

Committee just appointed, and not have the spectacle of having the same ground traversed again with the possibility of the same witnesses giving evidence before two Committees. One can well imagine, judging by the adjournment of the other place at the moment, that it may delay this matter for some time. Members can also take into account the long debate that has already taken place on the Bill and anticipate that considerable time will also be taken over it in the other place. I do not complain of that; it will probably be well worthwhile. I do suggest, however, in the interests of all concerned, that this motion should receive favourable consideration.

THE PREMIER: I am unequivocally opposed to the motion and intend to vote against it.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	28

Majority against .. 18

AYES

Mr. Boyle
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Hill
Mr. Hughes
Mr. Keenan

Mr. North
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Seward
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Sampson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Berry
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Doney
Mr. Fox
Mr. Hawke
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Mann
Mr. McDonald
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Needham

Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Pantou
Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Tonkir
Mr. Triat
Mr. Warner
Mr. Watts
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Wise
Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 7.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th January, 1943.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE PREMIER [11.1]: With the permission of the House I move, without notice—

That for the remainder of the session the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 2.15 p.m.

In the ordinary course notice of the motion would have been given, but I understand there will be no objection to it. The time of 2.15 p.m. will be in lieu of 11 a.m.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I have no objection to the motion. The sittings at 11 a.m. have occasioned some difficulty, particularly for country members, whose departmental work has been considerably restricted, while Friday sittings are not convenient.

Question put.

MR. SPEAKER: As there is an absolute majority of members present and no dissenting voice, I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

QUESTIONS (4).

TRAMWAYS.

Inglewood Extension and Fares.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the deputation which waited on him prior to Christmas and protested against the increased fare charged on the tram beyond Dundas-road is patiently

awaiting a reply? 2, Is he aware that much annoyance and resentment continue to be expressed against the Tramway Department and the Government with the continuance of the increase? 3, Is he aware that the people of Inglewood are called on to pay an increase in fare because of a short extension, when as a fact half the length of the first section is not used by them but serves the requirements of the people of South Perth? 4, Will he go into the question immediately with a view of restoring the fare to that charged during the past 10 years?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, The fare section is being adjusted to provide a threepenny fare between Weld Club and Salisbury-street, Inglewood. 4, See answer to No. 3.

PIG INDUSTRY.

As to Slaughtering Regulations, etc.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it a fact that the slaughter of pigs for human consumption is prohibited in country districts despite the existence in certain country centres of registered killing yards and of certified health and meat inspectors who, in regard to determining the presence or absence of swine fever or other ailments, have the same qualifications as metropolitan inspectors? 2, How, if it exists, is this prohibition explained? 3, Is there, in the metropolitan area, any such prohibition? If there is not, how does he justify the disparity of treatment? 4, Is there any truth in the allegation that today it is allowable for pigs to be sent from outside the metropolitan area to the Midland yards, there to be sold alive to bacon curers who then may kill and pass on for consumption? If not, what are the relevant facts? 5, If such allegation is correct, is such killing permissible without the test for swine fever being insisted on? 6, Is it to be assumed that if country butchers desire to secure pig carcasses they can do so only by buying in Perth? 7, Will he add any other items of importance he considers are applicable to these matters?

The MINISTER replied: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: The information desired would entail a voluminous report. Such information as is available is being put together and will be tabled as a report next week.

SWAN VIEW TUNNEL MISHAP.

Mr. THORN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the driver and fireman collapsed on the footplate of a passenger train passing through the Swan View tunnel yesterday? 2, Will he have steps taken at once to deal with this serious and dangerous situation?

The MINISTER replied: I am aware of the fact. The matter is being investigated and adequate steps are being taken.

Mr. TRIAT (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Does he intend to obtain the assistance of the ventilation officer in the mines at Kalgoorlie to make inquiries into this matter?

The MINISTER replied: I can only say that the whole matter is being investigated and that nothing will be left undone in making the investigation.

MOTION—TRAFFIC.

As to Co-ordination of Road Services.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [11.7]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, in view of the serious position facing passenger transport authorities, due to the war, the Government should take immediate steps to set up a special committee to reorganise, co-ordinate, regulate and direct all passenger transport routes, companies and vehicles in the Greater Metropolitan Area in the best interests of the public for the duration of the war and six months thereafter.

I have no apology to offer for moving this motion, because I believe it is the duty of Parliament to give immediate attention to questions of importance. I can foresee that at no distant date a grave position will arise in connection with the road transport of passengers in the greater metropolitan area. Owing to the petrol restrictions and the very limited supplies of rubber, private cars are slowly but surely being forced off the roads, and transport services are gaining a tremendous number of clients. In view of the limited supply of vehicles and the difficulty of getting more, the time will arrive when the road services will be unable to cope with the traffic. Great Britain, in order to cater for road traffic, has had to adopt various drastic measures. In some towns to cater better for essential traffic, the seats have been removed from trams and trolley-buses so that the vehicles may carry more passengers. Seemingly we are wandering along under greater disadvantages than those prevailing in

England, and are drifting to a stage where it will be impossible for the Government transport systems and the private companies to cater for the traffic.

Evidence that transport vehicles are gaining patronage is found in figures I have obtained from the Government Tramway Department. I propose to quote comparative figures of the number of passengers carried during the last three months of each year since 1939. Members should note that during the whole of that period only 121 trams have been available when the full number were in commission but, owing to accidents and breakdowns, it has not always been possible to maintain that number. I submit to the House the following comparative table bearing on the subject:—

GOVERNMENT TRAMS.—*Comparative Number of Passengers Carried in Months of October, November, and December, for the Years 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1942.*

1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.
Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.	Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.	Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.	Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.
6,535,155	7,147,431	8,320,872	9,146,283
Route Miles.	Route Miles.	Route Miles.	Route Miles.
36	36	36	35
No. of Trams.	No. of Trams.	No. of Trams.	No. of Trams.
121	121	121	121

Increase of Passengers from 1939 to 1942—2,611,128.

In the same connection I submit comparative tables relating to trolley-buses and Government-owned engine buses—

TROLLEY BUSES.—*Comparison of Number of Passengers Carried in the Three Months October to December inclusive for the Years 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1942.*

TROLLEY BUSES ONLY—

1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.
Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.	Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.	Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.	Oct. to Dec. Inclusive.
1,246,810	1,416,076	1,881,910	2,270,758
Route Miles.	Route Miles.	Route Miles.	Route Miles.
13	13	12	13
No. of Buses used.	No. of Buses used.	No. of Buses used.	No. of Buses used.
22	22	22	30

Government-owned Engine Buses.—NOTE.—In 1939 12 buses running special trips only to relieve Trolley Bus Routes, carried 81,102 passengers.

In 1942 for the months of October, November, and December, 16 buses working 9 route miles carried 509,234 passengers.

Thus, Total Road Passengers carried by Government-owned vehicles in the last:	No. of Vehicles Used.
3 months of 1939 was	7,781,965
3 months of 1942 was	11,926,275

Thus only 24 Vehicles (16 of them small buses) carried 4,144,310 more passengers than in the same period of 1939.

I ask members to observe specially that for the last three months of 1939 Government-run services carried 7,781,965 passengers, and that for the last three months of 1942 they carried 11,926,275. In 1939 the total number of vehicles in service was 147, which

in 1942 was increased by 24 vehicles—eight trolley-buses and 16 small buses—to carry an increase in passengers of over 4,000,000 during the period of three months. It must be realised by members that very many of these vehicles are being overworked. Some of the trams and some of the trolley-buses are out on the track, running continuously, from 6 a.m. until midnight on the six week days; and on Sunday the only difference is that they run about 12 hours—a few hours less than on week days. Members will, therefore, see that it is only a matter of time before serious breakdowns will occur. It must be borne in mind that at all times numbers of trams and buses are out of operation by reason of unavoidable accidents and absolutely indispensable overhauls. Wear and tear, when vehicles are overworked, must be expected to be heavy.

The truth is that whilst traffic is increasing the position regarding replacements, especially of rubber requirements, is becoming gradually worse. Inquiry discloses that this same state of affairs exists in the private companies. Mr. Adams, the manager of the Metro Bus Company, yesterday told me that I would be quite safe in informing the House that the ratio of increase of passengers applies to the company operating under his direction in an equal degree—meaning that an extraordinary increase in the number of passengers carried was taking place. All arguments based on wear and tear on vehicles apply with greater force to private companies, because wear and tear on electrically driven vehicles is considerably less than wear and tear on engine-driven buses, which have more parts exposed to wear. I am informed that the Government with its electrically driven vehicles is in a much better position than are the private companies in respect of replacements; but the engine-driven buses of the private companies are in exactly the same position in the matter of replacement of parts as are the military authorities—living from hand to mouth as regards replacements, particularly in the case of Ford-made vehicles. I believe that in 12 months' time the position will be serious.

During the last few weeks I, like other members, have had numerous complaints from people who have found themselves unable to board either a tram or a trolley bus, or any other description of bus, during the busy hours of the peak period of the day.

It has been almost impossible to get on a bus or a tram near the Causeway to come to the city between 7.30 and 8.30 in the morning. The number of vehicles is not sufficient to cater for the traffic. And yet one has only to make a few casual observations during the daytime to learn—the member for Nedlands will also have observed this in his area—that buses of every kind are crowded with women coming to town; and I hear that in many cases those women are not engaged in essential occupations. So I hold that steps will have to be taken to conserve the use of these vehicles. Immediate steps should be taken to eliminate unnecessary passenger traffic and to co-ordinate the services effectively. Particularly in view of the seriousness of the rubber position, such steps are needed to utilise as far as possible the steel rail traffic.

It may be that between Perth and Fremantle, and also between Perth and Midland Junction, it will be necessary to put on more trains and restrict the bus services. One has to remember that some centres are not served by steel rail traffic at all. Consequently, it is essential that those centres should get adequate transport facilities to cater for their needs. The time has arrived, in my opinion, to take stock. If we do not do so, an almost total breakdown of the metropolitan passenger traffic will result. Our habit is to do too little and do it too late. It is important that the people who will be affected by the changes should have a voice in this matter. It may be that the Minister, or somebody else, will say, "We have a Transport Board controlling all transport; while at the same time there is Federal control under the National Security Regulations. Mr. Millen, who has a wide knowledge of the subject, is in full charge. He can direct the trams and the buses."

But running trams, buses and railways is not much more than one-tenth of the job. The major portion of the job is to prepare the vehicles, and to make arrangements for the providing of electric current and all the other essentials that go to make up a passenger service. The committee should be conducted in a national spirit, and therefore the people concerned should have a voice. I will give one illustration in particular. I notice that in the hot weather a considerable number of buses run direct from Perth to Mosman Park. People go there for pleasure, and it is right to cater

for them. In my opinion, however, some arrangement should be made to curtail that service. This could be done, because a bus service could be run on a much shorter route, say, from the Claremont station to Mosman Bay and back to the station. The holiday-makers could then travel by train for the rest of the journey. If some such arrangement is not made, it may well be that we shall not have any buses at all, because of lack of rubber tyres.

Take the bus service from Perth to Armadale: The buses run alongside the railway line almost all the way. It may be that the proposed committee would restrict that service and compel the passengers to travel by train. The committee might decide that the buses shall keep away from the railway line; and buses, run to a proper time-table, might be provided for districts further from the railway. The committee might decide that the buses shall not stop within half a mile of the railway stations. As I say, if some such arrangements are not made we shall not have a bus at all in 12 months. The rubber position is becoming still more acute, but I will explain that in a later motion. I honestly believe that the proposed committee should have power to restrict road transport in certain areas and provide additional facilities for areas at present not served by trams or trains. I venture the opinion that within 12 months many more private cars now on the roads will be on blocks; and consequently more people will have to avail themselves of public transport. I would appoint to the committee a representative of the Railway Department. I would make the manager of the Tramways the chairman of the committee. I would appoint Mr. Adams, of the Metro Bus Co., to represent the bus companies, because he has had wide experience. I would further appoint a representative of the Transport Board and a representative of the Department of Supplies. Such a committee, if clothed with necessary power, could effectively do the job.

The Minister for Mines: What about the people who use the transport?

Mr. CROSS: Unless something is done here at once, we shall be in the same position as Coventry. Coventry at one time had one of the best bus services in Great Britain. At present, only one bus runs there where formerly ten ran. The buses cannot be replaced. People wishing to ride in buses in

Coventry must have a license to do so, or walk. The buses are reserved for essential workers; pleasure seekers must walk. Even in England it is not possible to obtain tyres for bicycles. Members will realise that thousands of people in Coventry use bicycles to get to and from work; they must now travel in buses. That also applies to Perth.

The best solution of the problem would be single control with pooled resources. Action is necessary in order to ensure that the State's essential transport requirements are met. Great Britain has done some remarkable things in order to protect its road transport. For instance, there has been introduced in Great Britain what is known as the grid system for electricity supplies. I shall explain to members what the grid system is; it has proved to be a great success. In one part of England it was found that within a range of a few miles there were several power stations which were producing, say, 10,000 kilowatts of power. In order to produce that power, each station had to carry spare turbines, so as to be able to produce a minimum of 10,000 kilowatts at any given time. Each station had to carry, on the average, 30,000 kilowatts of potential power, and this was done by means of the extra turbines. This was necessary to ensure the supply of the 10,000 kilowatts to the public at any given time. It was also ascertained that the ten stations concerned had to produce 300,000 kilowatts at any given time in order to guarantee the public 100,000 kilowatts.

The Ministry of Supply stepped in and said, "There is a lot of waste here. We have not time to make more turbines and we have shadow factories requiring turbines." All those stations were, therefore, put on a grid system so as to pool the whole supply. If extra power was required on one station, it was simply connected up with another station. It is strange, but true, that those stations were able to transfer turbines to fit up three additional stations in another part of Great Britain. They were able, even after that, to give greater efficiency than before. So it is with our trams and buses, which are experiencing some trouble with their manpower and womanpower. Some of the women conductors on the trams and buses are taking a day or two days off at the week-end when rostered for duty. I do not know why, but it is so, and the depart-

ment must make provision for a certain number to stand by in order to keep the services running. On a recent hot Sunday, when quite a lot of extra men and women were required, not less than 22 failed to report for duty when rostered, and 18 or 20 vehicles were put out of commission. On the other side of the city was a company which had its crew standing by playing with their fingers, with nothing to do. By the pooling of supplies and better co-ordination, a more effective job could be done. Something should have been done long ago.

The best course would have been for the Government to take control of the lot, but I am aware of the difficulties of finance. However, I honestly believe the job could be done a lot better by a committee which would co-ordinate traffic in the best interests of the people. If this is not done, I fear the position will be regretted at a later stage because, although a few new chassis are coming in, it will not be possible to obtain all that are required. I notice that the Transport Board in the last few days has sent out a circular to all the transport companies asking them for their requirements for the next 18 months. The companies are aware of their needs over a much longer period than that. If such committee as I suggest were appointed and resources were pooled, it would make a tremendous difference, and the job would be done more effectively than the Transport Board has done or could do it, even admitting that the board has done well in a good many directions. The position is becoming so acute, however, that something more needs to be done.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan): I propose to support the motion because it is one that should be given effect to. Before Christmas I referred to transport difficulties in my electorate, and particularly to the overcrowding and inadequate transport system operating through the Belmont district. On several occasions I raised the point and brought it to the notice of the Minister. Unfortunately the Minister has been ill, but I have no information whether these matters I ventilated have been rectified or whether any attempt has been made to rectify them, or whether the Minister has discussed the matter with the Transport Board. If a committee such as is proposed existed, present occurrences would be obviated. In a previous discussion on this matter I indicated that various authorities were charged

with the responsibility of directing and controlling traffic. I mentioned in connection with traffic routes that the Transport Board deals with the control of private buses, that the City Council deals with other activities in its domain, and that the Police Traffic Branch has a certain responsibility. Evidently, too, the Tramway Department is master in its sphere. The consequence is that one authority often makes a decision which conflicts with the decision of another authority.

A former Government established a Transport Advisory Board to give advice on matters connected with transport in the metropolitan area, but that board is never consulted. If it had been, some of the things that have happened recently would never have occurred. There would have been a proper conception of the traffic position in this city, and decisions made one year would not have been overridden by decisions made in a subsequent year. The appointment of the suggested committee is absolutely necessary having regard to the overcrowding taking place, and to the fact that transport is tamed to its utmost not only in my electorate but throughout the metropolitan area. The appointment of a committee is long overdue. The Labour Government slipped long ago in not tackling this question of unifying the control of traffic in the metropolitan area. It had a golden opportunity to develop the transport system, but hesitated with the result that the position got out of hand. I have previously pointed out that traffic in other cities is under the control of one authority, and I cannot see why that system cannot operate in Western Australia. In Queensland both trams and buses are municipally owned. In Sydney the Government has control.

There was much criticism of Mr. Lang in days gone by, but one thing he did do was to take control of traffic and put it on a unified basis, and that is what should happen in this State. Failing our being able to do that at present, the proposed committee could function and deal with the many problems affecting the transport system and thus bring about a better regulation of transport. There are difficulties in many directions and complaints are constantly received of inadequate services. Transport is one of those things that must be planned ahead and thought about, and the needs of the travelling public should be given proper consideration.

On Sunday night my wife was travelling near Fremantle and the bus she had to catch in the area was full, and she and other people had great difficulty in respect to making connections with transport at the other end. Such a state of affairs will continue until a proper authority is established to deal with such matters and to direct and control the whole business. Such an authority should be set up and the revenue derived from transport should be used to provide up-to-date facilities for the people. It should not be taken into general revenue, as is the case with the tramway system and such like enterprises. It should be used to secure new buses and provide up-to-date facilities.

The matter must be tackled, and while I am here I shall continue to advocate that and to support any measure which is proposed to give effect to such a proposition. Complaints have been brought to the notice of the Minister concerning the inadequate service in the Belmont district. Parliament is supposed to be supreme and Ministers are supposed to take notice of the remarks of the elected representatives of the people, but I am afraid they take no notice whatever. On two occasions I have ventilated this matter but have had no word about it. I ought to be told what is being done. I represent a fairly large electorate and I should receive some reply to my requests. I do not want to be put off and not given any information. The people have been suffering too long and they have made representations to the Government through me as their representative. I have seen their difficulties for myself, as has the member for Murchison, who lives in the district and travels on the buses and is aware of the conditions obtaining. No relief has been given. Although the motion could, perhaps, be framed in a better way, in substance it gives us an opportunity to discuss this question of transport. So far as I am concerned I propose to keep ventilating these difficulties when they arise, at least in my own electorate, so that they may eventually be remedied.

A Government officer decided where buses should pick up and set down passengers, but his decision affects only one section of the community; the other is disregarded. That is not proper administration. There should not be fish for one and flesh for the other. That state of affairs still continues. The Maylands tram service operating along

Guildford-road is overcrowded, and is a slow system. It is about time that the recommendations of the committee set up some years ago were given effect to, namely, that an improved trolley-bus system be inaugurated to run by way of Guildford-road and Garrett-road to Belmont. The people of Belmont are asking for the trolley-bus system to be extended to their district. Why should Wembley get all the benefits of the trolley-buses, and another suburb be starved? Other members look after their electorates, and I am going to see that mine gets a fair deal. Too long have I been ignored while other members have got the up-to-date services for their electorates. My electors are not getting comparable consideration when we remember what has been given to Victoria Park and South Perth. There should be no discrimination.

