

Mr. HILL: Yes, and I am in the same position here as are the Western Australian members in the Commonwealth Parliament, with this difference that our end of the State has never had such a fair deal from the State Parliament as Western Australia has had from the Commonwealth Parliament. Think of it! In 25 years there has been only one Premier who has come to our end of the State to see what could be done to develop it. Today the evil of centralisation is rolling like a snowball. We want to develop the outlying portions of the State and, if development in the southern end of Western Australia is commenced, it will start to roll like a snowball there. Not only the southern end of the State, but the whole of Western Australia will join in that prosperity.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.48 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 24th October, 1944.

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

QUESTIONS (2).

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES.

As to Course for Factory Operatives, Etc.

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) Is it a fact that the Government has decided to omit a course for butter and cheese factory operatives from Muresk Agricultural College curriculum for 1945?

(ii) If so, why?

(iii) In view of the increasing importance of the dairy industry in this State, will the Government take steps to ensure that a thoroughly modern agricultural college, located in a recognised dairy area in the South-West, is included in its programme of early post-war activities?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) and (ii) It is not expedient to conduct the complete course in dairy science next year at the Muresk Agricultural College. Certain essential equipment is not at present available. Operatives from dairy produce factories cannot be released at present to take the course and college students will not be eligible for at least two years. There are other practical reasons contingent on the war situation.

(iii) The whole question of educational facilities in rural districts, is being considered by the Government.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Supplies.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH asked the Chief Secretary:

Is the Minister for Health satisfied that the people living in towns in the North-West of Australia, receive supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables regularly, and in sufficient quantity to enable them to maintain a diet containing adequate amounts of vitamin C. If not, is he prepared to advise the Government to subsidise aerial delivery weekly, or twice weekly as may, from time to time, be required of fruit and vegetables to the North-West towns?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

People living in North-West towns receive regular supplies in accordance with available transport. The Government has already expended approximately £1,000 in subsidies to air transport for this purpose.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
Returned to the Assembly with amendments.
- 2, Companies Act Amendment.
Passed.

MOTION—ELECTORAL REFORM.*To Inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the 19th October on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:

That a Select Committee of five members be appointed to inquire into the question of electoral reform, and to advise on amendments to existing legislation with a view to improving the representation of the people in the Parliament of the State.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.38]: I applaud the motion moved by Mr. Baxter because I believe that a great deal of good can come from it. Almost everyone who has spoken to it has pointed out that there are anomalies in the Electoral Act. Mr. Wood referred to what might be described as the smaller wheels in the electoral machinery, and certainly indicated a number of ways in which the Electoral Act could be improved. Even those who have opposed the motion, to my way of thinking, put forward a very good case for it. We have been shown that there are numbers of people who at present cannot exercise the right as citizens to vote for this House. I think every member of this Chamber will agree that the claims put forward were justified, and I certainly think those claims would receive the earnest consideration of members appointed to the Select Committee, and would receive its earliest attention. It is interesting to me to realise that for the first time the young doctor in the hospital and the nurse are receiving adequate attention. Mr. Moore pointed to a section of the community that surely should have the right to vote for this House. On all sides there seems little doubt that good will come from the motion. It does give this opportunity as well; it will allow us to investigate not only the representation in this Chamber but the method of representation here and elsewhere. It would be wrong to suggest that the representation of the people in one House was considered whilst the representation in another House was overlooked. There are anomalies in both respects.

One point which I desire to emphasise, and which I trust the Select Committee will take into serious consideration, is the inability of a Government situated in the South adequately to govern the northern part of our State. That should be noted by the committee, and evidence called regarding the cession of the North-West to the Common-

wealth or to Commission control, not only on the ground that the North-West cannot be governed from this distance, but also from the aspect that the handful of people in the South cannot afford to govern the huge territory comprising the North-West. Let us think for a moment what is going to be needed in the future for this vast area. Water supplies alone must need considerable expansion, and the financial cost will be great. When last visiting the North-West I had a most unenviable experience at Port Hedland, and I was there only for a matter of days. What must have been the sufferings of the people who lived there? The residents of Derby are in difficulties, yet that town was considered to have one of the best water supplies in the North-West! Water supplies are one of the first amenities which must be provided for the people there. The cost of any one of these items may be more than we here in the South can afford; but when we add them all together and place alongside those water supplies the need for roads and the need for aerial services to meet the requirements of the people, we realise that the total cost will be one we cannot afford.

Even as regards my own speciality, the medical services in the North will cost per head very much more than the cost to the people of the South-West. Surely the people dwelling in the outback areas should have medical amenities somewhat on the level of those given to people residing in the southern parts of the State! Whereas in the southern parts we can care for the sick by ambulance transport, in the North such transport will have to be done by the much more expensive aerial method. One has only to realise that the area which interests the Government, and in which Mr. Dumas has done so much work, is one in which the homes will have to be prepared first, and the amenities provided will need to be available before population goes there. That is certainly something which we, as a small community, cannot afford. Even the controlling of the Gascoyne and Ashburton rivers themselves are tasks beyond our purse. I would suggest that while these problems are being looked at, we should also consider whether the people in the North-West are getting proper representation in Parliament as they are represented in this Chamber.

I hold that we should take into account not only the fact that we cannot afford the finances for the expansion of the North, but also that as a matter of defence we cannot allow the north to remain empty as a territory. In the early days of the present war things occurred of which I as a member of the Civil Defence Council still cannot give details, but which make it quite clear that our empty North was a menace not only to us but also to the whole of Australia. I consider that the point should be taken into consideration, if we are generally inquiring into the proper representation of the people of Western Australia in a House of Parliament. If we decide that the North-West of Australia should be taken over by the Commonwealth we go a long way towards accepting Mr. Baxter's suggestion to reduce the sizes of the Assembly and of this House.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We should do that in any case.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: When we realise that there are at present seven representatives of the North-West in the two Houses and that even so the people of the North-West are not adequately governed, it becomes plain that we could reduce the Council by at least three members did we not govern the North-West, and a further reduction to the number suggested by Mr. Bolton, namely 20, should be easy. I agree that 80 people to govern 400,000 are not required. The number is a plethora, and I consider that the Select Committee should give due thought to a reduction of members in each House. This brings me to a further point which has always interested me in the government of our country. It is whether the money that we as members of Parliament receive is an allowance or a salary? If it is an allowance, it is not treated as such. If it is a salary, it is inadequate. How members of Parliament who receive only £600 per year can carry out their duties I do not know, because to travel today to our North-West in order to see the country so that one might give an intelligent vote upon the question, is impossible. Unless this money be regarded as a pure allowance, in many cases in this House the £600 could mean very little; and I suggest to the committee, should one be appointed, that it review the question whether this money is an allowance or a

salary. It brings up the question whether the holding of a seat in either House is expected to be a full-time or a part-time occupation. If it is a full-time occupation the salary is obviously inadequate, because it can appeal, as a full-time salary, only to those whose salaries outside are smaller. To one whose salary in private life was greater, a full-time occupation in this House could be undertaken only on a purely altruistic basis.

The question is whether the people of this State require their Government to be in limited hands, or rather in the hands of a limited number of citizens, either those who can accept this salary as an increase or those who are prepared to accept it on an altruistic basis. Neither of those things actually happens in practice. To a very large extent what happens is that representation in Parliament is on a part-time basis. If that is all that is expected, well and good; but, if it be so, I consider that a definite decision as to which portion is an allowance, and which is salary, should be made. At present, the only people in either House who can afford to travel to our North-West and investigate that area thoroughly, are the Ministers representing that area. The cost of travelling to Derby by air is £50 return. In peacetime a member of either House is entitled to use the State Shipping Service, but in that case he can visit only the actual ports themselves; and I consider that if we are going to govern our country we should know its possibilities, not only from its coastline, but from what lies in the enormous hinterland behind. Those two are intimately bound together: the question of the Parliamentary allowance and that of the ability of members adequately to travel over the State.

We have heard of the various groups and communities of people who are excluded from the vote for this House. But there are other avenues to be explored, and one of them is the question of the qualification of the elector who votes for this House. At the moment, I am not referring entirely to the question of plural voting or the ownership of property; but I consider that the voter, before being entitled to vote, should show some elements of citizenship or even ability to undertake citizenship. My reading of the Electoral Act suggests that, whilst in gaol, a man is not entitled to vote; but, when he leaves gaol, he is entitled

to vote if he has a property qualification. Surely we should look into the question of the offence a man has committed, because there are some offences which by their commission give definite evidence of lack of citizenship. Again, a person, while in an asylum—and by "asylum" I refer to a mental diseases hospital—is not entitled to a vote; but, on leaving that asylum, he appears to be entitled to a vote unless he is certified to be of unsound mind. There are many people who are discharged from an asylum only because they are no longer dangerous to society but who, in the opinion of the authorities of the asylum, are not sane. Are they entitled to a vote if they hold a property qualification? I instance those two cases, but one could go right through the Electoral Act and refer to all sorts of small anomalies and difficulties.

