valued at 12s. 4.6d. per ton, and about 200 men fewer were employed than at present. Mechanical appliances have been introduced, and cheap open-cut mining resorted to.

More men only mean more absentees. That is where the trouble comes in—and not only at Collie. Throughout Australia the trouble is absenteeism. I am told that men finish working at two o'clock in the afternoon because, as they say, they have earned enough and do not care to pay the taxation required for war purposes. That is one of the aspects which require to be investigated. I have only one other phase to comment upon, and what I am about to say on it I hope the Minister will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. I now quote from "The West Australian" of the 26th August—

Speeding Victory. U.S.A. Plant for British Coal. New York, August 25.—The Washington Bureau of the "New York Times" reports that in order to hasten victory the United States is sending to Britain equipment both for developing new strip or open-cut coalmines and for mechanising old deep mines. According to the report of American experts who recently visited England the introduction of American machinery and mining methods into British coalmines will step-up production at a rate exceeding 20,000,000 tons yearly. On the recommendation of the American experts between 70 and 100 British mine managers will visit the United States to study the use of American machinery and equipment.

As regards coalmining, we are not educated in this country. Modern methods of coalmining will mean that we can get our coal at a cheaper price. If an investigation is made as I have suggested, there will be evidence to show that the country is being bled by the bureaucratic control of incompetent men.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are not referring to the coalminers, but to the Government?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, and to absenteeism. With the introduction of modern methods, the cost of our coal must come down. Who is paying the extra £250,000 for coal? The taxpayer! If, under the post-war reconstruction scheme, we are to do anything for the development and peopling of Western Australia, one of the main things required is cheap fuel. Fuel is the basis of the whole scheme. I hope that some member will take up the problem of the coal industry of Western Australia, and ensure that we return to a proper basis instead of being bled, as is now the case, by having to pay 21s. 6d. per ton for our coal. I do not want to see the wages of the coalminers cut; but if, when the mines are mechanised, there is not enough work for the extra 200 men to whom I have already referred, work will be provided for them in other industries by cheap coal. We are told that the coalmining industry is not one in which men want to engage. We cannot stand still, persisting with the old methods. We must bring ourselves up to date. We must endeavour to speed up victory as is being done in Britain and the United States.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 12th September, 1944.

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

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

1, Dried Fruits Act Amendment.

2, Local Authorities (Reserve Funds) Act Amendment.

3, Northam Cemeteries.

4, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.37]: As was stated by the Minister, this is a continuance measure. The Act has been in operation since 1915 and has undoubtedly rendered

valuable assistance to the farmers requiring advances to carry on their operations through difficult times. The activities of the board have increased considerably since the Act was passed and, according to reports, farmers may require to come under it to some extent this season, as the prospects in some of the agricultural districts are not too bright. We all hope, however, that we shall have the necessary rains and that conditions will improve. It is interesting to note from the Minister's speech that whereas last year 672 persons came under this Act, today the number is reduced to 412. This is an indication that our farmers have been enjoying better prices for their products and consequently have been in a position considerably to reduce their debts to the I.A.B. We have had a similar continuance Bill before us each year for many years past and, as members are well aware of its value to the farming community and will no doubt agree to it, I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I propose to support the second reading of this measure because not only would it be unwise from the point of view of the agricultural industries not to do so, but this measure is one which, in my opinion, will yet prove to play a more important part in connection with other industries than it has in assisting those of agriculture. I refer to that portion of the Act which gives authority for assistance for the establishment of other industries. Loans or grants may be made to other industries in accordance with the terms of the Act. If one looks through the reports of the Treasurer from time to time one finds that considerable sums of money have been advanced under this Act to industries other than those of agriculture.

Mr. Marshall: But mainly agriculture.

Mr. WATTS: "Mainly" is probably the right word to use, but if the hon. member looks through the items of expenditure he will find that under Part III of the Act many industries, not of an agricultural character, have been assisted in the past. Although, previously, expenditure has been small so far as these other industries are concerned it seems to me that now is the time when we should continue that part of the Act which enables assistance to be rendered to industries other than farming, because in the post-war period much valuable work may be done under it. If today one goes to the Minister for Industrial Development with a reasonable proposition, showing that some industry of use to the State and its people can be commenced by an individual, but that lack of funds prevents his entering upon it either now or in the immediate post-war period, it will be given consideration.

Members will also find that it is under the Industries Assistance Act that such assistance is made a charge upon the Revenue or funds of the State. So, I rise to mention my intention to support the second reading, and to remind the House that the ambit of this Act is not altogether confined to agriculture. It has another duty which has been of some value in the past and, I believe, may be of even greater value in the future. It is not reasonable or proper that the public should have the opinion that the passage of this Industries Assistance Continuance Bill year after year is only directed towards the assistance of the agricultural industries. So long as the other provisions remain in the Act, then for so long must they be deemed to be part of the reasons for continuing it. Even if we were to decide today that it was no longer necessary or desirable to assist, under the terms of this Act, any grower of agricultural produce, we should still, I think, be forced to the conclusion that we must renew it because of that part which enables other industries to be assisted. Therefore there are strong grounds why it should be continued, quite apart from those dealing with agriculture.

I could enumerate complaints in connection with the administration of the Act so far as agricultural loans are concerned. As members know its administration has been, under the Agricultural Bank Act, brought under the heading of the transferred activities and committed to the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank. In consequence it is today, from the agricultural point of view, a statutory offshoot of the Agricultural Bank itself. However, I do not propose at the moment to bring up any complaints, of a minor character though they might be, about the administration that has taken place because, according to the figures given by the Minister, there is every indication that its interest to agriculture is becoming less and less, and I hope that in the course of the next year or two its interest to those engaged in farming will cease almost entirely. Then we may be able to con-

tinue to make use of it as a means of assisting in the establishment of other industries in the State, or of extending those already established.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison): I am very pleased that the Leader of the Opposition raised the point dealing with the other industries. I hope that on the next occasion that this measure is discussed by the Assembly the Minister will give us a detailed outline so far as assistance to industries is concerned. I had intended to rise to speak on this measure on the matter of rural industries assistance only, but without the knowledge of the number of rural industry clients being assisted under this measure I can advance no strong argument in regard to the actual prevailing position as it affects the farming industry and as it has prevailed since 1915. This Act was passed in the year 1915 and was the outcome of legislative activity due to factors which brought the farming industry, generally, into a state of financial difficulty. I refer to the very bad times over which the farmer had no control. I understand that the droughts of 1911 and 1914 placed him in such a position that he could not carry on any further without the aid of this particular measure. I would like to know just exactly how many farmers are still being assisted under this Act. The point I want the Minister to understand is this: A number of beneficiaries, in the rural industries, under this Act may have sought assistance of recent date.

The Minister for Lands: It was found necessary to assist a lesser number than 500 last year.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is the point. I want to show what a deplorable state of affairs it is, and what a reflection upon us, as a Parliament, if we have asked farmers to struggle on against adversity and have invited them and their heirs and successors to take part in the working of farms for a period of approximately 30 years without any possible relief from debt. If that is the position it is a disgrace, to say the least of it. I am not sure whether that is the case. Some of these farmers may have been obliged only recently to apply for relief under this Act.

The Minister for Lands: Thousands who applied for assistance are not now under it at all.

Mr. MARSHALL: That point gives us a very good indication as to what our debt system and our interest bill are doing to an important industry such as the agricultural industry.

The Minister for Lands: This Act has helped thousands of farmers over temporary bad times.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree. But the Leader of the Opposition's point is one that should be considered by the Minister. These industries should all be segregated. I suppose that 99 per cent. and more of the people believe that this measure is continued merely to protect or assist the rural industries. Of recent years, however, other industries have been more than active and have had large sums advanced to them under the self-same Act. So, when it is next introduced, I would like a more detailed account of its actual operations. That, of course, is if I am still a member of this august body. I do not intend to oppose the measure, but I would like to know for what periods some of our farmers have been struggling to free themselves from debt. This is a good indication of the bad system under which we are working, because not many members would like to have that experience. So some relief should be forthcoming for those people who for years have struggled under an interest burden in the direction of having their capital indebtedness wiped off. I hope that on the next occasion when the Minister brings down a continuance Bill, he will give details of what industries have been receiving assistance under the measure and the period over which that assistance has been extended to them.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): This legislation, which was originally invoked to help the farming industry, has served a useful purpose, and I agree with the general expression of opinion that the time has not arrived when it can be terminated. I was glad to hear from the Minister that the number of farmers receiving assistance under the Act has been reduced. It is to be hoped that, following the investigations and constructive suggestions made by the Rural Reconstruction Commission, the time will not be far distant when this Act will be superseded by possibly a more comprehensive measure in order to improve the situation of farmers now receiving assistance under the Act. Until that time comes, the proper and

in fact the only wise course to adopt is to ensure the continuance of the Act, in the absence of which a difficult position would arise for the substantial number of farmers who are still under the Act. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [4.54]: To a greater degree than is sometimes necessary, members should consult the parent Act before coming to a conclusion as to the value of this measure, especially Section 2 of the Act wherein is set out the various directions in which the measure shall not apply. With the general principle on which the Bill is based, I have no quarrel. The principle is that shearers, like all other workers, and in fact like people generally, should have clean, healthy and ample living, cooking and sleeping accommodation. I say they are entitled to all that, and nobody on this side of the House, at any rate, will object.

The speech of the Minister for Education, in moving the second reading of the Bill, indicated the existence of an idea somewhere or other that no matter how crude and inconvenient the living conditions might be, they were good enough for shearers. I do not know where the Minister could have got that idea. I certainly do not hold it, and I have not heard it expressed during the time I have been a member of this House. I recall that in 1912 the then Premier, Mr. Scaddan, brought down a Bill which contained much the same provisions as those set out in this measure, though there were slight variations. That Government and successive Labour Governments have had the policing of the provisions of the Act, and it would therefore appear that such crudities and inconveniences, if there have been any since then, have certainly been the responsibility of the Government and nobody else. So far as we are concerned, all reasonable provision with regard to buildings and other accommodation is as much the right of shearers as of anyone else, and I cannot see why shearers should have been singled out for particular mention by the Minister.

The House will agree that if the Minister, the Premier, the Minister for Lands, and I happened to be shearers, we would naturally want to work under clean and healthy conditions, and I imagine that shearers take the same attitude. This is not to say that they should be finicky or that we should be finicky, or that we should act without due regard in the matter of putting farmers to unnecessary expense for structural and other alterations. After all, we need but reflect that shearers are not in any one district for any great length of time. Generally it would be a couple of months at the outside, and as regards their stay on a station, that might amount to no more than a fortnight. Occasionally, in the case of the larger stations, the shearers might stay for nearly a month, but I suppose that their average stay would be four or five days and that they would hardly ever be likely to exceed one week. For such a brief period there would be little sense in forcing sheep owners to go to heavy expense that is not strictly necessary.

For instance, the Act of 1912 provides that farmers or sheep owners must employ at least eight men before the provisions of the Act would operate. South Australia observes the same number. I understand that this Bill is based on the South Australian Act; in fact, the provisions of the Bill have been lifted almost word for word from that Act. But it happens that today the Minister desires to reduce the number. Unfortunately, however, he gives no reasons for the proposed changes. This is a case in which, I submit, the reasons certainly should be given. I do not know whether there are any reasons; but, if there are, the Minister should state them. He should have some sound grounds before setting out to inflict upon farmers, who are now of course exempt if they employ fewer than eight men, the necessity for putting up the accommodation specified by the measure. Particularly in that regard, it is only four or five days out of the 365 that the accommodation is required. This

is almost the only provision of the measure to which I raise any real objection.

