will not put any additional burden on the State; but the proposal in the Bill will.

Mr. Brand: How?

Mr. O'Connor: He would be giving service to the State.

Mr. HAWKE: It would place an additional burden on the State because at present the State does not have to pay its share of the pension when the person is in employment. This provision deals only with pensioners who are re-employed by the State. At present they receive their full wage or salary, plus the share of superannuation payment which the fund would make. However, they do not receive the share which the State would pay.

Mr. Roberts: If they were in receipt of a pension and were employed in private enterprise they would continue to receive the pension plus their wages.

Mr. HAWKE: I have already agreed with that. My argument is that the amendment in the Bill will place an additional burden on the State. The same argument applies to widows although my objection is not as strong in this case, because widows do not receive anywhere near the total amount of pension as the retired civil servant. I ask the Treasurer, when replying to the debate, to give us some practical examples and to prove his claim that hardship is the factor which caused the Government to agree to the inclusion of the provision.

I am not able to see how hardship could arise. In fact, the re-employed pensioner will be better off than the employed officers who have not yet retired, because the re-employed pensioner will receive the full wage or salary plus the full pension if this Bill becomes law. I suggest the Treasurer will have a pretty hard job to justify the inclusion of this provision.

I do not remember the Treasurer discussing one particular part of the Bill, but he might have. It is contained on page 9 and reads—

> Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, where a male pensioner marries after he has attained the maximum age for retirement, or after his retirement from the Service (including retirement under section sixty-one of this Act), pension shall not, upon the death of the pensioner, be payable to the widow or in respect of her children, or the children of that marriage.

Clearly this new provision lays it down that where a male pensioner has reached the maximum age for retirement, namely at 65 years of age, and he marries, or presumably remarries after retirement, then upon his death no pension shall be payable to the widow, or to any children she might have had before she married him, or to any children which might have emanated from the new marriage.

Strangely enough, I received a letter this week from a male pensioner who argues the other way. He has done this very thing following retirement, and he sets out in his letter a strong appeal through me to Parliament to have action taken to ensure that amendments will be made to the existing law to enable his widow, should he predecease her, to receive a pension; and for her children, or any children of the new marriage, to come under the pension benefits as set down in the Act.

As I say, I do not remember the Treasurer discussing this part of the Bill. I am certain he would have some information on the matter, because it is of some importance; and I hope that when replying to the second reading debate he will have something to say about this matter, and also give me his views in regard to the appeal which I have put to him on behalf of the person who wrote to me. I am not saying that there is not a very good argument in favour of the amendment in the Bill. However, this person who wrote to me was not short of arguments.

Mr. Brand: No; he was not when he wrote to me, either.

Mr. HAWKE: He made out quite a good case; shall we say a *prima facie* case?

Mr. Brand: Yes.

Mr. HAWKE: However, we will wait with considerable interest to hear what the Treasurer has to say at a later stage. The only other provisions in the Bill deal with pensioners who come under what is known as the 1871 Superannuation Act. This was amended in 1958 mainly, I think, for the purpose of including the supplementation payment of a flat rate of £1 a week, to which I have already made reference.

When the Treasurer made his speech in explanation of the provisions in the Bill he told us quite justifiably that the provisions in the Superannuation Act, and therefore some of the provisions in this Bill, are somewhat complicated and to some extent beyond the understanding of the ordinary individual. I could not agree with him more. I have given a lot of time to studying this Bill in relation to the Act; and one requires to study it not once, but half a dozen times, to obtain a reasonably accurate understanding of what is involved in each of the amendments.

Perhaps the most complicated amendment in the Bill is the one which deals with pensioners who are still drawing pensions under the Superannuation Act of 1871-1958. However, in the clearest language I am capable of using to describe the situation, I understand the Bill proposes to fix the number of units under the 1938 Act to give pensioners under the 1871 Act the same original pension as they would have received under that last-mentioned Act. In other words, the formula of the 1938 Act will be used to work out the units of pension which the pensioners under the 1871 Act would have received originally at the time of their first retirement from the Government service.

Obviously, that in itself would be no good. In fact, it would, I imagine, reduce the present pension of every person under the 1871 Act. So this Bill goes on to provide that there shall be added to these units when they are ascertained, the increases in unit values which have since taken place under the 1938 Act. In other words, as far as I am able to understand, the purpose of this part of the Bill is, in principle, to put the 1871 pensioners on the same basis, in relation to pensions, as the relevant pensioners under the 1938 Act.

I think here, too, it would assist members of the House in trying to arrive at a clear understanding of what is actually involved,

if the Treasurer, when replying to the second reading, could give us some practical examples of how each group of pensioners under the 1871 Act would fare when this new formula comes into operation. In other words, take the various groups as they now exist under the 1871 Act with the total pensions which they receive per fortnight, and then show us by comparison how their present pension rates per fortnight would move upwards by the application of this proposed formula. That would, I think, clarify the situation for us considerably, and place us in a position of being able to understand easily what the new situation will be.