I have brought these matters up mainly because I believe there should be not only qualifications for the electors but also some stringent qualifications for the elected. How that is to be brought about, I do not know. Whether there should be not only an age of entry but also a retiring age is something which the Select Committee, if appointed, might consider. It is possible that either way, if we accept an age of entry and an age of retirement, we may exclude some worthy administrator from our midst. Maybe we would exclude a Cromwell—one who though only 32 years of age was regarded as being past his prime—and we might also exclude a Disraeli who had waited for a long time for his term of office. I trust those points will be considered when the Select Committee meets to discuss the entire subject. I support the motion.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East): There has been considerable criticism of the Legislative Council of Western Australia for the action it took in regard to the electoral measure which was submitted by the Government for its consideration. As a matter of fact, the Legislative Council anticipated—if that term may be used—the desirability of a full inquiry into the need and possibility of amending the Electoral Act. I think the mover of the motion showed better judgment than did the Government, and I should have thought it would have welcomed the appointment of a joint Select Com-

mittee. My opinion is that this House is more democratic than is another place. Most measures that are dealt with here are dealt with on their merits. Whilst many Government proposals have been amended and even rejected here, in the considered opinion of the majority of members of this Chamber they have not been dealt with on party lines. Unfortunately for politics as a whole we have a section of the community which, whilst claiming to govern the country, is in turn itself governed by an outside body. We know that the members of the Government now in office are selected by the unions to which they belong. I take no exception to that. At the same time I claim that that state of affairs removes from them the right to state that they are the only true democrats. We know that they are selected by the unions and that, unless they obey the instructions of those unions, they will not again be selected. In point of fact, we are really being governed by bodies outside the precincts of Parliament. Nothing like that can be charged against the Legislative Council.

This House takes more care of the interests of the whole of the people than do those who are claiming to represent the whole of the people. I could quote a number of illustrations to prove that that is so. During the last Referendum campaign we heard a good deal about the depression that occurred in the thirties. It was impressed upon the people that that was brought about by various causes, and that the Commonwealth Government required full power to see that justice was done to all sections of the community. I should like to draw attention—

The **PRESIDENT**: I point out to the hon. member that the question before the House has nothing to do with the merits of the two Chambers, but deals with electoral reform.

HON. A. THOMSON: I am aware of that, Mr. President, and will endeavour to connect my remarks with the motion. Members realise that it is necessary to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into electoral reform. A great deal of the adverse criticism against this Chamber is entirely unjustified. The reason why I have touched upon the depression that hit Australia is that several members have expressed themselves in opposition to the motion, and have stated that this House has objected to sol-

diers being given a vote. As stated by Mr. Miles in an interjection, a good deal of sob stuff has been brought forward. During the depression men had to leave their homes to work on the roads and tackle jobs which they had never had to do before. At that time a Labour Government was in power, and it insisted that no man could work on the roads or in other Government undertakings unless he belonged to a union. That was the policy of the Government, and it imposed a grave injustice upon many people. Returned soldiers have come to me and strongly objected to such a policy being forced upon them, but they had either to agree or starve. The same conditions are being applied to the whole of the Commonwealth today. There is a case in this morning's paper of a returned soldier in New South Wales who was sent by the manpower authorities to the sugar works, and because he was not a member of the union the other employees refused to work with him. The same thing happened in South Australia, and has happened in this State. Most members of this Chamber do not agree with the policy that denies the right to work to any man.

The appointment of a Select Committee would bring forth much information of value to all concerned. On the one hand this House is accused of denying people the right to vote for it, whilst on the other hand we have organisations which the Government chiefly represents denying to men the right to choose their own means of living. Those who criticise this Chamber so severely should remember that it is in fact the bulwark of democracy. It protects the whole of the people and not one particular section. I feel sure that the deliberations of the Select Committee will be beneficial. I have no desire to traverse the ground covered by Dr. Hislop in his references to the North, but it does seem necessary to have a redistribution of seats. That question, too, can be dealt with by the committee. I hope greater attention will be paid to this question than has been given to it in the past. With regard to the statement that this House has denied the vote to soldiers, I draw attention to a question I asked the Chief Secretary with regard to Trans. line cattle trucks which had been converted for the use of soldiers. I asked whether the Government would make immediate representations to the Commonwealth Minister for Transport.

Hon. J. Cornell: What has that to do with electoral reform?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Just as much as other matters that have been touched upon by various members.

The PRESIDENT: Again I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the subject-matter of the motion, namely, electoral reform. I have given him, as I have given other members, a great deal of latitude, but that can be carried too far.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am endeavouring to connect my remarks with the motion. When this question was asked the reply given was that the matter was one for the Department of the Army. I am endeavouring to combat the suggestion that this House is not sympathetic to those who are fighting for us. I support the motion.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan): I have advocated parliamentary reform ever since I entered this Chamber, and have never missed an opportunity to preach it and voice the need for a reduction in the number of members of both Houses. It is with pleasure that I support the motion, and am delighted to see that at last there is a prospect of some move being made in this direction. To speak at any length on this question would only be to repeat the remarks I have made in connection with practically every Address-in-reply. It is said that constant dripping wears away a stone. I feel sure that that may yet come about so far as parliamentary reform is concerned in relation to both Houses. I throw out the suggestion that the Select Committee might be asked to consider another matter that has been before the electors for a long time, namely, the prospect of a uniform voting card of some description.

As I think has been pointed out by other members, today an elector signs an electoral card and imagines that he is on every possible roll for any possible election. We know that that is not so. This applies particularly to the Legislative Council. I think other members have had the same experience as I have, in that I have found that if a man votes for the City Council he imagines he also has a vote for this Chamber. If it were possible to have some arrangement—there is no reason why it should not be brought about—whereby there could be one card for the whole of the votes the elector is entitled to in our own

Parliament, a distinct advantage would be gained. I am pleased to endorse the remarks of Dr. Hislop. I am glad that at last there is someone else who is prepared to advocate a reduction such as I have been urging for so long. I have no desire to speak at length, but shall support the motion, hoping that the outcome will be Parliamentary reform along the lines for which I have been looking for so many years.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I listened with a good deal of interest to Mr. Baxter in moving his motion and, when he had concluded, I felt that he had submitted the weakest case I had ever heard presented in this House in support of so comprehensive a matter. If I am to take notice of all the speeches that have been delivered, I must consider it the most comprehensive motion that this House has ever had to deal with, because it embraces not only the question of electoral reform, but also very many important matters that members believe can quite suitably be considered under such a motion. Since Mr. Baxter introduced his motion, I have had an opportunity to read and analyse it, and I must say that my first impression appears to be justified. I felt I was constrained to look a little farther afield and seek some other reasons for the motion than those submitted by the hon. member, additional reasons that would justify such an all-embracing motion. In the speeches of quite a large number of members on this motion, we probably have a clue to the additional reasons of which I speak. I submit that the first reason, in addition to those tendered by the hon. member, is that he was quite sure he would have the numbers to carry the motion, and therefore there was no necessity for entering into any great detail as to the need for the motion. The second reason, which I think is quite apparent from the speeches of members, is that the carrying of the motion will at least justify the Council's frustration of the Government's desire to alter the franchise for this House. From what has happened since then, I am justified in making that remark.

The mover of the motion limited his remarks almost entirely to what he described as abuses of certain sections of the Electoral Act. First of all he spoke of the rolls and said there were not as many people enrolled for this House as there ought to be and that

the number should be increased considerably. He referred to what he described as abuses of the Act in regard to the enrolment of electors for this House. He laid particular stress on the abuses of the postal voting system. He did not have very much to say about it, but he told us there had been a few instances of the postal voting system having been abused. He even brought in the voting at the recent Commonwealth Powers Referendum, mentioning something that he said had occurred in an Army camp, and went on to say that there was something wrong which ought to be tightened up, though I cannot see that that has anything to do with the State electoral laws.

The hon. member apparently selected one particular province in order to justify some of his remarks. In doing so, he went to the extreme, in my opinion, by exaggerating, first of all, the number of electoral claims that had been disallowed. He quoted a total of something over 300, and implied that the whole of those 300 odd claims for enrolment in that province had been disallowed because they were not in order, and that the 300 were part of the total new enrolments made for that election. I prefer to leave the matter at that because I consider the hon. member was most unfair in the inference he asked the House to draw regarding the election in the North-East Province. It is a fact that a large number of electors were enrolled for that province at the last election, and Mr. Heenan, one of the members for the province, told us that a large number had been enrolled as a result of his own efforts and those of his supporters.

I took the trouble to ascertain the actual facts from the Electoral Department. I find that the total number of voters struck off the roll was 276. Forty of the names were struck off because the electors were dead, so they had not been enrolled for the purpose of that election. A total of 79 was struck off because of enrolment for another province. This is an automatic striking-off done by the department from time to time and has no association whatever with the electoral cards submitted for the last election. Fifteen names were struck off at the request of electors themselves. Most of them were on the main roll and had probably been on the roll for years, and therefore they had no association whatever with

the electoral cards submitted for the purpose of the last election. A total of 133 were struck off the roll after objections, and most of those were on the main roll previous to the printing of the supplementary roll. So we get down to the fact that apparently very few new enrolments were struck off at the last election.

Hon. J. Cornell: Will you tell us the number of duplications?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know the number.