I intend to pursue this matter further. The people of South Perth and Victoria Park should not get a longer tram ride for 3d. than those living at Inglewood. If one section can be disturbed so can another. I am annoyed at the way the Government has dealt with this matter and its lack of oversight. The Mint-street section in Victoria Park and the Tate-street section in South Perth are both longer than the Inglewood section. The question of the re-organisation and co-ordination of traffic in the metropolitan area is an important one, as it is, too, in other parts of the State, and should be tackled by the Government. This can be done. The Public Works Department is now practically under the control of the Defence Department, and unemployment no longer exists. At one time we used to have a full-time Minister for Unemployment. Problems like this should be tackled, and now is the time when a report should be brought down in this House so we could give consideration to it.

On motion by the Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RUBBER SUPPLIES.

*To Inquire by Select Committee—
Ruled Out.*

MR. CROSS (Canning) [11.45]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to investigate and report in regard to rubber supplies in Western Australia, particularly relative to—(a) collection of used and scrap rubber; (b) the use of it as this relates to passenger transport; (c) private people.

This motion is really linked up with the one just moved, and it deals with matters likely to bring about a breakdown of transport. Since the war I have had occasion to draw attention to the acute rubber position. It is true that as a result of the loss of men a special committee was appointed to deal with used tyres. That committee is doing a remarkably good job, but the collection of used rubber amounts almost to a major scandal because of the lack of action taken. This position has arisen in spite of a special appeal made from Canberra by a Federal Minister. It appears to me that nobody is responsible and there is no real organisation. Rubber supplies for this State are today more vital than petrol. There is no possibility at present of any private user of a motorear getting a tyre retreaded. The position is even worse because there is no chance of a member of Parliament having his tyres retreaded. That means that all the small business concerns using rubber-tyred vehicles in the course of their business are on too low a priority to get tyres.

My information is that the supplies of good rubber have become so short as to create almost a national emergency, yet in this State we find uncollected rubber all over the place. Only last night the Prime Minister, by wireless, issued a warning—too little; too late! When are we going to start, on a total basis, collect the limited supplies of used rubber with a view to having them converted into useful rubber? We have no effective organisation. This morning I paid a visit to a spot where there was once a rubber dump. For what has happened to that dump, had it occurred in an Axis country, someone would have been shot. There was a rubber dump in the railway yards, and in the last few weeks the Metropolitan Fire Brigade has attended it on several occasions to put out fires—caused by sparks from the engines—that have started on it. When I attended this morning the dump had disappeared. It had been left with nobody to watch it and now those supplies of old rubber, which could have been converted into something useful, have gone, and we cannot now get new rubber. It is a scandal. Who is responsible? Somebody should be brought to book. I am informed—and fairly reliably so, too—that even at Boyup Brook, in the middle of one of the main streets, there is a pile of rubber and it is nobody's business to send it to Perth. On the end of the

Geraldton jetty there is another pile of used rubber. I understand that the other day a few of the tyres were thrown into the sea there in order that people could watch them float away. There are plenty of heaps of rubber to be seen in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Sampson: I fancy you are confusing it with the "Tung oil" plant.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member is not capable of confusing anything because he knows nothing. Only a few days ago I went to three centres in his electorate and noticed in places five or six old tyres, each containing about 150 lbs. of rubber. There are hundreds of tons of used rubber in the metropolitan area. For instance, the other day I went to the Victoria Park East school. Incidentally I found there that great damage had been done to the school property. Cupboards had been broken open and books thrown about. I do not know why it is but that is done almost every year in Victoria Park. I saw 10 used tyres there and some of them did not even require retreading. All this is nobody's business, and nothing is done. We know that the rubbish men were supposed to collect the supplies and deliver them at depots. In one instance a ratepayer said, "You ought to take this man off the rubbish cart. He is pinching all the good tyres and selling them for his own benefit." Nothing is done; it is no one's business.

This matter of the collection of used rubber constitutes a calamity and a tragedy. We are unable to secure new supplies of rubber and private car owners cannot get their covers re-capped nor can people procure covers or tubes for bicycles. The prospect confronting us is not pleasant to contemplate. Take the position of the Old Metals Branch! I have no objection to that organisation collecting old rubber. At Fremantle, however, the Old Metals Branch has a dump of used rubber and the place where it is stored is surrounded by high grass. It only requires a fire to start and the whole of the dump will be destroyed. Those in charge will not allow the salvage people to deal with the dump; yet why is it not made use of?

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. CROSS: Surely members will realise that in this matter something should be done with a view to the conversion of used rubber into supplies for current use. The people who have old rubber that is of no further use to them should be compelled to forward

it to some central authority, and it should be an offence to retain it. New rubber supplies should be made use of for military operations, and any surplus of re-conditioned rubber could be made available for the re-capping of tyres for civilian car owners. By that means we would keep more cars on the road. If action is not taken now we may soon find that it will be too late. It takes months to collect used rubber, send the consignments to the Eastern States for treatment, and for the resultant rubber to be sent back to Western Australia for use here. It is time we did something definite in this matter or we will never win the war; in fact, neglect along these lines constitutes one way in which we may lose it.

When I was in the Dunlop Rubber Company's premises today I saw a dump of several tons of used rubber, and apparently it is no one's business to deal with it. That firm has ceased buying old rubber. Formerly 50s. a ton was paid for it, but none is bought now. If rubber does not seem to be wanted. The State Government should co-operate with the authorities in this matter and encourage the Old Metals Branch and the Boy Scouts' Association to make further collections. The Railway Department should haul consignments freight free and the rubber should be brought to some central depot. I do not know that it would not be profitable to pay for that work to be done. I am sure the boy scouts would run all over the State collecting old rubber if that course were adopted. I do not know why arrangements could not be made for the military limber waggons to collect old rubber in the metropolitan area. They could also collect aluminium.

Mr. McLarty: Who is responsible for such collections now?

Mr. CROSS: No one.

Mr. Mann: The Commonwealth Government made an appeal for old rubber.

Mr. CROSS: Yes, and I, in common with others, took up the appeal, but it has been of no avail. It seems to be nobody's business to take charge of supplies collected and make use of the old rubber. If a civilian tries to arrange to have his tyres re-capped he is met with a refusal on the ground that no rubber is available for the work. I can tell members that nearly all the first-class rubber supplies have been used up and what little remains is second-class. I can inform members of my own experience. I bought

some rubber when the war broke out and only because of that have I been able to get my covers re-capped. I foresaw the present situation, and I predict that it will become worse as time goes on. There is another matter that should receive attention with a view to stopping the practice. A man may own a 3-ton truck and when he goes to Francis-street to have it relicensed he may have a 4-ton load on the vehicle. The police insist that the man shall license the truck for four tons.

We should stop the practice of forcing people to license their trucks on the basis of overweight. The police may seek to secure additional revenue, but it is not right. I can quote an instance of a man carting for the Civil Defence Council who was compelled to license his truck on the basis of what was more than a fair load. That course was insisted upon because he had on his truck a heavier load than was reasonable. If a man overloads his truck or car, he is destroying rubber and is breaking down the walls of his tyres. The rubber problem deals with one of the most essential requirements of the Commonwealth, and that is why I urge the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the situation. Members know I have taken an interest in this matter. The task of winning the war will be very hard unless we have rubber supplies and we certainly cannot make synthetic rubber.

Mr. Berry: We cannot win without rubber.

Mr. CROSS: That is so, and what are we going to do about it? If the whole business were properly organised we could collect all the second-hand rubber in the State and we could keep a large number of private cars on the road. There is a stage in the wear on rubber tyres at which they can be re-capped with the use of a few lbs. of rubber. If the wear goes beyond that stage, the cover is ruined. Let us collect all the old rubber that is available and allow small business firms and the farmers, who are vitally concerned in this matter, to have the benefit of the supplies recovered by that process so that they can continue using their motor vehicles. If members looked into this matter they would be amazed at what can be done. At present huge supplies are being wasted. What are we going to do about it? It is to secure an answer to that question that I urge the appointment of a Select Committee. That course should be adopted in the national interests. Members can do what

they like, but I appeal to them to do something in the interests of the nation towards the winning of the war.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore): The member for Canning is to be congratulated on bringing this matter before the House. I assure members that whoever finally controls rubber and tin will control the universe. This is a mechanical war, a war of speed, a war of rubber, a war of tin, and a war of petrol. During the last war we did not have to face a problem of that kind, and there were many others that we did not have to face. The position this time is different. Japan is a dangerous and a powerful enemy, dangerous by virtue of the fact that in a matter of a few months that country depleted the Allies of 75 per cent. of their rubber and approximately 90 per cent. of their tin. The rubber problem is the most serious one we have to face today, more serious even than is the petrol problem, more serious than anything, because without rubber our mechanical advantage is gone. There is no need to impress upon the House or anyone else that this is a war of movement. The only means of rapid movement is through inflated rubber.

Our sources of supply of rubber are gone, and they are gone until we take them back again. If we do not regain possession of the countries which produce rubber, we shall not regain possession of our resources of rubber supplies. In this State, and no doubt the position is the same elsewhere, we are going on in the same haphazard manner that has characterised our war effort from the beginning. The policy is "Do not do today what you can possibly delay doing until tomorrow." That will never get us anywhere. Our buses are carrying double the number of passengers that they are licensed to carry. I travelled in a bus recently that was licensed to carry 35 people, but in it were 92. Sardines were comfortable by comparison with the people in that vehicle. The added weight in these vehicles means added wear and tear upon the tyres. The sudden stopping of such a vehicle every hundred yards or so also means a further wear and tear upon the tyres. Every time the brakes are put on it amounts to living on our fat. We cannot go on living on our fat forever.

The motion suggests that all scrap rubber should be collected, and that a Select Com-

mittee be appointed to inquire into the whole question. I should like to see a straight-out order from those in control saying, "You must send in all your rubber for proper treatment in order that the requisite number of tyres may be made available." I would go even further. I would ask how many miles of rubber are being worn out unnecessarily by the military authorities at present operating in Australia. The whole problem is both a tremendous and a dangerous one. It is full of danger for the whole of the people of Australia. Rubber is the crux of the position, and it is no use saying we are going to produce it. Where is the plant in Australia that can produce rubber within 18 months? How shall we grow rubber in a country in which it is so difficult to grow it, or where the labour is inadequate to handle it if we could grow it? Our only hope lies in conservation and economy in the strictest sense, in order that the time factor that we hear so much about and take absolutely no notice of may work in our favour. Japan at present is in possession of Singapore and Dutch East Indies, the two most important and the biggest rubber-growing countries in the world.

I unhesitatingly support the motion. In fact, as a citizen who has the right to preserve his life, I demand that the Government of this State and the Commonwealth Government should make every effort to collect all available scrap rubber and reclaim it for the purposes of victory. I would go further and say that our train services are not adequately used today. The bus services could be used as feeders to the railways, but they are not so used. People have become motorcar-minded; in fact we have all become motorcar-minded, and will not walk 100 yards if we can get into a bus or a car. That sort of thing has to stop, "pronto." The trains that run to Fremantle are sometimes fairly full, but more generally are fairly empty. Running alongside them is an overcrowded bus taking people to Fremantle. That sort of thing is absolutely unnecessary. If it is deemed expedient let us see that people are taken to the trains by bus. Let the buses perform that service with a minimum expenditure of rubber and a minimum expenditure of wear and tear in other ways. If I was given to prophecy, I would say that if we continue as we are going we shall have nothing left in ten months. The Metro. Bus Company, has, I

understand, practically a dozen buses held up, not through the want of rubber, but through the want of spare parts. That difficulty arises through lack of foresight on our part, and through lack of vision.

Foresight and vision are the two mental commodities that the Allies seem to lack and fail in. Let us do as is suggested in the motion, but let us do it on an Australia-wide basis. If we must have a Select Committee let us have one without waste of time. Let us insist that the rubber lying on scrap heaps, on the beaches, and anywhere at all is brought in and reclaimed. We know it can be reclaimed. I know something about rubber. Japan stole my rubber plantation and I feel very intense about the matter. I am not able to contribute one ounce of rubber to the war needs although I own a plantation which produced pure rubber. I cannot produce an ounce of it today because Japan has taken my property from me. I am only a drop in the ocean for Japan has taken the property of thousands of other people. We have not the rubber to enable us to carry on a protracted war. Let us, therefore, conserve such supplies as we have and put them to the fullest possible use. Let us build up our rubber stocks so that we may ultimately force our way to the throat of Japan, Tokio. Let us do all we can to make it possible to wring that damned throat!

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco): I support the motion. I agree with previous speakers that there is much rubber in Western Australia that could be reclaimed. One point not already mentioned is that numbers of people—I will not say a large number—are buying new cars simply because they cannot get their old cars re-tyred or their old tyres re-treaded. This seems awful because it means that money is being sent out of the country to pay for those cars. Yet people are being allowed to do it.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington): The member for Canning is to be commended for having brought the motion before the House. Not long ago I heard the Commonwealth Minister for Supply and Development make a most earnest appeal over the air for all the scrap rubber that could be made available. If one-half of what the member for Canning has told us is true, it is an alarming state of affairs. We are told that every ounce of scrap rub-

ber is required; yet he told us of a large dump of scrap that had caught fire several times and had eventually been burnt up. Surely there is something wrong in the organisation of the campaign to collect rubber, and if the motion is likely to do any good I shall have no hesitation in supporting it.

Members representing country districts have frequent requests from farmers to obtain tyres and retreads for them. The farmers in my district are already beginning to cry out for tyres, and we are told there is not much prospect of their being obtained for some considerable time. If we can remedy the existing shortage even to a small degree, we should endeavour to do so. Recently a regulation was introduced by the Commonwealth prescribing a speed limit of 40 miles an hour in order to conserve rubber. This shows how seriously the position is viewed by the Commonwealth. But the question I asked by interjection when the member for Canning was speaking I ask again, whose responsibility is it? I know that dumps have been formed in country districts and that little boys who want a rubber tyre to bowl about or swim on take it from the dump. Surely there is responsibility somewhere! Is it a Federal or a State responsibility? Does it come under the Department of the Minister for Industrial Development?

The Minister for Industrial Development: No, it is under the Commonwealth Department of Supply and Shipping.

Mr. McLARTY: Surely that department could do something to improve the position! Either the department is not doing its job, or the job is being done badly. I have no doubt there is plenty of scrap rubber in Western Australia. I am told that in the district represented by the Minister for the North-West there is any number of tyres on the roadside from Derby to Wyndham, some of them in fairly good order. They have been holed and discarded.

The Minister for Lands: Some of them weigh 90 lbs.

Mr. McLARTY: It might be difficult to collect those tyres but, if we are in dire straits for scrap rubber, no effort should be too great to reclaim them. We have been told by the responsible Minister that the position is exceedingly serious. We have been given an example of wastage after the scrap rubber has been collected. We should do everything in our power to

prevent this waste and this shocking mismanagement, and try to wake up the responsible authority.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): Because this motion is obviously aimed at assisting in the solution of a problem which is a very great one at present, I intend to support it. At the same time, I believe that this House itself is to blame for the necessity that impelled the member for Canning to move his motion today. Last October the hon. member introduced this topic to the House in rather different terms. Then he impressed upon members the facts he has mentioned today, although in a somewhat different way. From this side of the House a suggestion was made that the State should legislate to enforce the collection of scrap rubber. It is common knowledge that there is a great measure of control in the Commonwealth Government of matters such as this, but I venture to believe—and I think I am right—that there would be no objection whatever to the State's taking action concurrently with the Commonwealth. It would have been quite practicable for legislation to emanate from this Parliament at the time requiring the compulsory collection of scrap rubber, but not even the member for Canning could be found to support the suggestion, and it was defeated on a division, although I sought to simplify the amendment moved in order to make it practicable for some members on the Government side to give it some sort of blessing.

Thus the enthusiasm which the hon. member has displayed in this matter today, while commendable, would have been made commendable had he given some assistance to the taking of concrete action four months ago. I knew at that time, and I know today, that local authorities in various outback portions of the State have been active in inducing their people to supply such scrap rubber as they had. One local authority has written to the department concerned asking for arrangements to be made for the transport of its collection to the point where it is required. Approximately three months have elapsed since that communication was sent, but no instructions have been received by the local authority and no means of carriage have been provided from that district for the purpose. So it is quite obvious that there is no co-ordination, and

in my belief no genuine effort is being made to collect the scrap rubber in this State, notwithstanding the precariousness of the position in which we find ourselves. While I believe we have let go by an opportunity that we should have taken, I still hold the opinion that we should take some action, and therefore I shall support the motion.

I should like to make some passing reference to the observations of the member for Irwin-Moore. It seems to me to be a sad commentary on our ability as a people if, because the sources of rubber to the extent of 75 per cent. have been taken from us, our prospects of winning this international struggle have become more precarious. What have our enemies been doing? What sources of supply have been made available to the Germans during the last three or four or five years?

Mr. Berry: They have a pretty good synthetic rubber.

Mr. WATTS: Precisely. It has not been the presence of natural supplies of rubber which has enabled the Germans to run the most highly mechanised war in history, and run it until recently with a substantial measure of success. It is because they have applied scientific knowledge—

Mr. Berry: Are you aware that Germany is still receiving supplies of rubber from Japan?

Mr. WATTS: I believe that the Germans have applied their scientific knowledge to the rubber problem and a great many other matters, and that they have succeeded in obtaining the bulk of their rubber otherwise than from oversea. Doubtless they have obtained some fractional part of their requirement, perhaps 25 per cent., from oversea; but as regards the other 75 per cent. it is well known that they have so developed and applied their scientific knowledge as to obtain it from the use of materials available to them. And so they have done in regard to various kinds of fuel. To a great extent they have overcome, with limited supplies of natural fuel, the difficulties in which they have found themselves all the time and in which we now find ourselves. I venture to suggest that we apply ourselves to the subject-matter in the same way as they did—for a far baser reason, unfortunately—in the last few years. Unfortunately, that does not limit the fact that we have got to do all that we can; and, because that is my

belief, I am prepared to support the motion of the member for Canning.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan): I am pleased that the member for Canning has brought this matter forward again; though naturally I regret that when I desired on the former occasion to move an amendment that it be a recommendation to the Government to bring in legislation to secure a measure of control, my suggestion did not appeal to the hon. member. That should be done, and I am grateful for the reference made to that phase of the subject by the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Canning has referred to a new organisation which has done something in regard to the care of rubber. I do not know what the new organisation is, but I am sure there is a lot of rubber lying about, although old covers and old tubes do not necessarily mean that the rubber they contain remains in a condition in which it may be of utility in providing usable or commercial rubber. I am certainly not with the hon. member in his suggestion that the Government collaborate in the proposed collection, because, without any reflection on the Government, I am quite sure that if it is desired to bring about failure we should induce the Government to do this work. In any case, there is no need—and it is hardly appropriate—to form a Government organisation to collect rubber.