In Committee I may find it necessary, unless the Minister puts up some convincing reasons, to submit an amendment bearing on the point. As regards the change which proposes to make police officers inspectors under the Bill, presumably there is dissatisfaction with the work the present inspectors have done. I do not know in what way they have proved unsuitable, but that appears to be the case because it is proposed that senior police officers may act as inspectors themselves or pass on instructions to their constables to act thus. I do not know whether the Commissioner of Police has concurred in this new arrangement. The Minister might inform us on that point. Particularly in the outer areas, it is to be feared, a police constable would not have time to attend to this new work.

Mr. Marshall: He goes out annually to collect statistics.

Mr. DONEY: Quite so, but his visit for that purpose might not coincide with the week or fortnight shearers would happen to be there. His annual visit, which must be taken at a set period in the year, would therefore generally not be of much assistance in this regard. If the provision as to police constables is to be sensibly carried out, the constables would seemingly, under this proposal, be travelling from shed to shed over long distances. Why are they to be burdened with work of this kind, which might seriously impair the efficiency of the Force in other and more essential directions? The proposed changes set out in the Bill are likely, as members can see, to affect farmers much more detrimentally than graziers and pastoralists. I ask the House, therefore, to deal reasonably with amendments moved by members representing the rural areas.

I have also to draw attention to numerous provisions in the Bill dealing with sleeping accommodation, such as mattresses, clean and dry hay, straw, kapok or fibre, lamps, cooking and drinking and washing utensils, vessels used in cooking, bathrooms and so forth. I agree with all that is stipulated in that respect, and I hope members generally will do so. I hope, further, that whoever administers the measure will see that its provisions are enforced with the utmost discretion. A case in point is that urns are insisted upon and petrol tins must not be used. I will admit that petrol tins are not the most suitable of containers to use in kitchens, but it will readily be seen—and this applies to other utensils as well—that occasions will arise when urns particularly would be very difficult to secure. In those cases kerosene tins would be as handy as anything else, and their use might be permitted. I have no objection to the passing of the Bill, but I shall, probably have to move an amendment or two later.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington): I think all members are agreed that shearers should have proper and adequate accommodation. Unfortunately, when the Minister introduced the Bill I was called out of the Chamber, and I have not been able to see a report of his speech since. I trust, however, that when necessary building alterations are to be made, consideration will be given to the difficulty of obtaining materials. I do not know whether the Minister in his introductory speech took that difficulty into account. Generally speaking, farmers and pastoralists are prepared to provide adequate accommodation for shearers. Members representing pastoral areas will know the pastoralists have provided the necessary accommodation. I think that was done years ago; but, as the member for Williams-Narrogin has said, the proposals of the Bill relate mostly to farming areas. There again, if the farmers can obtain the necessary material, they will make the alterations specified.

I would suggest to the Minister that instead of using police in agricultural districts, he might use the local health inspectors. The police are being overburdened with work at the present time. Every few weeks they are given additional duties. If the Minister would agree to this suggestion, he would be acting wisely. Every road board district has a health inspector; this is especially the case in farming areas; and the health inspector moves through those areas constantly. Part of his job is to visit the various places and look to their health requirements. Thus he would be able to take this job in his stride. I would also suggest that a health inspector is better qualified to carry out the duties than a member of the Police Force would be. These are the only suggestions I have to make, and I hope they will be accepted.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Education (for the Minister for Works) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2 of the principal Act:

Mr. DONEY: On the second reading I asked the Minister why the Government had decided to reduce the minimum number of shearers from eight to six. Many farmers, because they have not been required to supply the accommodation specified, do not possess it now. The proposal of the Bill is to impose upon them the erection of new buildings to conform to the letter of what the Bill specifies. Possibly there has been a mistake made by the draftsman.

Mr. SEWARD: Unfortunately we have to debate this Bill, and others, without having copies of the speeches of Ministers. Would the six shearers specified include all the men employed about the shearing shed? If that were so, a great number of men would be included.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I direct the hon. member's attention to the definition in the parent Act, of shearer, which surely answers his question. It reads as follows:—

> "Shearer" means any person employed in or about a shearing shed in the shearing of sheep or in work connected therewith, but does not include a person who is employed on the holding on which the shearing shed is situate when the shearing is not in progress, nor does it include any member of the employer's family, woolclasser, or expert quartered and dining apart from shearers, or any aboriginal native.

I may add that this is 1944, and that the original measure, providing for a maximum of eight, was passed in 1912. While the provisions made when that measure was enacted were satisfactory for 1912, I consider that we are entitled to look for some improvement in 1944. It is felt, moreover, that because of the improvement of the wool industry in Western Australia, and the better position of many employers now as compared with 1912, it is not asking too much that the benefits of this legislation should be conferred upon men who work in batches of six instead of batches of eight. Shearers should not be asked to put up with all sorts of crudities. An endeavour should be made to extend to as many shearers as possible what are right and proper conditions, but without causing undue hardship to employers. It is right to say that instead of making the provisions of the Bill apply to places where not less than eight shearers are employed, they should apply to places where not fewer than six are employed. We could have gone lower, but that was not done.

Mr. Doney: How much lower?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We could have said that these conditions should apply where not fewer than four were employed, but we have not done that, believing it desirable to extend these facilities to as many men as possible, but at the same time having due regard for the responsibilities of employers and the size of their holdings.

Mr. DONEY: I should think that what has been regarded as quite sufficient for six men to put up with would be deemed just as reasonable for eight men to endure.

The Minister for Education: Or ten, or twelve!

Mr. DONEY: I said eight. The Minister's contention was to the effect that we progress with the years and that this is 1944 and not 1912, and, that being so, we should be entitled to some changes. But why did not the Minister show—if he could, and I do not think he could—that, arising out of conditions in the Act in South Australia and again in our own Act, there are certain disabilities that shearers should not be called upon to endure? If the Minister cannot do that, he is not entitled to make any change.

Mr. PERKINS: In view of the Minister's explanation of the definition of "shearer," it is certain that the Act will affect quite a number of sheds in the agricultural areas. It is becoming quite a common practice for larger teams of shearers to shear at contract sheds and for various shed hands to travel with them. Consequently, if we bring the number down to six, I feel certain that many sheds in the agricultural areas will be affected. In regard to most of the sheds, the period of shearing is very short. In many instances it does not exceed a fortnight or three weeks. So some hardship could be caused by bringing them within the provisions of the measure. One clause refers to accommodation being within a certain distance of stables or other outbuildings. In many instances, the accommodation would be quite suitable but it would be ruled out by that clause. I am not suggest-

ing that the accommodation provided in the agricultural areas should be of an unsuitable type. As a fact, we find that shearers demand accommodation at least equivalent to what they are able to get in the pastoral areas, and I think in the majority of cases that accommodation is rather better than is found in pastoral districts. I do not imagine that shearers would agree to shear at sheds where the accommodation was not of a reasonable type. Most of them are able to obtain sufficient shearing in pastoral areas without worrying about the agricultural districts, and people in the agricultural areas have to set out to attract them.

The Minister for Lands: There are other advantages of shearing in farming districts; for instance, there is no thousand miles to go to start work!

Mr. PERKINS: Yes, that does enter into the question as well, but I cannot see any point in Parliament's putting obstacles or unnecessary difficulties in the way of farmers in the agricultural areas. If the number is left at eight instead of being reduced to six, I am sure there will be no danger of shearers having to put up with unsuitable accommodation, because they would not go to properties where the accommodation was not reasonable. Some clauses of the Bill might easily occasion hardship, particularly that referring to distance of accommodation from other buildings.

The Premier: Is not most of the shearing done by two-stand plants? In that case, the men would not come under the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. PERKINS: That has been so in the past, but at present there is a tendency to concentrate in larger sheds. The manpower office has been trying to encourage farmers to take their flocks to one shed where sufficient accommodation is available. In that way, a large team of shearers working in one centre can get through their shearing quickly; in a fortnight or three weeks they can shear from 5,000 to 6,000 sheep, moving then to another depot shed. If farmers are compelled, by this measure, to erect entirely new accommodation, many of those sheds will be wiped out altogether. The men who own them will simply say, "We will employ fewer shearers and therefore will not come within the provisions of the Act."

Mr. TRIAT: Quite a number of pastoral properties are situated in my electorate and there is no trouble regarding accommodation for shearers. Pastoralists have given every assistance to make the accommodation reasonably good, but since 1912 the sheep population has travelled into the agricultural areas. We know that the biggest sheep population is to be found in the agricultural and not in the pastoral areas. Much more shearing takes place in the farming districts than in the pastoral districts. Depot sheds existed long before the manpower regulations were introduced. Eight or nine years ago farmers concentrated shearing in one shed in a particular district. They did not utilise the full eight men, and thus evaded the responsibility for providing the men with accommodation. The shearers were asked to sleep close to pig-styes and stables. Such conditions should not be permitted to exist. Shearing is being speeded up. Six men today will do as much as eight men did in the past. If eight men are entitled to good accommodation, why not six?

Mr. Perkins: Why not reduce the number to two?

Mr. TRIAT: If two men are not given decent accommodation, the Act should be amended to provide for it. One man in this Chamber connected with the sheep industry —the member for Murray-Wellington—has no objection to this measure, because he realises that the proposition is reasonable and he has sheep in an agricultural district and in a pastoral district. The Bill aims to give shearers decent accommodation and there should be no objection to it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Nothing is provided in this measure which should not be extended to men engaged in the industry. Furthermore, it should be agreed that we ought to attempt to extend the benefit of these provisions to as many men as possible. The argument has been used by some members that shearers would refuse to work if conditions were unsatisfactory and that there is no need for this provision. If that argument is sound, there is no need for the Bill. We have to make a provision and set out to whom it will apply. I do not believe that any great hardship will be imposed upon employers if we extend the provisions to places where not fewer than six men are employed. We should not argue that because some little hardship might be caused in some places, men engaged in the industry should be de-

nied reasonable accommodation. The member for Williams-Narrogin endeavoured to show that it was not necessary to make provision to extend the operations of the measure to places where not fewer than six men are employed because suitable conditions are already provided. If that is so, what is there to worry about?

Mr. Doney: What about when those employing fewer than five employ six, seven or eight?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: When they start to employ six men, they should extend these reasonable conditions to those men. We cannot say that because a man is one of a team of four or five, he should put up with much worse conditions than are considered decent. An attempt should be made to go as far down the scale as possible. It would be highly desirable to say that these conditions should be extended to every man engaged in the industry, because they are not luxurious or extravagant; but we know that if we were to insist on the provisions being applied where only one man was employed for a short time, the cost might be so great as to be prohibitive, and therefore it would be unreasonable to provide for the conditions to be applied in such a case. In asking for this small extension regarding conveniences available to the men, we shall not be imposing any hardship.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister takes it for granted that the existing conditions cannot be said to be decent. He has not endeavoured to establish that fact. I am convinced that he cannot do so, and in that event he is not entitled to attempt to effect any such change. In my opinion, there is no justification for it. Has the Minister received any complaints from shearers or contractors?

The Minister for Education: We do not wait for complaints before we act!

Mr. Watts: That has been customary in the past.

Mr. DONEY: If the Minister could say that complaints had been received regarding the accommodation, then perhaps there would be justification for his attitude. In the absence of justification on that score, there is no need for the alteration. The only argument advanced so far is that we obviously do not live under conditions now that admittedly existed 10 or 20 years ago; but that is not sufficient. I am afraid that if the Minister persists with this proposal, farmers instead of increasing the number of shearers will employ aborigines.

The Minister for Education: That does not say very much for farmers generally.

Mr. DONEY: I do not say they will do that, but they are liable to do so.

The Minister for Education: Rather than provide decent conditions!