Hon. J. Cornell: I mean the number of duplications occasioned by new enrolments and the old enrolments being allowed to stand.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I saw no necessity to inquire into that. I give these figures because of the wrong impression conveyed by Mr. Baxter that something like 300 out of 1,000 new enrolments had been struck off. It is not fair that such an impression should be allowed to go abroad, particularly in substantiation of a motion of this sort. Sir Hal Colebatch, in supporting the motion, had some very interesting remarks to make. I listened to him with considerable pleasure, but I am afraid I cannot agree with some of the reasoning submitted by him. I am afraid, also, that I cannot agree with his suggestion that the first question the Select Committee should consider should be—"Is Western Australia being well governed?" Well, we could have half-a-dozen Select Committees and get a different reply to that question from each of them. Such a lot would depend upon the personnel of the Select Committee as to the reply that would be given to such a question. I have no objection whatever to the question being asked, but I have my opinion which I am sure, is very different from that held by Sir Hal Colebatch.

We were told of other questions which should be raised and which are of more or less importance. Mr. Seddon laid stress on the fact that the Select Committee should take into consideration the educational qualifications of the individual to determine whether he or she should be entitled to vote for this House. I hope I am not misquoting the hon. member; those are not his exact words, but that was the effect of them. If we are going to take educational qualifications into consideration, in order to determine whether a person shall have a vote for

this House, we are going a long way from our ideas of democratic government. Everybody cannot reach a high educational plane, and no doubt many citizens of the State would be interested to hear the points of view expressed in this House along those lines. We have not all had equal opportunities to be educated in the same way, and I am afraid some people outside Parliament would be of opinion that some members were rather prone to place themselves on a pedestal.

In his remarks this afternoon Dr. Hislop showed that he is of opinion that the Select Committee should have a very wide, roving commission to deal with all sorts of matters which, to my way of thinking, have very little to do with the electoral laws of the State. I do not know that I need enter into details in reply to what Dr. Hislop said, but if the Select Committee is going to undertake the responsibility of inquiring into all the things suggested by other members, in addition to those suggested by Dr. Hislop, we are not likely to get the report this session. We shall be very fortunate if we get a report from the committee next session.

Hon. J. Cornell: The committee would lapse in the meanwhile.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: How futile is all this, Mr. President! I am reminded that this is not the first occasion on which a Select Committee has been proposed, and even appointed, in order to defer a decision on a particular subject which has been submitted to this Chamber, and even on the question of electoral reform. Mr. Baxter says—

Let a committee be appointed to take evidence from those who can give worth-while evidence. The time is over-ripe when Parliament should appoint such a body to make an inquiry—no Government has done that as yet and does not intend to do so—with the idea of making a recommendation to Parliament, as I hope will be the case—with a view to amending the Act so that we may have on the statute book a better measure than we have today.

Surely, Mr. President, the hon. member when making those remarks, was well aware that only a few years ago a Select Committee to deal with electoral matters was appointed by both Houses of Parliament and it was eventually turned into an honorary Royal Commission.

The terms of the Commission were very wide and, as was pointed out by Mr. Cornell, who was one of the honorary Royal Com-

missioners, it was one of the most representative Commissions that have ever acted on behalf of this Parliament. It did its work thoroughly. All the evidence taken by that Commission is available. I have taken the trouble to read a good deal of the evidence that was given on that occasion and every point—except the point in regard to the recent Referendum—that has been raised on this motion was dealt with by one or another of the members of the Commission. The Commission went even further than most Royal Commissions do, because it is most unusual for a Royal Commission to go so far as to prepare a draft Bill and submit it with their recommendations to Parliament. I think it is perhaps more unusual still that the Government of the day said, "We will accept this draft Bill as the basis of our amending Bill." Yet that is what happened on that occasion. I think I am right in saying that all the principal recommendations of the Commission—certainly all the more important of its recommendations—were embodied in that amending Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: Embodied in a different way.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They were all embodied in the Bill, which was passed by another place and reached this Chamber. This Chamber dealt with the Bill in its own way, in just the same way as it has dealt with many another Bill that has come before it dealing with other subjects. This Chamber made no fewer than 62 amendments to the Bill and then returned it to another place.

Hon. J. Cornell: There were only three principal amendments; the others were consequential.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am coming to that. Practically all of those amendments dealt with items in respect of which one member of the Royal Commission, who was also a member of this House, did not see eye to eye with the other members of the Commission. Mr. Cornell will not mind my mentioning the fact, because he has been consistent over the years with regard to these particular points. He was the member of the Royal Commission who submitted a minority report on those particular points. This House agreed almost entirely with the submissions of Mr. Cornell and the result was that the Bill contained no fewer than 62 amendments when it was

returned to the Legislative Assembly. Members know the result. The Legislative Assembly said, "We are not going to worry about this Bill." I repeat, how futile it is for us to think of appointing a Select Committee to deal with a subject of this kind, which is so wide and so all-embracing, when we have had previous experiences of the kind I have just mentioned. I personally know how desirable are a number of amendments to the Electoral Act, more particularly with respect to the points raised by Mr. Baxter. But I submit, Mr. President, that if this House had agreed to the franchise Bill, that measure in itself would have done away with many of those abuses about which the hon. member complained.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: There would have been no voting for this House after three years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The franchise Bill to which I referred embodied the present Government's ideas about the reform of the franchise for the Legislative Council.

Hon. J. Cornell: The franchise was not interfered with.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Chamber has decided that matter, although I can assure hon. members that it will not be allowed to rest. Sooner or later—perhaps I should say sooner than later—the Government will make another effort to broaden the franchise for this House.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It will probably meet with the same fate.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: During the course of this debate some members have made what I consider to be very wild statements. We had one this afternoon, for instance, that this House is more democratic than is another place. The hon. member even described this Chamber as being the bulwark of democracy. I am afraid I cannot agree with him. If ever there was a House which is the bulwark of privilege, it is this House, and that fact has been exemplified down the years. When we find a member like Sir Hal Colebatch claiming that this House is always impartial in its consideration of legislation. I think he is really stretching it a little when he asks members, or anybody else, to believe that there has been no occasion when progressive legislation which has been submitted to this Chamber has not been fairly dealt with. In the years that I have been

a member, I can recall not one but dozens of Bills which have been treated in a cavalier manner. They were treated so offhandedly that they got no real consideration at all. There are members in this Chamber who can recall as well as I can the Chairman being moved out of the Chair.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You did that to me once.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are members who can recall measures having been defeated on the second reading without giving those supporting them the opportunity to speak. By virtue of weight of numbers, those members exerted the authority they had.

Hon. J. Cornell: Another place is open to a similar charge.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But I am charging this Chamber with having done so.

Hon. T. Moore: This is a democratic Chamber!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is more, that is the kind of action which has been taken with respect to measures of the utmost importance to the people of the State. I shall not spend much time in enumerating those measures, but shall refer to a few of them. One is the Industrial Arbitration Bill, which was before this House on no fewer than five occasions and was either defeated or emasculated by the members of this Chamber.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And yet it is the best industrial arbitration legislation in Australia.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It used to be.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But it is not so today.

Hon. J. Cornell: You have not brought it up to date.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is plenty of time for that. Then there were the Bills dealing with factories and shops, rent restriction, workers' compensation, third party insurance, profiteering prevention, tramways purchase, workers' homes, State Government Insurance Office, bureau of industry and economic research and fair rents. Those Bills, to my way of thinking, never received fair treatment.

Hon. J. Cornell: Ninety per cent. of them are on the statute book.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some of those measures were submitted to this House

session after session; and yet we have members who say that this House has always been fair in regard to progressive industrial legislation! Is it any wonder that we have an imperative demand by the workers of this State for the franchise for this Chamber to be broadened!

Hon. J. Cornell: Fair but not docile!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not asking the hon. member to be docile, because I do not think it is in his nature to be docile at any time. But I suggest to some members of this House that it would not matter what type of legislation it was, if it were associated with industrial conditions or social progress, it would receive but scant attention at their hands. I know that this Select Committee will be appointed. That has been apparent right from the moment when the motion was introduced, and I have no doubt that the committee will make very comprehensive inquiries not only into the matters raised by Mr. Baxter but into many other matters in addition. As the result of my experience of over 20 years in this Chamber, however, I have not very much hope of anything satisfactory coming from the work of the committee. There is plenty of scope for it, of course, but I say that as the result of our previous experience in this matter and because of the fact that this House is not prepared to accept the policy of the Government in regard to electoral reform and broadening the franchise for this Chamber, I have no option but to vote against the motion.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban): It seems to me that the arguments against this motion are really all in favour of it. The main argument against the appointment of the Select Committee is that this Chamber has exercised its undoubted right and performed its duty in voting according to its conscience in throwing out certain measures. Therefore they say, "We must not have a Select Committee to inquire into electoral reform." Surely it is the very argument which makes us require electoral reform, or at least an inquiry. Now it is suggested that this Chamber has thrown out everything in the nature of reform, and everything to do with industrial matters in particular. That can be said truthfully in one sense. We can put our fingers on to various amending Bills that we have rejected.

The most recent Bill that we rejected was the one dealing with the franchise for this Chamber. We were told that there was a tremendous outcry in favour of the reform of this House. We found that when we, as our conscience bid us, rejected the Bill not one solitary responsible paper in the State raised its voice, nor has one person said to me, "What a pity it is that the Bill was thrown out." I was a member of another place when a worker's compensation Bill was brought forward to give the working man the right, as soon as he was injured at his work, and proved it, automatically to get his pay. That measure was opposed by every member of the Labour Party in the Legislative Assembly and the Bill was thrown out. So, it is not only this Chamber that rejects industrial measures; another Chamber does too. However, that only shows that we should inquire into electoral reform.

