

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 20th September, 1939.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.

Kalgoorlie Depot, Boiler Attendant.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that on many occasions recently a youth without the necessary qualification of a boiler attendant's certificate has been placed in charge of boilers worth many thousands of pounds at the Kalgoorlie loco. depot? 2, Was anyone else with the necessary qualification on the same shift?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes, on occasions and in accordance with Clause 30 (a) of the award. 2, No.

Kalgoorlie Depot, Coal Used.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways: How many tons of Collie and Newcastle coal were used at the Kalgoorlie loco. depot during the fortnight ended the 9th September, 1939?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 468 and 32 tons, respectively.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT QUARRIES.

Complaints About Explosions.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that complaints about the recurrence of heavy explosions at

the Government quarries near Darlington are again being made? 2, Will he take action to ensure that the reduced charges as arranged are not exceeded?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The manager of the Boya Quarries has confirmed that he is still working to instructions issued regarding the use of wood plugs for tamping. This practice has considerably reduced the noise of explosions.

Mr. Sampson: I have received another letter of protest to-day.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURE.

Rural Relief, Flour Excise Collections.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: 1, Has the State Government received from the Commonwealth Government the collections to the 31st August last under the flour excise? 2, If not, when does it expect to receive the money? 3, If the money has been received, will arrangements be made to pay it over to wheatgrowers before the 23rd inst.? 4, If not, when does he expect that the payments will be made.

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The amount received is not sufficient to make a payment of 1d. per bushel and it is proposed to await the receipt of further collections of flour tax to enable a payment of 1d. per bushel to be made. 4, Answered by 3.

QUESTION—CORNSACKS.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Premier: In view of the fact that there are not sufficient cornsacks in the State, and possibly not on order, to meet the needs of wheat farmers for the ensuing season, will he get a report from the Agricultural Bank Commission stating whether it is satisfied that the supply of cornsacks can, at this stage, be left to the discretion of merchants?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied: In view of the Premier's statement last night regarding the possible shortage of cornsacks for the coming harvest, the Commissioners will confer with merchants regarding supply for Agricultural Bank clients.

QUESTION—FEDERAL TAX ON GOLD.*As to Taxation of other Metals.*

Hon. N. KEENAN (without notice) asked the Premier: 1, Can he inform the House whether the Commonwealth Government has fixed any maximum price for the sale of silver or any of the base metals and, if so, what prices have been fixed? 2, Has the Commonwealth Government fixed any price for the sale of silver or any of the base metals in respect of which the Commonwealth Government will be entitled to share any excess over such price obtained on sale of such silver or base metals? 3, Will he make available an opportunity for the House to discuss the action of the Commonwealth Government in relation to the sale of gold?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 2, I do not know what the Commonwealth has done. Up to the time of my leaving Canberra on Monday week, there had been no talk with the States regarding the imposition of a gold tax or anything connected with the sale of gold, and this remark applies to other precious and base metals also. Therefore I cannot give the hon. member any information. So far as I am aware there is no regulation of the sale of any metal, precious or base, except gold, which has been subjected to the imposition of a tax. 3, I am afraid that the Commonwealth Government is anxious to get the gold tax approved as early as possible. No publicity was given to the matter until last Friday, and the Bill has already passed the second reading in the House of Representatives. From appearances I assume that the Bill will be pushed through during the present week. If that proves to be so, it would not be of much use the House discussing the matter, but I have already made a protest on behalf of the Government. Members doubtless have read my statement in the Press, and that has been followed by a protest to the Commonwealth Government. Evidently the Commonwealth Government has decided, as a matter of policy, to persist in imposing the tax. If hon. members so desire I will give the House every opportunity to discuss the matter so that we can inform the Commonwealth of the opinion of the House regarding what I might term a disastrous blow to the goldmining industry of this State.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Mr. Abbott (North Perth) on the ground of active service with the air forces of the Commonwealth.

BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands (for the Minister for Labour) and read a first time.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.*Third Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.38]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.39]: I desire to make a brief reference to the Bill and particularly to two meetings that were held, one at Gosnells and the other at Cannington. I am of opinion that the passage of this Bill may prove a serious matter to some of the settlers located on the Canning River. Certainly the remarks about the Cannington meeting made by the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) during the second reading debate were not in accordance with facts.

Mr. Cross: Were you at the meeting?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have facts regarding the meeting.

Mr. Cross: No shorthand notes were taken of the speeches.

Mr. SAMPSON: But that will not prevent my making some facts available to the House. Statements made during the second reading stage no doubt had an effect on the Minister and other members.

Hon. P. Collier: Those statements influenced me greatly.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am pleased to hear that. If they influenced the member for Boulder, they influenced other members. The meeting held at Cannington on Monday, the 11th September, was not called to consider the Bill now before the House—the measure amending the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. It was called to discuss the matter of the Kent-street weir.

That weir, as we know, was constructed to prevent salt water from coming up the river, the presence of salt water naturally having a most deleterious effect on growing crops and trees. I have here a copy of a letter from the Canning Road Board, the copy having been sent to the Gosnells Road Board. It reads—

Re weir and the Canning River at Kent-street.

Mr. Raphael: Is that in Victoria Park?

Mr. SAMPSON: No. This is in the Canning electorate. The letter continues—

I have been instructed by my board that a meeting will be held at the Town Hall, Cannington, on Monday the 11th September, 1939, at 8 p.m., of settlers interested in the construction of a weir at Kent-street on the Canning River capable at all times of preventing the salt water from coming upstream. The board confidently expect you will attend this meeting, as they are of the opinion that the time is opportune for approaching the Government with a concrete proposition. The board will feel obliged if you will advise anyone interested who may not have received notice of this meeting. Yours faithfully.

That letter is signed by the secretary of the Canning Road Board. It is quite clear for what purpose the meeting was called. At that meeting there were nine present, and I claim that the member for Canning (Mr. Cross)—

Mr. Cross: How do you know that? Is this backyard tattle?

Mr. SAMPSON: If it comes to backyard tattle, I daresay the hon. member can hold his own without any assistance. However, as I said, there were nine present at that meeting.

Mr. Cross: That is not correct, for a start.

Mr. SAMPSON: I think I may count the member for Canning as one. The statement was made to rebut the effect or report of the considerable meeting held at Gosnells, which was, with one exception, unanimous in opposition to the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: Perhaps that was due to the shadow of the war.

Mr. SAMPSON: The argument of the member for Canning will be shattered when I give the facts. There were nine present at the meeting; and the member for Canning was not justified, I claim, in making it appear to the meeting that the gathering had been called together to discuss the

Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment Bill then before this Chamber.

Mr. Cross: But the meeting did discuss it.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, out there they will discuss anything!

Mr. SAMPSON: During the second reading speech of the member for Canning I asked him what did they—those at the meeting—think of the Bill; and the hon. member replied, "They approved of it."

Mr. Cross: So they did.

Mr. SAMPSON: "So they did." The hon. member persists in that statement.

Mr. Cross: Yes.

Mr. SAMPSON: Further the hon. member said, I believe, that all present at the meeting, with one exception, approved of the Bill.

Mr. Cross: So they did, too.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member also said that in his opinion there were no objections to the Bill and that there would be arguments and disputes and rows—this is fairly comprehensive—along the Canning River—

Hon. P. Collier: A local war!

Mr. Cross: I have proof of it here, too.

Mr. SAMPSON: —along the Canning River as long as the present unsatisfactory position persisted. All that is calculated to mislead the Minister for Water Supplies. In fact, it would mislead anyone who took the words as meaning what was said.

The Minister for Lands: Did you vote against the Bill?

Mr. SAMPSON: Undoubtedly the words used by the member for Canning prompted the Minister for Water Supplies—

The Minister for Lands: Will you vote against the third reading?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am addressing the Speaker, and making some comments on what took place during the second reading stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Let the Minister for Lands listen. The words used by the member for Canning no doubt prompted the Minister for Water Supplies to believe that there was divided opinion, one section of those on the Canning River being in favour of the Bill and one section of those on the Canning River being against it. I claim without any reservation that the member for Canning was unjustified in

his statement. The meeting referred to by him was not called to consider the Bill, but called to consider the Kent street weir. I also claim that what he said had the effect definitely—and I can only think this was the object he had in view—of misleading the Minister and members of this House, all of whom, I am sure, were anxious to deal with the matter on its merits.

Mr. Cross: Departmental files will prove what I said.

Hon. P. Collier: Let us have all the papers on the Table.

Mr. SAMPSON: Although I was not present at that meeting, I know that at least two of those present were not in favour of the Bill. How the member for Canning was able to tell the House that those present were in favour of the Bill passes my comprehension. No motion was submitted to the meeting, and yet the member for Canning comes along with the object of advancing an argument and making statements at variance with the real position.

The Minister for Mines: Let us have a motion of no confidence.

Mr. SAMPSON: This is not a matter of no confidence. It is a matter which seriously affects numerous people. I do not think that even the Minister for Mines and Health would wish to secure the passage of a Bill by misrepresentation of statements.

The Minister for Mines: I say definitely that the other night I did not intend to vote for the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: There we have a statement, clear and definite, from the Minister for Mines and Health that but for the statement of the member for Canning he would not have voted for the Bill.

Mr. Raphael: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that is a false statement concerning the member for Canning. After listening to the speech of the member for Swan and the arguments of the member for Canning, I do not think the statement made by the member for Canning was in any way a false statement. I consider that such an assertion should not be made.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Canning has taken no exception to the statement.

Mr. SAMPSON: Now that the bodyguard of the member for Canning has resumed

his seat, I shall continue. There were at least two present at that meeting who are opposed to the Bill.

Mr. Cross: Who are they?

Mr. SAMPSON: Further, I am told that others present—

The Minister for Lands: That is a bit unusual with regard to any Bill, only two against it.

Mr. SAMPSON: Two out of nine; two whose views are known. The nine no doubt are highly reputable and excellent people. I have not one word to say against eight of them.

Mr. Cross: Why did not you come to the meeting?

Mr. SAMPSON: As regards eight of them I have nothing to say. As to the ninth however, I exercise the privilege of criticising statements made by the member for Canning.

Mr. Cross. You were not even present.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Canning must keep order.

Mr. SAMPSON: Some of those present were not even located on the river; they were neither owners nor occupiers of river land. If the member for Canning does reply, I would like him to express his justification for misleading the House in regard to the meeting. I am quite sure the Minister does not wish a Bill to be pushed through the House by misrepresentation, and there was misrepresentation in regard to the meeting held at Canning. As I said, no motion was submitted regarding the Bill. The Kent street weir was the subject under discussion. It is no exaggeration to say that the Bill is a serious one to many people settled on the river. The matter can be fought out on its merits, but I think the least the member for Canning can do is to admit that an error was made, that perhaps in the enthusiasm of the moment he misrepresented—I cannot use the word exaggerated—the position. I have voiced the objection to the unfair statement that was made, and I feel the Minister himself will regret that the passage of the Bill was influenced by it. Both the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) and the Minister for Health would have taken a different view had they known the actual position; in other words, if they had not been misled by the member for Canning.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.53]: I question whether I am called upon to make a reply at all. The hon. member comes to this Chamber with backyard gossip, mere hearsay. He was not present at the meeting, nor could he name the people who attended it. He knows only what he was told. No representative of the Press was in attendance, nor were any shorthand notes taken.

Mr. Sampson: You should keep to facts.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member was wrong as regards the number of people at the meeting. His statements clearly prove that the Bill is needed to clean up the position.

Mr. Withers: The member for Swan should withdraw.

Mr. CROSS: An expression of opinion was given at the meeting in regard to the Bill, and discussion took place as to the method of taxation.

Mr. Sampson: Was a motion put?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CROSS: The Kent street weir was discussed. The meeting recognised that the two problems were interlocked, and that it would be useless to attempt to control the water in the river, unless effective steps were taken to prevent the salt water from going up the river. I do not propose to say more, except that all statements I made about the feuds, disputes and quarrels between the people settled on the river are well known to the department, and are disclosed by the departmental files. I support the third reading, and thank the Government for having brought the Bill down, because I believe it will result in fair play for all the settlers on the river.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—METROPOLITAN MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulations.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [4.56]: I move—

That Regulations Nos. 17, 18, 23, 24, 30, 31, 32, 39, 53, 54, 64, 65, 72, 73, 76, 80, 81, 85, 88, 89, 94, 99, 106G, 106I, 108, 142, and 144 of the regulations made under the Native Administration Act, 1905-1936, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 8th September, 1939, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 12th September, 1939, be and are hereby disallowed.

I desire to preface my remarks by saying that the department has, in the Minister for the North-West, a sympathetic administrator. I have no criticism to offer as far as he is concerned. Nor do I share the opinion that I have heard expressed that the Commissioner is a ruthless tyrant misusing his position to harass the natives. There is more in the motion than a mere expression of opinion as to the sympathy of the Minister or the control exercised by the Commissioner. Regulations gazetted last year were disallowed by Parliament in November last. I have closely examined the regulations now tabled, and can find very little difference between them and the regulations that were considered and disallowed last year. In one or two instances the word "Minister" has been substituted for the word "Commissioner." With very few alterations, the regulations now tabled are the same as those which Parliament rejected in toto last year. The principle of government by regulation—or an attempt to govern by regulation—has in these regulations the best exemplification I have so far seen.

Mr. Marshall: You are right there.