Mr. DONEY: Aborigines and half-castes are employed by the thousand and are particularly adept at shed jobs connected with shearing. I am afraid the Minister will run the risk of decreasing the number of whites employed in the industry.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 5:

Mr. WATTS: The proposed amendment to the Act will mean that every policeman who is in charge of a district or of a police station shall be an inspector under the Act. I am not sure that that is a reasonable duty to impose on the police. Does the Commissioner of Police consider it is a duty that could reasonably be undertaken by his officers? If so, I shall be guided by his approval; but even so, I think the proposed amendment should be altered so that every member of the Police Force and not merely the one in charge of a district or a police station, should be authorised as an inspector. If the Commissioner of Police considers that his officers can reasonably undertake this work then the suggestion made earlier in the debate that the inspections could be carried out annually when the policeman was gathering his statistical data, should be adopted. Already officers in charge of small country stations have to do much travelling and their duties under this Act will mean a considerable increase in that respect.

Mr. Withers: He could appoint another officer as his deputy.

Mr. WATTS: Even so, I do not think we should limit this to the officer-in-charge but should provide that every police constable should be entitled to carry out the required inspections.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Bill provides for the automatic appointment as inspectors of policemen in charge of districts or stations and further that such officers can delegate their authority to other members of the Police Force. The authority to delegate power is necessary so that we can utilise the services of all the officers re-

quired. The provision is adequate and represents an improvement without creating any hardships. I am advised that the Commissioner of Police has raised no objection.

Mr. DONEY: Beyond saying that the change is desirable, the Minister has not supported his statement with further information. Unless he can show that the change is desirable, how can the Committee be assured that the proposed step is justifiable? Already policemen in country districts are overloaded with work and have to travel excessively long distances from time to time. The Bill will necessitate a great deal more work that policemen certainly will not appreciate.

The Minister for Education: It is felt that the change proposed will represent an improvement.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister should demonstrate that the change is justified.

Mr. SEWARD: I do not know how this proposal will work out in view of the volume of work country policemen already have to undertake. As to the suggestion that the inspection should be carried out when the policeman is engaged in collecting statistical information, I do not see how that could be done. The required inspection would have to be carried out while shearing was in progress. A policeman might make his inspection at one period of the year but he could not be assured that the same conditions would obtain when shearing was in progress. To cover a district would require about two months, and during all that time the policeman would not be available at his station.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister has not given me an answer to the question I submitted. Perhaps he has had no experience in connection with shearing but there are others who can furnish the desired information. If the Minister cannot advance further arguments in support of the clause, his logical course will be to vote against it.

The Minister for Justice: Can you suggest an alternative?

Mr. DONEY: That is an amazing retort to my request for information! I am not called upon to submit an alternative proposal. If I were, I would suggest that the course proposed be not adopted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The member for Williams-Narrogin is very hard to satisfy. Under the parent Act all non-commissioned officers of the Police Force are inspectors and all that is sought in the Bill in that respect is to appoint constables in charge of police districts or stations as additional inspectors. The reason for effecting the change is that the course suggested will be more satisfactory and more efficient than the existing system. Surely that is sufficient.

Mr. Doney: Now I admit you have given us some information.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is not a great deal to argue about, after all.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Repeal of Section 6 and new section inserted:

Mr. McLARTY: Is there any provision in the principal Act to insist that shearers shall leave their quarters in decent order? The clause itself is all on the shearers' side, and contains nothing about damage to property or leaving the accommodation in the condition in which it was found.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Bill contains provision whereby the men shall take reasonable care of those things which are provided for them.

Mr. McDonald: That is in the parent Act.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This clause is really the equivalent section of the parent Act but re-enacted with some additions.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—New section: Alterations to buildings erected before passing of this Act not required until expiration of 12 months after war:

Mr. McLARTY: I move an amendment—

> That at the end of the proposed new Section 6A the following proviso be added:—"Provided always that the Minister on the application of the employer may extend such time for alteration of the building for such further period as the Minister thinks fit."

We know the difficulty of getting material in these days, and I am sure the Minister recognises it. It is unlikely we shall overtake our tremendous building programme 12 months after the war. My amendment would give the Minister power to extend the time for these alterations to be made. Probably he will have several reasonable requests in that direction.

Mr. DONEY: I support the amendment. Will the Minister say how he interprets

the reference to 12 months after the war? That may mean 12 months after the cessation of hostilities, before the period of grace expires and the Bill operates. In the first few years after the war there will be a shortage of material and men and of all building requisites. I hope the Minister realises the necessity for extending the period.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The period alluded to means 12 months after the cessation of fighting.

Mr. Doney: That may be 12 or 15 years.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think so.

Mr. Watts: You would have an argument if you put that up to the High Court.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This means after organised hostilities between the nations have ceased, when the Governments of the nations have decided that fighting has ceased. That is the date which will be taken. I do not think there will be any difficulty in the matter. I have no objection to the amendment, although the Bill contains the necessary safeguards. A notice would not be served under Section 12 of the Act if it were obvious that it would be wrong to require a man to have this building done. Assume that notice were served 12 months after the war, the man summoned would have no difficulty in proving to the court that he had exercised due vigilance and that, owing to circumstances beyond his control, he could not comply with the order.

Mr. WATTS: If the Minister's interpretation as to the period is correct, I would be disposed to vote for the amendment. If this means 12 months after actual open hostilities between nations have ceased, I assume that would be a comparatively short period from now. It is possible quite a number of applications will be made to the Minister for an extension of time, and these should be avoided in order not to encumber the officers with too much detailed work. We have had these arguments about the end of the war on other occasions. The Premier will remember the evidence tendered by the State Solicitor-General on this subject a little over a year ago. In the opinion of that gentleman 12 months after the conclusion of the war in which His Majesty was engaged meant 12 months after the ratification of the peace treaty. That might be six or seven years after actual hostilities between the nations had ceased, in which case we would not want the amendment. If the argument went to the High Court it would probably be found that 12 months after the conclusion of the war was a long period.

The Premier: I think an Act of Parliament will be passed defining what the termination of the war means.

Hon. N. Keenan: There was last time.

Mr. WATTS: That may be the position in this case. If I accept the Minister's idea of the meaning of the phrase I shall have to support some such amendment as that moved by the hon. member. Is it impracticable for this extension of time to be given by the officer-in-charge of a police station? Under the original Act an inspector was appointed by the Governor. Now we have regularised the system of inspection under this Bill by appointing the police officers. Would they not be qualified to extend the time for making these extensions if the necessity for so doing arose within a short time after the actual battle had come to an end?

Mr. McDONALD: Such expressions as "after hostilities have ceased," "after the conclusion of the war," and similar expressions will, I think, be the subject of an Act of Parliament. It has been held by the courts that the words "after the war" are too uncertain for them to decide what they mean. That was the decision arrived at in connection with a lease which was to last until the conclusion of the war. I agree with the Premier that it will be found necessary to resolve these uncertainties both in the Commonwealth and State Parliaments by an Act that will give a specific meaning or date to these various expressions. I also agree with the Minister for Education that the intention would no doubt be that the time for making building alterations should run from the cessation of hostilities. If that meaning were not in the draftsman's mind, it would involve possibly the postponement of the operation of the Act for many years. The amendment of the hon. member is, in the circumstances, a reasonable one. Whilst the court would no doubt pay attention to the difficulties of the farmer who had not erected buildings within 12 months after the end of the war, it seems to me that he would be liable to be convicted. It might be a matter of a small penalty, but it would be no excuse to save him from conviction. Many farmers may, therefore, find themselves with a record

through no fault of their own. Some provision should be made to meet extraordinary cases of the kind suggested.

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

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 8 of principal Act:

Mr. DONEY: I quite realise that the mandatory provisions in the Bill with regard to accommodation require the deletion of the word "tent." However, unusual circumstances might easily arise requiring the use of a tent or tents on a station or on a farm. The Minister himself can probably see that such a position might arise owing to a larger number of sheep having to be shorn and to the need for additional accommodation. The existing accommodation might be burnt down and tents used temporarily. I suggest to the Minister that he agree to the defeat of the clause.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think the hon. member has the wrong idea. The provision in question deals with the accommodation which must be kept clean by the shearers themselves. All this clause does is to remove from the shearer the obligation to keep the tent clean.

Mr. DONEY: I realise what the Minister says, but there is reason for the excision of the word "tent." That word has been in the Act for many years and we now suddenly find that its excision is necessary. Tents are not now to be provided for shearers nor can they be regarded in any sense as rooms. Their use as accommodation for shearers will no longer be tolerated if the Bill becomes law. I hope after this explanation that the Minister will see fit to do as I ask.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Repeal of Section 14 of principal Act and new section inserted:

Mr. WATTS: The penalty provided is a peculiar one. Will the further penalty of £2 be imposed in respect of the days which accrue between the commission of the offence and the offender being haled before the court in respect of it, or is there any possibility of the extra penalty accruing if the offence continues after the conviction?

The Premier: That would be within the discretion of the court.

Mr. WATTS: The provision does not seem to me to be at all clear. Surely it should be sufficient to impose a penalty of £10, and then a further penalty afterwards if the default continues.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: What is intended is that the default shall be dated from the time when the court has decided that an offence has been committed. The court would impose a fine and fix the time during which the premises have to be put in order. The default would be time from that period. I see no danger in imposing the two penalties in the first instance.

Mr. WATTS: I am still not satisfied with the wording of this provision, as I do not think it expresses what both the Minister and I want. It seems to me that default commences when an employer is served with a notice and fails to carry out the terms of the notice. He is then liable to a penalty of £10, which is perfectly reasonable. The magistrate may, at his discretion, inflict a fine of less than £10, but he may inflict the maximum penalty; the employer, however, is also liable to a daily penalty during his default. That daily penalty, it seems to me, would commence from the time when he failed to comply with the notice and continue until his case was adjudicated on by the magistrate. The Minister for Justice will recollect similar provisions in the Companies Act, but they are not worded like this. They are perfectly clear. I cannot at this juncture move an amendment which would suit myself, and I would therefore suggest that the Minister undertake that further consideration be given to the provision in another place with a view to clearing up my doubt. I do not want to place obstacles in the Minister's way, but I do wish to make sure that this provision will not work out in an extraordinary manner.

Mr. McDONALD: I desire to add a word in support of what the Leader of the Opposition has said. This is a class of offence in respect of which a prosecution must be taken within six months, but the offence arises when the farmer fails to comply with the notice. The prosecution may commence at any time within six months; that lies within the discretion of the authorities. The authorities may not know about the failure to comply with the notice for perhaps three or four months, and even when the summons is issued weeks may elapse before the matter is adjudicated upon by the court. It is therefore possible that the running penalty may add up to £350 or £400.

The Premier: But these are maximum penalties!

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, but the courts are entitled to and should take into account the maximum penalty fixed by the Legislature.

The Premier: In flagrant cases.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. The court might say, "The Legislature has taken a very serious view of this delay," and possibly inflict a penalty of £300 or £400. That is neither the intention of the Legislature nor of the authorities nor of the Government. In the parent Act the penalty is £5, with no additional running penalty. We are seeking to increase the penalty to £10, that is, doubling it, and in addition we are suggesting this running penalty. With the Leader of the Opposition, I think this is a matter to which the Minister might direct his mind with a view to safeguarding any misunderstanding as to the intention of the Legislature.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I must apologise to the Committee for misleading it, but I think I can make the point perfectly clear now. Section 12 of the Act provides that where an inspector, in making an inspection, has reason to believe that any requirements of the Act have not been complied with, he shall notify the employer, directing him within a time mentioned in the notice to comply with such requirements. The period of default refers to the period which elapses subsequent to the time mentioned in the notice. The inspector says, "You have to put this right within a certain time." If the employer neglects to do so, he is summoned to appear before the court and a penalty is imposed. The maximum penalty is £10, but he is liable to a further penalty of £2 per day for every day which has elapsed since the date specified in the notice as the last day he had to put the matter in order.