Hon. T. Moore: When was that done?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: My friend gets very excited.

Hon. T. Moore: Those are ridiculous statements!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am sorry that the hon. member did not pay attention to his Parliamentary duties when he was here. He was defeated and then got back again later. The Bill to which I refer was brought down after his defeat. It was introduced in 1932 during the Mitchell regime. It was a comprehensive measure dealing with the whole of worker's compensation. Every member of the Labour Party voted against it, and, furthermore, I personally was tackled by certain insurance companies. The Labour Party and the insurance companies combined together in rejecting it in the Assembly.

Hon. T. Moore: There were other reasons. It was not rejected for those.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: We now hear the cry that it was rejected for other reasons. But did we hear that cry when the Chief Secretary said that this Chamber threw out Bills? Of course they were good reasons! I am not criticising those people but merely pointing out that they did reject it.

Hon. G. Fraser: The Bill sought reduced hospital benefits to start with.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Furthermore, the Bill guaranteed that, no matter what the financial position of his employer, if a

man were injured in industry he should not suffer financially.

Hon. G. Fraser: The measure suggested reducing hospital benefits to £50.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I find that one member of the then Legislative Council remembers the contents of that Bill. Another member does not. This motion is purely for a committee of inquiry. I cannot understand anyone objecting to an inquiry because there are solid matters that need inquiring into. All sorts of peculiar statements have been made. I agree with the Chief Secretary as regards that, although we may not agree, possibly, about the various peculiar statements. I have in mind one very important question, namely, whether a Minister should control the Electoral Act, or whether the Chief Electoral Officer should be outside the control of the then existing Government. I mention this question for this reason that a complaint may be made about offences under the Electoral Act, but if the Minister for the time being administering the Act does not wish to proceed, for political reasons, against the offender, nothing is or can be done. Therefore, to my mind, the Chief Electoral Officer should be outside the control of the Minister. I may be right, or I may be wrong, but let us inquire into it.

Take the position regarding postal votes! It is common knowledge that the absentee system is open to tremendous abuse, and numbers of frauds have been worked under it. We know also that the committee that sat previously evolved a very simple remedy to prevent people from keeping claim cards which they had collected. They had to put them in. Whether they be true or not, I do not know, but we certainly hear rumours of how electoral cards are filled in by people interested in a candidate and then examined closely, with the result that cards filled in for people who it is considered will not vote in favour of that particular candidate, do not reach the electoral office. Whether that be so or not, does not matter, but surely we should inquire into it. We want, if we can, to do away with the possibility of fraud in connection with enrolment and in connection with voting. The system of "sick votes" is very difficult. Many offences are committed under it and it is very difficult to get the necessary proof.

It is unfair to my way of thinking to ask any citizen to assume the responsibility of a

postal vote officer. He is liable to all sorts of penalties. He is pulled away from his work at all sorts of times to take votes, and then is liable to a penalty of up to £500 if he makes what, to him, is an honest error, but which a person on the other side thinks is a wilful act. He holds himself liable in many cases through ignorance, or good nature.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: How would you replace it?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have my own ideas which may or may not be right, but we should inquire into the system and get the best available measure to avoid these troubles. There are two rolls each year in England. I think they are called the spring and autumn rolls, or the summer and winter rolls. Our rolls should close on certain dates, say, the 31st December, and the 30th June. If the roll closes on the 31st December, it should not be available for use until the 1st July. Any people who applied for enrolment between December and July would then go on to the next roll. That would obviate all this rush of putting people on the roll at the last minute. I feel sure that all members and candidates would be pleased if they did not have a rush to put people on the roll at the last minute. It would give the Electoral Department and everyone else a chance to keep the rolls in order. True, the rolls on that basis would be six months behind.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: That would disfranchise a terrible lot of people.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not think so, but that is a matter which could be discussed. I am only suggesting something that should be inquired into. Three months may be a better period than six months, but the present provision certainly holds itself open to such abuses as could lead to a great scandal, because many people are put on the roll at a time when their claims cannot be checked. That is especially so in the case of electors in the back country. I know actual instances of that. I have reported them to the Electoral Department but nothing has been done. Another matter which requires urgent and immediate attention is the Court of Disputed Returns. The question of whether an election is being carried out correctly or not needs looking into. I suppose that all members of this Chamber desire that Parliamentary elections shall be clean. I should imagine that no one would wish

otherwise, but in order to keep them clean we should make the law simpler and easier to rectify any wrong.

At present we cannot see the votes or a lot of the other papers in connection with the voting until proceedings are actually started against an individual. It is not until the court fixes a date for hearing, and the judge sits in court that he is officially known as the Court of Disputed Returns. The result is that it is not until we get into the court that we get permission from the judge to inspect the various papers. We have to make our charges in the dark, and hope that after we get the order to inspect we shall then be able to prove our charges. The evil-doer has a tremendous lot up his sleeve. He is the one who knows whether the papers are incorrect. The man who is aware that he may not be able to prove his case has to take a shot in the dark. His only chance to prove it is after he sees the papers. There should be some speedier remedy, with proper safeguards, for seeing electoral papers after the poll so that if anything is found to be wrong necessary action may be taken by those who desire to do so. That would also reduce the costs. The old idea was to avoid, as far as possible, litigation. I do not suggest for a moment that we should do anything to increase litigation, but that we should be able to see the papers and what happens clearly, and so possibly avoid a lot of trouble.

The present system whereby soldiers vote is nothing short of a scandal. The whole thing is wrong. The Bill was rushed through at the end of last session. It does not meet with any recognised ideas of an honestly run election, and it cannot do so because no one can keep a check. If anyone likes to be dishonest as regards such votes he can. I do not propose to mention many of the things that have been said apropos the request for this Select Committee, but it has been suggested that it is because of the recent Bill that was rejected in this Chamber. I discussed the question of a Select Committee to inquire into electoral reform long before this session opened. If I remember rightly this motion was put on the notice paper some time before the Address-in-reply was concluded.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It was put on just when it started.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: So it was certainly before anyone knew the contents of

the Bill for the alteration of the franchise for this Chamber. True, the Lieut.-Governor's Speech stated that there would be an attempt to alter our franchise, but it was not suggested that it should be an adult franchise. I do not propose to go into the question of whether the adult franchise should be made applicable to this House or whether inhabitant occupiers or anyone else in particular should be entitled to a vote. I hold that we could not act wrongly by agreeing to an inquiry. It may well be that from such an investigation excellent results will follow, results that will be for the general welfare of the community at large. For that reason I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East—in reply): I have been astonished at the bitterness imparted into the debate on the motion. That was most apparent in the remarks by the Chief Secretary and Mr. Moore, which served to indicate that the Government and its supporters are bitterly opposed to any inquiry into the workings of the Electoral Act. I have never previously heard the Chief Secretary speak so vigorously on a subject and for some of his statements there was not the least justification. Some of his assertions were indeed wide of the mark. I cannot for the life of me understand why he could have made use of such expressions. The Minister said that my case was weak. I agree that that may be so, but I assert that not only those in authority associated with the Government as constituted at present but everyone else who has taken any interest in elections and the ramifications of the electoral laws are just as fully aware as I am of the many deficiencies of the legislation. Even the Chief Secretary and Mr. Moore, who so bitterly opposed the motion, agreed that it was necessary that the Act should be amended.

Hon. T. Moore: We submitted a Bill, and you knocked it out.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: And what sort of a Bill was it? It was one that could not be amended.

Hon. T. Moore: What a statement to make!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Bill was ill-conceived and it was thrown at us in a stand and deliver manner. What consideration was shown to members of this House? For

my part I do not think there was any sincerity behind the action of the Government in placing such a Bill before Parliament.

Hon. T. Moore: I object to that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In the course of his remarks the Chief Secretary said—

Point of Order.

Hon. T. Moore: On a point of order, Mr. President, I object to the statement made by Mr. Baxter. I object to him saying that there was no sincerity in regard to submitting the Bill to Parliament. I ask that the statement, which I regard as offensive, be withdrawn.

The President: I take it that in making that statement Mr. Baxter did not mean to be offensive. It is highly disorderly to impute motives, and I hope Mr. Baxter will withdraw any remark that has been regarded as offensive.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not think the statement was offensive, certainly not more offensive than statements that Mr. Moore has made. If it is regarded as offensive, I will withdraw it.

The President: Mr. Moore has taken exception to the remark.

Debate Resumed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have withdrawn the remark. The Chief Secretary, in the course of his speech, said that the motion was comprehensive in that it embraced not only the matter of electoral reform, but very many other important matters that could be brought within its scope for consideration. I drafted the motion for that very purpose so that the Select Committee would be in a position to make inquiries from every angle and not be restricted in its scope. It is true that an inquiry was held into electoral matters in 1935 but no amendment has been made to the Act that could be regarded as of any appreciable value and certainly little consideration has been given to electoral matters as a result of inquiries since 1911. Even since 1935, which is nine years ago, there have been many abuses of the electoral laws that did not occur before that year.