Mr. BOYLE: The Native Administration Act was passed in 1936, so it is a recent one. The previous Act was passed in 1909. The present Act is the outcome of a searching and exhaustive inquiry by an able Royal Commissioner, Mr. Moseley. The Act is good as far as it goes. That being the case, there is hardly justification for such sweeping regulations as those now tabled by the Minister. Only last week, in the Victorian House of Assembly, Sir Stanley Argyle, the Leader of the Opposition, with the support of many Labour members, protested strenuously against the introduction of regulations practically supplanting the Acts under which they were made. If the Act requires

amendment, I am sure the House will listen with a great deal of sympathy to the Minister in the event of his introducing a Bill designed to amend it. But when there are tabled regulations that have been effective from the date of their gazettal, months before their appearing in the House, government by regulation has definitely been introduced and has, for the time being, supplanted the Act. For the bureaucrat—I do not use the word offensively—who is administering a department, such regulations are a great boon. A man seeking power can secure it by way of regulations. Such a man may find the sections of an Act rather irksome, rather prohibitive, but if he is a clever administrator, he can through regulations obtain precisely what he wants. There are approximately 29,000 natives in Western Australia, of whom 10,000 are bush natives; and they constitute practically a lost race. Undoubtedly, we have attempted to do something for them, but that attempt has really amounted to an effort to save them from utter extinction. I think that most of us who have visited native camps have left them feeling that we have failed to do anything really effective in redeeming the race or bringing the natives up to normal standards. By normal standards I mean the standards that native races are enjoying in other parts of the world. In New Zealand, for instance, the Maori population is increasing, and that race is not governed by regulation. The Maoris have been taught to support themselves.

The Minister for Mines: Surely you would not compare the two races.

Mr. BOYLE: No, I would not compare them, but the treatment of the Maoris has been very different from that accorded to the aborigines of Australia.

The Minister for Mines: The Maoris are a wonderful race.

Mr. BOYLE: In the Kimberleys there are 10,000 aborigines. In the Pilbara district there are 2,500, and in the Murchison north of Carnarvon, 1,500. There are 5,000 south of Geraldton. Altogether there is a total of 19,000 aborigines in addition to the 10,000 bush natives. In that 19,000 are included 3,900 half-castes—natives of a lighter colour—or 20 per cent. of the total native population. In 1905 the half-castes numbered only 900. The position of the coloured people con-

stitutes the real tragedy. Through no fault of their own, these half-castes have been ushered into the world with the stigma of half-blood. I know many half-caste men; one family I know very well. The man's name is Harris. He used to live in Toodyay, and I think he and his family are now in Morawa. He is an educated man, with an excellent family, but those people are suffering all the disabilities of full-blooded natives in this State.

The Minister for the North-West: Why does he not apply for exemption?

Mr. BOYLE: He says he will not do so. I have discussed the matter with him but he asks why he should have to do so. He has all the instincts of a white man and has a fine family, but he declares he will not apply for exemption. Therefore he is subject to all the disabilities suffered by the native race. Six miles north of Kellerberrin, in my own district, there is a native camp. At the invitation of the Kellerberrin Ministers' Fraternal, I visited that camp and I can truthfully say that it is on all fours with those described by Mr. Moseley and inspected by him during his visit to the Great Southern area.

Mr. Marshall: Are they half-castes or full-bloods?

Mr. BOYLE: They are mixed. Altogether there are 54 natives—men, women and children—without any semblance of education whatever and living in shacks under most deplorable conditions. During my visit I nearly broke two regulations. In the first place I had a camera with me. I was advised by the local police to leave the camera at the local police station or I would be subject to prosecution by the Commissioner of Native Affairs. Secondly, I was asked whether I had permission to visit the camp. For the information of the Minister, I may say I dispensed with that permission. I visited the camp. Originally, the camp was located quite close to the town of Kellerberrin but it became an intolerable nuisance and the department decided to shift it six miles north of the town. In order to assist the natives, the board decided upon the unusual course of making a donation from its three per cents. to the department for the provision of corrugated iron. However, the department never availed itself of the road board's

offer. The board sent the following letter to the Commissioner under date 17th April, 1934:—

Dear Sir,—Your letter of 22nd March last was submitted to a meeting of the board held on the 14th inst., and I have to advise you that now the water is laid on, arrangements are being made for transport of the natives during this week, providing weather permits, to the new reserve.

Discussion also took place at that meeting in regard to making some further provision for shelter for these natives, and I was instructed to forward the following resolution which was carried, as follows:—“That this board is prepared to donate the sum of £15 from 3 per cents. if the Aborigines Department is prepared to subsidise £1 for £1 to provide shelter for aborigines on the new site.”

My board feels that some better provision should be made for shelter for the natives than the buildings they usually put up, and is willing to help your department in the manner suggested.

The board will be glad if you will kindly forward your views on this proposition. Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) T. R. Moody, Secretary.

On the 24th April the Commissioner replied as follows:—

Dear Sir,—I received your letter of the 17th inst. regarding the provision of camping material for the natives to be transferred to the new reserve. I very much appreciate the action of the road board in so kindly agreeing to donate the sum of £15 from the three per cents. for this purpose providing this department supplies an equal amount.

I feel that their generous offer warrants the most favourable consideration but do not know at the moment whether funds can be found this financial year, that is before the 30th June next. There is, however, a possibility of doing something by using those derived from another source, and this matter is at present under consideration. I would ask, therefore, if you would be good enough to acquaint the board with the position and allow the matter to stand over for a few days in the hope of my being able to make the necessary provision.

The board's action in this matter constitutes one of the few instances which have come under my notice of local bodies being willing to assist in the very necessary task of caring for the natives.—Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) A. O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines.

The board still has the £15, which it offered to donate. Nothing further was done by the Commissioner and the shacks in which the natives are living are a disgrace. I think Mills & Ware contributed most of the roofs. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) will appreciate that. The discarded tins that were used were useful

but not ornamental or rainproof. The result is that even to-day very little has been done in the matter of housing the natives in that camp. Little has been done except to smother them with a whole heap of regulations. I interested myself in the provision that was being made for the erection of a school. The road board made a further contribution to the Presbyterian Church that was endeavouring to establish a school, which I understand has since been erected, though, I believe, not on the reserve.

To deal with the regulations in full would occupy a great deal of time and there is no need for them to be considered in detail because already they have been discussed. I will briefly refer to them as I proceed. Regulation No. 17 provides that the Minister may cause any native to be kept within the boundaries of a reserve. The Act already provides for that; therefore the regulation is redundant. There is nothing in the relevant section of the Act that justifies a regulation of this sort, but it appears to me as if the Commissioner must have a regulation, and in order to secure one he practically repeats the words of the section. By regulation No. 18 he is given the power to remove a native from a reserve. The House has already disallowed a regulation to that effect, but word for word it has been reintroduced within a few months of its disallowance. Regulation No. 23 provides that any native expelled from any institution or reserve and found thereon without permission commits a breach of the regulations. This was also previously disallowed but has now been reinstated word for word.

Mr. Marshall: What is the definition of “removed”? What is the purpose?

Mr. BOYLE: I will read the regulation.

The Minister for the North-West: Read Section 12 of the Act and then read the regulation.

Mr. BOYLE: I prefer to do the job in my own way if the Minister does not mind.

The Minister for the North-West: I do not mind.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think you should quote the remarks made by the Minister last year.

Mr. BOYLE: I think I will do so. His remarks are worth quoting.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He is a departmental puppet.

Mr. BOYLE: The regulation with which I am dealing reads as follows—

Any native who has been expelled from any institution or reserve and is found entering or remaining upon any institution or reserve without the permission of the Commissioner or an inspector or a protector commits a breach of these regulations.

But that is a breach of the Act, so why bother about a regulation? I suppose that if the regulations are again disallowed we shall have them submitted annually hereafter. No. 24 provides that if a person other than a native desires to enter a reserve the Commissioner may require him to furnish a bond. That also was disallowed last year. Perhaps the Minister will be able to furnish reasons for its re-introduction. No. 30 stipulates that no livestock belonging to any inmate shall remain within any institution or reserve without the authority of the superintendent or manager.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Some of them will remain, all the same.

The Minister for the North-West: It is a very necessary precaution.

Mr. BOYLE: But we disallowed this regulation previously. Perhaps the Minister may be able to satisfy the House that there is a need for it. Regulation 31 provides that no person shall take photographs without the permission of the Minister. I may state that for the convenience of the House I have abridged these regulations. Where I have used seven or eight words to give the effect of a regulation the Commissioner has employed 30 to 40. The House has already disallowed a regulation prohibiting the taking of photographs. What is the fear behind such a regulation? Why should not people be allowed to take photos? There is no other Government institution—except fortifications—that may not be photographed.

Mr. Withers: The natives might be embarrassed!

Mr. BOYLE: Possibly. On the other hand the administration might be embarrassed. I think that is the main fear. I cannot understand why the Commissioner wishes to prevent the taking of photographs. If these institutions are all right, and the Department has nothing to fear, I see no reason why even pressmen should not be allowed to photograph them. But to do so is made

an offence and penalties are provided. No. 32 provides an instance of extreme paternalism. It says—

No person shall either within or without the bounds of any native settlement purchase or attempt to purchase any native weapon or any article at all.

Such a regulation would tend to destroy any initiative on the part of natives. I wish to mention one family belonging to the area I visited. This consisted of the husband, wife and eight children, all of whom were living in a shack. On his way out from Kellerberrin the husband passed a rubbish tip, and amongst what he considered was a discard he found a couch and two old chairs. Whilst working on the couch the native discovered £28 hidden in the upholstery. That was an immediate reward for his industry. I am sorry to say the white person to whom the furniture had previously belonged put in a claim for the £28, but that was disallowed. I presume that under a further regulation 75 per cent. of that money, £21, would be held by the Commissioner. That is going to extremes in the matter of paternalism.

Regulation 39 says that all letters to and from an institution shall pass through the hands of the manager, who may withhold them. Are these natives convicts, are they held in duress, and is there any reason why such correspondence should be held? We are seeking to educate these people. For the use of the community of which I am speaking, a school was erected, and this has been devotedly attended by two teachers who are no doubt instructing the natives how to read and write. The natives are not guilty of any crime except that of being black, but they are to be prevented from receiving or sending any letters out of their camp unless such correspondence passes through the hands of the manager. That is going to extremes.

Mr. Marshall: They could not successfully carry on a courtship in such circumstances.

Mr. BOYLE: It would amount to orderly courtship, and reminds one of the term "orderly marketing." This regulation reeks with bureaucratic control, swivel-chair control, and places these people on an unfair footing from the very beginning.

The Minister for the North-West: No, it does not.

Mr. BOYLE: The only places I know of where letters both inward and outward are supervised are the gaols. This regulation places natives in the position of being convicts or prisoners.

No. 53 will make a special appeal to the Minister, and I will presently quote his own remarks dealing with it. It says that in the case of a native obtaining employment outside a reserve, the Commissioner will determine what portion of his earnings shall be deducted for his dependants living within the reserve. I have an excellent authority for asking that that be disallowed. When simply the member for Kimberley, prior to his elevation to Ministerial rank, the Minister was very wrath on the subject. He referred to it in a speech in the House made on the 16th November, 1938.

The Minister for the North-West: That is a very long time ago.

Mr. BOYLE: That may be so, but I am afraid the Minister is developing a bureaucratic mind. By our standards, last November is a short time ago, less than 12 months ago. I see the Minister for Railways looking apprehensive now.

Hon. C. G. Latham: One would think that those two Ministers would influence the Government.

Mr. BOYLE: One would think so. I will now quote from the remarks, not of the Minister for the North-West, but the member for Kimberley. He said—

No. 53 reads—“Any native who has obtained employment outside an institution or reserve, and whose dependants within an institution or reserve are being maintained at the cost of the department shall, during his absence in employment be liable to pay such weekly sums towards the support of his dependants as may be considered equitable by the Commissioner.” That is most objectionable. In the North of the State many natives are employed at from 6s. to 10s. a week and keep. If this regulation is persisted in the Commissioner can elect to take from the native 2s. or 3s. of his weekly earnings for use by the department. I do not think the House requires any information as to what would happen if this provision were enforced, and half of the pittance now earned by natives were taken from them.

The hon. member put the position better than I am able to do.

Mr. Patrick: Very sound.

Mr. BOYLE: Further on the hon. member, not then a Minister, said—

The Commissioner should not have power to take portion of the native's wages when he has dependants in an institution that belongs to the Government.

There is no necessity for me to stress that any further. The Minister cannot persist in Regulation 53 after using such strong language himself.

Regulation 54 says that where an institution has been declared a native institution the Commissioner shall require the admission of any ward and it shall maintain that ward as long as required by the Commissioner, and such ward may be removed by the Commissioner. Very properly that, too was disallowed. The regulation is extremely dictatorial. The Commissioner may place in an institution that is only partly subsidised by the Government, some undesirable person, and he may also take out of that institution any ward, presumably without reference to the persons controlling it.

Nos. 64 and 65 were previously disallowed. No. 72 was also disallowed. No. 73 provides another case of paternalism, and says that where a contract is entered into between a native and the person employing him, it may be varied by the Commissioner, presumably without reference to either party. I think Form 16 is set up. Regulation 76 was previously disallowed, as were also Nos. 80 and 81. No. 85 says that a specified portion of wages up to 75 per cent. shall be held in trust for such native. This will bear very harshly upon half-castes. I referred to the discovery of £28 by one man. I do not know whether he was allowed to retain the money, but the Commissioner could have taken £21 from him, possibly to form a reserve, at a time when the native required every penny of it. That is one of the regulations with which the Minister dealt so stringently. No. 89 says that fares are to be paid by employers to within 20 miles of the place of employment where the native is picked up. No provision is made for a refund after such period when the native elects to stay on the job. That is grossly unfair to the employer who may have engaged many natives. It would not matter for how long or short a time the native stayed in his employment, the fare would be lost to the employer. Regulation 94 was disallowed. No. 99 says that no employer shall sell or purchase to or

from a native any article of a value above £1. That was previously disallowed. I shall withdraw No. 106 G. from my list. Regulation 106 says that the Commissioner can refuse to receive contributions to the medical fund. Why should he have that power? The regulations say that contributions must be made to the medical fund, but No. 106 gives a bureaucratic Commissioner power to refuse the money. If the money is not paid by the employer the people of the State must bear the burden. Regulation 108 was previously disallowed.

I am keeping the good wine to the last. Regulations 142 and 144 mean "morality by Act of Parliament." If a native is exempt and it is found that he is not married to the woman with whom he is living, the exemption can be cancelled. The regulation says that a certificate of exemption shall not be issued to a native who is living in conjugal relationship but not married. We have heard a reference to the difficulty of making people moral by Act of Parliament, but the Commissioner of Native Affairs intends to have a good shot at doing that. This regulation applies chiefly to half-castes. I agree with the underlying principle if it can be applied to everybody. Quite a number of exemptions might be withdrawn in the case of white people. Some 4,000 half-castes are concerned in these regulations, and many of them are living under exemptions. If the Commissioner in his moral rectitude, and out of a desire to see that everything is all right and above board, finds that a half-caste is not married, he may withdraw the exemption and the half-caste will become a native again. The House would be doing the right thing if it disallowed these regulations.