We might next have a suggestion from the hon. member that a working bee—say of those sitting on the other side of the Chamber—occupy their spare time in carrying out what no doubt would prove highly useful work. Some time ago I did suggest that consideration be given to the construction of what is known as the tip-toe type of tractor driving wheel, the utilisation of which would obviate the use of a great deal of rubber. I understand that the Minister for Industrial Development is giving this matter consideration, and that he will, so soon as his researches permit, let the House have some advice on the subject. As a matter of fact, apart from road transport, the driving wheels of tractors are largely bound up in the supply of rubber; and if those tractors are to continue their essential work, either rubber must be used or an alternative, as I suggested some time since.

I am not quite convinced that the establishment of a Select Committee is a solution of every problem under the sun.

I am inclined to think—and I throw out the suggestion to the mover of the motion—that the appropriate organisation in regard to rubber be approached, and that that organisation be asked to take the work up. I believe it would do so, and that the organisation would forthwith appoint a committee from its ranks and do what is required. The position regarding the need for rubber is so well known that actually there is no need of a Select Committee to inform the House that the subject of supply or conservation of rubber is of first rate importance. We are all aware of that fact. I suggest that the proper organisation is bound to be a motor tyre or general rubber organisation. Such an organisation could do what is needed. So I suggest to the mover that he might, with the consent of the House, amend his motion. The energy expended in this persistent desire for the appointment of Select Committees, while it does indicate some thought on the part of the hon. member, would in my opinion be of far greater service if an effort along more practical lines were adopted: and that could best be done by approaching the organisation which has a thorough working knowledge of rubber. On that phase we have this morning heard numerous statements, some of which doubtless are dependable but others quite the reverse. Rubber loses its virtue with the passage of time and by exposure to air and sun. Rubber goods deteriorate as time goes on.

Mr. Cross: Rubber can be re-vitalised.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, if there is some remaining virtue in it, but not otherwise, because rubber—like some other commodities—loses its quality as time goes on. That applies even to a number of metals. The form is changed. I know nothing is lost in nature; but that relates to metals. Articles manufactured from rubber deteriorate very rapidly. What might appear to be a heap of usable rubber will be found, upon expert examination, to be quite useless. However, I shall not say one word against any effort that might be made in this important matter; but, as I have said, I feel that it would be far better to take a practical view and, instead of this God-blessed proposed Select Committee, we should allow the leading rubber organisation to deal with the matter. I would move an amendment, but when I did so on a previous occasion it had the effect of chilling the enthusiasm of the mem-

ber for Canning, and that I do not desire to do. Any amendment moved would mean an alteration of the motion, which might thereby lose the support that otherwise would be given to it. I am sincerely hopeful that in the near future the Minister for Industrial Development will be able to give the House some advice on the tip-toe type of tractor driving wheel now so largely in use in the United States and other large agricultural countries of the world.

Mr. SPEAKER: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that this issue has already been decided. Last year, earlier in this session, the member for Canning brought forward a motion, to which several amendments were moved, all of which were negatived. On the 28th October, 1942, the member for Canning was successful in getting the following motion carried:—

That in the opinion of this House, in view of the serious shortage of rubber supplies, together with the possibility of further restrictions for civilian requirements, immediate intensive action be taken so as to obtain the most effective use from used tyres in the interests of the State and in order to further assist in the war effort.

The motion now before the House is substantially the same as that which was carried on the 28th October, 1942. I must, therefore, rule it out.

Question ruled out.

Mr. Sampson: Would I be in order in suggesting to the member for Canning—

Mr. SPEAKER: It would not be in order to suggest anything in regard to the motion at the present time.

Mr. Sampson: I will make a suggestion to the hon. member privately.

MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

As to Recommendations of Royal Commissioner.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [12.34]: I move—

If the lot of the native and half-caste children in the Southern portion of the State is to be improved and they are to be given the opportunity to become useful members of society, this House believes that that portion of Royal Commissioner Moseley's report, wherein he recommends the abolition of native camps in favour of providing settlements where families may be housed according to their needs and the children attend a school of their own should be given effect to, and requests the Government accordingly; and, meanwhile, that the Education Department be

instructed to provide a separate room and a teacher for native and half-caste children at schools where existing accommodation will permit of that being done.

I desire to ask the House to express an opinion upon that portion of Mr. Moseley's report dealing with half-castes living in the southern portion of the State. In 1935 Mr. Moseley was appointed a Royal Commissioner to investigate and report upon the natives in Western Australia. One of the terms of reference of the commission was the "physical well-being of aboriginals and any suggested measures for amelioration." I shall quote but little from the report of the Royal Commissioner, because it is available to members and because, when speaking some time ago on the Native Affairs Department, I made quotations from what might be termed the pertinent sections of the report. I desire, however, to draw the attention of members to page 1 of the report, where the Commissioner says—

Having travelled in the course of my investigations a distance of some 14,000 miles, having seen the Western Australian aboriginal in every condition of life, from the bush native, who has seldom seen a white man, to the half-caste child attending a Government school in a large town, the conclusion is irresistible that the great problem confronting the community today is that of the half-caste. While it appears beyond doubt, from opinions expressed generally throughout the State, that the full-blooded aborigines are decreasing in number, it is very certain that the half-castes are multiplying rapidly.

Later on, the Royal Commissioner says—

The problem of the half-castes may be easier of solution by reason of the fact that they are not scattered to any very great extent over the State, but are to be found chiefly in the southern portion; it is true that they are to be found in certain numbers in the North and that the town of Broome has an undesirably large half-caste population. That town requires and will receive special reference in this report. With those exceptions the comparative proximity of half-castes to the capital city may render less difficult the task of caring for and training them—a task which must in my opinion be undertaken without delay.

In view of the Royal Commissioner's very thorough investigation of this question, I consider that his recommendations must and should be given the serious attention of this House. I desire briefly to state that any remarks I may make on the half-caste question will not refer to the northern part of the State. I know nothing whatever about the natives in the North and consequently would not presume to make any comments

upon them. My comments will be confined entirely to the native and half-caste question as it applies to the southern part of the State. Nor do I wish it to be inferred from any remarks I may make that I am necessarily criticising the Native Affairs Department. We had a few weeks ago a review of that department by the Minister when he replied extensively to my observations on it when dealing with the Estimates for that department. I do not wish to say that the department has not done a considerable amount of work since the Royal Commissioner made his investigations, but the fact remains that the half-caste question in the southern part of the State is little, if at all, different from what it was when the Commissioner made his report. It, therefore, behoves us to see if we cannot do something to meet the situation there. In his report the Royal Commissioner briefly drew attention to the then native population of the State, as follows:—

Kimberleys, including Broome ..	10,015
North-West, not including Carnarvon	2,497
Murchison and north to Carnarvon	1,497
South of Geraldton	5,012

He further said that in 1905 the estimated number of half-castes was 900. From that year the number had increased, up to the date of his report, to 5,012 in the southern part of the State. I think I can confidently state that the half-caste population has increased very largely since 1935, the date of the report. We have got to take this matter in hand. As I have stated, my reason for bringing the matter up is that, viewing these people as I do fairly continuously, I can say that their position is little different from what it was when the Royal Commissioner made his investigations. Since speaking here on this subject in December I attended a sports gathering which took place on New Year's Day west of the Great Southern, and I noticed at that gathering that there were large numbers of half-caste children present. I counted them. There were 20 sitting on a bench at the end of a shed, all between the ages of six and eight years, all poorly clad and all really objects of pity. Besides those there were fully a score of coloured youths running about the place and a good number of adults. That is the spectacle that constantly meets us. They are objects of pity. We must do something for these people. It is an obligation imposed on the community and that is the reason I have introduced the matter. Re-

cently we had some trouble at the Pingelly school. I do not want to refer to that beyond saying that the parents of the white children had medical evidence to the effect that their children were suffering from complaints received from native children.

The Minister for the North-West: That was not borne out by facts.

Mr. SEWARD: It has not been disproved. However, the position was that those children had not an opportunity to be kept in a clean condition owing to the fact that there was no water supply available for them. The trouble will probably be cleaned up by the natives moving to some other centre and the same trouble will arise there.

The Minister for the North-West: The same trouble does not arise in other places.

Mr. SEWARD: It occurred in Wagin a few years ago and also west of Narrogin. These people migrate from trouble because they get the idea that it is a colour question. It is not a colour question and I do not want to make it one. It is simply a question of making adequate provision for these children so that they can be brought up in a way that will give them an opportunity of improvement in life. The Royal Commissioner pointed out that there is an obligation on the community to see that the half-castes are placed in surroundings and given training to fit them later to take their place, if necessary, in white civilisation. How is that to be done? In my view there are two ways. One would be to take the children from their parents and send them to a settlement, there to educate them and as they become older teach the boys farm methods and the girls domestic work, so that when they are 16 or 17 years of age they will be fitted to take their place in the community and in callings in which they could earn a living. But there are objections to that course. As the Royal Commissioner pointed out, it means taking the children from their parents and Mr. Moseley, after his very thorough investigation, came to the conclusion that that would not be advisable because the coloured mother has a very great love for her children. I am not going to pit my opinion against that of the Royal Commissioner. He knows the position better than do I and I accept his conclusion.

The alternative method is to build some kind of wood-and-iron camps on reserves where a water supply is obtainable and which are fairly close to farms. In such circum-

stances the adults could work on the adjacent farms and there would probably be sufficient children to be educated at a school of their own situated in close proximity to, if not on, the particular reserve on which they were camped. That would be preferable to the existing position. As the Commissioner points out, these people must have a water supply. We had trouble at Pingelly recently. A few weeks afterwards I was told that the Water Supply officer in Pingelly had been instructed to make a report about laying a water scheme on to the reserve. I notified the Minister for Native Affairs who told me—and I believe him—that he had no knowledge of the proposal. I also notified the Public Works Department. From that department I have had an acknowledgment of the letter, but nothing further. The proposal is to connect the reserve to the Pingelly water scheme by means of 600ft. of piping and put in a water trough and a stand-pipe. If that is done it will be a scandalous waste of money. The other night there was a fire in the district and the fire brigade filled from the Pingelly water supply a 100-gallon tank about 100 yards from where I live and we could smell the stink from that distance. It is horrid, green, stinking stuff and the proposal is to put that on to the native reserve. I protested about the expenditure of money for such a purpose. If they want to spend money, why not establish a well with a windmill and trough and give the natives a decent water supply? To provide them with foul, stinking water of this description would be a scandalous waste of money.

The Premier: If that is not done they will get no water, will they?

Mr. SEWARD: They will not get any good water if it is done. Nothing on earth could drink that stuff. It could not be used for washing because it is green, stinking stuff, that can be smelt 100 yards away.

The Premier: That is when it is stagnant.

Mr. SEWARD: Nobody uses it except for flushing out cisterns. The horses will not drink it and the natives cannot use it. They have a soak in a paddock nearby to which stock also has access.

The Minister for the North-West: What reply did I give to your letter?

Mr. SEWARD: You said that you would not stand for it; but we have the Public Works Department to consider.

The Minister for the North-West: The Public Works Department will not do it unless asked by my department.

Mr. SEWARD: I am glad to have that assurance.

The Minister for the North-West: You had that from me in writing.

Mr. SEWARD: No, the Minister—

The Minister for the North-West: You read my reply again.

Mr. SEWARD: The trouble is we have these different departments denying responsibility. We have had trouble at the Pingelly school. The Native Affairs Department says, "It is nothing to do with us," and the Education Department says the same. So the thing goes on. That is no good. With regard to water supply, the Water Supply Department's official was instructed to make this investigation and submit a report. I believe that the Minister will do everything he can to prevent such a scheme being put into operation. That will be all right so long as the Public Works Department does not say it has got to be done. There are plenty of reserves. For instance, where the sports gathering was held, a good river runs through the property. Buildings could be erected there to accommodate half a dozen or more families. I do not suggest that the buildings should be pretentious, but wood-and-iron structures could be established on the reserve. The natives would have a water supply and would be surrounded by farms on which the adult members could obtain plenty of work and the children could be educated—in a moveable building if necessary. Thus they would have a good opportunity to become decent citizens. I would draw attention to another portion of the Royal Commissioner's report in which he states that many of these children are of fair intelligence, but do not make that progress with their education in their younger years such as is made by white children. The result is that children of 10 and 12 years of age are in the infants' class, though they make better progress in later years. If these children had such a school of their own they could all be kept together and would make approximately the same rate of progress. At present there are classes of 60 or 70 infants with 20 native children between 10 and 12 years of age. Consequently they do not receive proper attention and do not make progress, and have not a

fair chance of succeeding in life. The Royal Commissioner himself made this recommendation—

Abolish the native camps which, without exception, are a disgrace, and provide settlements where the families may be taken, where the grown-up members of those families may be housed according to their needs, and be usefully employed, either on the settlement or, at periods, at work on surrounding farms, and where children may occupy quarters of their own and attend a school of their own.

That recommendation was made after careful investigation. If something of this sort is not done the result will be a great increase of the present problem, because the children of today will be the parents of tomorrow. The population today is between 5,000 and 7,000, and in ten years' time it will probably be double that number. Consequently we must deal with the position to which the Royal Commissioner referred when he said—

Apart from the altogether undesirable surroundings for children of tender years if, on reaching the age for leaving school they have nothing better provided for them, at the present rate of increase the time is not far distant when these half-castes, or a great majority of them, will become a positive menace to the community.

There is today unlimited opportunity for these half-caste adults to be usefully employed. If the opportunity to work on farms—

The Minister for the North-West: Do you know of any of them out of work?

Mr. SEWARD: I do not say that there are any unemployed, but if they are properly placed in the farming districts, not with 10 or 12 adults adjacent to only three or four farms, but so that they can easily get to the farms, there is an avenue for their employment, and the children can be educated at the same time. There is any amount of rabbit poisoning and trapping to be done. The rabbit position is well known to members. Plenty of charcoal has to be burnt, and a number could be employed on cutting firewood for next winter. But today they are seeking their own employment as best they can, and the youngsters have not very much of an outlook. As the children become older, the parents might be able to take them to Carrollup in order to have them taught farming methods and handicrafts, etc., and it might then be possible to wean them from the native life. That I consider is essential. We must wean these young children from their present way of living so that

when they are educated and have learned handicrafts and become older members of the community, they may be able to take up land of their own and so become useful citizens of the State. They will not do that if matters are allowed to go on as they are at present. In the latter part of my motion I request—

That the Education Department be instructed to provide a separate room and a teacher for native and half-caste children at schools where existing accommodation will permit of its being done.

I do not want the Education Department and the Department of Native Affairs to spend a lot of money in providing this accommodation at the present time. The Government has not unlimited money at its disposal, but it can sponsor pensions for some people and, if there is a basic wage rise, it can always find £100,000 or so to meet it. But here we have a more important obligation. While salary increases and better living conditions are desirable features of our domestic and social legislation, this presents an obligation to people who have had no chance. Some small expenditure, therefore, might be incurred to provide a teacher for these children where the existing accommodation will permit of its being done. As the Royal Commissioner pointed out, a highly qualified teacher is not required. A monitor would probably be sufficiently competent to teach them until such time as they required more advanced education.

At the present time, the Education Department simply brushes this matter aside and says, "It has nothing to do with us: it is the concern of the Department of Native Affairs." The Education Department will not assist and definitely refuses to provide separate accommodation, although at Pingelly we have an idle room which could be made available. All that we need is a teacher. The Education Department should be compelled to make proper provision for these children and give them their chance in life. For these reasons, I hope the House will agree to the motion. I have not moved it to be critical of the Department of Native Affairs, which has done a considerable amount since the Royal Commissioner made his report, but the rate of increase of the half-caste population in the southern part of the State is probably greater than in the northern areas, and calls for closer attention. The Minister probably has not nearly as much money as he would like to spend, but

better provision must be made for these children. How it is to be done is, perhaps, a matter of opinion. I have put forward my ideas in connection with the reserves, and it is for the Education Department to make available the services of a teacher at those schools where accommodation is sufficient to enable that to be done.

MR. BOYLE (Avon): In supporting this motion I have in mind the obligation entered into by the Government and people of Western Australia when responsible government was granted, namely, the care of the aboriginal population of the State. By and large our Governments have measured up to that obligation, but the tragedy, to my mind, is the problem of the half-caste. That problem is more manifest in the districts south of Geraldton than in the remainder of the State, for the obvious reason that the small, numerically speaking, native population is more or less the prey of any unscrupulous whites in these more densely populated districts. The main reason I have for supporting the motion is that in my electoral district there is what I am pleased to term a model native settlement on the lines referred to by Commissioner Moseley when he recommends—

The abolition of native camps in favour of providing settlements where families may be housed according to their needs, and the children attend a school of their own.

The member for Pingelly has asked that that recommendation should be given effect to, and requests the Government accordingly.

Sitting suspended from 1.0 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The time for the consideration of motions has expired.

[Resolved: That motion be continued.]

Mr. BOYLE: Before the luncheon suspension I was referring to the small native settlement some six miles north of Kellerberrin. Had the Minister been in his seat at the moment, I had intended to ask him to accept an invitation to inspect that settlement with a view to regarding it, as it were, as a model upon which other similar settlements could be built. At that model settlement there are about 54 natives of varying colours and sexes, and it is largely due to the good work of the clergymen of Kellerberrin, through their ministers' fraternal, that the establishment has been brought to the successful stage it has now reached. The

school is under the direction of a teacher supplied by the Education Department, and that lady is thoroughly enthusiastic in her work. I consider such an attitude is essential on the part of a teacher engaged in activities of this description. Originally some trouble arose at the Kellerberrin State School similar to that recently evidenced in Pingelly. There was a decided objection on the part of white parents to sending their children to the school while the native children were in attendance there.

A public spirited citizen of the district made available portion of a property some miles north of Kellerberrin. In consequence of that and because of the unselfish work of the clergymen I have referred to, from humble beginnings we now have the present institution for the native children. A school that had been abandoned in the Tammin district was purchased and re-erected at the native settlement. Of course, the housing of the natives still leaves much to be desired, but the establishment of the settlement has removed from the Kellerberrin township the inconvenience and trouble that arise when there is a congregation of natives living in close proximity. What has been done in that district could be repeated in other parts of Western Australia with great advantage to all concerned. It seems strange to those of us who had something to do with the provision of the native settlement there that such a position as that indicated at Pingelly could have arisen. There is evidently a lack of sympathetic handling of matters in certain quarters. As to the Department of Native Affairs, I have received nothing but courtesy and assistance from the departmental officers—if I except my initial effort. At that stage I was threatened with action seeing that under the regulations I had no right to go on a native settlement without a permit and, furthermore, that I could not carry a camera there if I wished to do so. I think those Gestapo regulations are still part and parcel of those administered by the Department of Native Affairs. Surely it is the height of absurdity to threaten the member for a district who is desirous of bettering the lot of the natives with the enforcement of regulations against him.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Cannot a member of Parliament go anywhere?

Mr. BOYLE: No, not under the administration of the Department of Native Affairs.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Members can go on to a racecourse.