Hon. G. Fraser: There were many recommendations in the 1935 report that have not been acted upon.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I agree that there was quite a lot in that particular report

and no one regrets more than I do that greater effect was not given to the recommendations embodied in that document. The remark that I had moved the motion in order to forestall the Electoral Act Amendment Bill that the Government had introduced ill became the Leader of the House. In the course of his remarks regarding my motives in bringing this matter forward, the Chief Secretary said that the reason was that—

The carrying of the motion will at least justify the Council's frustration of the Government's desire to alter the franchise for this House.

Hon. T. Moore: There is no doubt about that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Members will recall what Mr. Moore said about the motion—

It is merely a method of drawing attention away from what was proposed by the Government, namely, an alteration of the franchise for this House.

There was no justification for that remark at all. As Mr. Parker mentioned a few minutes ago, the question of moving in this matter was mentioned long before the Electoral Act Amendment Bill was introduced. I am aware that there was some reference in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to action to alter the franchise for the Legislative Council, but my motion was under consideration long before that statement appeared in print. In fact, I had a Bill drafted prior to the outbreak of war for the purpose of amending the Electoral Act. After further consideration, I thought a better course to adopt would be to have a full inquiry by a Select Committee with a view to framing an amending measure rather than to introduce the Bill I had drafted without any such inquiry. The innuendoes he indulged in ill-became the Leader of the House.

The Chief Secretary: Why, you referred to it in your introductory remarks!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Referred to what?

The Chief Secretary: To the fact that the Government was bringing down a Bill to deal with the franchise for the Legislative Council.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so—when I submitted the motion. I am referring to what was done long before that stage was reached. I decided to let the matter stand in abeyance although I knew that the Electoral Act badly needed amending. I feel a little aggrieved at the attitude of the

Chief Secretary and the remarks he made in taking exception to my action in moving the motion. Another unfortunate remark by the Chief Secretary was to the effect that I moved the motion because I was quite sure I would have the numbers necessary to carry it. How could I be in that position? It is not my practice to run around sounding members with a view to securing their support before going on with a motion. There is not a single member of this Chamber who can say that I asked him to support my motion. It is quite wrong to say that I am sure of the numbers I can command in support of the motion; the Chief Secretary is more sure about it than I am.

The Chief Secretary: And I am absolutely confident.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The Minister must have some inside information.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: During the course of my remarks I referred to the roll for the North-East Province. By interjection I asked how many out of the 2,000 who had been put on the roll between December and March when the supplementary roll was compiled had been struck off, but the Chief Secretary did not give the information to the House. It will be remembered that close on 2,000 names were put on the supplementary rolls in that brief period. I said it was pretty safe to say that 300 names had been struck off.

Hon. G. Fraser: You said 300 out of the 1,000.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Chief Secretary today told us that 273 names had been struck off out of the 1,000. I never said that 1,000 were put on the roll.

Hon. G. Fraser: You did!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Heenan mentioned 1,000 and I referred to 2,000. At any rate the Chief Secretary admitted that 273 names were struck off.

The Chief Secretary: On a point of explanation, what I said was that out of the 273 who were struck off the rolls not one was a new enrolment. Very few were new enrolments on that roll.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am not disputing that. I go further and say that they were struck off before polling day. We know perfectly well that a large number were enrolled prior to the election and the enrolments had to be examined after the election. I guarantee that more than 273 will

be struck off. That is no reflection on Mr. Heenan, because I know he would not contravene the provisions of the Act under any consideration.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: How would hon. members interpret that remark?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I said that I was not reflecting upon the hon. member.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: It must reflect upon someone!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The remark does not apply to the hon. member, so why need he worry? Mr. Moore in the course of his remarks said—

I have been in this House so long that I always feel that any remarks I may make will fall very often on biased minds.

Mr. Moore should be the last to speak about any member having a biased mind. Mr. Moore can himself see in one direction only—that of trade unionism.

Hon. G. Fraser: Hear, hear! Quite right, too!

Hon. T. Moore: It is a fairly good background; and I am not ashamed of it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Moore further said—

If the Select Committee is appointed and does the right thing, perhaps I can suggest one or two points with regard to the franchise for this House that it might take into consideration.

If that is so, why does not Mr. Moore support the motion? He realises, in common with the Chief Secretary, that the necessity exists for an inquiry and for the amending of the Act.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Nocs	..	..	..	7
Majority for	..	..	..	11

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch
Hon. J. Cornhill
Hon. C. R. Cornish
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. F. E. Gibson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall

Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. G. W. Miles
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. R. Hall

Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. T. Moore
(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.
Hon. H. L. Roche

No.
Hon. E. M. Heenan

Question thus passed; the motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Select Committee Appointed.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, Select Committee appointed consisting of Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, Hon. H. Seddon, Hon. H. S. W. Parker, Hon. E. M. Heenan and the mover, with power to call for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place, a quorum to consist of three members, and to sit on days over which the Council stands adjourned; to report on Tuesday, the 21st November.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Land Alienation Restriction.

(Hon. A. Thomson in charge.)

2, Builders' Registration Act Amendment.

3, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 19th October.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) [7.38]: A sound measure to punish sex crimes is no doubt necessary, but this Bill opens the door to graver abuses than does any legislation on the same subject that has been submitted to the House in recent years. The Bill amends the Evidence Act in reference to offences against children, and introduces something new in principle. It seeks to remove one danger and opens the door to other dangers, to which I shall refer later. It is now necessary to have corroboration of a child's evidence in connection with the sexual offences covered by the Bill. This proposed legislation makes such corroboration unnecessary in a limited portion of the State if a judge of the Supreme Court, after questioning the child, comes to the conclusion that the child's evidence should be accepted, and empowers the justices or magistrate trying the case to act accordingly, and no matter what they or he may think after hearing the whole case, they or he must obey the judge's commands.

There may be, and there will be, cases where evidence against a man may be manufactured. There is nothing new in such an instance; the parents would see

that the child was well tutored to meet the judge before the prosecution was launched. In 1901 the late Mr. R. S. Haynes, K.C., then a member of the Legislative Council, obtained an amendment of the law by the deletion of the death sentence for rape. He did so on the ground that it was next to impossible to get a jury to convict where a man's life was at stake. I voted for the amendment on the ground that there was danger as the law stood of an innocent man being sent to the scaffold. The amendment passed the Legislative Council, and was agreed to by the other place. In the attitude I took up I was not acting thoughtlessly. I had in mind a case which occurred at Greenough many years ago. A young man named Bishop was the accused. In the early forties he had come from England with money to settle in the South-West, where schemes for land settlement were in progress. He was of unblemished character.

On his arrival at Fremantle he got literature in connection with Sir George Grey's exploration of the country between Shark Bay and Perth. He was impressed with Gray's references to the Greenough district, and from 25 miles north Grey had named it the Victoria district, after the then reigning Queen, and in her honour, because of the richness of the soil. This impressed Bishop, who decided to take up land at Greenough, and he carried out his resolve. I believe he was there for some years and established a farm. He was a man all admitted to be of irreproachable character. In the settlement were a woman and her daughter. The daughter was not a child; she was of marriageable age. They were both regarded as very undesirable additions to the population when their movements became known.

One day the woman called upon Bishop at his home and told him that he would be prosecuted for rape on her daughter. She said that if he gave her monetary compensation to show that he was sorry for what he had done, no action would be taken. He drove her from his premises in scorn, and told her not to darken his doors again. True to her threat, she did take action, putting the matter in the hands of the police. The police reported to headquarters, and were told to arrest Bishop and bring him to Perth. This was done. The mother and the daughter appeared against

him. How the court was constituted I do not know, but Bishop was adjudged guilty and sentenced to death, and was hanged within eight days. I lived in Geraldton for many years after, and discussed the matter with farmers—all respectable men—who expressed only one view, that a gross miscarriage of justice had occurred when Bishop had been executed on the quality of the evidence that had been brought against him.

This Bill, if it becomes law, will give an opening to professional blackmailers; there is no doubt of that. There will be a different class of victim. The victim will be a man with plenty of money, with a wife and family and a number of daughters; all good living people. A false accusation of some sort of indecency will be made against him, something to give a start to the prosecution. If a prosecution is launched, his wife and family will be involved and their future happiness jeopardised. Probably, in nine cases out of 10, his wife will give away some money with a view to stopping a prosecution that would injure the family name. Such cases are bound to arise. No opportunity should be given to enable that to occur. If blackmailers were successful in their attempt at extortion, that success would not be kept secret, and there would be repeated persecution of innocent people who would not care to be brought before the court on a charge too horrible to be contemplated by a good-living man.

As I have already indicated, there would be no attempt at prosecution, because the unfortunate individual from whom money had been obtained would be silent, and all his family would be silent also. I cannot support the Bill. An Act of Parliament is necessary to meet the situation but this is not the kind of measure required. It has only a limited operation—to the metropolitan area—and, even if the magistrate came to the conclusion that the child was not giving satisfactory evidence, he could not stop the case under this Bill; he would be bound to go on, even against his own conscience, and convict. I hope the Bill will not be passed and that every effort will be made to induce our lawyers to put their heads together and endeavour to draft a measure that will be suitable to the majority of people. I shall vote against the Bill. I regret having to do so but I cannot do otherwise, because the measure is dangerous.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): I think I shall be expressing the feeling of a good many members when I say that although this is a very small Bill it is one on which many of us will find a good deal of difficulty in making up our minds. To begin with, we must ask ourselves the question: Can we do anything to check the growth of what appears to be an expanding, very dangerous and entirely demoralising class of crime? I listened with attention to the remarks of Mr. Parker and I am sure we have all given some attention to the remarks of Mr. Drew, whose very wide knowledge and vast experience—which has brought him into more or less close touch with problems of this kind—entitle him to speak with authority. The contention of Mr. Parker seemed to be that no judge would give the direction contemplated in the final part of the Bill. I have no doubt he is right, but it seems to me that possible extreme cases might arise in which a judge would feel justified in giving such a direction.