I have other authorities to quote. One is the Minister for Railways who last session was the member for Kanowna. He moved for the disallowance of no fewer than 13 of these regulations.

The Minister for Railways: Many of them have since been altered.

Mr. BOYLE: Only slightly.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Two "i's" have been dotted and three "t's" crossed.

Mr. BOYLE: My main authority, however, is the member for Canning (Mr. Cross.)

Mr. Thorn: He ought to know.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, or I would not quote him. The hon. member does nothing by halves. He does not shilly-shally, and in that case he moved for the disallowance of all the regulations. I compliment him on his action. His mind rose to the occasion. The member for Kimberley moved for the disallowance of 5 regulations, the member for Kanowna moved for the disallowance of 13 of them, but the member for Canning took in the lot.

The Minister for Mines: He always was a whole-bogger.

Mr. BOYLE: The member for Canning moved—

That in the opinion of this House, the whole of the regulations made under the Native Administration Act, 1905-1936, laid upon the Table of this House on the 1st November, be withdrawn, and that a committee of five members, representing the Government and the religious bodies in the State more directly interested in native mission stations, be appointed to draw up suitable regulations in lieu of those withdrawn.

Again the hon. member displayed his thoroughness. He would not trust the Commissioner of Native Affairs nor even the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: The action there proposed is what has now been adopted.

Mr. BOYLE: The Government would not allow him to do what he proposed.

The Minister for Mines: These regulations are those of the committee that you mentioned.

Mr. BOYLE: If that is the position, another instance of love's labour lost is disclosed. The member for Canning objected to these regulations and now the same are proposed although he objected to them last session. In the course of his remarks the hon. member said—

It is not to be wondered that the regulations are not popular, because they are extremely unfair.

Mr. Wilson: Who said that?

Mr. BOYLE: The member for Canning, who sits on the hon. member's right. I am quoting the best authority on the subject. I say the hon. member is the best authority because I agree with him 100 per cent. No one can question authority of that type. I certainly cannot see that hon. member accepting these regulations. In his further remarks he said—

We need not go very far to obtain expressions of resentment at the gazettal of

such a set of regulations. I do not know whether my experience has been that of other hon. members, but I have received many communications from people expressing disgust and dissatisfaction with the regulations as they have been framed.

I cannot quote a more eminent authority. I agree with those sentiments whole heartedly. Without further ado, I move the motion standing in my name.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

MOTION—LAND SETTLEMENT, KIMBERLEY PROJECT.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland [5.33]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to examine and report upon any and all proposals submitted to the Government for special settlements in the Kimberleys or elsewhere in the North and/or North-West of Western Australia, and generally to investigate and report on the possibility of increasing settlement, and consequent population, economically in the said areas of Western Australia.

I have been influenced in bringing forward the motion by the announcement that representations are being made, chiefly from overseas, regarding the proposed settlement in the Kimberleys—as far as I understand, the proposed settlement is to be in the Kimberleys—and the further announcement made through the Press that the State Government is favourably disposed to the scheme. In Western Australia we have had experience of land settlement schemes that have not been wisely handled. With that previous experience to furnish a guide, Parliament would be wise to take official notice of the scheme that is now being canvassed in the Eastern States. I believe that on a previous occasion Parliament was somewhat stampeded into a major land settlement scheme. I feel sure the Government was involved before Parliament realised exactly what was going on. By that time we had become economically committed to a scheme that had not been properly canvassed and certainly not adequately considered by Parliament. The previous undertaking to which I refer is the Group Settlement Scheme in the South-West, which was negotiated and determined by the State Government and certain British Ministers of the Crown. The present proposal emanates from the same

quarter. In other words, the previous scheme was a Government conception that was discussed in London and the present scheme, as far as I can understand, also emanates from London and is supported by a wealthy group in the heart of the Empire.

Member: Would you support it under better conditions?

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: I believe that on the earlier occasion we were urged to grasp the opportunity to establish a group settlement scheme because we were to obtain financial assistance. It was a case of easy money, if not cheap money, and because we were able to secure financial assistance from overseas and contributions towards the land settlement scheme, the suggestion was advanced that it was desirable for Parliament not to be too critical regarding the proposal or to examine it too closely. Rather were we urged to grasp it with all our political hands in order to encourage finalisation of the negotiations. In my opinion, on that occasion we neglected our responsibilities to the State. We rushed into the project without full investigation. We started the scheme before we were ready and, in my judgment, we have never really caught up with it. The expenditure proceeded apace all the time and it took many years before we were ultimately able to stop it. As a matter of fact, money was being wasted every year really with the knowledge of Parliament, but we had become so deeply involved that the House was not prepared to call a halt in the midst of the expenditure involved or to insist on an investigation after the scheme had been launched. We rushed into it without preparation or organisation and the consequences of that precipitation have, admittedly, been a loss to the State of about £7,000,000. I do not know exactly what have really been the economic results of the Group Settlement Scheme. I do not know that any member of this House has been able to ascertain what was the actual contribution by the British Government or how it was finally capitalised, if there has been capitalisation. I do not know whether anyone has been able to ascertain definitely what the Group Settlement Scheme in the South-West has cost Western Australia. I remember the then Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy) admitting that the writing-off of losses on the

scheme amounted to between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000. I know that the whole of the undertaking was not a failure. On a number of occasions I visited the South-West and I was associated with an investigation by a Royal Commission in the early stages of the scheme.

To indicate how dangerous it is to become involved in an undertaking and then attempt to secure reforms after the scheme has been launched, members have merely to look through the report of the Group Settlement Royal Commission, which exposed all the weaknesses, as far as I can judge and afforded very sound advice to Parliament. On the other hand, I recollect that at the time the Royal Commission's report was not seriously discussed. Further, the statement was then made that no good purpose would be served by taking the recommendations of the Commission into consideration. The losses and waste of money went on merrily for some time after the report of the Royal Commission was submitted to Parliament. Ultimately Mr. Troy took control of group settlement administration and evidently he did consider the recommendations of the Commission, for many of them were adopted. Although effect was given to those recommendations, that action was taken too long after they had been made. The result was that the full economic benefits that would have been obtained had those recommendations been adopted when they were made, did not accrue. Parliament must appreciate the fact that if we become involved in a proposition of such a nature it is most difficult to effect alterations during the progress of the scheme. Members become afraid to deal with what they know to be weaknesses because they always anticipate that the State's organisation will get a better grip and convert the proposition into something economically and otherwise sound.

Therefore it becomes imperative for Parliament to start right, because once a commencement has been made and a stoppage authorised, great difficulty is always experienced in renewing activities. By way of illustration I could provide many instances within the State of similar results being obtained. I may cite the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. Grave difficulties were associated with that project and a tremendous lot of waste occurred at the inception. A Royal Commission was appointed

to investigate matters. Great difficulty was experienced from the start and, due to lack of proper organisation and investigation, much money was lost that otherwise could have been saved, and a lot of consequent sadness could have been avoided had the work not been launched without proper deliberation. I appreciate the fact that limited results of a satisfactory nature have been obtained from the Group Settlement Scheme. Population in the South-West has multiplied, the increase being due to group settlement expenditure. Undoubtedly we did expedite the settlement of that part of the State, but we could have obtained better results than we did and could have saved at least £7,000,000, had we been prepared before we started and thought the scheme out thoroughly so as to enable satisfactory results to follow. Many of the difficulties in regard to our previous attempt at land settlement were due to the fact that we had established an organisation to enable us to put in more than one group a quarter. But due to pressure caused by misunderstandings at the other end and despite unpreparedness at this end, we were rushed into an attempt to establish one group a week instead of one group a quarter. Anyway, we were all involved in it, and I have no wish to have another similar experience.

The proposal to utilise the Kimberleys for the purpose of settlement to give relief to refugees was being supported in London whilst I was there. I met some of the people who were interested in the scheme, and also in the welfare of those poor unfortunate people who were being buffeted about at the time, people without home or country. Those interested in the proposal in London were anxious to contribute towards a scheme that would afford relief to the refugees. I did not encourage the idea of settlement in the Kimberleys because I thought that too little was known about that part of the State for us to support anything of the kind. I did, however, express the view that in the North-West of the State, possibly after closer investigation it might be possible to do something in the way of expanding settlement so that we might absorb desirable settlers in those areas. I do not know why the Kimberley district was selected; but during the brief discussion I had with the people to whom I have referred—and that discussion was not official in

any way; I just met the people as any other person from Western Australia might have met them—I learnt that the locality had been chosen by them and they suggested an area that could be occupied by the refugees under the scheme they were propounding. I pointed out, and I repeat it here, that I was aware of the existing danger of a thin population in the northern part of the State, and in that part of Australia. We all know that there is a sparse population from Geraldton to the Kimberleys, and the danger of a meagre population is that attention is constantly being drawn to the fact that the country could carry many more people, and that if one country was not able to utilise the vacant spaces, another country should have the opportunity to do so. It is very difficult to argue against that.

I submit that the Kimberley area is an unknown quantity. I am aware that a good deal of information has been obtained, and we know also that it has been partly occupied for many years. What I contend, however, is that it has not been properly explored in a way that would justify Parliament or even the Government in saying that there was sufficient data available to warrant settlement on a large scale in that part of the State. As I said in London, why start at the North and work down towards that part of the State where are to be found the amenities of civilisation? Why place hundreds in the Kimberleys while there are only tens in better areas of the thinly-populated part of the North-West? I repeat here, why do we want to go to the Kimberleys when we have a district like the Gascoyne, a locality where the climate is congenial, where the land is good and where we know a small irrigation scheme is already operating.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What about the rainfall?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The question is whether it is possible to conserve the water that does flow for the purpose of giving prospective settlers a chance to develop their areas. Would it not be better to carry out some such scheme rather than settle people where the utilisation of available water would be an economic impossibility?

Hon. C. G. Latham: The conditions in the two places are not to be compared.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know whether they can be compared, and I do

not think anyone else has that knowledge. We should therefore set ourselves to acquire information of that description by means of a select committee before we become involved in any scheme of settlement. If I thought that Parliament or the Government was in possession of the information that I am endeavouring to obtain, I would rest content. I would know then that the position would be adequately protected. But I do not believe that anyone is in possession of the information that we should have before venturing into a proposition such as that suggested. I have a little knowledge of the Ashburton district. Like other members, I have been through the Gascoyne and have seen the cultivation there. It afforded me pleasure to note the attempts made to settle people on the areas in that part of the State, and I have always hoped that we might be able to expand the settlement into something of greater magnitude, and in that way absorb a larger population. There are people who are deeply interested in settlement there, people who have given a good deal of thought to the question, but Parliament as a Parliament and the Government as a Government have not gone into the question of securing expert assistance to acquire knowledge as to what might be done on the Gascoyne. If I may be permitted to speak of my personal experience in the Ashburton district I might inform members that at one time I worked on the banks of the Ashburton River, and my job necessitated the mixing of a good deal of concrete. When I began my task I carted from the bed of the Ashburton River all the metal required for the concrete. The bed was then as dry as the floor of this House; but before I accepted the job, water was flowing down that river between well-defined banks, so well-defined that from trees at the side of the banks it was possible to see the depth of water. We used to swim in that river. With the flow of water, vegetation in the warm land began to grow at a remarkably rapid rate, and by the time I had finished my work there, it was necessary to cut a way through the growth of grass that had sprung up to a height equal to a good wheat crop. As far as the eye could reach there was a luxuriant growth of grass to be seen and an enormous quantity could have been cut for hay. The opportunity was there also in that year to

conserve a great quantity of water for irrigation. Under such conditions there was a glorious opportunity for closer settlement, provided, of course, that water could be impounded and used for irrigation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Does the river flow every year?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know; I am not in possession of the facts.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I know it does not.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I want the information, because we cannot entertain any scheme for settlement without an investigation into the conditions. If the Leader of the Opposition is in possession of the facts, let him assist me to collate them. Let him support the motion for the appointment of a select committee to investigate the possibilities of that thinly-populated part of the State. It should be possible to avoid settling people in the Kimberleys if the opportunities are more favourable further south. I want the investigation to be made. I do not know whether the water, when it does flow in large quantities in the Ashburton River, can be impounded. The question arises as to whether the ground is porous, and we also want to know in the event of its not being porous, whether the water would remain fresh if impounded, and for what length of time. A good deal of information, I am convinced, can be obtained by conducting an inquiry, and with the possession of that knowledge we should then be able to arrive at a correct estimate of the value of the localities in question. I cannot forget that while I was in the Ashburton district a tremendous lot of water was running away into the ocean. As I have said, the water was flowing in a river that had well-defined banks. I was also greatly impressed by the appearance of the vegetation. Grass grew overnight to the extent of an inch, and everywhere one looked there was to be seen a magnificent growth over miles of country. But, as the Leader of the Opposition points out, we must not run into expenditure on the strength of one year's experience. We have to see how often that sort of thing happens and estimate whether the land can be economically used for the limited period—if it is a limited period—that the water is available. I do not know whether any gaugings have been made of the river, or whether there has been any inquiry, but I know that at various times representations

have been made for areas of land on the banks of the Ashburton for the purpose of gardening, and some people were of opinion that irrigation would be a practical proposition. Whether the Government ever closely investigated the matter, I cannot say, but I have been told that settlement in that area was thought to be an economic possibility.

Investigation is needed. In the years to come we should be able to explain why such a large area of good country between the Kimberleys and Geraldton carries a comparatively small population. If we leave out of account the Gascoyne, Ashburton and other rivers not far from Geraldton, and concentrate on the Far North to increase the population of the State, we shall merely be aggravating the position by directing attention to the sparsely populated portion in the south which, from many points of view, is more attractive as a field for settlement. Therefore we want data on which to base the explanation; we want data on record to show that the whole question was investigated before one particular area was selected.