Mr. BOYLE: I paid a visit to the local policeman before I took any risks, after receiving the communication embodying that threat. The policeman showed me the regulations, which I had previously seen, and he clearly indicated that he would have to carry out his duty if I took a camera with me and went on to the native settlement. I had intended photographing some of the work that was being done. However, there seemed to be a fear of the light of publicity being thrown on the work at the native settlement. I do not know whether those regulations are still in force, but I do not think the present Minister in charge of native affairs would be a party to enforcing them.

The Minister for the North-West: I certainly would.

Mr. BOYLE: Did the Minister say he would enforce them?

The Minister for the North-West: I did.

Mr. BOYLE: To prevent a member visiting a native settlement in his electorate?

The Minister for the North-West: I voted in support of the regulations when they were before the House.

Mr. BOYLE: Would the Minister authorise the prosecution of a member of Parliament who went on to a native settlement without a permit?

The Minister for the North-West: I would prosecute any member who broke the law of the land.

Mr. Patrick: That would be a big job.

Mr. BOYLE: In view of the Minister's statement, the obvious duty of this House is to withdraw these powers from the Minister's hands.

The Minister for the North-West: You can attempt that with pleasure.

Mr. BOYLE: I think that since the time I speak of, tolerance has become more evident regarding the enforcement of the regulations. As a matter of fact, I am afraid a prosecution could still lie against me unless there is a time limit, because I took no notice of the regulations and visited the native settlement, although I had not been issued with a permit. I certainly did not take a camera with me, as that might have been regarded as a provocative action. However, I visited the settlement and conveyed to the department many suggestions upon which action was subsequently taken. Today the people of Kellerberrin are not bothered

about native troubles as apparently is the position in other districts. As I mentioned earlier, I had intended to suggest to the Minister that he make an inspection of the native settlement, for I am sure he would find it beneficial to him in his administrative work.

The Minister for the North-West: I have been there.

Mr. BOYLE: If the Minister were prepared to accept it, I would have much pleasure in conveying an invitation to him.

The Minister for the North-West: You need not bother. I have been there.

Mr. BOYLE: Has the Minister been there recently.

The Minister for the North-West: Not very recently.

Mr. BOYLE: I think it was W. M. Hughes who said, "Silence is the tomb of thought." I am sure the Minister would be pleased at what he would see at the settlement if he were to pay it another visit. The difficulties that confronted the people in that district have been surmounted and the children are attending school. There is room for improvement in the housing arrangements, but that place might well serve as a model settlement for many other centres in Western Australia. I mentioned earlier that we as a people undertook the full care of the aborigines and promised to attend to their welfare. Various Governments have tried to do their best in that direction. The department, by and large, has endeavoured to carry out those obligations, but we are always up against the difficulty of the shortage of money.

The Minister for the North-West: Yet you opposed the Commonwealth Powers Bill that would get done the things you say ought to be done.

Mr. BOYLE: It is definitely out of order, I suggest, to introduce the Commonwealth Powers Bill at this stage. I do not think we are entitled to transfer to another Government the responsibilities we undertook in agreement with the Imperial Government. We have experience which the Commonwealth does not possess. If we look into the administration of aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory, I do not think we shall find anything to write home about. Mr. Moseley's report contains references to the aborigines of the Northern Territory. I recollect that in my youth natives were very numerous in this State and were located

in various parts and were, everything considered, fairly well looked after. I hope the House will pass the motion. I am quite convinced that in one part of the State at least we have an example that might well be followed. The Minister says that he has visited that place, but a motion of this kind might serve to focus attention—

The Minister for the North-West: On the colour prejudice.

Mr. BOYLE: Now the Minister is raising another question. To put it plainly, it is not a colour prejudice but a hygienic prejudice. That was the objection taken at Kellerberrin. One cannot expect children coming from native camps to conform with all the hygienic conditions that our civilisation demands. In other districts I have known of small numbers of native children who were well cared for and against whom no objection was raised. There is always a reason for such action on the part of the parents of white children. I do not think that parents are so much upset by the colour prejudice as by the fear that the health of their children might be affected.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin): The future of the progeny of aborigines raises a very serious question. In supporting the motion I should like to mention briefly what I have seen occurring in my electorate during the last 30 years. I do not think all members realise what is likely to be the future for these half-castes and quadroons, unless a different method of treatment is devised to give the young men and women amongst them a chance of becoming useful citizens. Not more than a few years ago I saw as many as 100 men and women, boys and girls, traversing the streets of Wagin day after day. They were nomads. They had a camp about half a mile out of the town and their progeny was sent to the State schools with about 150 white children. Time after time the headmaster received complaints objecting to the smell from the bodies of these native children, and he refused to admit them. I know from the police what happened when this action was taken. What did the mothers of some of those native children do? There was no water supply at the camps except what was carted from the town supply, and the mothers took their youngsters to the nearest water trough and soured them in it with all their clothes on. Those kiddies next day were sent back to the school.

I am thankful that the present Government has re-started a scheme which was closed down for many years. I objected to its being re-opened, but I have since seen that the work being done reflects credit on the department. Not one-quarter the number of half-castes and quadroons are now allowed to walk the streets of Wagin as did so four years ago. I am told authoritatively that these male and female adolescents of the native race have to prove to the satisfaction of the police and of the Carrolup authorities that they are employed. I support the statement of the mover that we have not gone far enough in our efforts on behalf of the natives. The House ought to remember the obligation cast upon us. It is not the fault of those native kiddies that they have been brought into the world, and they cannot help their colour; but beyond the shadow of doubt it is our responsibility to look after the kiddies, every one of whom belongs to Western Australia. It was the country of their forebears ere ever we occupied it. Until a scheme such as outlined by the mover is put into operation, to grant those boys and girls some opportunity to learn a congenial trade and to understand that when they grow up to be men and women they must earn their own living, there will be no solution of the problem.

Let those children be given a chance! Is it not the duty of every member of this House to bear in mind that the natives are part and parcel of the human race that is born into the world, and that their boys and girls should receive some little start in life? I do not in the least depreciate the work being done by the present Minister to eliminate the conditions that have prevailed, though the hon. gentleman is far from having reached his goal. He is entitled to say, "Give me the money to do what is required." I consider it is up to the House to give effect to the motion. We have a duty to perform towards the unfortunate coloured children. The coloured people are increasing rapidly in numbers. Only a few years ago one might see 15 or 20 coloured adolescents in the streets of Wagin, but I have of late years seen hundreds of them aimlessly walking the Wagin streets. Therefore I support the motion.

MR. MANN (Beverley): I, too, support the motion of the member for Pingelly. Having heard the observations of the mem-

ber for Avon, I wish to state that for many years I have seen the half-caste and quadroon problem growing. I daresay that Quairading and Beverley, which towns are both in my electorate, have more half-castes and quadroons than has any other part of Western Australia. The only solution of the problem is farm settlements, where the young coloured child may be brought up on lines very different from those obtaining in native camps. The scheme of the member for Avon is all right in its way, but he admits that the housing accommodation for the coloured population is intolerable. Settlements like that in the Badgebup area, on miserable sand patches, upon which nothing can be grown, are useless. The natives there now are too tired even to dig for water. The half-caste and quadroon evil is growing worse year by year. I repeat, the only solution is the establishment by the Government of definite native settlements. Especially should the coloured children be taken away from their parents and trained.

Two natives approached me last year—man and wife. The husband was elderly. Their habitation consisted of bags and a few bushes. I said to the man, "Why don't you have decent protection from the weather?" In another case a native had a wife and four children, and their conditions of living were just the same as in the other case. One native, with two children, had served five years in prison. During his incarceration his wife had been well looked after at Mogumber. When he was released she came to the metropolitan area to meet him. She was a particularly fine type of young woman, well clad and otherwise presentable. What happened after the re-union of the couple? Within 12 months of the wife's renewal of association with her husband, she had "gone bush"—wearing neither shoes nor stockings and having remnants for clothes. Moreover, she had reverted to the dirty state of the native. All the talking that can be done in this Chamber will have no effect on the native question until settlements are established to which the natives can be sent and where they can be strictly controlled, so that they may become citizens. At the present time they roam about listlessly; they do not get work.

No native child should be permitted to attend a school for white children. It is not a question of colour, but of hygiene. The native children come with sore eyes and suffering from diseases; I understand

some of them are affected with venereal disease. When a native and his wife inhabit a hut with their four or five kiddies, they all sleep together. I do not consider it right for a white child to be forced into association with native children in that condition. We have a heavy obligation to discharge to the natives of Western Australia, and our first obligation is to make them good citizens. They are increasing in numbers year by year. Until the Government sets up special settlements for the coloured people, the position will remain hopeless, though we keep talking here year after year. It is the Government's duty to finance the solution of the trouble. Sometimes I wonder whether the administration of the department is right. My point is that many men holding high positions in the Government service, Under Secretaries and so forth, are succeeded as a matter of course, upon their retirement, by the officers next in seniority. A man of outstanding ability is required for the task of solving our native problem. Without any disrespect whatever to Mr. Bray, I doubt whether he possesses the requisite knowledge of this important subject. It is a question of picking the man who knows the job. If the fault for the present condition of affairs lies with the department, then clean up the department and secure men who know the job! On the other hand, if the difficulty is one of finance, the Government should supply whatever funds may be needed. As the years pass, the problem will become more acute. It must be solved sooner or later.

I hope some day to have the pleasure of visiting the Carrolup Native Settlement. I may not be inclined to agree with the eulogistic references made about it by the Bishop of Bunbury in a letter which was read by the Minister to the House last year, but I hope that, as a result of my proposed visit, I shall form a favourable opinion of the settlement. While we are dealing with this question in our present haphazard manner we shall make no progress. It is not a Commonwealth matter: it is our duty. We have a responsibility which we must discharge. There are more natives and half-castes in Western Australia than in any of the other States. My friend, the member for Pingelly, will agree with me that in another ten years we shall have a substantial increase in our native population.

Mr. Seward: Double the population!

Mr. MANN: It is a pity the Commonwealth Government decided to pay child endowment to native women. That is one of the greatest mistakes the Commonwealth has made. Some of these native women have eight or nine children, but they do not receive the endowment money. The man gets it and gambles it away. Under such conditions, it would be far better to hand the money over to the State Government, which could, in times of adversity, use it for supplying rations to the natives. I would prefer giving a native a bag of flour to giving him 5s. I know that he would use the flour, but would merely throw away the 5s. in some gambling school. I know of some native gambling schools in which as much as £80 or £90 has changed hands. The only solution to this problem is the establishment of settlements where natives can be controlled from birth. The old nigger will go bush. Even the native child of 13 or 14 years of age goes bush. He may attend school for a fortnight or three weeks and then get tired of it and go to a farming area.

What is the use of educating those boys? It is the greatest farce in the world. Should a schoolmaster give a half-caste boy a caning, the boy will leave the school and wander about the country. It is not compulsory for native children to attend school. As Mr. Moseley recommended in his report, settlements are the solution of the problem. There should be no natives at Quairading and Beverley; they should be on a settlement where they can be trained. They must remain on these settlements for a sufficient period to give them a chance of becoming good citizens. They must not be allowed to go bush before reaching maturity. I sincerely hope the Government will take the matter up seriously and deal promptly with a question so important to the State.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison): It is true that this is a growing problem. I have noticed natives and half-castes wandering about the Murchison where I have never seen them before. They are spreading rapidly. Undoubtedly, much of the trouble we are experiencing in regard to these people has been brought on us by our apathy to their welfare. We are to blame, because we are always inclined to resent their colour. We do not encourage them very much, because they are not white. Generally speaking, that is the attitude we adopt towards

them. I am delighted to be able to say that there are several young coloured women who live in the Belmont district and travel on the same bus as I do. I think they are married, too. They are smartly dressed, well behaved and appear in every way to be most desirable citizens. One in particular is evidently married to a white man. Notwithstanding that no fault can be found with this particular lady, one hears sniggers and giggles by white girls travelling on the bus whose own reputations might successfully be challenged. But what about the poor unfortunate girl, who has probably led a good, clean, honourable and virtuous existence, is married to a white man and living strictly according to our standards, so far as my observations go? Simply because she has a little colour which is not peculiar to us, her presence in the bus when travelling to and from the city is resented. I put it to members whether that is encouragement to such people to try to attain to the standards which we would have them enjoy. Where is the encouragement when we observe behaviour of that sort? I might say it is general.

The only half-castes I know of today who are appreciated are, strange to say, those dressed in khaki. They mingle with their white brothers and are welcome. They are fighting shoulder to shoulder with our white brothers for Australia. That is the spirit which should be displayed in our civil life. I disagree with the member for Beverley when he says that child endowment for natives should be paid to the State. We want those people to feel confidence in themselves and to realise that we desire them, so far as is humanly possible, to enjoy the same laws and privileges as we do.

Mr. Mann: Would you allow them to go into hotels to obtain drink?

Mr. MARSHALL: The matter of over-indulgence in liquor to which the member for Beverley has referred, as well as gambling, is due mainly to environment. We have our own brothers and sisters who over-indulge. None of them that I know of appears very pleasant company when under the influence of liquor. I do not think there is anything more deplorable or pitiable to look at in human form than a woman under the influence of liquor, nor anything more objectionable than a nasty-tempered individual, even though he be white, under the influence of liquor.

Mr. Mann interjected.

Mr. MARSHALL: May I say that I think the member for Beverley is influenced more by general things to which he has not given very much consideration? As my friend sitting behind me knows, there are two half-caste boys of my acquaintance who follow up shearing. I need not mention their names. They mingle with their fellow shearers. They are real good shearers themselves. They are natives under the Act, but are indignant when it is suggested that in their own country they must obtain a permit to enjoy the same privileges as are enjoyed by other people. They say with indignation, "I have to get a permit, to get exemption, yet a native from South Africa or America can come here with only one law to contend with, the one the whites have to contend with." The member for Pilbara knows these two boys. Between them and other men who go shearing there can be no discrimination outside of colour. They do their work well and are clean. They go into town and have a few drinks—sometimes getting the worse for liquor—then go on to the next shed, and there is no trouble with them. That is environment. They have been shearing from their youth. They have been encouraged to go on. No one resents their company because they are well known, but I suggest that if the same two lads were to go into a strange environment away from the Murchison and other places where they are well known, they would probably get the same treatment as the lady I have mentioned, who travels in and out from Belmont.

I agree with the member for Beverley to this extent that, when those with native blood in them come under the influence of liquor, the greater percentage of them behave in a more refractory manner than the white men. But may I point out that that is due to the fact that they have never been given an opportunity to develop a strong constitution when young? Their environment as infants and even before they come on to this planet is such that it is impossible for them to develop the same constitution as white children, even though those white children might be sadly neglected in their youth. So we should be sympathetic towards them. The question whether they should have alcoholic liquor is one we need not discuss now. I understand there is work available for most of these families. It should be an obligation on the authorities who administer the law to deal with these

children as they do with ordinary white boys and girls; that is, to pick them up and take them before the court, and if they cannot prove they are living a righteous life and have visible means of support, make them pay the penalty. That is what should be done for these people.

The Minister for the North-West: So it is. That policy has been in operation.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am pleased to hear it.

The Minister for the North-West: It has been the policy for the past 18 months.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not doubt it. One member opposite mentioned the name of the Commissioner of Native Affairs. I want to tell him that I do not think Mr. Bray, who administers this Act, can be faulted up to date.

The Minister for the North-West: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: He has done one or two things already that in my humble opinion have a wonderful effect upon both the half-castes and the full-bloods. For instance, these native boys are now getting employment under Arbitration Court awards or industrial agreements. It is not necessary for them to obtain a permit to work. They get a job and live at the same standard as the whites, with no law to hinder or hamper them. Credit is due to Mr. Bray and the Minister for having brought about that condition of affairs. Such boys can see that we are trying to lift them and educate them up to our standards, and are not constantly coercing them with separate laws just as though they were myalls or what we know as wild or bush blacks. Where it can be seen that people are desirous of lifting themselves, they should be given an opportunity to do so. Why do we allow these people to congregate in camps? They speak fluent English and are able to work. Work is available for them at reasonably good wages. Why do not the authorities say, "You shall live at a higher standard. You are not going to live at this present standard?" Why not try to force them up instead of down? We are all too pleased to travel through the country and say, "Yes, there is a niggers' camp," and leave it at that. We like to know they are in a camp, or at any rate we are satisfied that they are there. They should not be allowed to be there.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Why force them to do what you want them to do? Why not educate them?

Mr. MARSHALL: Why am I forced to do things? I am not allowed to live below a certain standard.

The Minister for the North-West: You are not allowed to go into a hotel after 6 o'clock.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am restricted in many ways and am forced to do things against my will almost every day.

Mr. Fox: Every law is a tyranny.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. I point out to the member for Subiaco that up to date the force to which she refers has been exercised in the direction of keeping these people down. I am endeavouring to force them to realise that they can live at a higher standard, and that we wish them to do so rather than permit them to believe and to become obsessed with the idea that the native standard is all we desire for them. I do not know whether this motion is consistent in its wording. The mover wants to improve the natives and make them useful citizens of society. To that extent I am in agreement with him, but if we are going to lift a section of the community socially I am doubtful whether we can succeed in our effort by discriminating between it and other sections of the community. One of the worst features in our social life is class distinction. I remember that some years ago the then Premier of this State desired to charge fees for admission to the University of Western Australia. The late Tommy Walker eloquently attacked the proposition, and pointed out that although the fees were optional they would bring about a state of class distinction within the University. One child would say to another, "My people are paying for me. You are coming here free." That is precisely what we are doing in this connection. It is proposed to segregate these children. They will not be allowed to mingle with the whites. They will be forced to realise their inferiority, so to speak, all the time. They will be forced to say, "This is our school: that other school is for the white children." I do not know how America succeeded in overcoming her difficulties in connection with this problem.

Mr. Mann: America has not overcome them.

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot argue that point. I have given no study to the American problem; but we have this advantage, that our aboriginal blood breeds completely out. That is a big advantage and we should make use of it.

Mr. Patrick: In America they have their own schools and universities.

Mr. MARSHALL: That may be so. The possibilities of improving the standard of these people are very apparent while the war is on, and the new order will perpetuate them. I can assume, as other speakers have recently, that this new order will be something wonderful. We now have the opportunity to enforce the same laws against these people as apply to us. They must be made to live up to a higher standard. When they send their children to school they must be forced to see that they are clean and tidy like mine. Until we do that and make them understand that they can be our equal, and give them some degree of confidence and self-reliance we are not carrying out our responsibilities. We must teach them that they can be our brothers just as are the aborigines who are fighting with our own sons on the battlefields of foreign lands. They are fighting shoulder to shoulder and are comrades in the way that these people could be, but that attitude is not being helped by the present administration of the Department of Native Affairs. All the time we cling to the colour line and class distinction and these people realise it. I am acquainted with a family known as the Harris brothers at Morawa and they can write a letter marshalling their subjects better—and this is not flattering them—than I could. It would astound members to read the letters they write.

Mr. Patrick: They are good bush lawyers.

Mr. MARSHALL: One of the persons I admire is the man who will fight to improve the standards of his fellow-men. That is why we are at war with Italy. We want to retain the institutions we have enjoyed, and we want better standards.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: They think theirs are better than ours.

Mr. MARSHALL: We are entitled to think for ourselves.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And so are they.