My knowledge of criminal law is not sufficient to justify my offering definite suggestions, but I have toyed with the idea that possibly, in certain circumstances, a magistrate might be empowered not to convict but to commit for trial. In those circumstances, the case would go to the judge and jury and the judge would then use his discretion either to withdraw it from the jury because of lack of corroboration, or else to say, "I will allow the case to go to the jury but I must caution them against the danger of accepting evidence without corroboration." In that event, there would be four safeguards against the conviction of an innocent person. One would be the police. I am speaking from strong conviction when I say I have great confidence in the officers of the Police Force. They would use discrimination and discretion before taking any proceedings at all.

Secondly, there is the magistrate who, in any case, would have no power to convict and who certainly would not commit unless he were completely satisfied. Thirdly, there would be the judge, who would not allow the case to go to a jury unless he was satisfied of the acceptability of the uncorroborated evidence. Finally, there would be the jury. Mr. Drew made the suggestion that a Bill of this kind might

lead to blackmailing. I have a limited knowledge of this matter but it seems to me that anyone who was going to get up a blackmailing charge would find it as easy to create a witness as to rely upon action under this Bill. One thing I should be sorry for and that would be the effect of the publicity given to this measure. This type of offence is very seldom committed within the view of a third person, and if it goes out to the world, through the great publicity given to the matter that in no circumstances can a person be convicted on uncorroborated evidence—assuming the Bill is rejected—it might induce some warped minds to think the offence can be committed with impunity.

On the whole, I feel disposed to vote for the second reading of the Bill. I welcome Dr. Hisslop's suggestion that its life should be limited to one or two years. Perhaps our legal members may give some consideration—I do not suggest it is worth anything—to the idea that magistrates should not go beyond committing for trial; that their powers should not extend to conviction on unsupported evidence, even if they had the authority of the judge to accept that unsupported evidence. To my mind, the consideration of the greatest importance is: Cannot something be done to check the growth of this type of offence? The offenders in a large number of cases are very young men. I find myself wondering whether something cannot be done in the way of coping with juvenile delinquency.

I hope the Chief Secretary will not take in bad part what I am going to say now. A Select Committee of this House, of which I had the honour to be chairman, and on which all parties were represented, was appointed a year or two ago to inquire into juvenile delinquency. On the approach of the end of the session, the Premier was good enough to convert that committee into an honorary Royal Commission so that it could complete its work after the session had finished. The Commission submitted a report, which was unanimous. When I say unanimous, I mean unanimous. The whole spirit of every member was in that report. To the best of my knowledge, not one word of criticism or condemnation has ever been levelled against that report; but nothing has been done towards giving effect to it.

The main recommendation, on which all the others more or less depended, was the establishment of a permanent board whose business would be to keep in close touch with all phases of this great and, I am sorry to say, still growing problem. The board recommended by the Commission was to be composed of highly-placed governmental officials, each occupying a position that brought him into daily contact with youth. Some were to be from the educational side, others from the juvenile crime angle, but all would be brought into daily touch with youth and all the problems associated with juvenile depravity. In making recommendations in regard to the personnel of the board, I am sure that no member of the Commission had the slightest idea of dictating to the Government or of going any further than making suggestions. Had the Government seen fit in its wisdom to appoint a board quite differently constituted, I am sure no member of the Commission would have taken the least exception. But what has happened?

The recommendations of the Commission were enthusiastically unanimous. Not one word of criticism, as far as I know, has been advanced against these recommendations. It was clearly seen by the Commission that war conditions must inevitably lead to an increase in this evil of juvenile depravity, because of the absence of so many fathers from their homes. It has been shown wherever similar inquiries have been conducted that it is the broken, disturbed home-life that brings out the juvenile criminal. In spite of the recommendations of the Commission, nothing of a comprehensive character has been done by the Government, either to implement the recommendations of the Commission or to substitute something else. This may not be entirely pertinent to the Bill under consideration, but I think that, as in all cases prevention is better than cure, if we can improve the standard of youth we are less likely to be confronted with what I am afraid is the case—a growing tendency to offences of the class this Bill deals with. I shall support the second reading, though with a great deal of diffidence.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): Had I spoken to this Bill last week, I would have supported it. I am glad to say that, after rather extensive inquiries and on further

evidence, I am definitely against the Bill. I must apologise to Dr. Hislop for that. We discussed the Bill last week and had come to the conclusion that it was right to support the measure, but I have entirely changed my views. One of my reasons for doing so is that the law of evidence is not so much made by Parliament as it is a growth of perhaps hundreds of years of custom. Custom has taught us that it is unwise or unfair to accept the uncorroborated evidence of anybody, especially a child. It is against a fundamental principle of British justice to accept uncorroborated evidence, particularly that of a child. Secondly, I am of opinion that it would be safe to give the power to a judge of the Supreme Court, a man of vast experience, to accept or reject such evidence.

But it is not merely a matter of giving this power to a judge; it is also a question of giving this power to a jury of laymen who would be under no obligation to accept the direction of the judge. Juries sometimes take no notice of the direction of a judge. I have had experience of service on juries and have found that their decisions are often based, not on logic, but on sentiment. I can imagine a child and its mother being in court and giving evidence on one of these charges, and of the jury being swayed entirely by the heart rather than by the head. Hence it is not a matter simply of giving the power to a judge to accept or reject such evidence; we shall be giving the power to a jury who, at best, are somewhat inferior laymen. In the circumstances, I feel compelled to oppose the second reading. Perhaps we shall be able to find other means of dealing more effectively with these horrible crimes, but let us not do it at the expense of common justice.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): I, too, intend to oppose the second reading. I listened very attentively to the remarks of Mr. Parker. If there is one man in this State who is qualified to speak on this question, it is he. I congratulate him on his speech, which was very logical. Mr. Drew, in my opinion, takes pride of place for his common sense, and he has vast experience behind him. The Bill was introduced in another place following on a series of these offences at Nedlands. It was introduced by an eminent lawyer, but the measure did not leave another place as that eminent lawyer

had framed it. I understand it was mutilated, laymen having used their knives and scissors in an endeavour to improve on the work of a professional man. Uncorroborated evidence, as has been pointed out, has been disallowed from the time of our forefathers right down the years. Knowing children as we do, we are aware that a child will say things of which it does not know the meaning, and very often it does not understand the value of truth. As a youth I was a bit of a prevaricator. However, a child does not tell stories simply for the sake of doing so; it merely gives expression to images in its mind.

This is a question that concerns the Crown Law authorities and the courts of this State, and any departure from years of usage and custom not to entertain uncorroborated evidence should not emanate from laymen or from members of Parliament, but should have its origin with the authorities charged with the administration of the law. The initiative should be taken by the Crown Law authorities backed up by the organisation that sponsors the prosecutions, namely, the Police Department. They should give the lead, and by them we should be guided. If there is to be a departure from the existing law, and if the uncorroborated evidence of a child is to be accepted, only one person should be permitted to adjudicate, and that is a judge. The adjudication should not rest with even a magistrate or a jury. A judge knows his job and will give his decision untrammelled by any consideration other than the interests of justice. That is as far as I would go. I would be amenable to reason if the Crown Law authorities could offer some solution and had the backing of the Police Department.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East): This is a small yet very important Bill involving an extremely important principle. I intend to support the measure because I would not feel at all happy in opposing the second reading. We have all known of the type of crime that the Bill is designed to minimise, and I feel sure that every member will go as far as sound reason will allow him in supporting any amendment of the law of evidence that would permit of dealing with these repulsive offences and the individuals who commit them without endangering the principles of freedom which we all hold sacrosanct. I do not pose as an

authority, but I hope the few remarks I shall make may throw a little light on the subject. Mr. Parker dealt with the Bill in a way that I am not competent to do. Members should understand exactly what Section 101 of the Act provides. It reads—

(1) In any civil or criminal proceeding, or in any inquiry or examination in any Court, or before any person acting judicially, where any child of tender years who is tendered as a witness does not in the opinion of the Court, or person acting judicially, understand the nature of an oath, the evidence of such child may be received, though not given upon oath, if in the opinion of the Court, or person acting judicially, such child is possessed of sufficient intelligence to justify the reception of the evidence, and understands the duty of speaking the truth.

(2) No person shall be convicted of any crime or misdemeanour on the testimony of a child who gives evidence under the provisions of this section unless the testimony of such child is corroborated by other evidence in some material particular.

It is well to point out that the cases to which this measure will apply will be fairly small in number. The evidence of a child of tender years—there is no age limit—if he or she understands the meaning of an oath, may convict anyone without there being any corroboration of that evidence. Corroboration is not needed in cases where there is sworn evidence. This Bill, then, will deal only with those children of very tender years who do not understand the meaning of an oath. That is why I said the number of cases to which the measure will apply will not be large. The sections in the Police Act relate to any person wilfully and obscenely exposing his person in any street or public place or in the view thereof, or in any place of public resort. Then there are charges under the Criminal Code—indecent treatment of boys under 14, indecent practices between males, indecent acts, indecent assault on males, and indecent assault on females. The Bill provides that evidence may be accepted without corroboration—

(i) when the hearing of such charge is before a judge of the Supreme Court sitting with or without a jury, and the judge considers that the testimony of the child is sufficient for the purpose of a conviction without corroboration as aforesaid.