The question arises whether we can justly and humanely place people in those remote and isolated parts of the State, more particularly inexperienced people. The Jewish people will be inexperienced and, though they are wonderfully resourceful, can suffer privations and seem able to overcome difficulties, we should show some consideration for their welfare and try to give them a better area, if possible, for the expenditure of their capital and the building up of their homes. I was in the House of Commons when the question of the Palestine settlement was discussed, and was astonished to hear of the tremendous increase in production from Jewish efforts there. The Jews have achieved wonderful results in Palestine which conveyed the impression that, after all, they were not so inexperienced, or that privation compelled them to make special efforts.

Parliament should certainly take up this matter. Members will recall a complaint by me that Parliament is ignored in many ways. I made a special speech—it did me no good—pointing out that we did not want people outside Parliament to do our work. We ourselves have to do the job; it is not for us to sit back and ignore this proposi-

tion, or leave it to outside people, so that, when complications arise, it will be too late to interfere. People are asking what they have asked on many occasions—"How did Parliament come to allow such great waste of public money in the South-West when it was clear to all that money was being wasted?" I want to do better than that and I believe Parliament wants to do better. The trouble is that at times we are inclined to let things drift and allow ourselves to become involved in some scheme, and then, when once involved, we do not seem able to put things right. On this question we have an opportunity to move in time. The appointment of a select committee would enable us to do a service for the community not only by investigating the proposition that has been submitted but also by examining the whole question of the settlement of the North in the light of the existing conditions.

Not a great deal of attention is given to the North. We have granted leases of very large areas of country to a relatively small number of people, and we have been content to let it go at that. Seeing, however, that we are in charge of the leasehold lands of the State, we should have a stocktaking or survey made to ascertain whether the lands are being used to the best advantage, or whether improved methods can be suggested. We ought to decide whether we are merely going to hand over these large tracts of territory to a limited number of people and then lose all interest in them and expect the lessees to obtain the best results. I have no desire to criticise, but I do wish to discover whether we can get better results than are being obtained. Therefore I have not limited my motion to the investigation of one proposition. I desire that a survey be made of all the possibilities of the northern part of the State to ascertain what can be done. I have a very high opinion of our North. I have travelled up the coast on several occasions and have penetrated inland at various points, and there is no doubt that in the North we have a wonderful heritage. As to the population that it might be capable of carrying, I cannot speak, but stock certainly flourishes there and by wise use of the natural grasses, greater production should be possible. All those points might be investigated with advantage to the lessees in the North.

Mr. Sampson: The proposed settlement of Jews would not involve the Government in any expenditure.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member forgets that, because on a previous occasion we did not do our job as the custodians of public expenditure, the people of this State are bearing a burden of £7,000,000 upon which no interest is being earned.

Mr. Sampson: This is a different proposition entirely.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course; this is a more difficult proposition, one that needs to be carefully investigated before we become involved in it.

Mr. Sampson: The Jewish people have the necessary money.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know the hon. member's idea of administration when money is involved. If he can see cheap money, he will never lose sight of it. Money is his ambition and his god. Money does not attract me; my concern is the welfare of humanity.

Mr. Sampson: But commonsense dictates consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Although the Jewish people have the backing of wealth, I look at the people; the hon. member looks at the wealth.

Mr. Sampson: Look at the practicability of the scheme.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is what I want a select committee to investigate.

Mr. Sampson: You have not indicated that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have more sense than to try to indicate anything to the hon. member. I am trying to indicate it to members generally, and I believe I have made clear even to the member for Swan that to investigate this proposition by means of a select committee is desirable.

Mr. Sampson: Do not become peevish.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not like embarking upon these schemes simply because money is associated with them. It is not on that ground that I want an investigation made. I want a select committee to investigate the financial obligations and determine whether the State can wisely enter upon such a scheme with the assistance of outside money. That is a matter upon which I cannot express an opinion until I know more about the proposal, and I venture the belief that Parliament would like further

information before becoming involved in the proposal. We have been adversely criticised overseas for not doing better with our Group Settlement Scheme. All sorts of accusations, including one of indifference, have been levelled against us for not conserving the financial interests of the scheme, and for not properly caring for the people sent from overseas to undertake the actual settlement.

Mr. Sampson: That is not to say that the criticism was justified.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We should be careful not to give critics an opportunity to attack us again and make it appear that we are incompetent to advise upon and direct a scheme in the best interests of all concerned in the venture. I view this matter with considerable pleasure. I like the idea of securing an increase in the State's population. The great need of Australia is people, and I believe that we can do with the North much better than we have done in the past. Whether we should encourage a proposal such as the one that has been submitted is beyond my capacity to say. I do not know enough about it.

Mr. Sampson: You have made that quite clear.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But the knowledge I have impels me to say. "Let us investigate this scheme before we become associated with it." I trust that the House will approve of the appointment of a select committee in order that the matter might be thoroughly investigated.

Mr. Sampson: You are an optimist.

On the motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

MOTION—FEDERAL TAX ON GOLD.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [6.14]: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, the strongest possible protest should be made against the Federal Government's action in imposing an unjust gold tax, which will operate very seriously against the mining industry of this State and will cause considerable loss and increased unemployment. This House further considers that the Government should send a special mission to Canberra with a view to securing at least—(1) exemption from the gold tax for prospectors who earn in any one year not more than £400; and (2) exemption from the gold tax for all mines in the developmental stage of production that have not yet earned sufficient profits to cover their capital outlay.

I believe that goldfields members in particular will welcome the assistance of a metropolitan member to get this important matter discussed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CROSS: Interest in the proposed tax on gold is not confined to the goldfields, for it is occupying the attention of many people within the metropolitan area. A cursory glance at the situation indicates that the Federal Government could not have given the matter much consideration. The tax represents an extraordinary and wicked imposition upon the goldmining industry. No consideration has been extended to prospectors, nor even to non-profitable mining ventures. Because of war conditions, people in this State expect to have to pay their share of new taxation, but they feel that such taxation should be imposed on a fair and equitable basis.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is there a Federal tax on goldmining?

Mr. CROSS: Not so far. Since the collapse of the goldmining boom, practically no money for the industry has come into the State. The recent success of a number of local companies has, however, given encouragement to investors and has caused a revival of interest in the industry. Until we heard of the proposal to impose a tax on gold, investors were enthusiastically buying stocks. The moment the subject was discussed as a serious proposition, this move was killed. Mining dividends paid in this State represent over £1,000,000 per annum, and this works out a little over £1 for every ounce of gold produced. For the year ended the 31st December, 1938, 1,167,791 fine ounces of gold were produced, and the dividends paid during that period amounted to £1,103,244. According to an announcement in the "West Australian" to-day the price of gold has been fixed at £10 10s. per fine ounce, and this price will continue for some time.

The Minister for Mines: Where has it been fixed?

Mr. CROSS: That statement was made in the Press. If the proposed tax were levied on the gold production for 1938, the amount that would have to be paid to the Federal Government would be £210,520 more than was paid in dividends from Western Australian mines during that

period. The proposal is ill-considered and unfair. So unfair is it in its incidence that it has caused dissatisfaction and dismay throughout the State. A prospector who goes out into the backblocks, lives under very hard conditions, on indifferent food and insufficient water. He may be carrying his life in his hands and may have to work for many months without result. Yet he will have to pay tax upon the first ounce of gold he may discover. No consideration has been given to unprofitable low-grade propositions. Mines that have no chance of recovering their original capital expenditure will be taxed on every ounce of gold they produce. Small shows will be very hard-hit. Quite a number of low-grade mines are operating in this State. During the last few days people in the city have declared that if the tax is imposed many of these shows will have to close down immediately. Yesterday a director of one mining company expressed the opinion that the tax would lead to the closing-down of at least two-low-grade mines, one of which would be the Youanmi. The number of men employed on that mine on the 30th June last was 243.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is it suggested that the mine would have closed down but for the increase in the price of gold?

Mr. CROSS: Because of the low grade of ore being mined, the imposition of a tax will render it impossible for the company to carry on.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The tax would only be imposed on the additional price of gold.

Mr. CROSS: I have already said that the tax would amount to over £200,000 in excess of the dividends paid last year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Evidently some of the companies have been hanging on to the gold in the hope that the value would rise to £11 or £12 an ounce.

Mr. CROSS: I think not. The mines clean up every month, and the gold is sent straight away to the Mint through the banks. The increased price of gold gave low-grade mines a ray of hope, but with the imposition of a tax on every ounce of gold produced—taking gold at its present price, this would amount to 22s. 6d. per ounce—they would have no chance of carrying on. The proposal will put a number of low-grade ventures out of action and affect many prospectors. It will make all the difference between profit and loss. I would like to give an

illustration to show how unfairly the tax will bear upon some mines. A Yellowdine company is now operating a new show, from which it is expected to get a return of £30,000. In point of fact the company has already sunk, in capital expenditure, over £40,000. In spite of the high probability that it will never get back its initial capital outlay, it will have to pay tax on every ounce of gold won. In proposing to fix the tax for the duration of the war no account has been taken of the tremendous costs bound to result, especially after the first 12 months of war. That being so, small companies will be hit hardest. Some hon. members know, and others will easily realise, that large companies can buy big supplies of stores.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not know how you reconcile that argument with your anti-profitsteering measure.

Mr. CROSS: It would be fair to levy a tax on gold, but to impose the tax by the method proposed by the Federal Government would be distinctly unfair and inequitable. The larger companies can afford to put in capital for the purpose of buying big quantities of stores in advance; but the smaller companies, not having large amounts of capital and being unable to provide storage capacity, are compelled to buy stores from hand to mouth, so to speak. To arrive at what is likely to happen in the next three or four years, we can only look back to what happened during the last war. Between 1914 and 1918 mining costs increased immensely, the prices of some stores having actually trebled. I shall give an example of a mine then operating at Mt. Magnet, the show worked by Messrs. Cummings and Fox. They were treating about 1,000 tons of fairly low-grade ore monthly, and up to the commencement of the last war were making an annual profit of about £1,500.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was it fairly low-grade ore? You have the figures there.

Mr. CROSS: No. I have, however, this information, that by the end of 1915 this show working on the same grade of ore had ceased to make profits and had incurred heavy losses by reason of increased cost of mining requisites. The show had to be closed down at the end of 1915.

Yesterday I was speaking with the manager of one of the largest low-grade shows in Western Australia. He expressed the opinion that because of the increased cost of stores such as cyanide, oil fuel, acetate

of lead, and quick-silver, and also of machinery his company already found itself considerably worse off than it was before the price of gold rose above £7 8s. 6d. in London. I propose to quote particulars of differences which have already occurred in the prices of mining requisites in this State. I shall quote from a letter written by the secretary of a mining company operating at Mt. Magnet. He states—

On Thursday, August 31, prior to the outbreak of the war, I entered into contracts for cyanide and acetate of lead. Cables were sent by our agent in England fixing the prices, which were agreed to.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Mr. CROSS: The letter continues—

On Thursday, September 14, our agent informed us that the suppliers could not hold themselves to the contracts, which were as follows:—Cyanide, August 31, £90 per ton; on September 14, £102 per ton. Acetate of lead, £48 per ton; now £55 per ton. Zinc shavings, £45 per ton; now £47 10s. per ton. Quicksilver, £20 to £24 per ton; now £26 to £30 per ton.

And this morning I was shown information cabled from Great Britain yesterday which disclosed that quick-silver is being quoted at £41 per ton in London. That makes the price of quick-silver delivered in Western Australia, allowing for exchange, £51 5s. per ton, without taking into account the higher freights and increased rates of insurance which are inevitable. The letter continues—

The increase in fuel oil and lubricating oil of 1d. and 3d. per gallon respectively means £20 per month increase to my company. With the few items enumerated above we are already knocked for an extra £50 per month, which means 6d. per ton increase.

One readily visualises that with increased freights and higher insurance rates mining costs will rise still further. It is contended by the companies concerned—and with justification, I think—that already any benefit which mines may have secured from the increase in the price of gold since the outbreak of war is being eaten up by increased cost of stores. And that is not the end of the story. In a report submitted by the same company on the 23rd August, shareholders were informed that the company was about to increase its treatment of ore by 1,000 tons per month. I understand that quotations had been obtained for the new plant to bring about the increase of tonnage showing a maximum expenditure

of £9,000. But to-day it is impossible to obtain a hard and fast quotation. On Friday last, the 15th September, the company was advised by its manager that a machinery firm which had been prepared to undertake the work was no longer prepared to bind itself down to a hard and fast price, and had given a new estimate of £13,000. Need I remind members that new mining machinery is almost impossible to obtain at any price?

Member: Why?

Mr. CROSS: For the simple reason that machinery firms will, according to experience gained during the last war, be engaged on manufacture of munitions and therefore will not be able to supply machinery.

The Minister for Mines: Where? In the Old Country?

Mr. CROSS: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: Mining companies can get in Australia all the mining machinery they require.

Mr. CROSS: They have not been able to do so in the past.

Mr. Sampson: The Wiluna plant came from England.

Mr. CROSS: A lot of the machinery came from Great Britain.

The Minister for Mines: There is no reason why that should be so.

Mr. CROSS: If the companies cannot procure new machinery, the necessity for repairs to old plant becomes more frequent and more costly.

Mr. Doney: The Minister should know, and he says it can be done in Australia.

Mr. CROSS: I am glad to hear that the companies can procure such machinery in Australia. As a matter of fact, the mining companies claim that much of the machinery they require cannot be obtained here. As the Minister will know, the latest tool-sharpening machine cannot be made in Western Australia, nor yet in Australia, for the simple reason that it has been patented in Great Britain and America.

The Minister for Mines: Tools can be sharpened without using that particular machine.