Mr. WATTS: The penalty is exceptionally heavy and, for the reason given by the member for West Perth, the Committee should not agree to it. I consider I was extremely reasonable in asking the Minister to give an undertaking that this matter would be gone into by the Crown Law officers with a view to making the wording of the provision clearer, either to limit the penalty to a maximum sum, or alternatively to make the daily penalty possible only if default continues after proceedings have been brought. If the Minister will not adopt my suggestion, I shall have to try to frame an amendment during the tea adjournment.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That all words after the word "penalty" in line 7 of proposed new Section 14 be struck out with a view to inserting the words "of not less than one pound nor more than fifty pounds."

Members will recall that the penalty provided in the parent Act with respect to contraventions does not exceed £5 whereas under the Bill it can go as high as considerably over £300. The sum mentioned in the amendment is quite reasonable.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understood that the Leader of the Opposition suggested before tea that if I gave an assurance this would be looked into and an amendment made in another place, if that was thought desirable, he would be prepared to allow this clause to go through as printed. I am prepared to give that assurance.

Mr. Watts: That is so, but up to the tea adjournment I had no assurance.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I had no opportunity to give one. In view of my assurance, I suggest that the amendment be withdrawn. It is not intended that the penalty should be excessive and an opportunity will be afforded in another place for an amendment to be moved more in keeping with what is desired.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister's word is sufficient for me and I am prepared to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. CROSS: Since the matter will be considered in another place we will have no chance of saying anything about it here.

Mr. Doney: Of course we will!

Mr. CROSS: Even in another place such an amendment should not be moved. The penalty provided is not extraordinarily severe. We have had experience of what some members of the farming community and some pastoralists are prepared to do. If only a paltry penalty is imposed they will put up any sort of a shack and provide no decent accommodation at all.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 10, *Title*—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [7.36:] This is the last of the emergency legislation now in force. It deals with limiting interest to five per cent. or a reduction of 22½ per cent. on the original amount. At present, interest rates are a good deal lower than they were when the measure was introduced. The Bill applies to mortgages entered into before 1931. While rates are lower today and mortgages can be renewed on better terms, there are still reasons why, in the Minister's view, the law should be maintained for a further period. I have pleasure, therefore, in supporting the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 5th September of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—PLANT DISEASES (REGISTRATION FEES) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. OWEN (Swan) [7.40]: The purpose of this Bill has been explained by the Minister for Agriculture. It is to increase the orchard registration fee in the case of commercial fruitgrowers so that the work of controlling the fruit-fly, as now practised, may be continued. At present, inspectors are engaged to advise growers, both backyard orchardists and commercial growers, on the correct methods of combating fruit-fly. It is also their duty to see that these fruit-fly control methods are properly carried out. The inspectors are doing an excellent job, and it would be regrettable if their services had to be dispensed with. The fruitgrowers of Western Australia, over the last 40 or 50 years, have built up a fruitgrowing industry worth in the vicinity of £1,000,000 per annum.

The industry provides practically all the fresh fruit required in this State, and during the last few years, mainly as a wartime measure, it has produced large quantities of fruit for dehydration, for canning and for juicing purposes. Prior to the war, quite a large export industry had been built up, and in one particular year over 1,250,000 cases of fruit were sent oversea. The bulk of this fruit, comprising apples and pears, was sent to Great Britain, and to Europe generally, but quite a large quantity—and an increasing trade—had been built up with Malaya, Colombo and the East Indies. This trade consisted of the export of grapes, citrus, and stone fruits, in addition to apples and pears.

The Minister for Agriculture: And was threatened because of the incidence of fruit-fly.

Mr. OWEN: It is hoped that this trade will be resumed and possibly increased after the war. But this will be possible only if we can guarantee that our fruit is free from fruit-fly. Fruit-fly can be controlled, as has been demonstrated quite often, if the approved methods of foliage baiting and correct orchard sanitation are carried out. The principal Act recognises this, and lays down the procedure that should be adopted to control fruit-fly. The regulations are of very little use unless they are properly policed. As a practical fruitgrower, and with 20 years' experience as an inspector under the Act I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that fruit-fly is the worst insect pest with which the fruitgrowers of Western Australia have to contend. I have seen whole crops of peaches, nectarines, pears and other fruits totally destroyed because of its ravages. Some 10 to 15 years ago many growers in certain districts almost despaired of ever producing good fruit, and they grubbed out and destroyed the varieties more subject to attack rather than run the risk of sending infested fruit to market. With the advent of better baiting methods, using sodium

(fluo-silicate) and white sugar instead of arsenate of lead and molasses, better control was achieved. But many growers still did not carry out the full control programme. These growers were a menace to the more careful growers and to the industry as a whole.

Fruit-fly can only be controlled if all orchards in a district are properly baited and the infested fruit picked up and destroyed daily. The best method of ensuring that these measures are carried out has been found to be the more or less regular inspections by paid inspectors. The appointing of honorary inspectors was tried, but this proved unsuccessful mainly because those inspectors could not afford the time for travelling to do justice to the job. The appointment of paid fruit-fly inspectors has been made possible only by the funds provided by the Plant Diseases (Registration Fees) Act. These men, during the past few years, have done very good work. Not only have they prevented the spread of the pest further south, but they have reduced the incidence of fruit-fly in so-called "dirty" districts. The payment of orchard registration fees has been agreed to by growers through their associations on more than one occasion.

The growers in the South-West, and in the Great Southern area, although their orchards have never suffered the ravages of fruit-fly, are quite content to pay these registration fees to keep the pest out of their districts. They realise that it would be very simple with the present fast motor traffic to introduce the fruit-fly from infested orchards situated even hundreds of miles away. It may sound paradoxical that the growers in the infested areas are willing to tax themselves in order to pay inspectors to make them do what they should already be doing of their own volition, but in effect that is what happens. They are willing to pay the fees and know that they, as well as their neighbours, will be forced to carry out proper control methods. The payment of these orchard registration fees is regarded in the light of a form of insurance to keep the pest in check, more than anything else. Unfortunately, in 1941, the orchard registration fees were reduced from 2s. 6d. per acre, with a maximum of £2 10s. for any one orchard, to 1s. 6d. per acre with no maximum, with the exception of wine grape vineyards, where the limit of £2 10s. still applied.

It is rather a pity that those fees were reduced. At the time, no doubt, it was thought that the revenue from the reduced scale of fees would provide sufficient funds to keep the existing staff of inspectors employed. At present, however, the funds are at a very low ebb indeed, and unless the scale is increased it seems likely that some of the inspectors will have to be discharged. The Minister for Agriculture has informed the House that the Treasury has agreed to make funds available to keep the inspectors employed for at least the present financial year, but it would have been a nice gesture had the Government agreed to make funds available every year, and so helped the growers who are endeavouring to help themselves. If that were done, the passing of this Bill would be unnecessary. From my experience I realise that no Government can ever be accused of being over-benevolent and, unless large-scale grants were made to the fund, I think there would be a danger of the Government being rather niggardly in its grants, and that cheese-paring methods would have to be adopted in administering this valuable work.

At present owing to acute manpower shortage in the orchards and also to some extent because certain varieties of apples and pears are not required to be marketed, the fruit-fly control work has been very difficult indeed, but the staff employed, in my opinion, has been equal to the occasion and has done sterling work. The fruit-fly has been prevented from spreading further south; in fact some of the centres that were recognised as infected areas are now practically clean, and even the dirty areas, which include districts other than the Swan, are in a very good state. Last year can be regarded as a record low in the incidence of fruit-fly.

Growers in the hills—and in making this statement I am speaking from experience—had very little trouble last year. Whereas in normal years there might be, in stone fruit, quite a few hundred instances of fruit-fly, last year there was very little, and I think the credit for this can be given to the fruit-fly control methods now being carried out through funds made available by the orchard registration fees. If this amendment be passed the extra cost to the grower, namely 6d. per acre, will be very

slight as compared with the advantages that will be derived from the continuance of proper orchard supervision, and I think very few fruitgrowers will object to the payment of the extra 6d. The slight increase in the maximum to wine grapegrowers is also not out of the way, and I do not think there will be any objection from them. In the circumstances, I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. HILL (Albany): I support the Bill, but I do so more or less under protest. The fruit-fly threatens the fruit industry in Western Australia. No industry has done so much to help itself as we of the fruitgrowing industry have done, and no industry distributes so much of its gross proceeds to the rest of the community as do we fruitgrowers. I am fortunate in living in a district free of fruit-fly and my attitude is the same as it was when this legislation was first introduced. I would sooner pay a few shillings per acre to fight the fruit-fly in the vicinity of Perth than I would pay several pounds to fight it on the Kalgan River. It is to be regretted that the Government has not seen fit to subsidise to a greater extent the fund to which fruitgrowers are contributing. In addition to this fund, we have our own trust fund, which is raised by a levy on every case of fruit. That fund is our own money, and quite a large proportion of it has been used to assist growers who have had to fight codlin moth and the black spot.

We in Western Australia are free of codlin moth. We are now free of apple scab or black spot, and we want to do all in our power to stamp out, so far as is possible, the fruit-fly pest. It is no exaggeration to say that the fruit-fly is a most serious pest with which we have to contend. It is a pest that threatens the very existence of our industry. Some countries will not admit our fruit within their borders because of the existence of fruit-fly here, and the Fruit-fly Advisory Board is doing excellent work. We growers are prepared to do our bit and are doing it. While I do not oppose the Bill, I express regret that the Government has not seen fit to introduce a subsidy instead of increasing this taxation.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I propose to support the Bill, but I think a moment or two's reflection on the previous history of this legislation will not be amiss. The original proposal was that there should be a charge of 2s. 6d. per acre, and that, I understand, had been agreed to by the Fruitgrowers' Association as being a reasonable proposition. I think the organisation agreed to it with some measure of mental reservation because ultimately, through the action of the Minister, the amount was reduced to 1s. 6d. per acre, and that figure has stood, I think, for two or may be three years, which represents the whole life of this legislation up to the present time.

Now we find that the amount is to be increased to 2s. per acre. So far as I know, the executive of the Fruitgrowers' Association has not been further consulted in the matter. It has, therefore, not given its assent to nor stated its disapproval of the increase. So far as I know, the position is that its previous decision of 2s. 6d. per acre as being a reasonable maximum sum has never been departed from, and in consequence I take it it is assumed, and I think not unreasonably, that the organisation has no objection to the amount of 2s. being levied in future. Nevertheless I am not altogether satisfied that the principle should be accepted without any objection from the House that an increase in this tax per acre can be incurred by this industry, because it seems that we are establishing strongly the principle that, in industries of this sort, which are likely to lead to industrial development and have been responsible for a great deal of successful settlement in this State, the industry itself should be the contributor and the only contributor towards the expenditure on the eradication of pests of a State-wide or national character.

As I said the other night, when discussing another matter relating to a national or semi-national pest, if we are dealing with a national enemy, we do not say to one section of the community, "You must pay the cost of defence or repairs." We say, "The nation will bear the cost of defence or repairs." I do not know that it would be unreasonable to say to the community as a whole that the fruit-fly and pests of that character are attacking the national income and the nation's development industrially, and it is therefore the responsibility of the nation—that is, of all the taxpayers—to contribute its indirect share towards combating the pest in the interests of the State. That is a principle to which we are not ad-

hering when we pass legislation of this character.