I would not mind that so much because our judges are eminent men.

Hon. L. Craig: What about juries?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I think a jury gives a greater measure of safeguard to the individual as a rule, although in cases of

this sort juries abhor the crime so much that they are prone to convict. I do not like the succeeding paragraph in the Bill which reads—

(ii) when the hearing of such charge is before justices or a magistrate, and a judge of the Supreme Court, on the ex parte application of the party who intends to call the child as a witness and after himself questioning the child, by order empowers the justices or the magistrate aforesaid to accept the evidence of the child without corroboration, and the justices or the magistrate act accordingly.

I think that is dangerous because in practice it would mean that if a magistrate or justices were dealing with a charge and the prosecution wanted the evidence of a child of tender years to be accepted without corroboration, the prosecution would make an application in Chambers to a judge for his directions. The judge would then hear the child's evidence, and he might or might not direct the magistrate or the justices to accept it without corroboration.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And without cross-examination.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes. I am afraid that in such a case the judge's direction would have such a bearing on the mind of the magistrate or the minds of the justices—

Hon. L. Craig: It would on the justices' minds.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN:—that they would not only accept the evidence but also believe it. I hope I have made myself reasonably clear. This aspect of the Bill has caused me much anxiety and I have given it much cogitation in the hope of propounding some satisfactory amendment.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not let the judge alone do the whole business?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That was the proposal I had in mind.

Hon. J. Cornell: Cut the jury out, too.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: There is this difficulty, which my friend Mr. Parker will appreciate: Any person charged with any of these offences is first dealt with in the lower court. He comes before a magistrate, who hears the evidence and if he thinks it sufficient, he sends the person on for trial; but if the evidence is not sufficient to send the person on for trial, the magistrate would have to dismiss the charge then and there. The amendment which I had in mind would, I think, defeat the Bill.

Hon. T. Moore: That is a good idea.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I would like to give my friend Mr. Dimmitt some help with the Bill, because, like every other member, I am greatly worried about this class of offence, which we all know is on the increase. I hope that when the abnormal times in which we are living pass by, such offences will decrease in number. I have the greatest respect for the judgment of the gentleman who introduced the Bill in another place. He is a man of unbounded capacity, experience and sincerity; and any measure which he proposes merits the greatest consideration. Taking it all in all, therefore, I propose to vote for the second reading.

HON. T. MOORE (Central): I oppose the Bill. I had intended to refer to the clause with which Mr. Heenan has just dealt. To me it seems remarkable to ask a judge in Chambers to listen to the tale of a child of tender years, decide whether the evidence should be accepted by justices and magistrates, and then order that such evidence shall be accepted. It appears to me that we cannot have two judges dealing with one case. I would prefer that the magistrate should be allowed to decide whether that type of evidence may be accepted, because then he would not be directed but would have an open mind when the case came before him.

This is a dangerous Bill. I recall two cases where two men were placed in an exceedingly invidious position. Both cases were similar. A child with a vivid imagination and a woman of an hysterical nature were involved. One of the men had a very bad time in the district in which he lived. He was looked down upon and frowned at by many people despite the fact that he proved his innocence. Some people will say, even after a man has been found not guilty, "There must have been something in it." Those cases happened where I was brought up in Victoria. After all, we know that little children have the most vivid imaginations. They are forever concocting stories. We hear them do so around the table at night. They are liable to build up a tale, especially if they happen to be aided by someone else of a certain temperament, and so harm can be done. In my opinion, this Bill should be defeated.

I certainly do not favour Dr. Hislop's suggestion that we should give the measure

a two years' trial. That would mean that at the end of two years we would be sitting in judgment on the judgment of a judge. That is not practicable. Such measures as do come before this Chamber for continuance year by year deal with matters with which we are all familiar. How could we judge of this Bill, should it become law, if we had had nothing to do with the cases that the judges or the magistrates tried? How could we possibly say whether right or wrong had been done? I am not going to take any risk. I shall vote against the measure.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply): The case mentioned by Mr. Moore would not be affected by this measure at all. The evidence about which he spoke was not uncorroborated evidence, as far as I can see, and therefore his illustration was entirely irrelevant to the Bill under discussion. Whilst I bow with due deference to Mr. Drew and his long experience, the case he cited would not be parallel with those that would be tried under this measure. The case he mentioned involves adults, and the evidence, uncorroborated or otherwise, of a child was not in question at all. There is just one other point in Mr. Drew's speech. He said this Bill was restricted to the metropolitan area. If the Bill becomes an Act, it will apply to the whole State.

I think it ill became Mr. Parker—particularly in view of the fact that 30 minutes before he spoke on this Bill he chided the Chief Secretary for attempting to put "sob stuff" over this House—to tell us harrowing, improbable stories of the possibility of a member of this Chamber going outside Parliament House, patting a child on the head and being involved in some charge of sexual interference with that child. He told us that with a sob in his voice. Several members who have spoken against the Bill raised the point that it will be obligatory on the part of the magistrate to submit the uncorroborated evidence of a child to a judge; in other words, the child would be sent to the judge in Chambers.

Who is there better fitted to sift the true from the untrue than a judge of the Supreme Court? He has spent many years of his life in watching the demeanour of witnesses and of accused persons. No-one is better equipped with a background of experience

and psychological knowledge than is a judge; and I should say that in his hands the matter would be very safe. A judge is well equipped to determine whether a child is telling the truth, or repeating in parrot fashion a tale that had been recited to it by a parent or a designing female who wanted to "frame"—I think that was the expression used—or blackmail some person against whom she might have designs. I feel that the danger mentioned by Sir Hal Colebatch is one which members of this House should not overlook.

A great deal of publicity has been given to this proposed legislation; and I, like Sir Hal, fear that if the measure is rejected the publicity given to the fact that corroboration is needed when a child is submitting evidence of an offence against itself, may lead these bestial criminals to believe they have a license to commit such acts. They certainly will not be deterred as they would be if this legislation were passed. I do not want to be sentimental over this matter, but I do hope that due consideration will be given to the protection of the child against these offences that are rapidly increasing right throughout the State, particularly in the metropolitan area. I leave it to the judgment of this House. I hope the Bill will receive a majority support.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	..	12

Majority against 2

AYES.	
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. W. H. Kison
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. C. R. Cornish (Teller.)
NOES.	
Hon. G. F. Baxter	Hon. F. E. Gibson
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Tuckey (Teller.)

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

BILL—PAWNBROKERS ORDINANCE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [8.35] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a very simple one. It proposes to

amend Section 26 of the Pawnbrokers Ordinance, 1860. Section 26 deals, amongst other things, with the age at which children shall be allowed to take articles to a pawnshop. The present provision is that children under the age of 14 years may not take articles to a pawnshop. The Bill proposes to raise that age to 18 years. It is thought that by so doing the Bill will, at any rate, remove some of the undesirable associations that children may form as a result of their parents being compelled to resort to pledging goods with a pawnbroker. The idea is sound. After all, the associations of a pawnshop are not desirable, and we should not introduce children to those associations, if we can avoid doing so, until they reach an age at which they have acquired a certain amount of knowledge of the world. I will content myself with these few remarks. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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—NATIVES (CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 18th October.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [8.38]: I desire first of all to say that I agree with the Minister in another place who, when introducing the measure, said that it was another of those small but important measures. In my opinion it is much more important in other things than the principle contained in the main clause. The Bill already has, and I hope it will continue to have, the effect of bringing before the notice of the public the conditions under which our natives exist in this State. It also enables members of both Houses to voice their opinions and, I hope, make some suggestions that will prove to be for the benefit and the betterment of this unfortunate race because, God knows, that is most necessary! I must confess that my concern is more with the great bulk of the natives than the very few who will avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the Bill. My complaint is that we are starting at the wrong end.

We have much too long delayed action in the right direction. I am not opposed to the principle underlying the Bill, but I want to try to offer some suggestions as to the right way of obtaining it. Having taken the land of the natives, we surely should, in return, do all in our power to see that they are given reasonable comfort, and we should make every endeavour to uplift and help this unfortunate race. In introducing the measure in another place, the Minister in control of native affairs told us that in the year 1930, some 14 years ago, the amount spent by the Native Affairs Department in this State was £27,000. He went on to say that last year no less a sum than £57,000 was spent. That should, at least, have provided the natives with better conditions than I feel they have today. I suggest to the Chief Secretary that when he replies he tell the House on what that additional sum was spent, and what proportion was spent on administration.

I approve of the native settlement schemes, but not on the lines of the one at Moore River. Although I have never visited this place, I have drawn my conclusions from information I have received from all classes—even from the Chief Secretary himself, who was for a time in charge of the Department of Native Affairs. I have also interviewed many natives and, for the last three to four years, I have taken an increased interest in natives and their conditions. I say definitely that the only way in which the success of the proposals outlined in this Bill can be assured is, first of all, to educate the natives. In order to do this and to do it with any degree of success, it will be necessary to establish an up-to-date self-supporting settlement with the right persons in control. The difficulty is, where to get them. I admit that that is a most difficult matter. I confess that quite a lot of the troubles at the Moore River Settlement have been due to mismanagement, not all emanating from the settlement itself. I understand it is the policy of the department to educate the children at the settlements up to the fourth standard.