Mr. CROSS: Probably so, but the Minister knows the machine to which I refer and appreciates the fact that it is a labour-saving device. Ten times as many drills can be sharpened by it in any given time as, for instance, the plant on the Lake

View and Star mine, which is certainly not the latest drill-sharpening machine. That is my opinion. The contention has been raised that the incidence of the proposed Federal tax will establish a new principle. Many people are curious to know whether the principle proposed to be initiated by the tax will be applied to other industries. I remind hon. members that the Federal Government's proposal will hit Western Australia harder than any other State. We produce nearly all the gold mined in Australia. On the figures I quoted to-night, a tax of 22s. 6d. per fine ounce produced will mean that £1,250,000 will be taken from the industry under that heading alone. Moreover, the proposed tax is to be imposed on gross production. I wonder whether it is intended to impose similar taxation on the production of every other industry. Will the Federal Government apply the tax to every pound of sugar produced in Queensland, irrespective of whether the factory is run at a profit or a loss? Is it proposed to extend this vicious principle to the production of the Collie coal mines? If the imposition of the tax on gold production is fair, surely it will be equally fair to levy the charge on the sugar industry or the iron industry at Broken Hill.

Mr. Hughes: That would be an outrage.

Mr. CROSS: Of course. If an attempt were made to impose such a tax on every bushel of wheat produced by the farmers, it would certainly be regarded as outrageous. We must remember, too, that the industrial concerns in the Eastern States have benefited, and will continue to benefit considerably, because of orders received for the manufacture of munitions. Why should the Federal Government seek to impose such an iniquitous tax on the gold-mining industry in Western Australia, having regard to the State's experience in the wheat and pastoral areas during the drought periods? Then, again, Western Australia has been prevented from taking advantage of opportunities profitably to export quantities of its minerals. Let members recollect the embargo imposed on the exportation of iron ore. Let them have regard to the position of our manganese deposits. For some time past manganese exports would have been profitable, but we were prevented by the Federal Government from engaging in that business. Now the proposal is to impose

a tax on every ounce of gold produced here, whether the mine can be worked profitably or not, and such a proposition is distinctly unfair. A tax of such a nature strikes at the basic industry of this State, and in my opinion, as well as in that of many mining people, if imposed, the tax will result in many men being thrown out of employment. In times like the present it is imperative that all our men shall be kept at work. Surely members will agree upon the importance of this State producing every ounce of gold possible, particularly at present. Most decidedly we shall play our part in the task of winning the war if we produce all the gold we can possibly recover. Every encouragement should be given to the industry with that end in view. If such taxation is to be levied, then the Federal Government should at least grant the exemptions I have indicated in my motion. Those exemptions should include prospectors, who should be left free in respect of the first £400 of income saved. Further, all mining companies should be exempt until they recover their capital outlay and show a profit on operations. The gold-mining industry should be placed on the same basis as any other. I agree that an extra tax on profits would be a fair proposition, but to impose a tax on a company that may be working at a loss would be distinctly unfair. If the Federal Government persists in its intention, obviously many mines will be closed and men thrown out of work. The possession of gold may be an important factor in the winning of the war. When hostilities have been in progress for some time, and the Mother Country, Australia and other Dominions are unable to produce munitions in sufficient quantities, the possession of gold will enable the Empire's requirements to be purchased in neutral countries.

The Minister for Mines: Will there be any neutral countries?

Mr. CROSS: There may not be many in that category before the war is concluded, but quite a number of the nations are still sitting on the fence. However, the imposition of the proposed tax on gold is outrageous and grossly unfair.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is the fourth time you have made the statement.

Mr. CROSS: A rumour has gained currency that the Senate has thrown out the proposal.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No!

Mr. CROSS: During the tea suspension I made inquiries but could not secure any confirmation of the report.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Did not you ring Canberra?

Mr. CROSS: If I were the Leader of the Opposition, I would not make such stupid interjections.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There was nothing stupid about that interjection. If the Senate has thrown out the taxation proposal, the time of the House can be saved.

Mr. CROSS: I say again that the proposal to levy a tax on gross production is entirely wrong, and Western Australia should take the strongest possible exception to it and use every endeavour to prevent the Federal Government from levying such an impost, which would certainly end in disaster for us. It is a short-sighted policy and I believe it has not been thoroughly considered. The tax, if imposed, would result not only in disaster for Western Australia, but the whole Commonwealth. I hope the House will agree to the motion. Even if this tax be not agreed to by the Commonwealth Parliament, the Commonwealth Government will certainly try to impose it in some other way. If the motion does nothing else, it will at least ensure that the Federal Government will know that if we must pay taxes, those taxes should be fair and equitable. We have always paid our share of Commonwealth taxation and cannot be accused of being unpatriotic in that regard.

Mr. Hughes: We must pay.

Mr. CROSS: And we have not had fair treatment at the hands of the Commonwealth Government. I submit the motion.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [8.1]: I second the motion. It is rather unusual for a metropolitan member to move a motion of this kind. The goldfields members had every intention to take the matter up; it is not as though they were sitting down on their job. I had in mind to move a motion somewhat similar to that now before the House. In my opinion, the proposed tax is an imposition. I do not say that the gold-mining industry is a struggling industry,

but it is not in a position to withstand such a terrific impost. I heard the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. C. G. Latham) mention that £9 per ounce was a handsome price for gold. It is, and the mining companies that cannot make a profit on gold at £9 per ounce must be in a bad way. However, reference to the report of the Mines Department for the past year will show that the gold won in Western Australia averaged a little under 6¼ dwts. per ton. That is an indication of the low-grade quality ore being treated in Western Australia to-day. In the case of a low-grade proposition, it is essential that some consideration must be shown to a mine during the period when it is building itself up to become a producer. Many points raised by the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) in the course of his argument were fair; but others, in my opinion, were wrong. He spoke of the impost on gold being fixed on a flat rate of £9 per ounce; but there are other factors and conditions to be taken into consideration. The outbreak of war will probably result in increased cost of production. I suppose every primary industry will suffer from such increased cost; but the mining industry has peculiarities of its own. Before I deal with them, I should point out the effect which the proposed impost would have on prospectors. As the member for Canning said, prospectors are likely to work for nine or ten months a year without any return; but in the last month or two they may win 30oz. or 40oz. of gold, upon which of course they would not be called to pay the proposed impost. A prospector working under the Government scheme at present must pay 20 per cent. of the gold won by him to the Government. Must he, in addition, be compelled to pay 75 per cent. to the Commonwealth Government? No account is taken of cost of living, or cost of equipment. In some instances the cost of equipment is as much as £60 or £100, if the prospector has a motor car or has to hire motor transport. Under the mining award, when gold reaches a certain price a special impost must be paid to all men employed in a mine. I shall quote subparagraph (1) of paragraph (b) of Clause 3 of the mining award—

The standard price of gold per ounce in Australian currency to the nearest half-sovereign as ascertained from a return supplied by the Perth branch of the Royal Mint, averaged for the quarter ending September,

1934, namely, eight pounds ten shillings, shall be taken as the norm, and equivalent to an industry allowance of 2s. per shift or 12s. per week.

Then follows sub-paragraph (2)—

For each increase or decrease of 10s. per ounce, the said allowance shall increase or decrease, as the case may be, by the sum of 4d. per shift, or 2s. per week.

A goldmining company selling its gold to-day must pay about 20s. per week per man employed by it. That is a large sum of money, when it is taken into consideration that the Commonwealth Government proposes to ask the mining companies to subscribe 24s., on the present price of gold, for every ounce they win.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is there no limit?

Mr. TRIAT: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: None whatever?

Mr. TRIAT: None whatever. That is fair; it is not a hardship. It is a loaded allowance. Under the present scheme, with gold worth £12 10s. per oz., the companies receive only £8 8s. 1¼d. Had the Commonwealth Government been aware of this special incidence, in my opinion it would not have sought to impose an additional tax. In my opinion, goldmining companies in Western Australia are quite prepared to meet taxation. I say that candidly, although I have not discussed the matter with mine managers. I have not had the opportunity to do so that was available to the member for Canning. Nevertheless, knowing the mine managers as I do, I am definitely of opinion that they would be quite prepared and willing to pay a tax on profits.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You do not move in the same circles as does the member for Canning.

Mr. TRIAT: I would not insinuate that. I feel sure the mining companies are willing to stand up to a tax on their profits, especially as the proceeds of the tax would be applied in the prosecution of the war. Mining companies would not object to paying a tax on their profits, provided the same tax was levied on all other classes of business. But to impose an additional tax such as that which is now being discussed, is unfair. I do not wish to labour the question, but every industry should be prepared to stand up to taxation in these special circumstances. Some two or three weeks ago I heard the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) remark that no one in Western

Australia, or in Australia, should be a penny better off when the war finishes than when it started. To impose this additional burden on the mining industry will cripple it. Many mines will probably cease working, and consequently men will be thrown out of employment. The number of men employed on gold mines this year is 800 less than last year. That is because some mines are going out of existence and also because men who have been employed on erecting plants are not now so engaged. The gold mining industry is essential to the welfare of Western Australia. It employs 15,000 men to-day and an additional 40,000 to 45,000 people are living upon it. The incidence of the gold tax suggested by the Commonwealth Government will be, as I have said, disastrous to Western Australia. A tax on profits, however, would not be disastrous to any business, whether it be goldmining or any other kind. I intend to support the motion moved by the member for Canning because it does endeavour to prevent the Commonwealth Government from imposing this tax, and thereby enable prospectors to make a living. I believe the companies in Western Australia will be prepared to bear a reasonable tax on any profits made from goldmining. I trust the motion will be carried.

MR. LEAHY (Hannans) [8.11]: I must say something about this matter, though I feel at a loss after having heard some of my colleagues discussing the mining situation as they have done. I also wish to enter a protest against the proposed tax on gold produced. I am sure that when all those who are concerned with the progress of mining in Western Australia give serious consideration to the matter, they will realise what is likely to occur if the tax is imposed. I do not wish to weary the House by covering the ground already traversed by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) and the member for Canning (Mr. Cross), but in recalling what has been said about gold mines and gold-bearing lodes, I am reminded of an incident that occurred in 1919 during the Hampton Plains boom. I was travelling with some mining investors when we came across a man called "Dick, the Devil." I do not know his correct name, but that is what he was called. He was digging a costeen, and I asked him how he was getting

on. He replied, "All right." I asked him, "Have you found anything?" and he answered, "Yes, we have discovered a lode here," "How wide?" I inquired, and he said, "About nine feet." The investors immediately jumped out of the buggy and said, "My word, that is fine; this looks a good proposition. How far have you traced it east and west?" To which Dick the Devil replied, "Well, the last I saw of it—and it was still gold-bearing—was down under the Canning Bridge." Consequently I can quite understand the interest taken in gold by some of the metropolitan members.

I do seriously enter a strong protest against the proposed tax. I do not mind a tax being imposed on profits, but I strenuously object to one imposed on the wholesale production of gold. There is another fact that might be borne in mind in this connection. It may be news to members that from 90 per cent. to 95 per cent. of the profits derived from goldmining in this State goes to shareholders and directors overseas. I know perfectly well that all those shareholders and directors are good loyal citizens, and supporters of the British Empire, and I feel sure that they would not for one moment object to a tax on profits. Not only overseas but in the Eastern States also there are directors and shareholders deriving some reasonable annual dividends from mining propositions in Western Australia, and I am sure they take the same attitude. If a tax is to be imposed, it must be levied on profits because that is the only reasonable tax that can be introduced. My opinion is the same as that of my colleague, namely that, if the tax proposed is levied, unemployment will be caused and a number of small producers of gold will be deprived of a livelihood because they will not be able to pay their way. Possibly they could make ends meet from month to month, but they would have no future. I hope that if the imposition of a tax is seriously considered, the people who are receiving dividends and whose money is not being spent in the Commonwealth will be taxed on a profit basis, and that there will be no tax on production. I will not explain in detail how a prospector producing an ounce of gold is likely to be imposed on if he is required to pay a tax on production, but will conclude by repeating that if any proposition of this kind is submitted, I hope the tax will be imposed on people who can

afford to pay and that the progress of the mining industry will not be retarded.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [8.17]: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "unemployment" be struck out.

My reason for submitting this amendment is that if the House adopts the motion moved by the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) the effect will be stultified. I think the majority of members will agree with the first part of the motion. At the risk of reiteration, I assert that the tax on the goldmining industry proposed by the Federal Government is most unjust in its incidence. From my observation of Federal affairs I cannot help feeling that if the gold produced in Western Australia were being mined in New South Wales, the suggested tax would not be so severe. I think the distance of Western Australia from the other States and its small representation in the Federal Parliament are responsible for the proposed tax. We are all aware that the mining industry in this State will bear the greatest part of the burden. The reason I have moved the amendment is that already our Federal members of Parliament have opposed the passing of the suggested measure, and I doubt whether any mission sent from this State to the Federal Government would affect the position. If the motion is carried, we shall to a certain extent be endorsing the Federal Government's proposal, because the position will then be that we contend for certain exemptions. This House should declare either for or against the principle of taxation on production, not only of gold but of every commodity. If we do that, we shall have done our best. The motion would further imply that if a prospector, no matter what his expenses had been for some time previous to striking gold, earned £410 in a year, he would have to pay tax on approximately 40 ozs., which would be a severe imposition on his earnings. Recently I met a number of men in the Marble Bar and Nullagine district who had been battling their way in the back country, and because there was an indication of the price of gold increasing—

Hon. C. G. Latham: But for the war that would never have happened.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am referring to a period before the war. Those men displayed initiative and undertook prospecting, but there are certain marginal propositions in that area which, if subjected to the severe impost proposed by the Federal Government, cannot bear the burden, and the result will be an increase in the number of our unemployed. I hope that the amendment will be carried and that the protest will be forwarded to the Commonwealth authorities, so that they will be in no doubt as to the opinions held by the representatives of the Western Australian people.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

BILL—GERALDTON HARBOUR WORKS RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

MOTION—HEALTH ACT.

To Disallow By-law.

Debate resumed from the 6th September on the following motion by Mr. Tonkin (North-East Fremantle):—

That by-law No. 6A, made by the council of the City of Perth under the Health Act, 1911-1937, published in the "Government Gazette" of the 30th December, 1938, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 8th August, 1939, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [8.23]: I do not know whether the member for North-East Fremantle proposes to proceed with his motion.

Mr. Tonkin: I do.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: After listening to the mover's speech, the Minister for Health had an inspection made, and by courtesy of the Minister I have been able to see the report of his officers. By his so doing, I have to admit, he forestalled me, and was certainly alive to the needs of the occasion. I do not know whether the member for North-East Fremantle has perused the report, but I suggest that he should do so before proceeding further with the motion.