I might be offering some serious objection to the measure did I not feel, from discussions I have had with him, that the Minister is not averse to considering other means, in future time, of financing operations such as this—improvements, perhaps, which would take into consideration and bring into effect contributions on a recognised scale settled on a reasonable and balanced basis. I have come to the conclusion that this measure must be continued for the time being, in order that we may have opportunity to evolve some better system. We have been satisfied, I think, both by the Minister's speech and by the most interesting speech of the member for Swan, that there is not sufficient money in the fund normally, at the old figure, to cope with the work that has to be done. We therefore have to wake up to the fact that, as the member for Swan put it, there remains a great deal more to be done, and that it is essential for the benefit of the industry that it should be done. My conclusion, then, is that I am prepared to support the Bill as an expedient to tide us over until we can find some better method of handling the problem on a State-wide basis.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington): I support the Bill, although I do not like the idea of increasing still further the taxation of the man on the land. We have just about taxed everything that he has—his bull, stallion, dog-cart—well, the list is so long that I cannot attempt to go through it. I agree with the member for Swan that as the result of the tax which was imposed some time ago, good work has been done. The Minister, in introducing the Bill, told us that there had been a considerable decrease in the ravages of the fruit-fly. I would be sorry to see a reduction in the number of inspectors we have at present. They have more than a full-time job, and there is no doubt that they are doing excellent work. Because of that work, the ravages of the pest have been decreased. I wish the Minister would indicate to us how much extra money he expects to collect if he gets the tax now proposed, and how many additional inspectors he proposes to employ?

The Minister for Agriculture: There will be about £600 additional.

Mr. McLARTY: The member for Swan referred to what a curse fruit-fly is. I remember when I was coming home on a troopship after the last war we picked up at a Mediterranean port a huge quantity of oranges. The ship had something like 1,600 troops on board, and naturally they were delighted to think they were going to have oranges for the rest of the voyage; but 90 per cent. of those oranges were rotten with fruit-fly, and as a result very few of them were consumed. And I have seen in this State stone fruit particularly made so useless as the result of fly that there was nothing to do with it but burn it. I have not seen that state of affairs for some time, and again I repeat that this is due to the diligence of the fruit-fly inspectors.

It is true also that if the fruit industry is to have a chance at all in Western Australia, it must export; and that applies particularly to citrus fruits and apples and pears. But if those fruits are affected with fly even to the slightest degree, our export trade will be spoilt. I believe that in the post-war period there will be a great demand for our fruits. In my opinion we could insist on a greater measure of baiting during the winter months. The Minister's advisers have often told me that every fly one catches at this time of the year is worth hundreds of flies caught in summer-time; but despite the fact that we get that very valuable advice I do not think sufficient winter baiting is done. This applies especially to the backyard orchard.

The Premier: I have seen inspectors around, anyhow. I have had one or two in my own yard.

Mr. McLARTY: Then the Premier has been doing good work. Greater attention could be paid to winter spraying. The Minister said, rightly, that he did not agree that the tax on backyard orchards should be increased. If one has a single tree, or the semblance of a tree, even though not bearing fruit, in one's backyard, one has to pay the 1s. registration fee. As a result of that shilling, a considerable sum must be collected. I am not too sure that all the shillings are paid.

The Premier: The inspector called at every place that has a fruit tree up my way.

Mr. McLARTY: Another thing we could do, one which would greatly assist despite the shortage of manpower, is community

spraying. If that were done, it would have a great effect. I know that voluntary efforts in this direction have been made, but if funds were available it would pay growers to do this work, which would have a highly beneficial effect. The Fruit-fly Advisory Board has agreed to the proposal to increase the tax on orchards, and I believe that as the result of this additional money the fruit industry will benefit. Therefore I am prepared to support the second reading.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest): I also have pleasure in supporting the Bill. Quite recently I have discussed the subject with the fruitgrowers in my electorate, and the majority of them are in perfect accord with the measure. In point of fact, they have not changed their minds since the holding of a conference some years ago, when they undertook to tax themselves for the eradication of this highly serious pest. A point was made at that time of the co-operation of growers whose orchards were in fact free from the fruit-fly. They were most emphatic that they, too, should tax themselves for the purpose of assisting in eradication of the fruit-fly in areas that were infested. Their reasoning was very logical, because if the fruit-fly was not controlled in those areas that were already having serious trouble, the pest would spread in no time to orchards that were happily free from it.

That, in effect, was the main basis of the discussion which took place among the fruitgrowers in conference when they decided to request the Government to impose this tax upon themselves, the growers. The Minister is still merely carrying into effect the wishes of the growers themselves when he asks that this legislation not only be continued but also that the fee be increased. This is necessary in order that the number of inspectors be not reduced; we want to see them carry on the good work they are doing. I agree with the suggestion of the member for Murray-Wellington with respect to community spraying. It is well worthy of consideration. Some such method might be adopted in the suburban areas. Notwithstanding that inspectors are continually on the move in those areas, something more could be done there.

Mr. Cross: Especially in the outer suburban areas, such as Swan.

Mr. HOLMAN: That point was raised when the Minister was debating the question in this House some time ago. The fact remains that this matter is not being treated seriously enough in the suburban areas. Some suburban fruitgrowers do spray and bait their fruit trees, but they find that, after having gone to that trouble and expense, other people in the district have not treated their trees in the same manner. That is by the way. The main purpose of this Bill is to protect the whole industry. Because we are doing something with which the growers themselves are in agreement, I support the second reading and sincerely hope that the Bill will have a speedy passage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th September.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [8.15]: In the first place, I desire to compliment the Government upon submitting this Bill to the House. The only criticism—if it can be termed such—I have to offer is that the measure is very many years belated. The Bill seeks to achieve adult suffrage for the Legislative Council, to establish the principle of one man, one vote, and to effect compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting. There is a difference of opinion in this Chamber as to what the Premier said when delivering his policy speech at Geraldton on the 1st November last year. Mr. Willcock stated as follows:—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! "The Hon. the Premier," not "Mr. Willcock."

Mr. GRAHAM: I am sorry. The Hon. the Premier stated as follows:—

> In order that there shall be no ambiguity about our proposals, I wish to say that the Government is seeking approval for legislation to widen the franchise for the Legislative Council, so that ultimately adult franchise will be the only qualification necessary. I make a request to the people of Western Australia to give us a mandate to carry out this policy.

I suggest that that mandate was given, because the party led by the Premier was returned with an increased majority of six, and every one of the retiring Government members was returned. I also suggest that after a period of ten years of office—and for the moment I forget party colour altogether—such an achievement is remarkable. The member for West Perth contended that no such mandate was given to the Government. If that be right, it pre-supposes that, notwithstanding the Government was returned, it has no authority whatever to embark upon any of its policy or upon any of the proposals which it submitted to the electors of Western Australia. We are all interested in what are termed the four freedoms, of which much mention has been made. The member for Murchison said that in his opinion one freedom was missing. I suggest, quite sincerely, that so far as the legislative bodies of this State are concerned, another freedom is missing, and that is the freedom to vote so far as the second Chamber is concerned.

We have to ask ourselves what we mean by democracy. Apart from the usual and well-known definitions, I consider it means the right of a people to express their views and to select the persons of their choice to represent them in Parliament, not one section, but the people as a whole. Such a state of affairs certainly does not exist at present. We have only to bear in mind that, rightly or wrongly, the people of Western Australia have for 17 of the last 20 years determined through the ballot box that Labour shall occupy the Treasury benches in Parliament; and yet throughout the whole of that time it has been possible for the Legislative Council either to emasculate or completely reject legislation initiated by the Government, that is, by the will of the people. Therefore it is rather hypocritical for persons to talk of Western Australia's sovereign rights. By "Western Australia" I mean the people of Western Australia. While it is possible for them to elect Governments which have not power to implement the reforms the people require, there are no such things as sovereign rights or democracy in Western Australia.

We are faced with this somewhat remarkable position: For a capital expenditure of £500, it is possible for one elector to have ten votes, and to be in a position to exercise 30 votes, that is, one for every one of those who comprise the Legislative Council. Such a state of affairs is diametrically opposed to all the principles and concepts of democracy. It has been suggested in various places that a Select Committee should be appointed to inquire into this matter. I feel, however, that the whole position is so transparently clear that such a proposal means, in effect, only a waste of time, because the proposition broadly is: Are you or are you not in favour of the people being given the right to choose the Government and those who comprise the State Legislature without let or hindrance? The answer is either in the affirmative or in the negative. There cannot be, or should not be, any hedging in regard to that matter. I realise that jibes have been made concerning the present distribution of seats and the many anomalies that exist at present. But I think it is generally appreciated at the same time that representation is determined under the Electoral Districts Act, a totally different measure from the one under consideration.

If any member of this House feels that the electorates are not established upon a correct basis, he is free to move amendments to that Act in accordance with his views. Last year, I believe, somebody in another place made the somewhat astounding assertion that the Legislative Council is the more democratic House. On what premises a person could establish a case in support of that contention is completely beyond me. He went on to say that the voters for that Chamber are men of experience and some substance, which bears a very close relationship to the statement by the member for West Perth that people who are qualified to vote for the Legislative Council have their feet in the soil, whatever that may mean, and that they are responsible people. If that be true, it means, in the case of the member for West Perth, that he himself has been elected to this Chamber by about 80 per cent. of people who are not "responsible," to use his own term. But everyone knows perfectly well that the fact of a man's owning a few pounds' worth of property or being in a position to pay rent does not establish that he has a greater intelligence, political knowledge or education than others who are not in the same position.

The present position gives some extremely peculiar results. As was pointed out by the Minister when introducing the Bill, it is possible for many boys who are fighting to defend our country at the present time, some of whom have received military decorations—even the Victoria Cross—to be somehow not qualified to vote for the Legislative Council. It could so happen that instead of living in or owning his humble dwelling at Cottesloe, the present Prime Minister of Australia might choose to reside at a hotel when coming to his own State. In that event he, too, would be disqualified from exercising a vote for the Legislative Council.

The Premier: Even if he had £1,000 invested in war bonds.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, even if he be the most desirable citizen in the country and at present he is the first citizen of the land. So it is possible for many anomalies to arise in that connection. We appreciate that there are forestry workers and people employed in timber mills who live in dwellings supplied by their employers at only a nominal rental, a figure lower than that which would qualify them to vote for the Legislative Council. They are therefore denied the right to vote for that House. I do not think there can be any argument with regard to the proposition that the fact of having one's feet in the soil—that is, owning £50 worth of property or paying a few shillings a week rent —gives a person any advantage over anybody else. I am entirely unimpressed with the suggestion that the age for voting should be increased. As a matter of fact, I am a strong believer in the reduction of the voting age.

Without going into the question of persons sent to the firing line, who have made sacrifices for their country, being given an opportunity to express a view with regard to who shall represent them, I should say broadly that as a result of the opportunity given them at present through broadcasting and films, a higher educational standard and access to libraries and magazines, the youths of this present era are qualified to become conversant with political, economic and public affairs generally to an extent not possible to those of past generations. Parliament has been a progressive development, if a slow one, from an absolute authority enjoyed by either one or several. There has been a progressive development whereby greater and still greater numbers have been given the right to exercise the franchise. A slow and gradual process has led to people being given the right to choose their political leaders. Unfortunately in Western Australia progress has been somewhat snail-like in common with that in other parts of the world.

I was interested in the remarks of the member for West Perth who took us on a verbal excursion to many parts of the globe, including other parts of Australia. To my mind, he proved nothing except a very similar set of circumstances whereby the will of the people, as expressed through the ballot-box, could be circumvented because of certain relics of barbarism. I use that term advisedly because it pre-supposes that certain people, not on account of any limitations of intelligence or application but because they have not "their feet in the soil," are not competent to exercise what should be the common citizens' privilege. The power of the second Chamber is complete and absolute because every word and every line of every Bill has to receive the sanction of the Legislative Council before it is placed on the statute-book. I appreciate that there are limitations, on paper at any rate, in certain respects, but whether or not the Legislative Council is able to insist on its recommendations to this Chamber it means that even that small safety valve is no safeguard. As one elected by the people generally, I am sensible of the position that I occupy. I appreciate the fact that, notwithstanding the undertakings given by Parliamentary candidates to the people, it is impossible for us to ensure the fulfilment of those pledges.