Unless that is done, we are left in the position of trying to work out just what all this complicated formula is about and what it will do. It would be far easier and much more convincing, I am sure, were we to have placed before us in simple language a comparison of the two situations. I understand that naturally the State will pay the whole of whatever increases are involved in this alteration, because this State has always paid the whole of the pensions under the 1871 Act.

I think that all members of the House are aware that no person who receives the pension under the 1871 Act ever made a contribution for a pension. It was a pension granted under that Act because of service to the Crown in what was known, and still is known, so far as I am aware, as an "established capacity". Heaven forgive me that I should raise this matter again, because the term employed—established capacity—was responsible for almost endless arguments, controversy, and confusion several years ago.

Cases were taken to the court by some of the aggrieved persons whose legal rights to a pension were not admitted. They claimed that they were employed in an established capacity under the Crown because they had started work with the Government at the age of 14, or whatever age it might have been; and that they had continued without a break, in a permanent position in the Government service, until the age of 65, which became the age of retirement with the passing of the years.

However, the courts ruled, as I remember it, that employment in an established capacity could be decided only by the Governor in Executive Council and not in any court of law. So it became the not very pleasant duty and responsibility of Governments to decide individual applications as they came in from time to time. Quite naturally, too, I suppose, the Governments displeased far more than they were able to satisfy.

Arising out of that situation an association was formed of those who had retired and who considered they had a very strong moral and legal claim under the 1871 Act. The association tried to become quite a strong political force at the time by using its influence against the Ministers of the prevailing Government and in some instances against the private member supporters of the prevailing Government. However, I think its influence politically was not strong enough to bring about any alteration in any particular electorate.

Because this State will pay the whole of the increases which will come to pass under the proposed new formula, I could have the same objection in principle to this amendment as I have already voiced to some of the other amendments. Under this amendment, Bill Jones, who is on a small rate of pension at the present time, would get, perhaps, no increase at all, or very little increase; where Thomas Smith Harrison, because he is on a high rate of pension at present, would receive a substantial increase.

The State would be footing the whole of the Bill in every instance; and so the argument arises as to whether the State should expend more money to give one pensioner under this 1871 Act a reasonably substantial increase in his present pension, and spend nothing extra, or perhaps 1s. or 2s. a fortnight extra to give another pensioner under this Act no increase, or 1s. or 2s. a fortnight increase, or whatever it might be. That is another reason why I am anxious the Treasurer should supply us with the examples to which I referred a short while ago.

By and large, I support the provisions of this Bill, and will certainly vote for the second reading. However, before that vote is taken, I hope the Treasurer will give us the information I have sought, and particularly provide us with the examples under the two or three headings to which I referred. If necessary, I would ask him to postpone replying to the debate until another day in order that he might have information prepared to provide us with those examples about which I have spoken. I support the second reading.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [11.15]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes—22.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Moir
Mr. Brady	Mr. Norton
Mr. Curran	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Evans	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hall	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Toma
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Heal

(Teller.)

Noes—24.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Brand	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Burt	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Court	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Neil
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Roberts
Dr. Henn	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Lewis	Mr. I. W. Manning
	(Teller.)

Majority against—2.

Motion thus negatived.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [11.19:] At this late hour I do not intend to detain the House any longer than is necessary. I had hoped that if an adjournment had been granted the Treasurer would have had time to look into the various questions which the Leader of the Opposition has raised in connection with this Bill.

Mr. Brand: I will be able to answer yours now, too.

Mr. BRADY: I think the Premier will have his work cut out to answer the queries raised by the Leader of the Opposition, without worrying about me; and I doubt whether he will be able to answer the Leader of the Opposition as fully as he should be able to do without referring to his departmental officers the matters raised. The very fact that there have been 12 or 13 amendments to the original 1871 Act, and three or four amendments to the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, makes it almost impossible for anybody to be able fully to follow all the alterations that have taken place. I think we should all be indebted to the Leader of the Opposition for the way in which he covered the various amendments.

Quite rightly he raised a number of queries which I think the Premier should endeavour to answer fully in order that the people who try to follow these debates, and see what amendments are made, can properly understand them. I understand that a number of amendments made to the original 1871 Act are out of print. Therefore, how can people follow these questions if the Premier does not intend fully to answer all the queries raised? I do not want to proceed any further in that strain.

Mr. Brand: You won't upset me.

Mr. BRADY: I wish to recount a few experiences I have had regarding the supplementary grants which were given by the Labor Government. A Scotsman who lives in my area came to me one day and said, "Mr. Brady, will you tell your Premier not to give us any more increases in superannuation?—because as fast as they are given to me the Commonwealth Government takes them from me with the other hand."

I am pleased, for the sake of those who are to get the increases, that the Treasurer has increased the unit rate; but I am wondering whether, on the other hand, he is not going to make it possible for the Commonwealth Government to be able to say to many of these people who are now being paid social services, "You are no longer able to get social service payments because of the amount of superannuation you receive." Every member knows that when a person receives a certain amount the Commonwealth Government is allowed to reduce its pension accordingly.