Mr. Tonkin: I have seen the report, and it has not caused me to alter my opinion.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Evidently the hon. member has an idea that every flat should be regarded as a dwelling and should be equipped with a bathroom and a wash-house. I think that every flat ought to have a bath, the provision of which is absolutely necessary to ensure privacy; but to contend that a block containing 36 flats should have 36 washhouses would be ridiculous.

Mr. Tonkin: I do not say that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member said that a flat should be treated as a dwelling-house, and a dwelling-house has both of those appurtenances. I intend to read portions of the report made by the Minister's officers to show that there is no need to insist upon a washhouse being provided for every flat. If there was need for it, I would support the hon. member. The Health Act contains a provision that every flat shall be regarded as a dwelling. The powers given to local health authorities have been exercised by the City of Perth, and Section 98 of the Act reads—

(1) No person shall erect, rebuild, maintain, or use any house, or keep or use or suffer to be kept or used any public place or private place without providing for the same sanitary conveniences, and also bathroom and laundry facilities, to the number prescribed, constructed and equipped in accordance with the by-laws of the local authority.

Thus the City of Perth has taken the power authorised by Parliament and has decided that one to 12 was sufficient.

The Minister for Health: One to ten.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so. The report of the officer who made the investigation showed that even one washhouse to 12 flats was sufficient, although I do not say that we should adopt that proportion. The inspection was made on the 26th and 27th July and the 1st August. The inspector, Mr. D. A. Evans, was accompanied by Inspector Dunne on the 26th and 27th July, by Inspector Salter on the morning of the 1st August, and by Inspector Shrigley in the afternoon. I propose to read the comment at the end of the detailed statement of the inspection—

In conclusion, I may state that a summary of the consensus of the opinions of the majority of the tenants interviewed is that the laundry facilities provided are adequate, as only two of those interviewed were malcontents, and these, under cross-examination, could not verify the statements made, one admitting that she never had to wait for the convenience of others using them, and the

other that she found that the wash-house and facilities were not left in a clean state by the previous user thereof.

During the course of the inspection, only two of the numerous wash-houses were actually in use, and the whole generally were found in a very clean condition.

It was learned during my interviews that the period of time the wash-house is used by tenants is minimum two hours, maximum three hours.

My own observations lead me to the opinion that the flats visited have adequate facilities provided, the chief defect being that the lines to dry the clothes, owing to the limited area available at some of the flats, are totally inadequate.

Mr. Tonkin: If they did not wash, they would not have any clothes to dry.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In the course of his inquiries the inspector visited 15 buildings in the City of Perth, containing 211 residential flats. The report discloses that the Riviera Flats number 24, 16 double and eight single. There are two sets of troughs and two gas-heated coppers, and everything is satisfactory there. At Arbordale there are 36 flats, 26 double and 10 single, three sets of troughs, one for each 12 flats, three gas heaters, and of all the tenants interviewed only one woman objected. The inspector went to London Court, where there are 24 flats, each occupied by two persons. In that building three washhouses are deemed to be sufficient. I do not think it is the desire of the hon. member, by his motion, to force property owners, through the City by-laws, to provide one washhouse for two flats, or even three flats. The result would be that a great number of wash-houses would never be used and would become harbours for useless junk. I made inquiries of numbers of people living in flats. In many instances two young fellows live together, or two girls take a flat between them. They say that is preferable to living in some boarding houses, and that at no time have they done their own washing, but have sent it out. If they lived in a boarding house or hotel they would send out their linen to be washed. They have no intention of doing their washing, and there would, therefore, be no need to make provision for it to be done on the premises. The Government inspectors are extraordinarily careful men, much more careful, I used to say, than were the city inspectors. They have satisfied me that there are sufficient facilities at the various flats. Of what use is it to compel owners to erect a number of

washhouses that will only lead to an increase in the rent imposed upon the tenants, and will never be used? We cannot force the City Council to make by-laws to that effect. Were we able to do so, and insisted upon owners providing additional washhouses, the rents would increase. People who have money invested in property do not like to see it lying idle. The tenants themselves do not require the additional facilities. The result would be a reversion to the unsatisfactory type of boarding house, of which many are to be found in all cities, or to cause people to stay at hotels. People who live in flats have a much more comfortable existence than they would have elsewhere. They have all the necessary sanitary conveniences, their own bathrooms, and are certainly better off than they would be in boarding houses. If the hon. member will reconsider the matter, I am sure he will agree it is better not to force people back to the old boarding house conditions. For a long time the city of Perth had no by-laws relating to washhouses or sanitary conveniences, apart from the general by-laws that it was compelled to frame under the Act. What would happen if these regulations were disallowed? Is it to be imagined that the City Council would frame a by-law insisting upon the provision of additional washhouses? It cannot be compelled to do that unless we amend the Act.

Mr. Tonkin: We might even do that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member may not get his own way in that respect. The Act provides, as I have stated, for the provision of sanitary conveniences, bathrooms, laundries, etc., to the number required in accordance with the by-laws of the local authorities. If the City Council will not bring down another by-law, what can we do about it? The City Council has certainly made an attempt to regulate the number of washhouses. Prior to that no such provision existed. We should not condemn the local authority until it has had an opportunity to test out these regulations. The first thing I wanted to know about London Court was where the drying space had been provided. That is most important. Perhaps the hon. member does not know the answer.

Mr. Tonkin: The drying space is on the roof.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, but the space is limited.

The Minister for Lands: Each flat has a bathroom.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, and sanitary conveniences. People do not live in the flats with the intention of doing their own washing. They prefer to send it to a laundry. The main idea of the flat-liver is to avoid domestic activities.

Mr. Withers: Not altogether.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Let the hon. member ask the tenants. I inquired of one tenant why he had selected a flat instead of a home with its open spaces and a garden.

Mr. Withers: You are referring to married women?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The answer was that there was too much work in a home. In many instances the man and his wife are in business together. They lock up the flat all day and work at their occupations until Saturday, when they go off for the week-end. They leave the linen outside the door; it is collected and returned to the flat.

Mr. Withers: Single flat dwellers do most of their own work, and live in the flat to avoid the expense of boarding.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Many of them do otherwise.

The Minister for Lands: You have been converted to flat life, have you?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hate the thought of a flat. There is no home life there. I have visited what is known as a bachelor's flat. It contained a kitchenette, where the occupants made their tea and toast in the morning. They had their lunch and dinner in town, and went to the pictures or home again at night. They had no intention of doing any work in the flat.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think they are quite as saintly as that.

Mr. Withers: You had better pay a visit to my area.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not want to go anywhere with the hon. member. I have heard many stories about the wanderings of some members of Parliament. We had better leave well alone. I am afraid this motion somewhat resembles the stories we heard during the inquiry regarding the city of Perth. I am inclined to believe that this emanates from the same source. The foundation for the stories is not very sound. It cannot be the hon. member's

desire to see a number of useless buildings foisted on flat dwellers who do not require them.

Mr. Tonkin: You keep on putting into my mouth words I did not use.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I heard the hon. member's speech, and read it over so that I might be accurate when dealing with it. Some of the stories told by flat dwellers are of interest. One building contains 36 flats, namely "Arbordale" in St. George's terrace. Inspector Evans reports as follows:—

The caretaker informed me that the majority of the tenants sent their washing out to private laundries. This was verified as several bags of laundry material were observed outside flats, waiting to be called for by the laundry vehicles. He also stated that none of the single flat occupiers used the laundry and also that there was no congestion or inconvenience to occupiers who used the facilities, and that the three sets provided had proved adequate. All the double flats were visited, but here again the majority of the tenants were either away or would not reply to a knock on the entrance door. The following occupiers were interrogated:—Flat 30 uses laundry every Wednesday and says she has never been inconvenienced and facilities are adequate. Flat 25 sends all linen to laundry, but added that she had never been inconvenienced or found any congestion when she used the facilities, and was satisfied they were adequate. Flats 20, 19, 8 and 5 use the laundry and are quite satisfied that they are adequately provided. Flat 31 informed me that she sent all linen to a private laundry, but used the facilities provided and found them inadequate. She admitted she had never had occasion to wait when she found it necessary to wash anything.

She was the one tenant who had a grouch.

Nos. 15 to 20: These informed me that all laundry was sent out and they never had occasion to use the facilities provided.

That is one of the largest blocks of flats, and the report is from the departmental inspector—not from the Perth City Council's inspector. It would be useless for this House to notify the Perth City Council or its officers that we are dissatisfied with the number of wash-houses provided, when in reality there are plenty of them. In the circumstances I hope the hon. member will allow the Perth City Council to try out the new by-law. That body is endeavouring to assume some control of the blocks of flats being built, so that necessary conveniences may be installed. Previously there

was no compulsion to put in any wash-houses. If the Perth City Council is about to do something in that respect, a certain space for drying purposes should also be provided. Thirty-six families would require a large drying space. But of course the position suggested is not likely to occur. Let the mover of the motion go with me over some flats on Saturday and Monday, and we shall see what will happen.

Mr. Withers: Why go with him, and not with me?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Because the mover has a more innocent face. Laundries are in fact provided, and there is no need for the motion. Wherever all this information came from, it did not come from the mover direct. Having a nice little home, he does not frequent these flats. He has been informed, and has again been wrongly informed. Further, I believe he has been informed from the same source from which most of the trouble relative to the city of Perth reaches this Chamber. I trust the hon. member will not press the motion to a division. It would place the House in a ridiculous position to require conveniences that are not needed. The only effect would be to increase the rents of flats.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [8.43]: I wish to deal with this question from an angle differing from that assumed by the Leader of the Opposition. In the first place, as Minister controlling local government and dealing with the Perth City Council and road boards in respect of building by-laws and town planning—

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not say too much about town planning.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS:—I have been associated with this particular by-law promulgated under the Health Act. The Leader of the Opposition suggests we leave well alone. However, I think it is not so well. In respect of housing, the City of Perth insists that a house shall not be built on a frontage of less than 50 feet, and a block of 6,000 square feet is stipulated before building is permitted. Yet in respect of flats, which are covered by the same by-law as houses, the position is utterly different. I can take the Leader of the Opposition to a two-storey building containing eight flats and situated in Stirling-street,

in a residential area. That two-storey building occupies a block of 50 feet by 125 feet.

Hon. C. G. Latham: This by-law does not affect that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. There is one wash-house for those eight flats, and those eight flats are homes. They are classified as homes, and the by-law prescribes that in building a home one must provide a wash-house. I do not want this motion treated in a frivolous manner. In the case I have mentioned, there is one wash-house to eight homes; and, my Under Secretary remarked, there are only seven days in the week. Eight families to one wash-house! Last year we had a Royal Commission to deal with this subject, and its report called attention to certain flats within the metropolitan area. I had believed that as a result of the report the Perth City Council would take a lesson; but almost immediately following the publication of the report this by-law was promulgated. Just after the House rose, on the 24th December, the by-law was published. When members assert that the Perth City Council has a right to do this, I would remind them that the by-law does not become law until it has been laid on the Table of the House.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It becomes law before that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fact remains that it has been put through, and that at the first opportunity to disagree with it, when this House met, nine months later, it was challenged. In respect of town planning, all blocks and subdivisions in the City of Perth have to be approved by the Town Planning Commissioner, and all builders have to comply with the building by-laws, the idea of course being to ensure that hungry landowners observe the conditions laid down. But the case I mentioned occurs in a residential area. I am now speaking not so much about those buildings in the heart of the city to which the Leader of the Opposition alluded, buildings which may be like pigeon boxes, but about homes in residential areas. Whereas one man can build only one residence on a certain block, this by-law permits not only that eight residences shall be built on the block but that only one wash-house be installed. If that sort of thing is to be

tolerated, we may as well scrap the Town Planning Act and give builders a free hand without any restriction from the building by-laws, thus letting the city be built higgledy-piggledy. Whatever excuse there may be in the large cities which have been discussed, there is no such excuse in Western Australia. Whatever else we may not have, we have plenty of space. Since it is our duty to approve or disapprove of these by-laws, it is also our duty to make sure that they are reasonable. We ought to see that buildings comply not only with health by-laws but also with building by-laws. Thus we may obtain decent structures and a city built as it ought to be.

I have consistently stood behind the Perth City Council and all other local authorities that came to me, even though they considered they had power to disapprove of certain buildings. There is a right of appeal to the Minister in such circumstances, as the Leader of the Opposition knows. Still, in each case I have consistently stood behind the Perth City Council in its endeavour to impose decent building conditions, even though it has not always acted consistently. The City Council has placed before me a set of zoning by-laws with the object of dividing the town into building areas for residential, business and factory purposes respectively. While endeavouring to encourage city conditions worthy of Perth, the practice to which attention has been drawn is permitted!

Mr. Patrick: What will happen if the by-law is disallowed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The City Council will promulgate a by-law that will meet the position.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Suppose the City Council does not adopt that course?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will tell the hon. member what is the position! The Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Atkinson, recommended that provision should be made for not less than one wash-house to every five flats. In spite of that advice, which, if adopted, could have been embodied in a model by-law, the City Council issued the one under discussion, which permits of one wash-house to every ten flats. The local authority in one suburb—I am not sure whether it is the Nedlands Road Board—adopted the proposal for one wash-house to every five flats. In the in-

stance now before members, we have the spectacle of the hungry landowner trying to secure the utmost possible out of his holding by skimping the provision of conveniences. The Government does not believe in that sort of thing, and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition does not.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not believe in making provision that is not required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What is the use of promulgating adequate building by-laws, which the City Council has requested for a long time? An adequate set of such by-laws is in the council's hands, but I do not know if they have been ratified. The complaint of the City Council has always been that it has insufficient control over builders and buildings. The Government has made provision for that control. The latest amendment to the Municipal Corporations Act had that objective in view, and now a set of by-laws has been agreed to. I have mentioned zoning. The Government's duty is to keep watch over such matters. Notwithstanding that the Town Planning Commissioner would not consent to such a provision as that to which exception is being taken, and that such a course would not be permitted under the building by-laws, the City Council overcomes its difficulty in another way, and promulgates a by-law under the Health Act despite the advice tendered by the Commissioner of Public Health. That by-law was agreed to by the City Council, and was passed by the Health Department. Many of these matters are regarded as formalities. I do not view them in that light. The least provision we should insist upon is that recommended by the Commissioner of Public Health.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. C. G. Latham: Where is his recommendation to be found?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the file sent to the City Council.