Of course we are twitted on the matter. We are criticised if certain subjects are brought forward, because we are told that we do so knowing full well they will not pass the Legislative Council. On the other hand, if we do bring these matters forward seeking to see them implemented, then we are told by the more sceptical minded that we introduced them knowing full well that they would be rejected in the other place. I for one do not feel disposed to continue to occupy such a position as that without exerting every possible energy and exploring every available avenue to overcome the present ludicrous state of affairs. Some 30 or 40 years ago in the Parliament of Great Britain the House of Lords refused to pass certain financial measures. As a consequence the Prime Minister of the day

went to the country, and was returned with an enhanced majority. He immediately submitted legislation which had for its object the limiting of the power of the House of Lords. That legislation was passed. Speaking on my own behalf, if ever I became a member of the Government and the Legislative Council refused to pass certain vital legislation that I sought to have placed on the statute-book, I would refuse to govern; in other words, I would go back to the people. I would be prepared to repeat that performance on innumerable occasions to demonstrate to the people who it is that actually controls the affairs of this State.

I want to make some observations with regard to the proposal to implement compulsory voting. Compulsory voting was first introduced in Queensland in 1915. Since that time the Commonwealth and all the States, with the possible exception of South Australia, have given effect to that principle. Victoria has compulsory voting for its Legislative Council. Western Australia introduced a measure for compulsory voting in 1936 for the Legislative Assembly elections, and it received no opposition. There are some interesting figures in connection with compulsory voting. At the Commonwealth elections of 1922—and I mention this year because it was the last occasion on which there was optional voting—an 83 per cent. poll was recorded in Queensland, which members will recall introduced compulsory voting in 1915. The balance of the States, which did not have compulsory voting for the State elections, ranged between 46 and 56 per cent. of those enrolled. In Western Australia the vote was 47 per cent. It is interesting to note that the lowest recorded figures in the elections for the Commonwealth are 28 per cent. That demonstrates the absurdity of the position when there is no compulsory voting. That figure of 28 per cent. somewhat closely approximates the percentage of votes recorded for the Legislative Council at present on an enrolment very much below, possibly, what it could be if every avenue was exhausted.

Mr. North: And the House of Commons also, by those figures.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is possibly so. In 1922, which was the last year of optional voting for the Commonwealth Parliament, 58 per cent. of the people recorded a vote. In 1925, the first year of compulsory voting, the figure rose to 91 per cent. It has been 95 per cent. ever since. These figures demonstrate that if we desire to gain a fair expression of the views of the electors it is necessary that we should implement compulsory voting.

Mr. Leslie: Do you suggest that the vote was any more intelligent because it was compulsory?

Mr. GRAHAM: No. I do not suggest either that when there was optional voting it was only the intelligent people who recorded a vote.

Mr. Leslie: It might have been those with a sense of responsibility.

Mr. GRAHAM: It might have been those who had their feet in the soil and desired to keep them there.

Mr. Leslie: If no qualification——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: If Parliament were elected by the overwhelming percentage of the people of the States then Parliament would have more confidence. It would feel a greater sense of responsibility because of the numbers of voters behind it, and that goes both for those who occupy the Treasury Benches and those who sit on the opposite side of the House. Because a Government does represent the majority of electors it has the right to introduce legislation and to take any action indicated on the hustings. If the great majority of people cast votes Parliament is accountable to them at the end of its term. It is suggested in numerous places that if one insists on a policy of compulsory voting then the percentage of informal votes is substantially increased. As a matter of fact, the figures indicate the opposite. At the Commonwealth elections of 1919 and 1922—and I instance those years because optional voting was still in existence then, together with the preferential vote—the informal votes amounted to 4 per cent. of the total number cast. From 1925 onwards the percentage has dropped to 3.4. Therefore the percentage of informal votes has actually declined in the face of compulsory voting. So the objection that people who are dragged to the poll, when they are not interested, make all sorts of figures and even obscene statements on their ballot papers cannot be sustained.

If the presumption that our laws are enacted by a majority of the electors acting through their parliamentary representatives

is correct, it is essential that we should hear the views of the majority of our electors. The only way in which that can be done, unfortunately, is through the penalty of a fine. It has been found, from the figures I have quoted, that the system has worked exceedingly well in all the circumstances. In any case we have to ask ourselves this question: Which is nearer the ideal state of affairs so far as the recording of votes is concerned, that as nearly as possible one hundred per cent. should record their votes, or that we should risk what happened previously in a Commonwealth election when only 28 per cent. of the electors enrolled? I should say without hesitation that it should be our objective to pass laws and generally to secure an awakening of the political conscience of the people at large irrespective of age, class or anything else, so that they will exercise their responsible part in the election of the machinery of democracy, namely, the State Parliament.

Mr. Leslie: Government by coercion?

Mr. GRAHAM: If the hon. member chooses to put it that way; at any rate an expression of the views of the people. Because of the division made at the present time on account of the property qualifications, we are perpetuating in Western Australia certain class hatreds or class distinctions that it should be our objective to overcome. If any person has an objection to the people as a whole expressing themselves through the ballot box, it can only be for the reason that that person is afraid of the will of the ordinary people of the State. There can be no other reason. In this Chamber we have found a certain amount of opposition or shall I say tardy blessing on the part of speakers to this measure. If reflections are to be cast on certain sections of the voting community, then those speakers are casting reflections on a proportion of the electors who gave them seats in this Chamber. I prefer to make no distinctions between those who are qualified to vote on account of age and who reside in my electorate. There is little else that I need say.

Mr. Thorn: Are you not going to deal with the speech of the Leader of the Opposition? You dealt with it over the air on Friday night.

Mr. GRAHAM: I prefer to make my own remarks in my own way. I feel that the Premier gave more emphasis to this matter than to any other when he delivered his policy speech. He asked for a mandate to carry out the policy he enunciated, namely, an enlarging of the franchise of the Council so that the only qualification should be that a person was an adult in this community. The fact that every member of the Government party was returned and that in addition three new members were elected was a mandate from the people of Western Australia to the Government, an instruction to the Government to proceed with a liberalisation of the franchise for the Legislative Council.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): The speaker who has just resumed his seat has enlightened us considerably on the Premier's policy in relation to this Bill. He told us the Premier's policy was that ultimately there should be adult franchise in Western Australia. This Bill does not say "ultimately"; it says in effect that this shall occur as soon as consent is given by both Houses and the Governor's assent is issued.

Mr. Needham: What does that means?

Mr. NORTH: I appreciate the hon. member's point. He has been a member of this Chamber for many years and has gained experience and a breadth of wisdom. While there is room for an alteration of the franchise for the Upper Chamber, recognition of this fact was shown by the willing assent of the first speaker on this side of the House in his suggestion that a Select Committee should be appointed to consider the whole matter. The hon. member showed great wisdom in using the term "ultimately adult franchise."

In bringing down this measure, the Government is not merely expressing its own wishes of today but is also moving with the times. We have over the air and at the cinema very often a feature entitled "The March of Time," and there is no member of the community who does not realise that there is room for an alteration to the franchise of another place. The only question is whether members on this side of the House should abdicate the duty of criticising measures or saying where they can be improved. The Leader of the National Party pointed out that certain suggestions could be made for a variation of the Council franchise. The first point I would make is that if we pursue the Premier's policy that the franchise was to be broadened or shrunken within a year

or two, then we should ask ourselves whether it is worth while having a Chamber that would be a mere duplication of this Assembly.

On this question we are entitled to take the judicature as a parallel. Everyone knows that under our system of law we have magistrates' courts, Supreme Courts and a High Court, and formerly we had recourse also to the Privy Council. This very ancient procedure shows that the British people realise that any constituted body might make a mistake, and therefore provision should exist whereby a decision may be reviewed. If we consider the gentlemen who sit in the higher courts, we find that sometimes, though not necessarily always, they are men who were promoted from lower courts. Therefore, on its merits, there can be no objection theoretically to a franchise for the Council of the same nature as the franchise for this House, that is, from the point of view of a decision being obtained in the way a litigant goes from one court to another.

Mr. Fox: There is no analogy between Parliament and the courts.

Mr. NORTH: Some might see it and some might not; I say there is a close analogy. Apart from that, it might be said that even if there is a slight resemblance, it is not sufficient to justify this Bill. Then let us consider another side of the question. We have today in the Federal sphere a Senate and a House of Representatives. No-one questions the adult franchise there on its merits, because it is argued that the Senate represents the States as a whole. The argument is that each of the six States has its different combinations and that it is possible to get a different viewpoint from a State as a whole as compared with the viewpoint of members in the House of Representatives. When I heard the Leader of the National Party mention a Select Committee, I could see the point he had in mind, even if he did not mention it; because he suggested the idea of a Select Committee for all the ramifications involved. There was to be some franchise similar to the adult franchise, as the Premier has said. "Ultimately" is what he had in mind, though not necessarily as regards this Bill in particular; that we should have the opportunity of obtaining through our provinces a similar outlook in our Upper Chamber to that which exists in the Commonwealth Senate. That is to say, if the Provinces were arranged so that the least populated portions of the State had a better representation than the more closely settled portions, we would then have something very similar to the Senate. That is a possible outcome of reference of the Bill to a Select Committee.

Other aspects have been mentioned by the member for West Perth. Whatever they were, I am one of those who see, as I believe most people in Western Australia do, including members of the National Party, that there is room for change in the Upper Chamber. Therefore I can see no objection whatever to this measure going through with a view to an early inquiry and a sane and broad report detailing some changes.

Member: Why waste time on that?

Mr. NORTH: Is it waste of time to obtain a first-class measure in which the viewpoint of members of another place had been considered, together with outside State advice? Let us remember the advice we recently got on the Referendum, how useful it was in helping members and others to come to conclusions. The result would probably be the same if the proposed Select Committee were appointed. There is to me nothing sentimental about the idea of a change in representation. We have the expression "horse and buggy age" and all that sort of thing; but we know that there have been changes made and that there will be new ideas in regard to representation. We know, too, that the other Parliaments of Australia have experienced changes. Now I wish to turn to another aspect of the measure, namely the necessity of saving the existing legislative talent we have in the Legislative Council. We want to be sure that the men who have been trained there and who provide a highly valuable viewpoint in our affairs shall be available to us in the future. That is a point which must be considered. Whatever the franchise may be, everything will depend in the end upon the different policies put forward.

We can be sure that the policies of parties will change in the near future with the changing times in which we live. I would like to feel that members up there today will have many years of useful service because of their personal experience and their view of affairs, which in many cases is quite different from the viewpoint of members of this Chamber. From that aspect, therefore, I hope a Select Committee will consider

some outline, some policy which will meet that part of the question ahead of us. It would be a very bad day for Western Australia if some of the brains in another place, on either side, were lost to it merely by a reform of franchise. Whenever the question is raised on the hustings, I always advise the ladies and gentlemen present to write letters to Queensland and ascertain the conditions there as compared with Western Australian conditions in regard to the rate of taxation. They usually get back an answer which is favourable to Western Australia—a very good thing for us. Whether the Select Committee will retain the exact clauses now in the Bill will be for the committee to say.

Western Australia, in my humble opinion, is to big for one Parliament. We have to-day 80 members; and I think we shall find, when we get back after the war to our various vocations, that the question will soon arise of dividing the State into a couple of States, with two Houses of Assembly and two Upper Houses. In that sense the existing 80 members will be required, and, in addition, we shall have to find a few more to make up the numbers, if there are two Chambers of only 25 members each and two Upper Houses of 15. Then 80 members would hardly suffice to form the two Parliaments. No-one who looks ahead to the future of Western Australia can visualise a single Parliament for many years more. We must visualise more Parliaments than one. Whether the State would be divided into two parts with one of them having Geraldton for its capital I cannot say. However, we must look at that side of the matter in this legislation. The Bill should have the fullest purview of a Select Committee. When all is said and done, there is nothing to be gained, as I see the position, merely by trying to treat this Bill as a party measure. It should be a true constitutional reform for Western Australia.