However, I am pleased about these increases on behalf of one pensioner in my electorate who left the railways in about the year 1948. At that time he had a superannuation rate which he knew would give him a pension of £2 over the basic wage. The position today is that he is getting a pension £6 under the basic wage. He was one of those 1871 pensioners who served in an established capacity. He lives at East Guildford and some 18 months ago wrote me a series of letters which, no doubt, are on the Treasury files. If the Treasurer wants to look the matter up, the man's name is Powell. He will be relieved to know that he will get a 2s. 6d. increase for each of the 15s. units he has at the moment; but whether that will be sufficient to put his income above the basic wage, I do not know.

Another man on superannuation came to see me last week and said he thought the increases proposed in the Bill should be stepped up by at least another 1s. 3d. a unit. He has 12 units of superannuation, but because some years ago he saved some money and bought some properties he or his wife is now precluded from getting the old-age pension, and he considers that the 2s. 6d. increase is not sufficient. He advised me that since he retired he has had to pay full hospital fees, full doctors' fees, full wireless license, and full TV license; whereas if he were a pensioner he would be granted a reduction in those fees.

This man feels that although he tried to do something for himself, and put some money aside for his old age, he is worse off than the pensioner who saved nothing during his lifetime. His main argument seems to be that if members of Parliament can get an increase in salary, and an increase in their parliamentary expenses, there should be some money somewhere which would enable an increased unit payment for superannuated people who, because they put aside a few pounds to try to supplement their income, are being penalised at present.

He points out also that when he fills in his income tax return he is not entitled to claim deductions under sections 19 to 26. He says he is being penalised in this respect and is worse off than an old-age pensioner. He gets

no allowance for his wife under the age allowance in the Income Tax Act, and he gets no medical or dental allowance. He feels he is worse off than the ordinary pensioner; and, whilst he agrees that the Treasurer has been generous, he believes that there are many who will get virtually little or nothing out of the increases, although there are others who will get some advantage as a consequence of the passing of this measure.

In this particular case the person concerned will get 12 times 2s. 6d., which is 30s., whereas he feels he should get 12 times 3s. 9d.; because he is of the opinion that when he paid into this scheme a pound was worth a pound, whereas today it is worth about 5s. He argues that the Chifley pound was worth a pound but the Menzies' pound is worth about 5s. or 6s.

These are not his words; but to some extent it would appear that somewhere along the line a confidence trick has been played on these people who tried to pay in so that they would have an adequate pension to provide for them in their old age. The Chifley pound, which was paid into the fund should be returning very substantial interest; and if that money is earning substantial interest rates, the superannuation fund should be in a position to be able to pay these people an increased unit rate.

I do not think there is any need for me to traverse all the ground covered so ably by the Leader of the Opposition. He has my gratitude—and I feel he has the gratitude of every member of this House—for covering the amendments so thoroughly despite the difficulty there is in trying to follow the various amendments to the superannuation Acts.

I hope the Premier will be able to reply fully to the Leader of the Opposition, because there will be hundreds of pensioners throughout the State who will be reading *Hansard* and trying to follow the amendments and understand what they mean.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I support the Bill because it means an increase in pension to many superannuated people; and as I understand the position, there will be no reduction in the case of those who may actually be receiving more now than would be the case if the Bill were passed in its present form and no provision were made for a no-reduction clause. I hope that the Premier will reply fully to the points that have been raised. I support the Bill.

MR. BRAND (Greenough-Treasurer—in reply) [11.30]: I think I should explain why I refused an adjournment. The member for Guildford-Midland wrote me a note asking me if I would be prepared to accept an adjournment and I said "No"; so I had to honour that undertaking!

I appreciate the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition. As anyone who has taken an interest in this legislation would know, it is a most complex situation. I find it very difficult to understand—if I do understand—certain sections of it at all. The notes which were given to me by the Under Treasurer and the officers of the Superannuation Board were those which I delivered to the House. I read very carefully the notes given to me in order that I could give the facts to the House, together with the reasons the board and the Treasury officers had put forward for making amendments, and the suggested alterations, to the 1871 Act, under which there appear to be so many anomalies.

As the Leader of the Opposition would know, the 1871 Act has been the subject of appeals and deputations over a number of years. As a new broom always sweeps clean, I had a deluge of approaches, and letters, and deputations on this matter and a number of other matters which were associated with the alleged anomalies under the 1938 Act. Accordingly, I asked the officers whether they could give me the full story, as a result of which they made a very thorough investigation over a number of months and the legislation we have before us is the outcome.

It does not aim to increase the pensions; it aims to iron out certain anomalies which have crept in as a result of amendments made to the Act over a number of years. I feel that the best way to deal with this—especially as the Leader of the Opposition has asked for examples and comparisons, and I have not got them here tonight—would be for the House to go into Committee, and for me then to obtain the necessary information, more than I have, on each of the clauses, and to deal with the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition, and the member for Guildford-Midland, giving examples, and explaining as far as I am able to explain the reasons for the amendments to be made. If the House is prepared to accept that undertaking I will deal with each clause in Committee, and do the best I can to explain the position.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) in the Chair; Mr. Brand (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave granted to sit again.

House adjourned at 11.35 p.m.