Hon. C. G. Latham: His inspectors did not bear that out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The health inspectors were not concerned, as the Leader of the Opposition and I are, with the building by-laws. They were despatched to inquire into certain circumstances. I agree that some people who live in flats do not require wash-houses and, even if they were provided, would not use them.

The Minister for Lands: On the principle that only dirty people wash?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They would not use the wash-houses because they send their soiled linen to laundries. The least we can do when an owner insists upon getting the utmost possible out of his block of land is to require that proper and adequate conveniences shall be provided in connection with any buildings erected thereon. I need hardly remind the House that in the past difficulty was experienced regarding sanitary conveniences, which were skimmed to a degree. I do not know whether even now that position has been altered in Perth. If we relegate this matter to the whim of investors desirous of getting the utmost out of their properties, we may just as well do away with the Town Planning Act and building by-laws. Some time back the representatives of the City Council approached me regarding conditions applying to Floreat Park. One man desired to erect two semi-detached houses on one block. The City Council's by-law was so framed that the civic authorities could not prevent that action being taken, but they attempted to do so. The man appealed to me, but I upheld the action of the local governing authority. In that instance the City Council wished to maintain Floreat Park free from flats and even would not allow two semi-detached houses to be erected on a quarter-acre block! When people purchase land under given conditions, the duty of the Perth City Council is to see that another person cannot, by means of smart practices, evade the law to the disadvantage of others. I regard that as a splendid idea, and I will support the attitude of any local authority that seeks so to improve housing conditions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There are prescribed areas, outside residential parts, where flats can be built.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the idea of the zoning system. That principle has been adopted by the Nedlands Road Board by means of by-laws under the Town Planning Act. Such a course is obviously necessary, for we must have some control. On the other hand, I have quoted an instance of a block of eight flats, which means provision for eight families—

Hon. C. G. Latham: There are no families there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are. They are homes, and the flats are advertised as such.

Mr. Doney: Would not the flats average three persons?

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, two.

Mr. Doney: You would not regard that as a home.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How many rooms are included in a flat?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Two rooms and a kitchenette. Big improvements have been effected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And now we wish to institute further improvements. I would not raise so much objection if the by-laws provided for one wash-house for every five flats, notwithstanding the fact that in many of these places no drying space is available. Reverting to the building I mentioned, in Stirling-street, where eight flats have been erected on a block 50 feet by 120 feet, a wash-house has been provided in a space on one side, but no drying area is available. The position amounts to this: If a man with a family were to seek advice as to whether he should live in a flat or in a slum, members opposite could only advise him to live in the latter. The worst slum that could be found in Perth would be more adequate for his family than the flats that are now constructed.

Mr. Doney: The man would have a much wider preference than you indicate. He would not be forced into a flat or into a slum area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under existing conditions, the hon. member could only advise the man to go into the worst slum area available in preference to one of the flash flats, because of the absence of conveniences in the latter.

Mr. Sampson: Has the Minister ever lived in King's Cross, Sydney?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not referring to St. George's-terrace, where land is valuable. In Perth we have not yet reached the stage of having to encourage people to go to residential areas such as those under discussion, without imposing some conditions. I have to administer the local government enactments.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But not the Health Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Nevertheless, we intend to co-ordinate the position so that by-laws shall be properly

supervised and to assure that regulations shall not be formally endorsed as in the past. We propose that they shall be examined by officers representing both departments concerned. I believe the State is anxious to improve housing conditions not only in the metropolitan area but elsewhere.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why do you not prohibit—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would prohibit what now occurs if I could. The least we can do respecting anyone who endeavours to get the most out of his block is to insist that he shall conform to decent, modern living conditions. Although the Leader of the Opposition suggests that the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) should withdraw the motion, that member is on the right track. The Leader of the Opposition would not treat the matter so lightly if he were Minister for Health, an office which he has held in the past. Neither the Leader of the Opposition nor any other reasonable person would be prepared to defend the way in which flats are now being built. Although this by-law was passed by the Perth City Council, we must assume some responsibility. I am willing to accept my share, and I say without fear of contradiction by those who have examined the case, that the advice tendered by Dr. Atkinson is the minimum that should be insisted upon in regard to flats. Although buildings have been erected in conformity with this by-law we should be enabled to prevent buildings of a like kind from being erected in future.

Mr. Doney: Do you consider that health conditions in Perth flats are bad?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, other councils have agreed to the by-law under the Health Act which provides that two washhouses must be attached to a building of ten flats, and one washhouse to a building of five flats. We should not be satisfied with the bare minimum that satisfies some people; that is how slums are created. People in some Perth slums say they are quite satisfied with their living conditions.

Mr. Doney: That does not meet this argument.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. What would meet the argument is that we should insist upon at least one washhouse to each block of five flats; one washhouse to ten flats is ridiculous.

Mr. Doney: Would the people use the washhouses, if they were provided?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The people should have the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Doney: They do not avail themselves of the convenience.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not speaking from the point of view of health. A little while ago we were engaged in an anti-slumming crusade and had much to say about the slums in East Perth. I maintain that the flats which we have been discussing, once the newness wears off, will become the worst slums in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Doney: You might be right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We must insist upon compliance with regulations which are not unreasonable. Our boasted town planning and building by-laws are being defeated.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is it not preferable for single persons to live in flats rather than in boarding houses?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Are they single?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know of many families living in flats.

Hon. C. G. Latham: How many children?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister may proceed with his speech. I cannot allow these continual interjections.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said families.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I want to know what constitutes a family. It may be a man and his wife.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not ask people all sorts of questions.

The Minister for Lands: The Leader of the Opposition is worse than the national register.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Is the Leader of the Opposition proposing to champion the cause of hungry landlords? It is the business of local authorities to keep them in order.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They will.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Notwithstanding the huge area of land available in Kalgoorlie, I remember years ago seeing five houses on two blocks of ground. That is what people will do if they are not checked.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Now there are not enough houses.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: There is a strong case behind this motion. The Perth City Council should be asked to amend the by-law and fall into line with neighbouring municipalities and road boards, who have given greater consideration to this question. It is the responsibility of Parliament to pass or disallow by-laws; and therefore it is our duty to let the Perth City Council know that they must reconsider this by-law with a view to passing another in its place more in conformity with modern conditions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was not the Town Planning Commissioner responsible for the by-law?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: You need not blame the Town Planning Commissioner. He had nothing to do with this by-law.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Did he not?

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! The Leader of the Opposition must keep order.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: I am telling the truth when I say that the Town Planning Commissioner had nothing to do with the by-law. I asked him for a report afterwards. The matter was brought under my notice without any intervention by the Town Planning Commissioner. Washhouses are just as necessary conveniences as are lavatories, and their provision should be insisted upon. It is better that Parliament should take control of this matter, so that people may be prevented from erecting buildings which at some time will create slum conditions. I shall certainly vote for the disallowance of the by-law. The Perth City Council will not be inconvenienced, because it can pass another by-law which would be unobjectionable.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.9]: I have listened with great interest to the Minister, and I am quite sure that he was perfectly sincere in every word he uttered. I hope, however, he will pardon me if I suggest that he is living an anachronistic life. He is not living in an age to which the principles which he has expressed would apply. Not long ago, it was customary for a wife to make her own jam, her own sauce, conserves, and so on. It was also considered part of the wife's duty to do the laundry work. Those views are now out of date. Equally in respect of flats is there an entirely altered view. If members visited flats in Melbourne or Sydney, they would discover an absence of wash-

houses. In fact, to ask people who ordinarily live in flats to do their own washing would be to say something that might be offensive to them. In every town and city of importance to-day there are laundries that carry out this work. I suggest that to add laundries to flats would be to provide lumber rooms because in most instances they would be put to no other use. People desiring the appurtenances of ordinary homes live in a house. People living in flats are a different type. The "flatite" probably works in an office. A flat-dweller who is a lady engaged in an office does not expect, when her week's work is done, to do laundry work at home. It is unusual for a couple living in a flat to wish to do their own washing.

Mr. J. Hegney: How do you know?

Mr. **SAMPSON**: Of course I know. I have been in many homes and flats. If I went to the hon. member's home, I would find that the washing was done there, but if the hon. member went to a flat, he would find that the occupants send their washing to a steam laundry. Flat life would not appeal to me, but I realise that conditions are changing, and big buildings comprising many flats are constructed on different lines from the ordinary family home. In this city we have some up-to-date architects, who assert that to provide a building of flats with laundries is unnecessary, as the space could be far better utilised, say, for a spare room in which a husband might place a friend who had missed his last tram. I am entirely in agreement with the suggestion that laundry should be attached to the ordinary cottage or family home.

The Minister for Works: Are you really?

Mr. **SAMPSON**: Yes. But this is quite different. I have moments when I lapse back into the years that are gone, but I do not intend to do so in regard to flats because we must realise that a different view is taken in regard to this class of dwelling to-day. That is proved by the flats now erected in Perth as well as in other capital cities. A flat is a type of architecture that stands on its own. Its construction has been carefully planned and I suggest that if the Minister paid a visit to a block of flats in a good locality, he would find that not only was there a very limited number of laundries but those that did exist were not needed. If a washhouse were needed—

The Minister for Works interjected.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have no desire to put myself up against the Perth City Council and its advisers in regard to the needs of the community. When domestic matters are under consideration, they are at least able to determine, equally with me, what is required. I would not have spoken except for the fact that some time ago, when I was in the Eastern States, I gave attention to this matter. Previous to that I was largely possessed of the same ideas as the Minister, but I acknowledge now that I was wrong. Conditions have changed. Whether flats are good for the human race and whether it is advisable to encourage flat life is another question.

Hon. C. G. Latham: To live in a flat is better than to live in a boarding house.

Mr. SAMPSON: A lot of work previously done in homes is certainly not done in flats. Take the care and washing of motor cars. Twenty years ago no one would have thought of sending his car around to a motor laundry, but how many business people to-day wash their own cars? Not many, because they have plenty of other things to do. They give the job to someone who makes a specialty of it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member intends to connect that up with the matter under discussion.

Mr. SAMPSON: The male member of the flat family does not wash his own car and the lady member does not do the laundry work, nor does she any longer make her own jams, preserves and sauces.

The Minister for Mines: In fact, she no longer cooks her own dinner.

Mr. SAMPSON: To a large extent the Minister is correct. If he went to Canada,—

The Minister for Mines: A tin opener and a corkscrew—and the dinner is ready.

Mr. SAMPSON: Exactly. The Minister is perfectly correct. In the United States and Canada that type of life has developed.

The Minister for Mines: I hope it will never develop in Western Australia.

Mr. SAMPSON: Whether we wish it or not, makes no difference. We can neither hurry nor retard that development. That is the position. If the Minister went to Vancouver he would find at lunch or dinner time queues of people lined up wherever there were premises supplying refreshments. Home life is more or less a thing of the past with some people and entirely a thing of

the past with many. Let us review the position in regard to laundries and dismiss from our minds the impression that if laundry work is not done by the woman of the house, it is not done at all. As a matter of fact, it is done elsewhere and the unpleasant smell of boiling soap and water is no longer an irritant to those living in the vicinity.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is terrible, is it not?

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the motion of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) will not be carried.

Mr. J. Hegney interjected.

Mr. SAMPSON: The smell occasioned by the washing of linen and other things is not pleasant, anyhow. Those who like it can have it. As for me, I prefer laundry work to be done in a laundry and I hope the motion will be defeated.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [9.19]: I think there is something in the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin), though I do not propose to support his motion. From inquiries I have made, this is the first by-law made by the City Council—following upon the additional powers granted to it by recent legislation—compelling the installation of bathrooms and laundries. The installation of laundries in dwelling houses is a simple matter, but where flats are concerned a certain amount of difficulty is involved and that difficulty does not appear to have been completely solved by this by-law. I admit that. A house is, of course, normally the residence of a family; and each family has a separate laundry equipped with the necessary facilities. In my experience, however, very few flats are occupied by families; mostly they are occupied by married couples or single people. There are some flat buildings—for example the large building erected in Perth by the C.M.L.—where the occupants, I suppose, would not use a laundry once in six months. Similarly, there would not be a laundry at the back of the Palace Hotel, because it would be quite superfluous to the people living at that hotel. Thus some buildings do not appear to require laundries at all. On the other hand, there are flat buildings, such as those in Stirling-street mentioned by the Minister, that do appear to require definite laundry facilities.

Under the powers conferred by legislation the City of Perth has made a start by requiring flats and ordinary residences to have laundry facilities and bathrooms. To provide those facilities costs money, and but for the uncertain condition of affairs owing to the war, I would have been more sympathetic to the hon. member's motion. However, additional costs will be imposed upon a number of people who may experience difficulty in raising the money to instal bathrooms and laundries, which require to be connected with the storm water drainage. The City of Perth is making a start by a provision that will meet the needs of most flats and is doing sufficient for the time being. As the City Council surveys the position and the requirements of different classes of flats, it can amend the by-law to provide in the case of certain classes of flats—those consisting of three, four, or five rooms—for additional laundry accommodation. In the case of flats that house single persons or consist of only two or three rooms, the present by-law may be adequate to requirements.

If the by-law is disallowed, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, we cannot compel the City Council, whose members are or should be responsible men, to pass a new by-law. We shall simply wipe out the present provision for laundries and bathrooms for flats. In the conditions applying to-day when people cannot always find money to meet additional expense, I should prefer to see the City Council allowed to make this start on the understanding that, in the light of experience, it will increase the provision for accommodation where required. The Minister spoke about certain flats in Stirling-street and said, quite properly, that flats are being built on areas of land that are utterly inadequate. He spoke of the almost complete absence of drying space and air space around buildings containing four to six flats. The Minister is quite right. However, a difficulty has arisen, though I cannot say exactly how. I have been told—and the Royal Commission on civic affairs was told—that the City Council has put up a proposal to the Town Planning Commissioner for the zoning of the city area. One of the proposals is that any building erected, particularly a flat building, must have an area of land proportionate to the floor space of the building. If a house has

2,000 feet of floor space it must have a certain area of land; and if a flat building of 10 storeys has 20,000 square feet of floor space, a larger block would be required that would give commensurate space to the building erected on the land. That is an admirable proposal. Yet, owing to some difficulty about which the Minister knows more than I do, there appears to be a deadlock between the Town Planning Commissioner and the City Council. This deadlock, I am told, has existed for three years.