Mr. MARSHALL: We still have that right so long as we do not speak too loudly. In these days every phase of human activity is regimented. We even have to be mighty careful, in this land of freedom, what we say, although we hear much about liberty, justice and freedom. We are too prone to force upon these people the idea that we are much superior to them and that they can never attain our standards. I disagree with that idea. Today their standards are being improved by virtue of the fact that an income is available for each child and plenty of work for the men folk. Because of that they should be invited to live on a higher plane. We should get away from the slum standard. The lower standard has been the guide to social prosperity! There was a time when we tried to raise the standard, but during the last 25 years all political organisations that I know of have tried to level it down. They look down and see where the lowest is and say, "Well old fellow you are a little bit too far up; you can go down!" That is contrary to what we were taught when we started in the Labour Movement years ago. But we now find that attitude adopted everywhere, and it is what we are doing to these natives; we are keeping them down and those who aspire to rise we push back again.

This motion, even if carried, means nothing. Now that the Commonwealth Government has been generous enough to assume the responsibility for the welfare of the native race of Australia there may be some opportunity and money to do things for them. This is a difficult problem because the natives are migratory in their habits. I would not like to interfere with their liberty so long as they will work and live at a reasonable standard. Even so there is some necessity for a housing policy for those natives who are more or less settled in some districts, so that they can have better accommodation and live under more hygienic conditions. The law should then apply to them just the same as it does to us. They should be compelled to keep themselves and their homes clean, and do all those things which other individuals have to do. They would then be inspired to rise to the standards which we say they ought one day to enjoy.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

MOTION—NORTH FREMANTLE PROPERTIES AND WHEAT STORAGE.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle)
[3.8]: I move—

That a Select Committee of this House be appointed to inquire into and report upon:—

- (1) The effect on the living conditions of the inhabitants and the extent of the deterioration of property in North Fremantle consequent upon the construction of wheat bins and the operations of the Australian Wheat Board on land in proximity thereto.
- (2) What action should be taken to deal with the situation which has arisen, with justice and equity to the persons concerned.
- (3) The powers of the Australian Wheat Board to take any remedial action.
- (4) The circumstances under which the Australian Wheat Board was able to have the structure known as "the Wheat Hospital" erected on Crown lands at North Fremantle, and in particular—

(a) into the terms and conditions of the lease made between the State Government and the Commonwealth Department of the Interior in connection with Crown land upon which a wheat hospital has been erected at North Fremantle;

(b) whether a fair rental is being received for this area and whether it is consistent with the value of such land;

(c) whether the State Government or its departments permitted or encouraged the erection at this time of a structure of this character which the Minister for Lands recently stated was "most undesirable and wholly inappropriate in this situation during war-time";

(d) whether the Western Australian representatives on the Australian Wheat Board supported the proposal to erect what is considered to be an unnecessary structure; and

(e) whether the Australian Wheat Board had the full authority and sanction of the appropriate Commonwealth Ministers to proceed with this undertaking.

This motion really deals with two separate and distinct subjects, although they concern one organisation. Since early in 1941 I have been complaining outside and inside this House about certain conditions obtaining in portion of North Fremantle as the result of the operations of the Australian Wheat Board. Unfortunately little or no progress has been made by me and others interested towards effecting a remedy of the very

serious state of affairs which has arisen as a direct result of the operations of the board. About 36 houses have been badly affected by the wheat bins which have been installed on the ocean front on part of North Fremantle in proximity to Bayley-street. For years because of the vermin that made their presence felt, and because of the dust nuisance, that area has gradually deteriorated until it is now neither more nor less than a slum. It is extraordinary that individuals should be subject to such treatment without some form of redress. Surely we cannot argue that because of the war emergency a section of the people should be so subjected without some recompense. Reports have appeared in "The Daily News" and in "The West Australian" respecting the conditions that obtain in the locality. The attention of the Prime Minister has been drawn to the matter, and he has made a personal inspection of the area. Members of the Australian Wheat Board have inspected the bins and the houses to see for themselves the conditions that obtain. All this has been without any tangible result.

Some people have been driven from their houses because conditions became unlivable. Those houses are now empty and the people have had to leave premises they had occupied for years. They have had to go elsewhere and pay rent. That is the present position. Some of the houses were not owned by the occupants, and the landlords have successively reduced rents in order to attract certain classes of people. The stage has now been reached where some of the houses can be secured almost rent free and others for the payment of a very small rental. The effect is that we now have in the district half-castes and, in some instances, undesirable persons, because of the fact that the area has deteriorated until now it is practically a slum district. That is neither right nor reasonable. Surely it should be someone's responsibility to check deterioration or to take such steps as are possible to recompense people who have suffered such losses. A suggestion was made to the Australian Wheat Board that it might acquire the land and houses and that the people concerned should be permitted to make use of the money to purchase houses elsewhere. The board has refrained from taking any such action, and the answer given to the request I mention is that the board has not the necessary power.

That is where the matter stands today. The North Fremantle Municipal Council has interested itself in the question over the years and it has been the subject of correspondence between the council, the Australian Wheat Board, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Commerce, but always with the one result—nothing. That is why I feel it incumbent upon me to bring the question before the House with a view to securing an investigation to ascertain really what happened and whether any remedy can be found for the present situation. Apart from the intolerable conditions that have grown up, the people concerned, through no fault of their own, have been deprived of their homes and the amenities they provided for themselves. The part of North Fremantle affected was quite a nice little section on the sea-front. It had beautiful views of the ocean and the residents had the benefit of the clean sea air to breathe. First one and then another of the bins were erected almost in the backyards of the houses, completely shutting off the sea view and the fresh air.

Mr. Boyle: What was the cost of the bins?

Mr. TONKIN: I am unable to say, but I imagine the cost would be large.

The Premier: There was an expenditure of between £70,000 and £80,000.

Mr. TONKIN: A tremendous quantity of corrugated iron was used in the construction of the bins, and the cost must have been very considerable. What makes the matter worse is that I understand these bins are not being utilised to the same extent as formerly, as it is now proposed to store the wheat at Bassendean. Now we have the spectacle of these tremendous bins having been erected there blocking out the sea view, cutting off the sea breezes and causing so much nuisance. In case members have forgotten the circumstances I related previously concerning this matter, I shall briefly run over the particulars. Two types of moths quickly made their appearance in the district as the result of the storage of grain in the bins. The first was a grain moth, the name of which is, I understand, angoumois. The other was the ephestia moth, which is the dried-fruit moth. The two types seem to breed in abundance, and there were literally thousands of them to be seen throughout the streets and in the homes of the people in the vicinity.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And in Perth too.

Mr. TONKIN: I saw them in clouds inside the houses, and I was told at the time

by residents that it was impossible for them to have soup on the table because the moment the plates were put down the soup would be piled up with the moths. I can well understand that it would be so. In addition to the trouble with the moths, there was the dust nuisance. It made its presence felt at all hours of the day. It covered the walls, windows and furniture inside the houses. Women told me that even though they dusted their premises every half hour, the furniture would quickly have the appearance of not having been touched at all. Members can visit the locality today and see the condition of the rooms and verandahs. It is absolutely impossible to keep them clean. So close to the houses did the Australian Wheat Board bring its activities, that not only did dust fall into the houses, but whole grain as well. In No. 5 Bailey street it would be possible to scrape up three bags full of wheat because at that point an elevator overhung the back fence! Surely people should not be expected to put up with such conditions. What would we say if we suddenly found bins erected near to our houses and we were asked to put up with similar conditions? My powers of imagination are hardly sufficient to enable me to think what would be said if such a proposition were put forward in Mt. Lawley.

Mr. Needham: Or in Nedlands.

Mr. J. Hegney: Or in South Perth.

Mr. TONKIN: Would the people of those districts allow such a nuisance to continue and to affect the values of their properties without putting up a tremendous protest? Of course they would not. At North Fremantle it has happened because the people concerned were very poor. All they had were their little homes which they had struggled for years to acquire, and then they were forced out of them because of intolerable conditions.

Mr. Thorn: I thought you said those places were rented.

Mr. TONKIN: Not all! A number were occupied by the owners. We can go down the scale until we get to habitations such as those which were on the beach at North Fremantle in which people were living during the depression, where conditions were highly undesirable and such as have influenced the council to take steps to have them removed. That will be the position at North Fremantle. Before long these houses will be in such a condition that the council will issue demoli-

tion orders against the owners and the places will be pulled down without recompense to the owners. Is it fair that these unfortunate people should be called upon to bear the whole of the cost, simply because an organisation decides that this is the place for the establishment of wheat bins and erects them there, despite what happens to the people living in the district? This is not an isolated case. I understand that 36 houses are affected of a value of about £12,000. That amount of money would be a mere bagatelle to the Australian Wheat Board. Probably it would not represent the cost of postage on the board's correspondence for the period it has been in operation but, to the individuals who own the houses and who have little else, it means much. I hope that as a result of an inquiry it might be possible to obtain equity and justice for these unfortunate people.

The other matter about which I am concerned is the erection of a wheat hospital on an area which is not far distant from the section about which I have been speaking. Members know that there is an area of Crown land close to the North Wharf, and that this land is not far distant from the nest of oil tanks that provides storage for a great proportion of the motor spirit used in this country. These oil storage tanks have been camouflaged and bricked up in order to prevent possible damage and loss. I understand that some little time ago the military authorities issued instructions to the owners of certain high structures at Fremantle to have them removed because they would possibly form ranging targets for an enemy. I think the smelters chimney was one such structure that had to be pulled down. Therefore it was with amazement that I saw this tremendous structure being erected in this vulnerable area. The building of it has been proceeding for months, and it is still going up. How high it is I am unable to say, but it is quite easily the highest building in Fremantle. It is the only feature of Fremantle visible from Rockingham. If there was any point at all in the military authorities' previously ordering the demolition of the smelters chimney, either they must know nothing about the erection of the wheat hospital or they have changed their policy. It may be said that ships could not get close enough to Fremantle to use this mark as a ranging target. What about aircraft? The oil tanks have been camouflaged

in order to increase the difficulty of detecting them, but all the enemy would need to know is that the oil tanks are adjacent to this tremendous structure and would only have to drop their bombs on to this structure and could not miss the tanks. Seemingly the Australian Wheat Board, not content with driving out a section of my constituents through the nuisances caused by the wheat bins, has made a certainty of the destruction of the remainder by erecting a ranging target in their midst.

When I saw this work in progress, I began to wonder what was wrong with the Minister for Lands in granting permission for the erection of the structure on this land. I wrote to him and told him what I thought of it. I said I could not understand him, as Minister, making facilities available without which it would have been impossible for the Australian Wheat Board to proceed. To my astonishment I received a reply as follows:—

24th December, 1942.

Your letter of yesterday's date re wheat hospital and area of Crown land at North Fremantle is to hand.

I share your concern regarding the conspicuous nature of the wheat hospital and its vulnerable location in one of our most vital areas.

You are quite in error, however, in your view that I, as Minister for Lands—or, so far as I know, any member of the Government—"gave the Australian Wheat Board the facilities without which they could not have proceeded."

The Government communicated with the Prime Minister in February last and raised objections to the transfer of the area, which had been requested, and also strongly urged that, in our view, a structure of this character was most undesirable and wholly inappropriate in this situation during war time.

In spite of our objections, the structure has been erected.

I was astonished to find that I had been blaming the wrong party.

Mr. Thorn: That is the sort of treatment we always get from the Commonwealth.

Mr. TONKIN: I could not see how the Australian Wheat Board could proceed with the erection of this structure on land belonging to us without the Minister's agreeing. I had been previously told, also, that there was very little wrong with our wheat. The member for Guildford-Midland had made a special point of informing me that there was very little wrong with the wheat at North Fremantle, and that less than 1 per cent. of it was lost upon sale. Thus there

was not all this deterioration of our wheat, less than 1 per cent. of it being faulty. Therefore I wanted to know the justification for erecting a wheat hospital to deal with wheat that was in such excellent condition as the hon. member had led me to believe. Then when I heard rumours that the wheat hospital had been erected against the advice of the Western Australian representatives on the Australian Wheat Board, I began to ask myself, "What is behind the erection of this structure?" Members know that there has been and still is a tremendous shortage of building tradesmen in this State—carpenters, bricklayers and the like. There is also a shortage of building material. It would seem there is ample justification for inquiry, in view of the suggestions that this big hospital was unnecessary, and that it was folly to utilise enormous quantities of building material and short labour on this project at a time when such material and labour should have been utilised elsewhere. They are still working on it. The structure is of such nature and design that I doubt whether it is being erected as a wheat hospital. I think there is something behind it, and that is why I seek a Select Committee to ascertain what was the reason for the erection of this structure in that position.

I am not too certain that the appropriate Commonwealth Ministers authorised the commencement of the work when it was begun. So this board, which says that it has not the power to acquire a parcel of land in North Fremantle, appears to possess tremendous power in other directions; and I would like to know exactly how far the members of the board can go and what business they are up to. That is the reason why at this stage of the session I ask members to bear with me and grant me a Select Committee. I understand that normally, when a matter of this nature is brought down, an adjournment of the debate is sought and time is allowed in which to study the question, so that it may be dealt with at a subsequent sitting. But I ask members to deal with this matter today, in order that the Select Committee may be appointed to make an inquiry. I submit that there is sufficient in it to warrant inquiry, having regard to what has transpired. In the best interests of this State, an inquiry should be held, and held quickly, so that we may ascertain what has gone on, and what in the future may transpire. Without unduly prolonging the debate on the motion,

I therefore do ask members to appreciate the situation and to help me as far as possible. I move the motion standing in my name.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I have been greatly interested in the case presented by the member for North-East Fremantle. It is quite true that the hon. member wrote to me some time ago inquiring as to the arrangement that had been made, and expressing surprise that I had granted the facilities and made it possible for such a structure as the wheat hospital to be erected in that position at this time. That is the part of the motion with which I am most concerned. The other part of the motion goes back to the original complaint of the hon. member, and is one that involves the whole of the terminal proposals for the handling of wheat at the Port of Fremantle. Members know that within the Fremantle Harbour Trust area there is a spot selected—and relevant plans have been prepared—for the ultimate erection of a structure to serve as a terminal for bulk wheat handling at Fremantle. The site is much nearer the mouth of the river, and nearer the entrance to the harbour, than is that of the structure now towering to the sky.

Mr. Boyle: And the cost was to be £150,000.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

It is a very big project for a big plant, intended to serve as a storage place for one-half, or more than one half, of one harvest. In the meantime permission has been given from year to year, firstly to the board to lease an area, some of which is on our railway lands and some of which encroaches on the Fremantle Harbour Trust property, and some on land controlled by the Public Works Department as lands of the Lands Department subject to lease. Several sites have been granted on it to permit of the gigantic bulk-heads which have encroached to some extent towards the residential parts of North-East Fremantle. All of the arrangements made in that connection have been the subject of negotiation between Bulk Handling Ltd., the Public Works Department, and the Lands Department, as the case might be, according to the situations of the various portions of land. But subsequently a proposal was put up that a structure to be known as a wheat hospital, for the treatment of wheat prior to shipment, should be

erected on an area which the Australian Wheat Board requested this Government to sell to it, so that facilities would be available for the immediate erection of the building. The Government refused to sell any land, and resisted all approaches to sell, even though it was suggested that the Australian Wheat Board would acquire the land if we did not grant it. What happened officially, in brief, was this. The Government resisted the proposal to purchase. It raised no objection to the leasing of an area upon which this structure might be erected at some future time, but considerable argument has ensued as to the rental to be charged.

Mr. Doney: Why do you say "at some future time?" Do you mean that you were not in favour of the erection of the structure at this time but might favour the work at some future time?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The mover was advised in answer to a letter addressed by him to me that the Government notified the Prime Minister early last year that it considered the time and situation wholly inappropriate for a structure of this nature in that position. Not merely does it constitute a structure erected in the middle of camouflaged oil tanks, but it is in direct line with the whole of the harbour. It is actually in the heart of the harbour, and in the heart of what ultimately will be harbour works. The Government objected to the Prime Minister to those proposals, and was notified by Bulk Handling Ltd. that that company also regarded the present time as inappropriate for the work. The Australian Wheat Board—on which there are two Western Australian members—nevertheless decided that a contract should be let, and at the time of our complaints to the Federal Minister the Australian Wheat Board was proceeding with the structure.

Hon. N. Keenan: Who gave the board authority to enter the land?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know. It was Government land. The whole of the official documents will show that the Government, while not wishing to place an obstruction in the way of the Australian Wheat Board to accommodate its wheat, was strongly opposed to a structure of this nature being proceeded with at that time. In spite of that the Australian Wheat Board, acting I presume under the National Security orders, proceeded with the structure. I understand, though I am not sure,

that Bulk Handling Ltd. had something to do with the financing of the structure. Now that the structure is erected we are told that although it is not needed as a wheat hospital it is suitable as part of a terminal that will ultimately be erected in the harbour.

Mr. Doney: That is interesting. Can you say, from your present knowledge of the matter, that the structure is suited to the purposes of a wheat hospital?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, it was supposed to be designed and erected for that purpose.

Mr. Patrick: What is a wheat hospital?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A wheat plant through which wheat that has been stored may be treated prior to shipment! There is much of this business that I know little about; but, as the Premier and all members of Cabinet know, I have had the matter before Cabinet on more than one occasion, and more recently in connection with the adjustment of the rent to be charged. The official papers are all there. If the member for North-East Fremantle had moved for the papers to be tabled, I would have raised no objection. Because of the case that he has submitted, because of the implications and because of many aspects which I think require examination, so far as I am concerned—and I think I speak for the Premier and the Government—I raise no objection to the appointment of a Select Committee.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin): The remarks of the Minister for Agriculture have certainly disclosed a rather pretty and interesting little problem. It appears there can be no two opinions about the fact that the Western Australian Cabinet and Western Australian interests have certainly been flouted, and so I think there should be an inquiry. In my opinion, the member for North-East Fremantle is fully justified in seeking to probe the problem which he has explained by the wording of his motion. He wants a Select Committee. Very good! He certainly will get my vote towards that end. I say that the people—not only the people at Fremantle, but the whole taxpaying public of this State—are entitled to know not only why the costly structures now in course of erection at North-East Fremantle—in a most inappropriate situation—are being erected, but why it should be necessary to erect them anywhere at all. I believe they are entirely unnecessary and

that ultimately they are designed to serve a purpose which, for the moment, is not being made public. The publication of the details of this little plot—it appears to me to be a plot of some kind, because certainly we in this State who are entitled to know the actual reasons for the erection of the buildings yet do not know—would do much good.

The Minister for Agriculture has made it plain that neither he nor any other member of the Cabinet gave consent. Therefore, on the face of it, it would appear that the buildings should not be proceeded with unless their consent were given. But obviously consent has been secured from someone. The Minister indicated that he believed it came from the Commonwealth by virtue of the powers conferred upon the Commonwealth Government by the National Security Regulations; but even so there must have been some pressure, I imagine, put upon Ministers on the other side for the matter to have got as far as it has. I am inclined to think, although I have no special advice on the matter, that there has been over the years influence brought to bear by the bagged wheat interests. I believe they have had something to do with this matter. I should imagine—again without knowing anything specifically about it—that the bagged wheat interests on the other side, that is to say, the Dreyfus-Bunge group and bag merchants associated with it, probably approached the Army authorities and secured consent from them. They, of course, in matters of this kind, and in all matters in these days, are a law unto themselves. Again I say, without knowing whether my assumption is correct, I think it not at all unlikely that that is the group behind the affair at Fremantle.