I believe that if the Bill goes to a Select Committee it will receive first-class attention both from members selected here and from members selected in another place, and also from the public. In my opinion some excellent ideas are coming forward now. In this morning's newspaper some prominent citizens published letters suggesting alternatives to improve the calibre of the proposed new franchise for the Upper Chamber. I am only concerned to get some real improvement in the other place, something that will broaden the franchise and meet the wishes of the people concerned, and enable Western Australia to carry on its development in the years to come. If we can obtain that inquiry without undue delay, it will be a good thing. Therefore I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe: I am obliged to support the measure, because I cannot see what valid objection can be raised against it. The Bill does not propose to abolish the Legislative Council. It does not disturb the present electoral boundaries or electoral periods. It does not propose even to give the vote to soldiers under 21 years of age who have risked their lives in the defence of the persons and property composing this community. The Bill has three main principles, namely, adult franchise for the Legislative Council, compulsory enrolment and voting, and one person, one vote. Assuming that the theory of polities considers persons and property as the two objects for whose protection government exists, what objection can be raised to this Bill? As to persons, all are equal by virtue of their being the same in nature, and if of adult age by virtue of their having normal reasoning faculties. This personal interest in government demands a democracy with all its strength and power, a demand that is generally conceded or tacitly conceded.

But when we come to property, we find that there is a demand for more representation for property owners, or exclusive representation for them, in Parliaments and Governments that combine the function of the protection of both persons and property. It must be admitted that these rights are very intermixed, and government must coordinate the functions relating to both. But there is no valid reason why the property interest should have representation that enables it not only to defend and further the property interest but to circumscribe, as it does circumscribe, the rights of persons generally. This claim for special representation for the property interest, which leads to domination, has given rise to inequalities in government from time immemorial. There was a time when no votes were conceded to people who had no property, when the franchise generally was based on a property qualification. But what

is the position in respect of property in a social order which has private ownership as its very basis? We find that the electorate as a whole consists of persons who own property, persons who have an interest in property, as the wives or the husbands of property owners, persons who have an interest in property arising out of their need for accommodation in a civilised community and therefore their need for the development of ownership and the construction of property, and persons who are on the threshold of life and have the same aspirations as their forebears for the ownership of property in a social order that propagates and fosters the idea of such ownership.

There are no persons in the community, with the exception of a few misfits and frictions, that have no interest in property or the ownership of property, and none who should be penalised because of the absence of the actual possession of it. There is so substance in the contention that a Government should be so ordered that it ostracises a large number of worthy citizens so far as the vote is concerned because there exist in a community some misfits who cannot be isolated anyhow. I was interested to read in "The West Australian" a few days ago a speech, delivered by no less a person than the Pope, on the question of a social order which has private ownership as its very basis. Although the Pope made it very clear that he favours a social order based on private ownership, he also made it clear, if a close investigation be made of that speech, that he is more concerned with the personal rights of the proletariat and with affording them some opportunities to accumulate a little capital. The Pope said in this speech, or rather, he appealed in this speech, for a post-war reconstruction on the basis of Christianity. He declared that Christians must be ready to work together for the salvation of man and the creation of a new world from the present ruins. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, and I ask the members of this House, how are we to work together when systems of government survive in which a large section of the community has no voice in what ultimately prevails or masquerades as the collective decision?

The limited character of the franchise for the Legislative Council tends to give to property owners not only the right to write their own laws with respect to property and to maintain laws with respect to property that have become outdated but, because of the weight that is given to the property interest in that Chamber, to forestall and encroach upon the rights of persons, in fact to encroach upon the poor to keep them poor. Through the very basis upon which our Government is framed, the State of Western Australia says that it is more desirable in a citizen to acquire property than to raise a family. Then we periodically deplore the declining birthrate which, by the way, is more manifest among the large property owners than it is among the people of moderate incomes who, after all, are the mainstay of modern society. We say to the fathers of families, "You can have a vote under the franchise for the Legislative Council because of your interest in property, as a roof over the heads of your growing families," but we say to the mother who has gone down into the valley of death half-a-dozen times or more to bear a family, "You cannot have a vote." The time has long gone by, has long since passed, when the voice of the people as a whole should be heard in both Chambers of the Legislature.

At present, so far as the Legislative Council is concerned, the voice of only about one-third of them is heard. The interest in property throughout a community is so widespread—that is the community which has as its basis the private ownership of property—that those who have arrived can suffer no undue disadvantage from a method of representation which gives a voice not only to them but to those who are bent upon arrival if they can possibly achieve it. We often hear trite sayings—phrases and sentences—about democracy. We hear how it is "government of the people by the people," and how "You cannot fool all the people all the time," and all the rest of it, but I have yet to learn that democracy has been reduced to such an exact science that its decisions with respect either to representatives or political issues are not often vitiated by extraneous influences. Even if the adult franchise is secured for the Legislative Council all the chief instruments of propaganda such as the Press, which proudly boasts that its news columns are for all but that its views are its own, will still be in the hands of the property owners.

The Press tries to maintain an illusion that it is something that possesses a body

and a soul; that the views it expresses are personal views enunciated by some oracle endowed with supernatural powers, when we know as a matter of fact that the views which the Press expresses in its editorial columns are written for it by a paid servant, such as Upton Sinclair refers to in his book "The Brass Check," in accordance with a policy determined at a meeting of a Board of Directors or at the daily council of the editorial staff. The instruments of propaganda are so concentrated in the hands of the property owners that it is no idle boast on their part to say that they can mould public opinion. So, even in a real democracy—which this State has never enjoyed—the interests of property will be amply safeguarded, even if we get adult franchise for the Legislative Council. We have to remember, too, that things have their laws as well as men, as Emerson tells us, and things will not be trifled with. Under any form of government, property will have protection. But that is not to say that under any form of government persons will have adequate protection. So I marvel at the archaic outlook of those who oppose this measure of reform. Those people hark back to the days when the electoral franchise was based entirely on property qualifications: when pocket boroughs were the order and all the strength of concentrated wealth was opposed to electoral reform.

Behind all this opposition was the fear that the people could not be trusted to cooperate in the combined functions of government. It was contended that even as to the protection of persons, governments should not be based on the ratio of the census. From that position we have advanced somewhat, after long years of struggle, and now it is generally admitted that as to the protection of persons, governments should be framed on the ratio of the census but as to the protection of property this should be framed on a basis of the ratio of the owners. The fears that were generated in the minds of those people in those past days that, if a universal franchise were granted to the people for the election of representatives in what is called the popular Chamber, chaos and revolution would result, were not realised. Neither will be realised the fears of those who think that if we grant adult franchise for the Legislative Council we will have some measure of chaos or some lack of reasonable protection of property interests.

This question of the property interest has emphasis laid upon it not so much for the protection of property but to give an opportunity to Chambers that are ostensibly organised for or formed for that purpose to encroach upon the rights of persons. Chaos has not developed in England since the passing of the Parliament Act in 1911. Whilst that has nothing to do with the franchise it has very much to do with limiting the powers and prerogatives of the House of Lords, and the possibilities of that House rejecting measures indefinitely. Neither chaos, revolution nor any other great disturbance has developed in Queensland since the Legislative Council was abolished. Nor has it developed in New Zealand where the second Chamber is composed on the franchise that applies to the House of Representatives; where they have, in effect, adult franchise for the second Chamber. The member for West Perth in referring to the second Chamber in New Zealand mentioned that it was a nominee Council. I think that it is possibly partly nominee and partly elective. But I do know that, to the extent it is elective, the qualification is the same as that which applies to the Lower House; that is the House of Representatives there. Reverting once more to this speech of the Pope, in which I was much interested, I find that he said in conclusion, reading from the abbreviated report in "The West Australian":—

> Justice for all must be enforced, for Justice is equal for all.

In saying that he recalled in different phrasing the very ancient principle of calling that which is just equal, but not that which is equal just. Bearing that in mind I can say without hesitation that the present franchise for the Legislative Council cannot be defended on the ground of justice. It is unjust to the many persons who have acquired a status equivalent to the qualifying basis for a vote for the Legislative Council. It has denied and has continued to deny a vote to those who have thriftily accumulated capital in the form of money which, at other times, members in another place say is so important to our development and progress.

Thousands of men and women in this country who are savings bank depositors

and are thrifty and provident have been denied a vote as such for the Legislative Council. It has denied a vote to thousands of women whose devoted efforts have contributed to the qualification of their spouses. It has denied a vote to citizens of both sexes who have devoted their resources to their educational advancement instead of investing them in property. It has denied a vote to thousands of mothers who, because of their family obligations, have not been able to acquire property in their own right from the joint income. It has denied a vote to thousands of young men and women who are the future fathers and mothers of this race. It has told the prospective mothers among them that, whatever concession in the way of a vote might be given to the father as the householder, no vote will be given to them, the mothers, if they foolishly raise a family instead of acquiring a property for themselves from the joint income. It has denied a vote to hundreds of workers who have gone into the timber country of this State where there are so few amenities and so little security for the economic construction of house property that the companies have been compelled to provide houses of cheap construction which they let to their employees at a cheap rental.

These people are all denied a vote because of that necessity. They are workers who are doing what can rightly be called pioneering work in this country. It has denied a vote to the nomadic workers, to the sandalwooders, the prospectors and the others whose callings take them into the great outback. As a matter of fact the Legislative Council franchise has been denied to all those men who went into the far outback of this country and prospected over its waterless wastes for gold, risking their lives, so long as they remained prospectors. Once they found gold in payable quantities and had to convert their prospecting areas into leases, they became property owners and were then raised to a position of respectability. But those who were fortunate enough to find gold rendered no greater service to this country than the many thousands who went out seeking for gold but were not sufficiently fortunate to find it in payable quantities.

Thousands of men and women in the goldfield districts of this State—the small mining centres—have been denied a vote for the Legislative Council. Those districts provided little security, and did not warrant the building of expensive houses. They only justified the construction of houses made out of hessian and poles in which the men and women roughed it while they pioneered the mining districts. The Legislative Council denied them a vote. Many men throughout the country have interests in property on the mining leases, but even though the property were worth £50 a year, they have not a vote. So I repeat that the franchise for the Council cannot be defended on the grounds of justice.

On the other hand, the franchise has been extended to property owners, to householders, to ratepayers and to leaseholders, but in respect to property owners no distinction is made between those who have property rights that have come to them as a result of services rendered to the community and those who have property rights that have come to them by way of gifts or patrimony. I should say that a majority of the people who are enrolled for the Legislative Council live in an honest-to-goodness community according to the generally accepted standards of honesty, but no question arises in respect of their honesty for enrolment for the Council if they have property. The possession of property, not the means by which it was obtained is the test —whether it was obtained by fraudulent company promotion, on which we had a Select Committee to inquire a few years ago, or whether it was obtained by black marketing, or profiteering, or prostitution or the proceeds of prostitution, or even by the more venial sin of illegal betting, which is so often condemned by members in another place. No question arises as to how the property was acquired; possession of property is the status for a vote for the Legislative Council.

I have no objection to a second Chamber provided it is democratically elected. If it is checks against hasty legislation that are wanted, the differing periods between the Assembly and the Council elections will provide those checks. But in the present set-up a section of the people can strive to defeat legislation in this Chamber and having been unsuccessful here where the voice of the people is fully represented, they can have it defeated in another place. This occurs while the weighted character of the franchise for another place militates against the substantial section of the community getting repre-

sentation in that place. When a Labour Government is in power in the Assembly, the House that matters is the Legislative Council. When an anti-Labour Government is in power in the Assembly, the House that matters is the Legislative Assembly. Under those conditions the people of this State are exposed to the full blast of all the disadvantages of a single Chamber form of government, as in the depression they were thus exposed. I have very little fear that they will ever be thus exposed again because I think that the people of this State are a long way ahead of their legislative set-up. As long as the Council retains its present franchise for its composition, the people of Western Australia, I believe, will return a Labour Government to this Chamber, if only as a measure of self-defence. I would say to the members of the National Party that if they are looking for the causes of the rot that has set in in their party, the first place to look is the franchise for the Council.