From my point of view, that is quite satisfactory, but schools established and maintained at the settlement must be provided with special teachers so that natives can be taught up to the necessary standard. Their education must not stop there. It must be continued somewhat along the lines adopted in our technical schools as it is only

by teaching and continuous teaching, and then teaching them their work, that the natives can be made into useful citizens. Early training is the main thing and is most essential. From my experience many natives can adapt themselves to almost any trade and can be made to help very materially in alleviating the manpower problem that faces us today. I suggest, however, that until they are sufficiently well trained to take positions, the natives should be kept in the settlements. Like many other farmers throughout the State, including some in my district, I have had to rely upon natives, mostly half-castes, for labour on my farm during the last three or four years.

I have learnt quite a lot through my closer association with the natives and I can say definitely that in my opinion the only time when the natives were really reliable and satisfactory was when they were under military control, and when employers were held responsible either for keeping the natives on their farms or in the positions they held or for seeing that they were returned to the settlement. I admit, as possibly some other members know, there is another story regarding the military control of native settlements, but no good purpose would be served by touching on that matter in this Chamber. The fact remains that natives are always in fear of the military authorities but, so far as I have been able to judge, they are in no fear of the Department of Native Affairs or of the controllers of the various settlements.

The Chief Secretary: Do you think the natives should be in fear of them?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not mean fear in the way that the Chief Secretary suggests, but rather that the department and the controllers have no control over the natives such as the military authorities had. The natives just come and go as they like, and I am told that they do almost as they like when they are at the settlements.

Hon. V. Hamersley: When did the military authorities have control over the natives?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: They had that control for a considerable time. The natives were all rounded up and put in compounds in various localities. Mr. Hamersley should have noticed that in his district. They were certainly rounded up and put into compounds in my district. The position today is that the natives will not stay in any one

place for long. They generally walk off their job when they have lost what cash they may possess at their favourite game of "two-up." When they do that, they always return to the settlements because they know they will be received there no matter what the conditions are. They are given everything they require, and this tends to encourage them to wander at will instead of being forced to remain on the farms or at some other place of employment. It is wrong to imagine that all employers are out to exploit native labour. It is not as bad as all that. So far as I can judge, all the employers with whom I have come in contact have no desire whatever to exploit the natives and any suggestion to the contrary is entirely wrong. At present reasonably good wages are paid to natives if they are willing to work.

I know of many employers in my district who pay natives up to £3 10s. a week. It is very difficult to get a native who is able to do anything at all for a wage of under £3 a week. Meat is usually supplied to them. In some cases it is supplied free and in others a charge of 4d. or even 6d. a lb. is made. In most instances the natives are in receipt of child endowment and as members know most half-caste natives are very prolific. It is quite common for natives to draw child endowment for from four to six children. In these circumstances the natives can be said to be reasonably well off. Much comment has been expressed in the Press and in another place as well as here upon the playing of "two-up" by natives. Although it is against the law, I definitely say that I do not view the matter seriously from the standpoint of the natives. "Two-up" is their only game. It is the means by which they enjoy themselves, and I say they should not be deprived of it—provided that they play on the farms or in the bush. Very definitely I would stop natives from playing it in the towns or suburbs.

Hon. T. Moore: They were taught the game by the whites.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I see no harm in the natives playing "two-up" and in any case we could not stop them doing so. If the playing of "two-up" is a vice, it is a bad vice; but like many others, this particular vice is born in the race.

Hon. J. Cornell: You must keep white men away or they will get all their money.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I must confess that on the one occasion I saw a white man join in—I was sorry to see it; it was not on my farm—it was the white man that slipped and lost his money. I have on many occasions watched the natives at play and I have seen children of 12 or 14 years join in. I have seen those youngsters win large sums of money and then play on only to lose not only the money they had won but all their articles of clothing. They persist in going on playing and losing. I know of a family that lost practically everything it possessed as the result of one Sunday afternoon's play.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And this is the game that you support!

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I support it—for the natives. What else have they to do? The native has absolutely no idea of the value of money. If a native gets £1 or £20, it makes little difference to him, because he will gamble the money away. He gets his enjoyment in that way, just as Mr. Miles gets his enjoyment out of something else. Then again much has been said and written about the morals of the natives. Personally I do not think they have any moral code at all. If we do not keep them at work or maintain their interest in one direction or another, we must expect a continuance of the present state of affairs. I understand that it is the practice on their return to a settlement after having been in a position or even if they return at any time in any circumstances, for the natives to be provided with food from the general kitchen.

I suggest that if it were possible for each family—for the most part the families are fairly large—to be taught to do for themselves, it might create interest in that side of their domestic life. The younger generation would be taught to cook and to do general housework. In time the native women, particularly the half-castes, would help very materially to solve the domestic problem, especially on the farms and in the country districts generally. There is not the slightest doubt that the natives, and particularly the girls, make excellent domestics if they have the necessary training, but it is essential to maintain control over them. Much has been said and written about the moral conditions obtaining at the native settlements. Recently I met a native girl, or rather I knew where she was working in

my district, who was 20 years of age and was most accomplished. There was practically nothing the girl could not do. In the house she would shame most white domestics. She was a wonderful cook. She could dress poultry, make cakes and bake bread. She had received her training somewhere in the Murchison district.

Hon. V. Hamersley: At an institution?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: No, but I am suggesting that if the natives could receive such a training in one of the institutions they could be made just as useful as this particular girl. Outside the homestead, the girl I speak of could milk, handle horses, and drive a motorear or truck. In the shearing shed she was just as good as any other shearing hand, and could do the pressing and so on. After many months of good service the farmer and his family went to the coast for a holiday and this native girl was allowed to return to the settlement for a month. Then followed tragedy. Some months after her return to the homestead her condition was noticed by the farmer's wife.

The most unfortunate part of it all was that she had contracted a disease and the girl had to be returned to the settlement where she remained for many months receiving treatment. I understand she is still there. The mother of a very respectable family of half-castes living in the same district suggested to the farmer's wife that one of her daughters should take the place of the girl who had had to leave. Unfortunately, when she went to the settlement for her daughter, who was under 16 years of age, the child was found to be in the same condition as the other girl. That is the part of the native problem that must be remedied.

Hon. J. Cornell: Have you read what Daisy Bates wrote on that phase?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, I have read a lot of what Daisy Bates wrote, and I know that she did a wonderful work.

Hon. J. Cornell: Yes, on that particular phase.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: The particulars I have narrated regarding these two native girls are not so much hearsay. I have given my personal experience, and I can vouch for the accuracy of the statements. As I mentioned, much has been written about this subject, and a column appeared in this morn-

ing's issue of "The West Australian." I do not propose to touch on that phase other than to say that there must be at least a little truth in what some of the writers say, but, as I view the matter, each writer seems to be a little biased in one direction or another. We all know that there are worse cases than those I have quoted, but no good purpose would be served by repeating further details.

I was sorry indeed to read the comments of the Minister in charge of native affairs on the work of an Anglican archdeaconess whom the Minister blamed for the department's failure to check immorality. In my view that was most unjust. I hold no brief for the archdeaconess or for anyone connected with the Department of Native Affairs. While I believe a certain amount of religious instruction is necessary for the natives, I am strongly of opinion that cleanliness should come first. I very much doubt whether religious instruction will cure either gambling or the sex problem. On the other hand, I think a well-managed settlement in some good district—not one in a God-forsaken hole like Moore River—fitted with modern appliances and made self-supporting by the efforts of the natives themselves, which would furnish them with an interest and an incentive to work, would be more likely to help to solve the appalling conditions under which the native population exists today. I believe that the provision of such a settlement under the conditions I mention would help the uplift of this very unfortunate race.

Before concluding my remarks, I suggest that the Chief Secretary might give the House some information about the proposed new settlement which I understand is to be opened in the Wandering district by church authorities. Whilst I have no objection whatever to raise to the proposal—as we all know, these institutions have done excellent work practically throughout the State—I would not like to think that the Government is shirking the responsibility that rests upon it to provide for the proper care of and adequate attention to natives, since I have in mind the possibility of uplifting a few of them. Accordingly I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 24th October, 1944.

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

QUESTIONS (3).

WATER RESTRICTIONS.

As to Application to Country Areas.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Do the restrictions to water consumers as set out in "The West Australian" of the 19th October apply to any extensions in farming areas?

(2) What is the position of farmers and other stock owners whose properties—

(a) adjoin the main pipe line and draw supplies direct from the main conduit?

(b) or those adjacent to towns and are drawing supplies for stock watering purposes from town mains?

(3) Does the specified term "Mechanical Device" include "Ball-taps" used in the automatic water of stock?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, but only in relation to the purposes specified in the by-law.

(2) and (3) The restrictions do not apply to water used for stock.

POST-WAR WORKS.

As to Western Australian Programme.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When did the Government invite local authorities to submit plans for the improvement of their districts as post-war works?

(2) What responses have been received from Nedlands, Claremont and Cottesloe?