I take it, too, that there is all the greater likelihood that the Army authorities have had something to do with this, because they are bound to have known that the structures are being erected in a situation most inappropriate from their point of view. With their powers it would be competent for them to stop the building at any stage of its construction, and the fact that they have not interfered is added evidence, I think—although of course not conclusive evidence. I admit—of the fact that they had previously given their consent to this move. It would be interesting to know whether Messrs. Teasdale and Diver, who at one time were mem-

bers of the Australian Wheat Board and who for no sufficient reason were thrown off it—and certainly no-one in this State or possibly in Australia is better qualified to give an opinion as to the need for those buildings at Fremantle and the usefulness of a wheat hospital—it would be interesting to know, I repeat, whether they favoured this project.

Mr. Seward: The Minister said it was done against their advice.

Mr. DONEY: I did not hear the Minister say so. It is certainly a statement that I am inclined to credit, knowing what little I do about this matter. If the wheat merchants of the Eastern States and the bag merchants allied with them, who, by the way, always seek to discredit bulk-handling, are behind this project, as I imagine they are, then the bulk-handling interests in this State will certainly be found in the opposite camp. Those are merely a few reasons which, after I listened to the two speeches which have been made, incline me strongly to support the move of the member for North-East Fremantle to secure the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the position.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle): I support the motion. I have every sympathy for the people at North Fremantle who have been driven out of their homes by the dust, the weevils and the moths that have been introduced there as the result of the erection of the silos. The dust is harmful not only to the men, but also to the women and children. I do not know whether this is news to the farming community, but we had the dust analysed at one time and the analysis disclosed a fair quantity of silica in it. Silica is the dust that works so much havoc among the miners on the goldfields. At the time we had the analysis made, we were trying to get extra payment for the men handling the wheat; but it was considered that the quantity of silica in the dust was insufficient to do any considerable harm. At the same time, the fact remains that there is silica in the dust, that the dust is breathed by women and children all day and that this must have injurious effects upon their health. I know quite a number of men working on the waterfront who have erected homes at North Fremantle with a view to saving tram fares. They have made these homes their own and lived in them until it was impossible for them to do so any longer. I do not know whether this matter is too insig-

nificant for the Commonwealth Government to deal with. That Government has large problems to handle at present, and possibly an amount of £12,000 is too insignificant to claim its attention. But the matter is of vital importance to the workmen concerned, who, after a long period of time, have been able to secure homes of their own. At the time we made the claim for extra payment to which I have referred, the wheat came to the port in bags and everything was in good order. There was no dust at all.

With the advent of bulk-handling it is a different thing altogether. I draw attention to the fact that some time ago a Bill was introduced into this House—and I think Bulk Handling Ltd. had something to do with it—for the building of a silo on the waterfront on Harbour Trust property. That Bill was opposed by members opposite and also by members representing the Fremantle district, particularly on the ground that we did not want another authority operating on the waterfront. We considered that the Harbour Trust was quite capable of doing all the work on the waterfront as far as wheat handling was concerned. It seems incredible that the military authorities should allow a high structure like that to be erected at present. That was started at a time when a Japanese invasion of Western Australia was imminent, and I do not know of any better landmark that could be erected to be a guide to a hostile force invading Western Australia than a big edifice like that, right up against the harbour, against the oil tanks and against something that we could ill afford to lose—the shipping in the Fremantle harbour, where 70 or 80 ships are to be found at a time. I cannot understand the military authorities giving permission for the erection of that shelter. For those reasons and in order to find out why permission was given to the Australian Wheat Board to build that edifice, I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. BOYLE (Avon): I support the motion. I had in mind the arguments used by the member for South Fremantle, and I remember when the Terminal Elevators Bill came down as a Government measure. It was opposed by many members of this House on varying grounds. I recall that the Fremantle members opposed it mainly on the ground of its interference with the Har-

bour Trust, a constituted authority in charge of Fremantle Harbour operations. The Bill sought to establish an over-riding authority at Fremantle. Members on this side of the House opposed the measure mainly because the Government proposed to spend £350,000 on terminal elevators at Fremantle and put the whole cost on the wheat-growers of the State by way of charges on the wheat, which is exactly what is being done now by the Australian Wheat Board. That board has over-ridden the State authority, as was mentioned by the Minister. The member for North-East Fremantle said that it over-rode the Western Australian representatives on the Australian Wheat Board and there has been established—even if the cost is only £12,000—in this so-called wheat hospital a permanent centre which may mean the upsetting of all the considered State plans for the future loading of wheat on the North Wharf.

These jobs have a habit of upsetting the pre-arranged scheme of things. This scheme goes to show the lack of co-ordination between the Commonwealth and State authorities. If an inquiry will adduce evidence to show the worst feature of that over-riding authority alone, it will do good; but I foresee difficulties. Select Committees have no power to compel attendance from authorities outside the State, and the hon. member will strike the trouble we have struck in one or two select Committees in connection with which local firms have refused to give information because their head offices were located outside the State. I do not know whether the Australian Wheat Board will shelter behind anything of that sort, but members on these benches know that every last penny piece will come out of the wheat proceeds for any of these works. If the Select Committee does nothing else than prove facts of that sort and the over-riding of the State authority, it will have my approbation and any assistance I can give it.

Question put and passed.

Select Committee Appointed.

Ballot taken and a Select Committee appointed consisting of Messrs. Doney, Fox, Patrick, Triat and the mover, with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to move from place to place; to report on the 24th February.

MOTION—POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 18th November on the following motion by Mr. Watts:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into, and submit proposals for, post-war reconstruction in Western Australia, with particular reference to ways and means of securing a greater measure of equality of opportunity, and the best possible standard of living for all the people, with continuity of employment, and the necessary increase in the State's population, and as means of attaining those objectives to consider—

- (a) the possibilities of land settlement as a means of repatriation;
 - (b) the reshaping of agricultural policy so as to offer prospects of success to those engaged in rural industry;
 - (c) the fostering of secondary industries so as to make the best use of the State's raw materials, and provide employment;
 - (d) the desirability of appointing a Minister for Reconstruction;
 - (e) any other proposals considered helpful.
- to which an amendment had been moved by Mr. Berry as follows—

That all the words after "into" in line 2 be struck out and the following words: "the desirability of appointing a Minister for post-war reconstruction and all problems pertaining thereto" inserted in lieu.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly—on amendment) [4.4]: This seems to be going back into ancient history, as it is so long since the motion was before the House. However, members have heard it read, and to the motion the member for Irwin-Moore, when speaking to it some time about the middle of November, moved an amendment to strike out all the words after "into" in the second line and to insert other words. Under his proposal, the motion would then read—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the desirability of appointing a Minister for post-war reconstruction and all problems pertaining thereto.

When the hon. member moved that amendment, he gave as his reason the fact that the House would, in the ordinary course of events, be adjourned at the end of the session, which would occur within a week or so of when he spoke, and consequently there would be no time for a Select Committee to go into the many and important matters included in the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. There are no grounds for these fears, because it is

well known that if a Select Committee is not able to complete its duties at the time of the adjournment of the House, it can be converted into an honorary Royal Commission and continue to carry out its duties while the House is in recess. His ground for moving his amendment, therefore, entirely disappears. He stated that, in his opinion, the desirability of the motion was not in question. He added, however, that in view of the many aspects and important matters to be included in it, there was not sufficient time and he then proceeded to move to amend the motion.

I cannot see any useful object to be achieved by appointing a Select Committee to inquire into the question of appointing a Minister for post-war reconstruction. If there is to be a Select Committee for post-war reconstruction, it would be better for that committee to deal with the question and make the information available, for instance, to the Minister for Lands in his position as chairman of the Rural Commission. Such a committee would be a valuable adjunct to him; but to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the desirability of appointing a Minister for post-war reconstruction would only be wasting the time of the committee. It is the duty of the Government to determine whether such a Minister should be appointed. Of course, I am not allowed to debate the merits of the motion; otherwise I might give some reasons for its desirability. The hon. member probably moved his amendment hastily and perhaps had not really grasped its significance.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (on amendment): The amendment moved by the member for Irwin-Moore does not, in my opinion, make sense. As has been pointed out by the member for Pingelly, if this amendment is agreed to it will mean that this House is asked to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the desirability of appointing a Minister to deal specifically with post-war reconstruction. There is no need for a Select Committee either to consider the matter or make a decision upon it. As most members are aware, for some time past the Government has had committees that were appointed departmentally, considering many phases of post-war reconstruction. For example, there is the committee appointed to deal with the housing problem in the light of possible post-war needs.

The Premier: And the public is represented on that and other committees.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, that is so. There is the committee on public works, while there are other committees dealing with land and agriculture. Another committee is considering education matters and the development particularly of technical education. To these latter committees representatives of the public have been appointed. In the circumstances it is quite unnecessary to suggest the consideration of whether a special Minister should be appointed, or that a Select Committee should be set up to inquire into such a proposition. As a matter of fact, I am sure that in his many statements dealing with post-war matters, the Premier has mentioned that upon the Minister for Industrial Development had been placed the responsibility of co-ordinating the work of the committees inquiring into post-war problems. Thus the work upon which all these various committees are engaged will, under one Ministerial control, not be allowed to overlap, but their efforts will be interwoven. There is no sense whatever in the amendment, and, with the member for Pingelly, I oppose it.

Amendment put and negatived.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The subject dealt with in the motion is one that could be discussed at great length and from many angles. In these days in the midst of the turmoil of war we find in common use the words "rehabilitation" and "reconstruction." It seems to me that the use of those words, as applied in a general sense, is inappropriate. In a strict sense the meaning of the word "reconstruction" is to construct again, or to remodel something that has been destroyed or something that needs reconstruction in part or as a whole.

Mr. Patrick: That could be applied to Europe all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To apply it in the circumstances that obtain in Australia to our primary, secondary and tertiary industries, is not at all appropriate. In addition to what is generally referred to as "reconstruction," there will need to be much fresh construction, much initiation of industry and much re-establishment of persons in industries. That applies not merely to the primary industries but to our secondary industries as well. Surely it is not seriously held that industries that have suffered in

consequence of the war are only those to which reconstruction considerations shall apply. Of course that is not so. The word, as used in an Australian sense, means the re-establishment and advancement of industry generally. The terms of the motion suggest that in respect of any inquiry to be made by a committee to be appointed to deal with post-war reconstruction in Western Australia, particular attention should be given to certain specific aspects. The first refers to the possibilities of land settlement as a means of repatriation.

Members are aware of the experience during the post-war period following the 1914-18 conflict respecting the endeavours made to promote, by the repatriation of soldiers, new settlements in different parts of Australia. They know of the very sad experiences of numbers of those people. They are aware of the sad experiences of all States involved in soldier settlement schemes. Not many years ago Mr. Justice Pike was asked to report on soldier settlement and he made a very close examination of the problem on an Australia-wide basis. It is interesting to note that of the 250,000 returned soldiers from the 1914-18 war, 37,000 were placed on the land by various land settlement authorities. Some of those settlers after occupying properties for some time left their holdings considerably involved in debt. In some States the loss per head of the remaining settlers approached £2,000, and in some instances it was found that the cost per settler was about £4,000.

Mr. Boyle: Per soldier?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, Unfortunately, very few of the soldier settlers had to disclose any qualification or experience in land matters apart from the fact that they were returned soldiers. Mr. Justice Pike made some very pertinent comments on that point as a guide respecting future settlements that might possibly be contemplated.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I pointed all that out at the time in opposing the scheme.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: On examination of the subject it will be found that in every State land was acquired for subdivision for sale to returned soldiers. On an Australia-wide basis 81 per cent. of the total land utilised for soldier settlement purposes consisted of Crown lands and the other 19 per cent.

proved to be very costly propositions. In Western Australia, although the loss per head was much less than in most of the other States—as a matter of fact, the cost was one-third of what it was in some parts—considerable expenditure was incurred on land settlement, even on repurchased estates. Therefore the first point in the motion which visualises the possibility of land settlement as a means of repatriation requires not merely the examination of any suggested project in this State, but an intensive examination of such schemes as applying to every other State. It would be very interesting to know, regarding all the States, not merely the original number of settlers established on farms but also the types of farms upon which they were established and just where the weaknesses occurred, whether in any particular industry or branch of industry in rural life, or whether in the main the failures were due to unsuitable land or to an overburden of debt. Mr. Justice Pike, in his report, made a very strong point of the fact that few of these men had any equity in the property at the commencement of their occupation, but even had a debt in excess of the value of the land and the improvements combined. The excess debt was represented by machinery and other things not permanent improvements, and also sustenance payments to them in the initial stages.

So those men commenced their operations on lands that were of inflated value, that were purchased in excess of the value immediately prior to these activities of the Government, and, after subdivision, were sold very often to the soldiers at a price in excess of the purchase price. Under that scheme it could hardly be otherwise, but I raise these points simply as an illustration of the very big task that confronts anyone propounding a scheme for the repatriation of soldiers after the present war on a basis that must be much more sound than the last scheme. It will be essential, therefore, in the case of soldier settlement, to scrutinise in great detail very many aspects of industry in every State of the Commonwealth. Historically, much valuable information will be gleaned from departmental sources in every State to show upon which kind of land in which kind of industry these settlers still remain.

What was the position regarding advances? At what stage did they begin to

show promise? It is estimated that soldier settlement alone as a basis of land settlement in Australia after the 1914-18 war cost over £23,000,000. This is the figure that was produced in 1930 by Mr. Justice Pike. In Western Australia I believe that the total number of settlers remaining was approximately 2,000 and the debt about £9,000,000. So it is a matter requiring the closest scrutiny on an Australia-wide basis. In one State particular favour was shown to the dried fruits industry. Of all the irrigation settlements in Australia, that is one of the few showing any signs of success. There are many irrigation projects in Australia, but the soldier settlement in the dried fruit industry has been one of the most hopeful. In any future scheme for the repatriation of soldiers for the purposes of reconstruction, evidence must be carefully collected as to the prospect of the particular industry in which these people are to be placed.

But there is more than that involved. Since it has been publicly announced that the greatest responsibility I have ever accepted has been given to me—that is, to be chairman of a Royal Commission to inquire into Australia's post-war rural activity, reconstruction and future development—I have had many suggestions. Some of them have been peculiar suggestions, some of them very good. I may be pardoned for illustrating how peculiar some of them have been. The following is an extract from a letter that came to me from the Bruce Rock district:—

Will you consider human feeling in your post-war reconstruction of farming plans? Here is a suggestion which you might treat as one to help the greedy farmer get a little more. Get a mob of lads (any breed) and castrate them. That should give your farmers a docile mob, ease the burden of the farmer's wife, and allow her to have her own home. Castrated men are what farmers need, some that just eat, work and perhaps sleep.

That is one peculiar type of letter; there have been many peculiar suggestions. Goodness knows how one could classify the mind, the desperate conditions or the peculiar circumstances of the writer of the letter I have quoted! There are so many aspects of the problem that I should like to outline the wide basis on which the question of rural reconstruction, in my view, should be examined, bearing in mind that the Commonwealth Treasurer, Mr. Chifley, has been appointed Minister for Reconstruction generally. He is appointing commissions to deal

not merely with rural problems but also with questions of housing, public works and other matters. Without prejudice to the generality applying to the rural problem, I will recite some of the things that the Rural Commission may be charged to investigate. We may have to investigate and report upon the following:—

(a) Conservation and development of natural resources including public works such as irrigation and works associated with agricultural development;

(b) Land utilisation and settlement, whether the land be held privately or by the Crown;

(c) The prospects of the absorption of discharged and demobilised members of the Armed Forces in primary industries;

(d) The improvement of the welfare, amenities and standard of living of farmers and rural workers;

(e) Likely post-war markets for primary products and the bearing of these upon current agricultural policy;

(f) The re-adaptation of primary industries established or expanded for war purposes;

(g) The disposal of surplus or superabundant agricultural products with advantage to the community and without detriment to the producers.

Here is something that will interest the member for Swan—

(h) The functions of wartime boards, committees and the like concerned with the organisation of primary production and the marketing and distribution of primary products, with particular reference to the transition from a wartime to a peace economy;

(i) The economic reconstruction of marginal or depressed rural areas or primary industries.

Those are some of the problems distinctly applying to Australia's agricultural future, and involved in an investigation of those points are others. Some of the others might be an inquiry into the difficulties that Australian tariff policy imposes both upon the primary producers as individuals, and upon States in formulating and giving effect to land settlement schemes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: A full-time job.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The answer to that remark is that there are very many men in this Chamber and in this State who could, in a very short time—I would say within two or three months—put forward a policy or a plan which could be given effect to within this State. But they would be hindered and restricted by the very nature of the inquiry they were to make. They would be limited, if their plan was to

be sound, by the future anticipated soundness of all Australia's agricultural and rural outlook. But I realise that if the appointment of the Rural Reconstruction Commission by the Commonwealth on an Australia-wide basis means anything, it means that the persons concerned are charged with a very grave responsibility, and that they must not sidestep that responsibility in putting forward a plan which will only be short-term, of short duration, and merely curing immediate ills. If the thing is to be done on an Australia-wide basis, I venture to say that such matters as the tariff, even in spite of, perhaps because of, reports such as that made by Professor Giblin, must be subjected to the closest scrutiny in applying whatever was recommended in that case to Australia's agricultural industry.

Involved, too, in Australia's future development and its reconstruction is what has happened during the last six months in America and in England, and has been endorsed by Australia's representatives, in regard to trade treaties—a highly important matter. In respect of one commodity alone, wheat, a plan has been formulated and agreed to in Washington, as the member for Guildford-Midland knows, which would have a highly important bearing on the future of wheat in Western Australia if that agreement is to stand in the post-war period. There is also the question, as has been suggested, I may say, by the Director of Post-War Reconstruction, Dr. Coombs, that the Australian Rural Reconstruction Commission will be asked to investigate; and that is the effect of bounties or subsidies in the past on agricultural industry. Those are merely some of the problems, but added to those must be an examination of the farmers' debts problem. Although I have from time to time found that members of the party sitting opposite have sharply differed from me regarding matters of administration, there is only one approach to this subject, and that is an approach with an open mind, without set views, but with the earnest desire first to formulate a plan which shall be the basis of the inquiry. When that has been decided, it will not take very long to complete an Australia-wide inquiry progressing simultaneously from many aspects being investigated in all the States.

Once that is set in motion, once the basis and the scope are decided, it will certainly be a matter readily proceeded with from

many angles inquired into at the same time. I give that as an illustration of what, in my view, must be involved in an inquiry into Australia's agricultural future; and while I recognise that all State departments have in their possession vast amounts of information that will be necessary, useful and applicable, the problem cannot be approached from one State only, nor by the initiation of a settled plan for the development of one State only. So I may hope that from the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission there will possibly emerge a plan which would have a very big effect not merely on the whole of Australia but in particular something more promising than Western Australia's agricultural history has so far given to this State. This motion deals with the re-shaping of agricultural policy so as to offer prospects of success to those engaged in rural industry. It specifically means and refers to, it states, those engaged in rural industry in Western Australia.