When I introduced a Bill—I think in 1938—for the liberalisation of the Council franchise, it received very short shrift in the Council. With what its members regarded as the defects and deficiencies of the measure, they did not even give it absolution. Only a few speakers addressed themselves to it and almost all of them refrained from discussing the merits of the Bill. Their attention was devoted to the number of people who could be on the roll if they took the trouble to enrol and to the fact that only a small percentage of those who did enrol actually voted when they had the opportunity to do so. After this desultory discussion, the Bill was defeated at its second reading on an 80 per cent. vote of the members, the voting being 15 against and nine in favour, four of whom actually spoke against the Bill. There were also two pairs for members who were absent.

In every form of organised society, its members must conform to certain rules. These are the laws that govern both the rights and the obligations of the constituent members. The case for compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting rests on the necessity, if the general welfare is to be maintained, of every adult person comprising the society taking some interest in its government and in the progressive development of the community. If that necessity is not appreciated by any substantial section, then the obvious remedy is to draw the attention of all to such necessity by means of compulsion. Compelling people to enrol and compelling them to vote teaches a minority of the people their first lesson in civic duty. The one person, one vote provision of the Bill is more than justified I think all members will agree. In most countries it has been accepted as reasonable, and in point of fact it was accepted as reasonable so long ago as when members were elected to Parliament from the hustings by a show of hands.

On one occasion it was contended in another place that one person, one vote was justified on the ground that different provinces had different problems. If anyone can find any merit in that contention, he is welcome to it as far as I am concerned. In Victoria the position is that whilst one can be enrolled for more than one province, one can vote in only one province. I have here a list of a large number of Bills which are Government measures that have been defeated in another place during various sessions. I shall not weary the House by reading through the list, but many of the Bills are definitely measures that refer to the personal interest in government, such as the Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill, the Mines Regulation Act Amendment Bill, the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, the Employment Brokers Act Amendment Bill—all Bills definitely of a personal character and having no reference, so far as I see, to the property interest. The property interest, being well entrenched in another place, uses its entrenchment to encroach upon the rights of the people.

I am opposed to this measure being referred to a Select Committee. As a matter of fact, a Select Committee could only deal with the provisions contained in the Bill, and nothing else. In 1935, however, a Royal Commission headed by Mr. Justice Wolff sat in Western Australia to deal with electoral matters, and it brought down a number of recommendations in connection with the Legislative Council and the Government introduced a Bill on the lines of those recommendations, which certainly were not very far reaching but were mainly of a machinery nature or dealing with the definition of the qualifications of an elector for the Legislative Council. I think it proposed abolishing the ratepayer qualification in one of those recom-

mendations. The measure passed this Chamber, and went to another place, which made so many amendments in the Royal Commission's recommendation that the Government ultimately had to drop the Bill. Anyhow, a Select Committee of this Chamber or of both Chambers on this Bill could only make a superficial examination of an issue the merits of which are so obvious as to require neither discussion nor examination. The measure proposes to convert our form of government into a democracy. It is concerned with the franchise upon which the Parliament of this country will be elected, and nothing else. The issue is so simple that it would not even justify a referendum, with its cost and the earbashing campaign that the people would be subjected to in connection with it—all the instruments of propaganda being in the hands of those who would be opposed to the reform. But personally I prefer a referendum of the people to a Select Committee. At least a referendum would bear the hall marks of sincerity and good intention; and whatever the result might be, it would have to be given effect to. We know what happens to reports of Select Committees, how their recommendations are just as easily evaded as if they had never been made. I hope the Bill will have a successful passage through both Houses, and I trust that the Legislative Council will have the good sense to drop its historic attitude of "What we've got we'll hold, and what we haven't got we're after." If democracy is the best form of government for an English-speaking people, then let us have democracy—a genuine democracy, not a remnant of a survival of an age that should be put behind us in an effort to develop a system that is truly democratic. Until we have done that we shall never be able to say that the people of this country have got the government they deserve.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands): I do not know whether the hon. member who has just resumed his seat looked at me deliberately when he said that the rot had set in, but I want to assure him that his remark has no appropriate application to me. However, speaking to the Bill, I feel that in approaching a matter of this sort it is necessary first of all to get the whole of the aspects of the measure into their correct perspective. For many years, and indeed again tonight, we have heard complaints coming from the Government side of the House regarding the franchise of another place. Moreover, we have heard those who have contended that the franchise in question was set at so low a level as to be quite generous, and fair to the community generally. Personally I think there is little good to be derived from debating these points at this juncture. I believe that our problem at the moment is to determine, in the light of existing conditions, whether or not the Minister's proposals are as weighty as he submitted to us they were, and whether in our opinion there is no substitute for them.

I say quite frankly, and equally sincerely, that I believe this to be one of the occasions when we should begin to measure the tasks that confront us now and will confront us in the immediate post-war period, and to measure the mood in which we are prepared to deal with them. That is a prerequisite to considering a measure so contentious as that before us. Having done that, as I said at the outset, we shall get the clearest perspective of the merits and demerits of the Bill. Whether we like it or not, there will be problems which we shall have to face up to and decisions which we shall be compelled to make in the light of the changing conditions arising out of the great conflict in which the United Nations are engaged.

Member: Would that involve property?

Mr. SHEARN: I am coming to that in a moment. If we approach the Bill in the manner I have suggested, I believe there will have to be many variations in our former outlook upon not only political but economic problems. I hope that every member whether he has addressed himself to this debate or not, will realise that we cannot possibly sustain a position in which men who have been fighting for the survival of this country shall, on their return, be denied a vote in the government of the country. Unless we give those men a vote for another place, it cannot be logically argued that they will be given the opportunity to play a full part in the government of the State. There is an inescapable duty devolving upon Parliament to see that provision is made for those people to play their part in the development of the State after the war, just as they have so ably played their part in fighting for the survival of the community in which we live. We might

also consider the changed conditions of living in this State. Many people now dwell in flats and similar classes of accommodation and they are unquestionably denied a vote for another place. I do not think we can sustain that position any longer.

That too is a problem which we must frankly face up to. Without going into too many details which have been so amply dealt with by both the member for East Perth and the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, two initial points are involved. I do not for one moment share the opinion that has been expressed by some persons outside this Chamber—and, indeed, I think by members of this Chamber—that another place should be abolished. I believe that House, with all its implied imperfections, plays an important, indeed an essential, part. I have no reason to doubt its sincerity of purpose as to the legislation which the Government submits from time to time to this Chamber. While not making any allegations, I seriously suggest to members that there have been times—in moments of public hysteria—when this House may have been induced to pass hasty legislation. The other House, whilst it cannot claim any superiority of wisdom, nevertheless has the opportunity to read the debates that have taken place in this Chamber and to review such legislation calmly; and I feel sure that such calm reflection in a period such as I have mentioned must be of material assistance to the Government, to Parliament and to the community generally. As one previous speaker has said, because of the fact that the election periods for the two Chambers do not coincide, there are times when the restraining influence and mature judgment of another place would prove invaluable. I therefore do not think it can be seriously suggested that the other House is superfluous or that it may necessarily become, as has been said, merely an echo of this Chamber.

It is hardly logical to contend that this Chamber is fully representative of the people while at the same time suggesting that we continue to support a franchise for another place, which plays an important part in the legislative proposals of the Government, whether the other place agrees to them or not, bearing in mind, too, that a considerable number of the people have no vote for the other Chamber. If we really want a practical suggestion for the broadening of the franchise for another place, we cannot get a better example than the Federal Senate. Members of another place should, I consider, be elected on the same basis, more or less, as are the members of the Senate; so that instead of members of the Council representing, as they do today, their various provinces, they would be State-wide in their representation and thus have no tendency to parochial outlook. However, I realise that matter is not contemplated in this Bill, but it might well be considered. Personally, I see no great obstacles in the way of the continuance of another place, despite the alterations envisaged by this Bill.

One of the apparent weaknesses of our present political outlook is the growing tendency to look for a lead by outside influences, instead of our giving a lead to the electors. The suggestion for the holding of a referendum or the appointment of a Select Committee—particularly a referendum—on these points should be the last resort. It is the definite responsibility firstly of the Government and secondly of Parliament to carry out the duties entrusted to them. It is our job to accept responsibility. It shows great weakness, in my opinion, when we get legislation of a contentious nature, that we immediately want to put the responsibility back on to the electors. While I am in this Chamber, I am prepared to accept full responsibility for my political actions, whether the result be my political suicide or not. We must be prepared in the future to face the changing times without vacillation. When the war ends every State in Australia will be confronted with tremendous tasks involving, among other things, a new scale of human value which will demand a proper conception of citizenship and a share in responsibility for not permitting anything to intrude which will raise sectional prejudices. I believe that, as in relation to this Bill so in regard to many other things, the basis upon which we have to build is that of equity and justice.

The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe gave expression to many sentiments I cannot share with him but to some which I can share. One sentiment of his with which I agree is that in future a greater regard will have to be paid to human values than to other values. If we are going to get anywhere in the new era of which so much has been said, we must not start to complain as soon as we are asked

to make some personal sacrifices. We must be honest and admit that this war was fought for the establishment of a new value in human conditions. Sitting on this side of the House, I say, despite the remarks of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, that I do not accept second place to him or to any other member on that side of the House in the mater of sincerity to serve the interests of the community at large. I support the second reading of the Bill because I believe that I—with every other member of this House—have a duty to the population generally.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 13th September, 1944.

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

QUESTION—IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE.

As to Collie Area Accounts.

Hon. W. J. MANN (for Hon. L. Craig) asked the Chief Secretary:

Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House a detailed statement of income and expenditure for the year ended the 31st December, 1943, in connection with the Collie irrigation area, and a similar statement for drainage in the same area for the year ended the 30th June, 1944?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Statements for the financial years ended 30th June, 1943 and 1944, will be laid on the Table in the near future.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Thirteenth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [4.35]: My first duty is to thank the electors of the Metropolitan Province for having again returned me as one of their representatives for a further term of six years. I congratulate the other members who have been returned. The House will agree with me when I say that Mr. Gibson and myself were very fortunate in being re-elected unopposed. Mr. Gibson has given many years' service to this State, and I was particularly pleased to see him returned without a contest. The other members have all been returned which, as has been previously mentioned, is something of a record. But after all, although we are on different sides of the House and although we are told that there are no party politics in the Legislative Council, I think there is a feeling of comradeship amongst us which makes us glad to see the other fellow back again. At any rate, that is how I feel. One thing the return of all members on this occasion should do is to convince those interested in the Legislative Council that the people still want this Council. There is no question about that. We would otherwise probably have had some candidates, other than the present representatives of the Government, claiming to be opposed to the Legislative Council and suggesting that when the opportune time arrived they would vote themselves out of existence. I very much doubt whether such a state of affairs will ever eventuate. To my mind this re-election of all members—most of them with good majorities—is proof that the country, at least, desires the continuance of the Legislative Council.

Before getting down to one or two points that I want to make in the course of my address, I desire to offer my congratulations to Dr. Hislop on his very able speech. He gave us some information that possibly only he could obtain. To many of us who have had experience in hospital matters it did not come as a surprise. We have to make allowances for the times, and can only hope that the matters brought before the House by the hon. member will be looked into by the Government. I would also like to commend Mr. Dimmitt for drawing attention to the lack of re-