I think it quite possible that when this subject is closely analysed, it will be found that Australia's penetration into areas for agricultural development has in many instances proceeded unwisely. I do not say that with any feeling of criticism of this land of my birth, because I think one of the great needs for Australians is to realise, not from the criticism of other people of our empty lands what we should do with them, but from their own knowledge and observation what is the total productiveness of this continent of ours, what are its limitations as well as its prospects, what areas can be ruled out altogether from consideration as possible areas of even poor pastoral occupation. We have heard much of the prospects of irrigation settlements in the Tropics and of agricultural settlements in the Tropics. In spite of our short history agriculturally, we have very much evidence of the degree of caution necessary in approaching projects within our Tropics. We have the experiences of Queensland, where tremendous sums have been spent on irrigation settlements within 40-inch rainfalls. I speak of such projects as the Dawson Valley irrigation settlement, in connection with which booklets were specially prepared and issued to induce settlers to go to this land flowing with milk and honey, where in spite of being within a 40-inch rainfall the loss per settler so far has exceeded £4,000.

Then we get to the case of the areas north of Townsville, adjacent to a 100-inch rainfall, where sugar is grown under irrigation—the outstanding irrigation project of Australia counted in financial terms. The dry months in that region are such as to warrant irrigation. When we have behind us even in this short history of Australia such examples as present themselves, the facts are marshalled ready for us. They do give an indication of how very carefully we must approach the subject of projects where rainfall limits are such that seven dry months are experienced in one year. The possibility of settlement within the Tropics, even with irrigation, is a subject for intense study and scrutiny; but I think that, with the close collaboration of engineers and of specialists in rural development, something will emerge if the matter is approached and tackled, but not with merely the idea of giving some panacea to our present farmers and lading out some hope for future farmers and giving our soldiers an answer to some of the promises made to them. Much more than that is required. This matter should, I think, speaking in an agricultural sense, be examined with great thoroughness. It would not be well for us to muddle along in the future, as has been the experience of much agriculture in the past. No-one would wish that.

I have had to listen in this Chamber to much criticism of my administration because of the desire to get as much money as possible to recoup some of the farmers' debts and their liabilities to the Treasury; and, although it cannot be said that all of Western Australia's agriculture is in a pitiable condition, that all of it is bad, and that there are no prosperous farmers, it can be said that the financial structure of farmers in this State must be examined not only from the point of view of this State and its experiences and anticipations, but also from the point of view of Australia as a whole. It is an Australia-wide problem. The Select Committee which it is sought to have appointed is, according to the motion, to inquire into very many matters, including not only agriculture, but the fostering of secondary industries, the desirability of appointing a Minister for reconstruction and other questions which might be considered helpful. If I thought that the proposed committee could tabulate something not within the departmental scope, that it could obtain evi-

dence that would be a guide as well for the State as for the Commonwealth, I would support it. But I think that, concurrently with the Commonwealth inquiry, each of the States will have Government representatives actively associating themselves with reconstruction problems of all kinds.

I would not like to think that the operations of a Select Committee in this State would hamper the activities of those who were prosecuting inquiries in particular directions, nor would I like to think that there would be any hampering of the getting together of information so necessary to be dovetailed into a complete scheme. I quite realise this point, that there would be in districts, whether at Denmark or Frankland River, at Mt. Barker or Kunnunoppin, people with views of their own as regards their particular districts. At the same time, I think much of the information which a Select Committee of this type would obtain would be, within its restricted charter, also obtained more simply by a proper approach to the subject in a standard way throughout Australia. I could detain the House for a long time in giving a historical background to Australia's agriculture, its many past mistakes, its many sad experiences in individual settlements, but I do not wish to weary members with those subjects. I have endeavoured to give a brief outline of the enormity of this task. It has been said that it will be a full-time job. If it is tackled honestly and whole-heartedly, it will certainly tax the capacity of every member of the Royal Commission.

I realise my own limitations, but I am indeed proud to be associated with those who will sit with me as co-members of that Royal Commission. I hope there will emerge from it not merely a partial plan, or a plan dealing with some aspects only, but a plan that will bring within its circle and have considered within its scope all those things that have a beneficial or detrimental effect on Australia's rural life. I say that if it does mean terrific expense to reconstruct and rehabilitate our existing agriculture, whatever is necessary will have to be faced. I hope that if it means industries established in wartime as war industries can be found a place in the economic structure of this Commonwealth in peacetime, if that can be economically done, those industries should be permanently with us. But, above all, I hope that in spite of my going from West-

ern Australia to help to do this national task, there will be benefits accruing to the whole of Australia and particularly to Western Australia.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): In contributing some brief remarks to this matter, my brevity is not occasioned by any want of appreciation of the importance of the motion and this subject. I have listened with interest to the contribution of the Minister for Lands and am in agreement with the greater part of what he said; in fact, with almost all, except in his opposition to the appointment of this Select Committee. The Minister commenced by referring to the word "reconstruction." I agree with him that it is not a very apt word. There are other words that could be used perhaps more aptly though not perhaps with complete satisfaction. We might say "post-war development" or, as the Minister said, "post-war advancement," or more simply "post-war progress." But the words "post-war reconstruction" have the imprimatur of Dr. Evatt in his Commonwealth Powers Bill, and therefore we are justified in regarding them as something which has a meaning of very great importance. I look upon this committee, if appointed by the House, as one which should be in session in some form or another right up to the time of peace, and which should officiate as a permanent standing committee of the members of this Chamber; and I do not regard it as being in any way opposed or hostile to any other committee whether departmental or appointed by the Commonwealth, or any other expert inquiry that may be set up.

I would regard a committee of this House as rather supplementary. It would be a committee that would hear from time to time what was published or said by those other committees. It would give their expressions of opinion a local application and not only could it express its own ideas to this Parliament and to the Commonwealth Parliament and the public at large, but it would also be a channel through which could be conveyed to any other Commonwealth or departmental or expert committee dealing with post-war problems the position as it appears to the selected members of this Chamber representing the State of Western Australia. I think that inadvertently and without his usual felicity of expression the Minister used the word "hamper." He said

that this committee might possibly hamper another inquiry. It would be a very sad state of affairs if the Legislature of this State in any activity of its members could be looked upon as hampering departmental committees. Departmental committees are under the supreme direction of the Legislature, and if the members of this House are to accept a subordinate position to the departmental officers of the State—while giving them every credit for expert knowledge—then we have parted with almost all the responsibility which should be ours.

Let me take the question of the settlement of land by returned soldiers. We all appreciate the difficulties involved in this in the light of past experience, but from my knowledge of the position I regard it as a matter of no small importance to this State that we should be concerned, not necessarily with developing our land settlement, but with retaining such land settlement as we now possess. There are many people who look to the returned soldiers as virtually the only means by which we may maintain many of our primary industries in their existing state. It is a matter to my mind of very great importance that we should have plans in this State to ensure that if we are to depend largely upon returned soldiers for maintaining many of our primary industries in their existing condition, we should have plans made to ensure that the entry of returned soldiers into those industries will be on reasonable conditions and as far as possible free from any disaster to themselves or to the State. That aspect alone, merely the aspect of the conservation of many of our primary industries, is a matter almost of life and death to the economy of this State.

For a long time the Commonwealth Parliament has had a committee of its own members on post-war reconstruction, and I am not prepared to admit the inferiority of our own members to deal with this important matter as compared with the mental status of members of the Commonwealth Parliament. It will be the duty of the Minister, in the position he is about to occupy, to regard the large responsibilities he undertakes from a nation-wide point of view. I know he will do that. I know our State will share the benefit of the whole of Australia by the ability he will bring to bear in his new position; but he will be primarily and properly concerned to look at this matter from an Australia-wide point of view, and in all

these inquiries—mainly set up through Commonwealth instrumentality—regarding post-war conditions, this State needs to exercise unceasing vigilance. Unless we do that our interests will be apt to be overlooked. We do not know whether the period following the war will represent days of great danger to this State or whether it will be a time of opportunity; but whichever it turns out to be this State will need to be thoroughly alive to every opportunity to advance its own interests, and I can think of no more appropriate body to watch the legitimate interests of our State than a committee of the members of this Assembly sitting for as long as it may be needed up to and after the period of peace, scrutinising all that is said by the expert and responsible tribunals that may be set up by the Commonwealth or departments and ready at all times to speak on behalf of the people of this State, and at all times open to be a channel through which any representatives of the people of this State can be given considerable expression and their ideas conveyed to the Government concerned, or to the various tribunals that may be engaged in various aspects of this inquiry.

It is said we have lost in the last year or two 5,000 of our skilled workers to the Eastern States. It needs no vision at all on the part of anybody to realise that the vast industrial development of the central States may be such that after the war they will represent a very great attraction to all people with enterprise and who desire to advance themselves, and a very great attraction to many of the younger people in Western Australia. If we are not able to present a picture that will bear some comparison to that presented by Victoria and New South Wales, our lot may not be so promising. I do not think it need be otherwise than bright if we are sufficiently vigilant to look out for our own interests.

I do not think we could have any body that could more properly undertake part of this duty than a committee of members of this House and, in fact, it would seem to me a grave reflection on the utility of this Parliament if, in the most important problem, the most critical problem in which we can play a part, we have not sufficient initiative and interest to have a committee of our own to protect and advance the interests of the State. I wholeheartedly support the appointment of a committee. I think its

charter should be as wide as it possibly can be. It should cover all the matters mentioned by the Minister in his informative speech, and it should cover the possibility of alterations in our Constitution which may be designed to give this State protection from the competition of the stronger States. In fact, it should comprehend every means by which this State's legitimate interests may be protected and its future in the economy of Australia safeguarded.

MR. BOYLE (Avon): When listening to the Minister for Lands I was reminded of one of Charles Dickens's writings, namely, that the problem of politics comprises within itself a study of no inconsiderable magnitude. The word "agriculture" could be substituted for "politics" with profit. The Minister very properly outlined the many difficulties entailed in any scheme of reconstruction. I prefer the word "reconstruction" because we will be charged with restoring the position as we know it today, and we will have something to work on. The term "post-war development" is to my mind wide of the mark. The Minister, in his comprehensive speech, pointed out that this is not merely a State problem or an Australian problem, but is a world-wide one and has been accepted as such by people who have given the subject any thought.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The world has accepted "reconstruction" as the word.

Mr. BOYLE: It has because the condition of the world before the war was, as Douglas Reed has said, "nothing but an armistice from the last war." In his book "A Prophet at Home" published last year he referred to the fact that this is not world war number two, but a continuation of the 1914-18 war. It is a continuation of that war largely because the then victorious allied nations did not make proper provision for reconstructing the world. That the world was not reconstructed was evidenced by Germany being able, with impunity, in 1933 to move troops into the Ruhr and tear up the Treaty of Versailles. If the Commonwealth Powers Bill is carried—and we will assume that it will be—there will be plenty for members of this House to do in connection with reconstruction work.

Our normal functions will be largely taken from us, and I cannot understand why the Minister for Lands should oppose the appointment of a committee of this sort. Its

terms were clearly laid down by the Leader of the Opposition. One can only take the position as it is in the world today to show that peoples and nations are already studying the problem of reconstruction. A Federal commission for rural reconstruction has already been appointed. Our Minister for Lands will be chairman of that commission, and what could be more helpful to him than a Select Committee of this House, consisting of members from all Parties, examining the changing positions in the agricultural industry? The Minister referred at length to our experiences after the last war. One need only travel through our agricultural districts to find that other problems have now been super-imposed. I mention the grasshoppers and rabbits which in 1918, 1919 and 1920 did not constitute the pest they do today.

The Minister has referred to the secured debts position. We have repeatedly asked the Government to deal with that position as it affects this State. I am glad to see that the Minister now considers it to be of paramount importance. The farmers on the land today rank next to the men coming back from this war in their need for consideration. They need reconstruction and there are thousands of them. In our wheatbelt alone there are, I suppose, 8,000 to 9,000 farmers. A committee such as the one suggested could do no harm. Whatever it did would be all to the good. If its members were inexperienced I could understand opposition being raised, but surely this House would not put on such a Select Committee members who have not already proven themselves as investigators in this field.

The Premier: They are widely different subjects. A man is not an expert in secondary industries and at the same time an agriculturist.

Mr. BOYLE: I agree with the Premier to some extent, but why not mix the committee? There are men on the other side of the House who are experts in secondary industrial organisation and so forth. We are not asking for a Select Committee of agriculturists. As the member for Pingelly suggests, it would be collecting evidence.

The Premier: In the maze of the whole inquiry you would do nothing useful. Why not concentrate on something that can be done?

Mr. BOYLE: I do not agree.

The Premier: Would you have a mining man on it to deal with the raw materials question? It is too wide and big in its scope.

Mr. BOYLE: The Premier can amend it if he wishes. That is a vastly different thing from opposing it absolutely and throwing it out. I would be prepared to consider any amendment of the type suggested by the Premier. The Minister for Lands referred to the world wheat position, and we have heard a good deal about it. In my opinion there is no room for pessimism in that regard. One of the staple industries of this State is wheat, and in the heyday of wheatgrowing 58 per cent. of the total value of exports of the States consisted of wheat. Included in those exports were gold, wool and all other products. We can be restored to that position. It is simply a question of distribution and markets. The Argentine, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. have agreed to a memorandum on wheat production and distribution which represents the conclusion of efforts that have extended over a decade.

In 1932, coincidentally enough, I interested myself in the world-wide control and distribution of wheat. On several occasions I interviewed Senor Bidone, Consul General in Australia, for the Argentine. I was in touch with the United Farmers' Association of Alberta, the greatest wheatgrowing State in Canada. I was also in contact with the British Farmers' Union in England. That Union pointed out that England was an importing nation and, shortly after, the price of wheat there was fixed on a satisfactory basis. Senor Bidone told me that the Argentine was only too willing to enter into any agreement reasonable to the Argentine. The member for Greenough interjects that his country broke the agreement once. If it did I have no recollection of it.

The Premier: It sold its wheat at a lesser price than was agreed upon.

Mr. BOYLE: Why is a dishonourable nation like that included in the working parties to the memorandum?

The Premier: They were let off under the First Offenders' Act!

Mr. BOYLE: Perhaps, in accordance with that suggestion, that country has been given another chance; but the fact remains that we must accept that country as a co-partner

in this wheat agreement. We find the following included in the memorandum:—

Adoption of national and international policies aimed at increasing international trade in wheat.

That is one of the reasons why I supported in the Commonwealth Powers Bill the provision regarding organised marketing, which implies the regulation of international trade and the proper distribution of world products. Surely that is a function of the Commonwealth Government! As has been already pointed out, the proper exercise of such a scheme can only be undertaken by the central authority in Australia—the Commonwealth Government. Then the memorandum contains the following provision—

Adjustment of production in accordance with consumer demand so as to prevent the accumulation of excessive stocks.

Those of us who have studied the wheat position know that the average normal disappearance of wheat throughout the world, excluding Russia, is 12,000,000 bushels per day, or 84,000,000 bushels a week, representing 4,200,000,000 bushels a year. In his booklet Dr. Evatt, the Federal Attorney General, points out that today in the four exporting countries party to the agreement—of course, Great Britain is also included as a contracting party—there is an accumulation of 1,375,000,000 bushels of wheat. When we consider that the normal average consumption in the world—excluding Russia—was over 4,200,000,000 bushels a year, one can estimate that on the conclusion of the present war countries that have been starved for wheat will occasion an extraordinarily large demand for grain. Take Germany itself!

Mr. Sampson: Or China.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, and Greece and Italy. All these countries will be brought under the agreement, as President Roosevelt pointed out, respecting the question of supplies to various nations. We will be parties to that scheme. Why should we in Australia adopt a policy of despair regarding wheat production? Here we have a State that in 1931-32 produced and sold 53,000,000 bushels of wheat. Today we are down to the ignominious total output of 21,000,000 bushels due to the compulsory reduction to one-third of the acreage under production. Then we have in Australia today the carry-

over from previous years. The production of wheat in Australia over four growing years was 538,000,000 bushels and of that total, with this year's crop of 132,000,000 bushels, we have now only 208,000,000 bushels in Australia. When we consider that the average world consumption of wheat is 12,000,000 bushels per day—that is what is termed “the wheat disappearance”—I think the proposed committee of inquiry could well tackle the restoration of our wheat areas in Western Australia. Members should realise that in this State we can produce wheat more cheaply than in any other part of the world. When I was discussing that matter with Senor Bidone, I ascertained that in the Argentine superphosphate is not used in wheat production at all. When we dealt with production costs, I found that ours were considerably below those of any other country. Another provision in the world wheat agreement is—

Adoption of the principle of the “ever normal granary” so as to assure the maintenance of adequate reserve stocks.

That great American, Mr. Wallace, who is at present Vice President of the United States of America, was largely responsible for the adoption of the “ever normal granary.” The idea behind it is to get down to something along the old Josephian principle of the seven lean years and the seven plentiful years. That is all it amounts to. Behind it is the proposal to keep stocks in America at a certain level—the ever normal granary. As a matter of fact, that has not actually been done. There is another factor that should help to dissipate pessimism regarding the wheat position. Only in yesterday's issue of “The West Australian” it was reported that Canadian futures were selling at 138 cents per bushel, which price is equivalent in Australia to 7s. 3d. per bushel.

The Premier: Plus exchange?

Mr. BOYLE: No, I have added that on in giving the Australian price. A quote of 138 cents a bushel represents about 5s. 10d. sterling, and exchange brings that figure up to about 7s. 3d. Australian. Then again today's cables show that the American Government is seriously considering instituting proceedings against certain interests in America that have cornered 500,000,000 bushels of wheat. If the wheat position is so bad and the outlook so pessimistic, would speculators and dealers in the United States of America trouble about cornering a tremendous quantity of grain?

The amount involved is equal to four years of our normal exports from Australia. I say the wheat position should occasion us no alarm in a country such as Australia which, after all, is not of such very great consequence in the world supply of wheat.

The Premier: Our experience during the past 12 years has been rather sad with regard to wheat production.

Mr. BOYLE: That was so because of the tremendous difficulty respecting exports. If countries that normally consumed our wheat had been able to take their normal requirements representing over 800,000,000 bushels a year, the position would have been satisfactory, but in the year before the commencement of the present war their imports dropped to 438,000,000 bushels. Every country in Europe was endeavouring to safeguard itself against war condition. In Italy wheat was exchanged at about 10s. 1d. per bushel and in France the Government secured for the farmers a price that was by no means an economical one. All this was due to war scare. If we could do away with war, surely all these shadows of difficulties would disappear forever. In normal times we would get back to normal conditions.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Look at the matter from the other direction and consider the position of Spain!

Mr. BOYLE: Spain is a heavy importer of wheat. That country does not produce sufficient for its own requirements. It has a population of 24,000,000. The next article in the draft convention for the solution of the world wheat problems is—

Orderly distribution of exports through a system of quotas.

Of course we will have to reach that point. The organisations that I have been associated with have been recommending something along those lines for years past. We want to go all the way and we want to know where we will stand, what will be paid for wheat and what will be a payable basis. We must get down to commonsense in the distribution of wheat. We should not leave it to merchants, particularly in the light of an experience I had in Melbourne on about the 1st March, 1933. On that occasion at a conference a leading merchant told the chairman, Mr. Gunn, that if he did not leave the conference chamber at 4.30 p.m. there would not be a price for wheat in Australia the next day. Does that not represent sheer dictatorship?

The Premier: But it would not have hurt anyone for one day if no price had been declared.

Mr. BOYLE: Of course it would have. Men bringing their wheat to the sidings would have been told that there was no market for their commodity.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But that could not have affected Western Australia because we have always fixed our own price.

Mr. BOYLE: Who has fixed our price?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Western Australian organisation through the Wheat Pool.

Mr. BOYLE: I am surprised at the innocence of the member for Guildford-Midland! I was in Melbourne when the 11 o'clock and the 4 o'clock telegrams were sent out to Western Australia.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But they did not come to Western Australia for the purpose of fixing the price of wheat. We get that direct from London and work on those figures, separately and distinctly.

Mr. BOYLE: Does the hon. member suggest that Western Australian wheat prices are different from those applying elsewhere?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course.

The Premier: That has often been so.

Mr. BOYLE: There may have been a difference of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 1d.

The Premier: No, a difference of 2d. or 3d.

Mr. BOYLE: The position is controlled by the firms operating in the capital cities.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No; we dealt with that.

Mr. BOYLE: The next article in the agreement read—

Stabilisation of prices at levels that will be satisfactory to producers and consumers alike. I hope that will be achieved, but surely that is a matter that could be dealt with by a Select Committee and some recommendation reached along those lines. What price will be satisfactory? Will any such price include provision of 1s. in the £ on account of interest on secured debts? If that is so, it will take some stabilising. The Minister has told us that £4,000 was the average debt of a returned wheatbelt soldier after the 1914-18 war. If the interest is 5 per cent., that would represent £200 a year, though actually I believe the rate is $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I am glad the Minister has

in mind the debt position because, unless there is reconstruction in this respect, the rest will be so much dead sea fruit.

Establishment of a wheat pool for relief to war stricken and other necessitous areas.

We know that 100,000,000 bushels are already earmarked and possibly the pool will include 500,000,000 bushels. That was not done after the 1914-18 war. According to the memorandum of the committee, it ought to be done.

Establishment of an International Wheat Council to administer the plan and suggest measures to meet changing conditions.

An inquiry by Select Committee could be of great assistance in these matters. The motion also seeks to bring under review rural conditions such as education. I suggest technical education, medical and hospital services. One could continue for hours enlarging on that theme.

The possibility of land settlement as a means of repatriation.

What other means have we in this State of repatriating our soldiers? The Premier has mentioned secondary industries. Are we going to have much say in the establishment of secondary industries in this State?

The Premier: I hope so.

Mr. BOYLE: The Premier is an optimist of the first water, because there will be thrown back into industry all the power of the Eastern States with their up-to-date plants. We have not such plants in Western Australia.

The Premier: The Eastern States have a lot of obsolete plants, too.

Mr. BOYLE: And a lot of up-to-date plants. One has only to visit Melbourne and Sydney to see new buildings equipped with the latest plant. As an entity in the field of secondary industry, we have no place. Evidently we have to hope for a measure of charity from the Eastern States that will permit us to establish secondary industries in Western Australia.

The Premier: No.

Mr. BOYLE: Some industries are being established here. I hope they will prove to be of a permanent nature; but can we regard them as a factor to be considered in the repatriation of soldiers?

The Premier: Of course we can.

Mr. BOYLE: Only to a very limited extent. I hope the Premier will prove to be right, but experience is on my side at the

moment. I have no intention of traversing the whole position beyond saying that, in supporting the motion, I regret that the Minister has disapproved of it, because it is fraught with the possibility of much good. It would give opportunities to many people to come before the committee and put up suggestions, though not of the type the Minister received from his friend at Bruce Rock. I certainly feel that a Select Committee could be profitably employed in an investigation of these matters.

On motion by the Minister for Labour, debate adjourned.

DISCHARGE OF ORDERS.

On motions by Mr. Hughes, the following Orders of the Day were discharged:—

- 1, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment Bill.
- 2, Licensing Act Amendment Bill (No. 1).

BILL—SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 14th October of the debate on the second reading.

Mr. SHEARN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [5.25]:

I do not propose to address the House at any length on this subject, because on a former occasion I introduced a Bill containing somewhat similar provisions. While I feel that in Committee the Bill might be amended with advantage, I did not desire to have the second reading debate closed without expressing an opinion that some reform along the lines laid down in this Bill should be introduced. I propose to support the second reading.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth): If my memory serves me aright, this is the fourth time in the past few years that we have had a Bill of this nature before us. Of the other measures, one was introduced by a member of the Country Party, one by the Leader of the National Party and the third by a member of the party on this side of the House. Now an Independent member, the member for East Perth, has introduced this Bill. The

object of each of those measures has been to amend the divorce laws and thus make the path to the Divorce Court smoother than it is at present and access to it easier.

The hon. member enumerated the many grounds already existing on which divorce may be obtained, and through this Bill he proposes to add more grounds. The plea now put forward is on behalf of a woman separated from her husband who regularly pays the maintenance order but cannot secure a reconciliation. If this Bill is passed for that reason, later on some other grounds will be discovered and so on ad infinitum until the last remnant of the marriage tie disappears. That is the reason why I have consistently opposed measures of this nature having for their object the widening of the laws of divorce.

I feel that already too many grounds have been provided for people desirous of severing the marriage tie. I object on principle to divorce, and do not desire to see the safeguards of the Divorce Court relaxed any further. In this community today we are suffering from the twin curses of divorce and contraception. This community is not singular in that regard. Unfortunately the factors I have mentioned are widespread, but the danger of those evils in the moral and economic senses is, to my mind, intensified during time of war. This civilisation of ours is in deadly peril. We realise the shortage of our manpower to defend it, and the more easy we make the approach to the divorce court the less manpower shall we have to defend our country in time of danger. The Bill proposes to reduce the desertion period to three years. This is an addition to the eight or nine grounds on which divorce can be obtained already. As I indicated at the beginning of my speech, there are eight or nine grounds too many.

Any further addition to those grounds will be an open invitation to persons to enter into practically illicit sexual relations. Unfortunately people have become so accustomed to divorce that it is quite common. At the same time, although of common occurrence, divorce always leaves a stigma. Under the law as it now stands, a divorce can be granted only on the ground of separation of the parties, if the separation is by order of the court, or by deed, or agreement or of separation. The parties must be separated for a period of three years or more and the respondent husband must have failed

during that period entirely or repeatedly or habitually to make payment of the allowances granted by the court to the wife, and for any children of the marriage. That is the present law, and it can be summarised under three headings: 1, Separation by order of the court or deed or agreement. 2, Separation for a period of at least three years. 3, Failure during that period on the part of the husband to maintain the wife and any children of the marriage.

This provision was brought in, I understand, during 1925; and from then until now it has not been altered. I believe that in the attempt then made for further relaxation of the divorce law, that was as far as it was thought proper to go. The Bill now before the House, should it become law, will be an absolute negation of the principles of Christian marriage. It simply says that if a married couple remain apart for three years, either party can dissolve the marriage. That is tantamount to introducing what was once tried in America, the "companionate marriage." This meant a man and a woman living together as in marriage, and if you did not like each other you could separate. Even in America that system could not last long. Again, companionate marriage somewhat resembles forms of marriage existing in the U.S.S.R.

The stand I take is that whilst divorce is recognised in our community, it should not be made any easier than it is now. The Bill, if I read it correctly, will render it difficult for man and woman to remain bound by the solemn tie of matrimony if they have the knowledge that should they separate and stay apart for the period of three years the bond can be severed. In that there is a danger of collusion, which is forbidden by the present law. The provisions of the Bill can be shortly described as "divorce made easy." There has to be culpability on one side at present. If the Bill becomes law, there need not be any culpability on either side. All the parties need do is to live apart from each other for three years. There need be no order of the court, or deed or agreement; no failure by the husband to pay for the maintenance of his wife and the children, if any. Such I think will be the results if the Bill is enacted. True, Clause 3 has a proviso to the effect—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in quoting clauses.

Mr. NEEDHAM: May I put it this way, Sir, that the Bill provides that a divorce shall not be granted if it is opposed by the respondent, who proves that the separation is due to the wrongful act or conduct of the petitioner. That proviso certainly is contained in the Bill, but it gives little or no protection to the wronged party, and the fact of its being given does not in any way invalidate the main objection I have to the measure. In my opinion the chief objection to the measure is that it practically destroys the principle of Christian marriage. It allows two people to agree, before or after marriage, that sooner or later they will separate and stay apart for three years, so that either one of the two can get the divorce. My construction of that feature of the Bill is that it amounts to nothing more or less than collusion. In fact, however, even an agreement to this extent is not necessary, as is apparent when one gives the Bill further analysis. If one party takes it into his or her head to go away and stay away for three years, either party can obtain the divorce at the end of that period. It will be seen that wide as is the door of the court today and smooth the road, this Bill will open the door still wider and make the road to the court shorter and smoother. Under its provisions the guilty party is also entitled to a divorce. The proviso does not define wilful separation as a wrongful act.

Whichever way one looks at the Bill, it is objectionable. Whatever objections could have been and were lodged against its predecessors, I maintain this Bill is much worse. Many other objections could be advanced against it. Property rights are often affected by marriage; sometimes the property rights of a third party might be involved. Under the present law, I understand such property is excepted. A settlement of property might be made in consideration of one of two parties becoming married. The settlement would presuppose a genuine marriage, whereas in fact by pre-arrangement the parties could get married without any real intention of remaining in that state. There is yet another serious objection to the measure. It is, I understand, a vital principle of divorce law that there should be no collusion between the parties. There must be the guilt of adultery, habitual drunkenness, imprisonment, wilful desertion or failure to maintain. Should the court suspect that the parties to divorce proceedings

had conspired together and framed a case, it could, upon proof refuse a divorce. If a divorce were granted as the result of such action and it was subsequently proved that there had been collusion, then the Crown could intervene and have the decree obtained from the court set aside. This Bill will leave the door wide open for collusion and the House should hesitate before it passes such a measure.

Those briefly, are my objections to the Bill and I hope it will meet the same fate as did its predecessors. We are living in abnormal times and our duty is, as far as possible, not to slacken laws relating to the morals of our people but, on the contrary, to tighten them up. Since this world-wide struggle began, we have had ample evidence in our city and its suburbs of the necessity for tightening up laws so that our young people may be kept, as far as possible, on the path of moral rectitude. That being so, there is all the more necessity for us to be particularly anxious to preserve the sanctity of the marriage tie. We are not going to remedy the present state of affairs by easy divorce laws. Rather, by so doing are we going to add to our troubles. I sincerely hope the Bill will be defeated on the second reading.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth—in reply): I have only a few words to say in reply to the member for Perth. He is quite wrong in saying that this Bill is the worst of four similar Bills that have been brought down to the House. This Bill is the fourth successful modification of the original Bill; it has been so modified as to be hardly able to stand up. It provides for certain safeguards which I thought should have been placed in the first Bill. One is that a wrongdoer cannot go to the court and take advantage of his own wrongdoing. The wrongdoer, whether male or female, is excluded by this Bill from obtaining a divorce. The member for Perth stated what is the existing law; he said that all that people had to do was to stay apart for three years and they could obtain a divorce. That is the law today. Either party can then get a divorce on the ground of desertion; it is granted almost automatically. If the hon. member objects to that, he should produce an amending Divorce Bill to cut out divorce on the ground of desertion. He also says that marriage is a sacred contract. So it is. It is more, it is the basic principle upon which the community holds

together. It is the very basis of our community life. Yet, notwithstanding that it is such a sacred and basic contract, a child can enter into a marriage.

A girl of the age of 16 or 17 years can enter into a contract, but she can repudiate it at any time, because the law says she is not old enough to form a concrete mind. After she becomes 21, the contract is not enforceable against her. But she can, while under age, contract a marriage, which is the most sacred and most important of all contracts. She cannot, however, repudiate that contract upon attaining the age of 21 years, nor can she recant at that age. If she makes a mistake, the member for Perth would hold her to it for eternity; he would not say, "This is a contract and she is to be relieved."

At the expense of some repetition, I desire to say that all this Bill provides for is that the person who honours his contract under the marriage shall be put on the same basis as the person who dishonours it. At present if a man marries and has children and, being a waster, subsequently deserts his wife and children, the wife can obtain a maintenance order against him. If he does not elect to pay, it is practically impossible to make him do so. He can put on his hat and go away without paying. Then he can be put in gaol for non-payment, and when he comes out he can be put in again on account of arrears accumulated while he was in gaol.

At the end of three years when the wife is disheartened through trying to make him pay, and has perhaps met someone else she feels she can marry, she can go to the Divorce Court and get a divorce on the ground that her husband has not paid maintenance. The man is then free to marry again and have a second family and do the same thing all over again, as has happened in one or two instances within my knowledge. I would support the member for Perth if he said that a man who had defaulted in his marital obligations to his wife and children should not be allowed to marry again and should be told, "You failed to discharge your obligations and left your children to starve and forced the State to keep them, and we are not going to allow you to marry again and bring more children into the world."

Hon. N. Keenan: What has that to do with this Bill?

Mr. HUGHES: I am saying that if that were suggested I would agree. This Bill proposes to give to the man who discharges his obligations the same privileges as are extended to the man who fails to do so. As a matter of fact the Bill will be of very little assistance to the male. In the Divorce Court and the Married Women's Court the male is anathema, a thing to be kicked and trampled on. In the Married Women's Court every male starts 200 yards behind scratch. The fact of his being a male is a terrible disability. There are many men and women who marry and discharge their obligations but in some cases, for some reason or other, the marriage does not succeed and they have to separate. If the man is a decent fellow—as many are—he discharges his obligations. He says, "I married and begot children and it is my duty to maintain them and I am going to do it." He honestly and regularly pays maintenance for his children, but he and his wife are tied for life. Neither can get a divorce, because they both believe in discharging their obligations.

I know one or two instances in which the wife feels that she and her husband will never come together again. She has reared children and would once more like to try her fate in the matrimonial sea, but because she married a decent man who discharged his obligations and she refuses to commit adultery or to stage a mock adultery they are tied up for life, while at the same time they can see the rotter who would not discharge his obligations free to marry again. They ask this Parliament the very pertinent question, "Why should we be penalised because we have discharged our obligations when the fellow who defaults is free to marry again?" The Bill provides that the men and women who have discharged their obligations can, like the defaulters, go to the Divorce Court and ask for relief. It contains the safeguard that if a man or woman is in default the other party can go to the court and demonstrate that the marriage broke up as a result of such default and the divorce cannot be granted. It is not discretionary on the part of the judge. The divorce will be blocked because the court will say to the gentleman or the lady concerned, "You were responsible for the failure of your last marriage and we are not at liberty to give you another chance."

But if the respondent has no objection to the other party going, the divorce can be granted.

The divorce can in no way affect any order given for maintenance prior to the application for divorce, even though the order is made in the lower court. Special provision is made in the Bill that the higher court cannot interfere with a maintenance order. So the party seeking divorce does not get relief, even if the divorce is granted, from the provisions of the order. One cannot go further in protecting the innocent party. The member for Perth says there may be collusion. I have often suspected a bit of it goes on today. I would not like to say there is collusion, but I have suspicions from time to time that when two people have been unable to agree they have said, "Very well, we will break it up and after three years one of us will sue for a separation." That cannot be stopped. The member for Perth complained that we have the curses of contraceptives and divorces—mainly the curse of contraceptives. If it is population he wants, look at all the manpower he is keeping idle! Look at the women that could bear children and would be glad to have them, but cannot have them because they made a mistake! I could produce half a dozen women of child-bearing age ready and willing to have children provided we will allow them to be mated with the men of their choice.

The Minister for Labour: They seem to have taken you into their confidence.

Mr. HUGHES: They admit frankly that they want to marry again. They say, "I am not too old and I would like to have children. I would like to have a home again. I made a mess of the last marriage, but I want to try again." We should let them have children if they want them. It is their birthright. I would like the member for Perth to show me any theological precept which denies women the right to have children.

The Premier: There is a biological precept anyhow.

Mr. HUGHES: In my experience—which is not very extensive—the biological side has frequently knocked down the theological precepts. By this Bill we shall allow people to do honestly what they can do dishonestly, and we shall allow men with limited means to do what the man with unlimited money can do today. If two people are separated

and reach the stage, being sensible people, of deciding that they are never likely to resume their married relationship, and the wife says that she has met someone else with whom she would like to live, the two can stage a fictitious adultery if they have the cash to do it. Does the member for Subiaco believe when she reads the story of John Brown being seen in his pyjamas with the blinds down in some hotel—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that has anything to do with the matter.

Mr. HUGHES: Does the member for Subiaco believe that is "fair dinkum"? Of course she does not! Anybody who is willing to resort to those means can today get a divorce, and how can they be stopped? It cannot be proved that it is not a genuine case of adultery. It has all the appearance of such on the surface, and is uncontested. Who is to prove that it is not so? But many people, particularly those in a position to judge, have grave doubts about the matter. But such a course takes money. I suggest that all we are doing in this Bill is allowing the decent man to be placed on the same basis as the one who does not decently discharge his matrimonial obligations. We are allowing to be done honestly what is at present being done dishonestly, and permitting the poor man to have the same privileges as the rich man. I hope the second reading will be carried.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	26

Majority against .. 19

AYES.

Mr. Hughes
Mr. Marshall
Mr. McDonald
Mr. Sampson

Mr. Triet
Mr. Withers
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES

Mr. Boyle
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cross
Mr. Fox
Mr. Hawke
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Hill
Mr. Kernan
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Needham
Mr. North

Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Panton
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Seward
Mr. Shearn
Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Warner
Mr. Watts
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Wise
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 6.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 28th January, 1943.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (7).

APPLE AND PEAR ACQUISITION BOARD.

As to Marketing, etc.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Would the Department, under acquisition, support an added free marketing period for apples? 2, Were Bartlett pears exported from Western Australia prior to acquisition and, if so, for how many years prior to acquisition? 3, Is it realised that acquisition of Bartlett pears means added expense to the Commonwealth, greater cost to the consumer, and reduced returns to the grower? 4, In the circumstances will he urge that Bartlett pears be exempt from the operations of the Apple and Pear Acquisition Board?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The import of the question is not quite clear but it is quite obvious that much more information is necessary. It seems that the subject-matter is one for decision under the jurisdiction of the Apple and Pear Board. 2, Bartlett pears have never been exported in quantity from Western Australia. Some consignments about fifteen to twenty years ago yielded very varied returns to the growers, and in general were not profitable owing to wastage. 3, No. 4, The omission of selected varieties might mean the abandonment of the scheme as a whole and is a matter for decision of the board.