The Minister for Works: The deadlock is between the Minister and the City Council.

Mr. McDONALD: Very well. The deadlock has existed for three years, and there is a reform—which the Minister must agree is a salutary reform—held up on account of some difference between the Minister and the City Council. To solve that problem is far more important than to approve of the motion, even though the member for North-East Fremantle feels that this matter is important to the health and convenience of the people of Perth. I hope the Minister will take early steps to overcome that difficulty, because I am sure he desires—he has told us so, and I accept his assurance implicitly—to have the best arrangements for the planning, building and hygienic conditions of the City of Perth, and this deadlock appears to be holding back some very important reforms, even more important than those discussed by the member for North-East Fremantle. Whatever is the outcome of this debate, I hope it will have some influence in overcoming the deadlock mentioned by the Minister regarding the zoning by-laws, which are matters of primary importance to the City of Perth.

While I appreciate that these preliminary by-laws—the first by-laws under the new powers granted by Parliament—might not be all that we should ultimately desire, I am prepared to accept the view and decision of the City Council for the time being as to what is considered necessary to make a start, knowing as we do that the occupiers of such buildings generally give out their laundry or do it quietly in the bathroom and hang the clothes in some convenient place, such as a balcony, to dry. I know of many flat premises in Perth where, even if a dozen laundries were installed, they would not be used once in six months. I allow the City

Council credit for having given this matter reasonable consideration, especially as it is exercising a legislative power that has just been granted and upon which there is room for a legitimate difference of opinion as to how far the requirement for the provision of facilities should be imposed upon some flat buildings. I give the City Council credit for having exercised an honest judgment, and therefore I shall vote against the motion.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [9.29]: I feel that, on account of some of the statements made by members, I cannot allow the motion to go to the vote without expressing my views. I listened with interest to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, and can only conclude that he paid particular attention to one portion of the city and then, by implication, formed the opinion that that represented the general position regarding flats in the city of Perth. I agree with the Minister's remark that unless rigid conditions are maintained with respect to the flats that are being built to-day, the possibility will arise, as has arisen in other parts of Australia, when such buildings may constitute the beginning of slum conditions. As he rightly said, this Chamber last session paid attention to this very question. Emanating from that discussion, we all hoped some semblance of ordered conditions in relation to flats would emerge. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition to the extent that the buildings to which he referred would be occupied by people who possibly had no family. What conditions are laid down that would make it impossible for these buildings, under certain economic conditions, to be occupied by other than a man and his wife or by two young women?

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are let only to groups of two people.

Mr. SHEARN: Whoever chaperoned the Leader of the Opposition evidently made a good job of it. He has not been able to discover all the conditions that appertain to some of these buildings.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am willing to accompany you at any time.

Mr. SHEARN: I could enlighten the hon. member far more than he appears to have been enlightened by some of the conditions he has seen in the metropolitan area.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The invitation is accepted.

Mr. SHEARN: I hope he will make better use of the information I can give him than of the information he has already collected. My position is rendered somewhat difficult by the fact that I am a member of a local governing body. My remarks are not directed in a spirit of criticism of the central authority. I realise, as the Minister himself must do from his association with local governing bodies, the very difficult position in which they are placed, particularly in relation to building by-laws. In the main they are guided by their officers. I have discussed this question with two technical men. Each held a different opinion, and so members will realise how difficult it must be for a municipal council or road board to be dogmatic on this question, and arrive at a definite decision on what should be done with respect to it. Obviously where ten flats are built on a small piece of ground, it is not in the best interests of the community that only one convenience should be provided. That would tend towards slum conditions, such as have been proved to occur in the past. I am not viewing the conditions as they are to-day in relation to new buildings, but am attempting to visualise those that might ultimately come into being. I know that a representative conference which is about to sit intends to discuss this important question with a view to evolving some reasonable scheme to overcome present difficulties. The Leader of the Opposition and other members have stated that in St. George's terrace and other important centres, where values are high, some consideration must be had for the space occupied when it comes to a question of deciding what conveniences shall be provided. Those who own the land, however, are obliged to pay some attention to health conditions. They have a responsibility, other than an economic one, by virtue of their position as owners. I can support the motion on the basis not that we are attempting to reflect upon the intentions or the judgment of the City Council—I would not be a party to that—but because I believe, as the Minister has pointed out, that by the disallowance of the by-law that body will immediately set about adjusting the position more reasonably without causing a great deal of additional expense or inconvenience. It is the duty of the House to endeavour to direct any situation of this kind. The

conditions referred to by the mover of the motion are not peculiar to the City of Perth. They obtain in other parts of the metropolitan and outer metropolitan area, though certainly not to the same extent as in the city, and such conditions are liable to extend. It is fair and reasonable that this Chamber should take some responsibility by directing the attention of local authorities to this question, which involves the health and general amenities of the community.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What do the by-laws of the Perth Road Board provide?

Mr. SHEARN: They demand the very conditions we are discussing, namely, one wash-house to each flat. Without being dogmatic, I think that is excessive, but being a layman I cannot draw the line between that and what is right. To the uninitiated it would seem that one wash-house to ten flats is equally unreasonable. Far better is it to err on the side of safety than to encourage other conditions, such as the hon. member endeavoured to stress when moving his motion. I support the disallowance of the by-law, not because I have any axe to grind—I appreciate the difficulties of the City Council—but because I see no reason why we should not ask the council at this stage to review its decision. The by-law is not satisfactory, and the City Council need only heed the conditions within its own boundaries, and those things that have occurred in adjacent areas, to realise that they are not in the best interests of the community or posterity. For these reasons I support the motion.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [9.38]: I support the motion. We do not want conditions to develop in Western Australia that have developed in some of the Eastern States capitals. I understand that in New South Wales no town planning Act has been passed. A set of conditions has arisen there whereby buildings have been erected to a great height, with very little air space around them. At a place called King's Cross the buildings are from 15 to 20 storeys in height, and so close together are they that in some instances only three feet separate one flat from another.

Mr. Doney: Would you not think there would be plenty of air space up there?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: That is not the case. I have been amazed to note the extent to which members of the Country Party have de-

fended city interests. A charge levelled against members of the Country Party throughout Australia is that they are not genuinely representing country interests, but more truly represent city interests. The Leader of the Opposition said to-night he was prepared to agree to one set of wash-troughs being provided for every ten flats. That speech alone associated him with those interests the support of which has led to so much criticism of members of the Country Party. I am astonished that members opposite should be putting forward a plea on behalf of vested interests in the city. I can understand the use of such arguments by those who represent different view-points in politics; but I cannot understand the Leader of the Opposition, sent here to represent the open spaces and the back country, pleading for such city interests. As the hon. gentleman has been in Eastern Australia and in other parts of the world, he knows the slum conditions prevailing there. He knows that in England there has been restriction, with insistence on bathrooms and wash-houses where such conveniences had not existed previously. Flat conditions have developed in Western Australia during recent years. No one can gainsay that many flats in this State are ugly. The member for Maylands (Mr. Shearn) knows that in the road board territory near Walcott-street several ugly flats have been erected, constituting a blot on a decent suburb, which is spoiled by their presence.

Mr. Sampson: You think laundries improve the appearance?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I believe the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) is doing a service to Western Australia as a whole and to the metropolitan area in particular in bringing forward this matter. As has been pointed out, some cities have by-laws applying a stringent control to the flat system. Certainly we do not want the same conditions to arise here as exist in Sydney. We can prevent the development of slum conditions, which exist even in Australia. Their existence in New South Wales has compelled the State Government to repurchase slum areas and build afresh. By the application of town planning conditions—our Town Planning Act is a serviceable statute—improvement can be effected. I consider it the duty of Parliament to ensure that slum conditions existing in Western Australia shall not be permitted to continue.

Therefore I support the motion. I fail to understand how a Country Party representative can defend such metropolitan interests. I shall vote for the motion of the member for North-East Fremantle.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle—in reply) [9.43]: The Leader of the Opposition inquired of me whether I intended to withdraw the motion, and he made references to the unimportance of the subject. It is strange that a matter of such little weight should draw speeches from the Minister for Works, the Leader of the Opposition himself, the Leader of the National Party, and numerous other members. The Leader of the Opposition would persist in asserting that in introducing the motion I expressed a desire to have a laundry for every flat. He still persists in that statement, notwithstanding my denial. Unless my memory fails me—and I have read my speech again—I said no such thing. Nothing of the kind is to be found in the report of my speech. Never at any time did I say there should be a set of two troughs for each flat. I did say that I was not sure whether or not the by-law of the Perth City Council was ultra vires, since under an amendment of the Health Act, No. 30 of 1932, the definition of "house" provides that every building let to an occupier as a flat shall be deemed to be a house. Then we have a by-law published in the "Government Gazette" of the 29th April, 1938 which lays down that every house shall be provided with one set of two troughs. Taking the two directions together, if every building occupied as a flat is deemed to be a separate house and every house must be supplied with a set of two troughs, it is logical to assume that under the law every flat must be provided with a set of two troughs. Nevertheless, the Perth City Council makes a by-law requiring only one set of two troughs for ten flats. I am not a lawyer, but it does appear to me that that by-law is ultra vires the Act. It is extraordinary that if we disallow the by-law—as I believe we will—the Perth City Council will, according to some hon. members, be able to refrain from promulgating another by-law and simply refuse to deal with the matter. We shall then have this position, that the Health Act provides there shall be a set of troughs for every flat, but that irrespective of the Health Act the City Council will not promulgate another by-law, and there

will be no power whatever of control. That is the position, and the sooner something is done to rectify it, the better.

I did not presume to tell the House what I considered was a reasonable requirement. I admit that I do not know. I have ideas on the subject, and hold that one set of two troughs and one laundry should be sufficient for four or five flats. However, I will not agree that two wash-troughs are sufficient for ten flats. One might as well have none at all. The report put up by the Health Department inspectors is to my way of thinking somewhat inconsistent. It refers to the belief of the inspectors that the existing provisions are adequate, but then it goes on to say that there is insufficient line space. Not very much line space would be needed for the washing that would result from one laundry in use by ten flats, especially having regard to the statement of the inspectors that more than half the tenants did not use the laundry at all. There would be little use for line space in such circumstances. If the inspectors contend that more line space is required to hang out clothes, more laundry facilities must be provided for the tenants to wash their clothes before they hang them out. Are we to permit the Perth City Council to proceed in this way? Previously that body complained about restrictions on building, saying that our archaic by-laws prevented the building of a modern city. The councillors' idea of building a modern city is to provide one laundry for the occupants of ten flats. That is not my idea of building a modern city. More supervision is required.

In dealing with the subject from his standpoint, the Leader of the National Party was very fair. I cannot, however, agree with the hon. member that this regulation represents a start and that we should allow the Perth City Council to go along on these lines for a while to see how it gets on. I was always taught that before we allowed anyone to start, we should see that he did so properly. If a person makes a false start, difficulty is experienced in correcting him.

Mr. McDonald: But you must be sure that you yourself are right first.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not regard the by-law as a reasonably correct start.

Mr. Hughes: But the council had the guidance of a member of this House.

Mr. TONKIN: If the member for East Perth will be more explicit, I shall be better able to follow his suggestion.

Mr. Hughes: A member of this House is a member of the City Council.

Mr. TONKIN: As the hon. member desires to indulge in enigmas, I find difficulty in following his reasoning. The Leader of the Opposition inferred that I moved my motion as a result of representations made to me from a certain quarter. He is an extremely bad guesser.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, not on this occasion.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes, he is.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The story came to me correctly.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member hears a lot of stories.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And this story is true.

The Minister for Lands: It is a sort of Ripley story—believe it or not.

Mr. TONKIN: Apparently, the Leader of the Opposition believes all the stories he hears.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, but I believe this one.

Mr. TONKIN: I know the source from which the hon. member says the suggestion came, but definitely it did not come from that quarter.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I know who started it.

Mr. TONKIN: As to that, I am not in a position to say. He may have started a lot of things.

The Minister for Works: If the Leader of the Opposition starts guessing, I can provide him with some information.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But will you give it to me?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. TONKIN: I have had no communication whatever with the man the Leader of the Opposition has in mind.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, you have not!

Mr. TONKIN: Nor have I seen him for a considerable time nor yet have I received any letters or messages from him. I am entirely ignorant as to matters started by that man. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will accept my assurance.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I know you are right.

Mr. TONKIN: All this makes no difference to the issue. The Leader of the Opposition believes that one set of two wash troughs is sufficient for the occupants of 10 flats. I do not, and I hope to convince the majority of the House that the provision is inadequate. If the City Council is permitted to get away with this by-law, it will try something else along similar lines. In those circumstances slum conditions will develop in endeavours to secure maximum dividends from investments irrespective of the convenience or health of the people.

Mr. Sampson: Do not you think that laundry work in flats makes conditions very unpleasant?

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member may know something about fruit, honey and bees, but his speech this evening indicated that he knows little about washing clothes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You would not expect him to, would you?

Mr. TONKIN: Furthermore, his speech indicated that he knows very little about the conveniences that people require for washing clothes. If the practice has been for flat dwellers to send their washing to laundries rather than do their own work, we should not encourage it.

The Minister for Lands: They should be "lux" girls.

Mr. Sampson: One job, one person.

Mr. TONKIN: If very few people living in flats use washhouses, let us wipe out the washhouses. If that course were adopted, more space would be available for the building of flats and the inconvenience of providing laundries would be avoided. If 10 families reside in a building consisting of flats and one family only makes use of the laundry, it will be a case of the majority ruling, and the landlord will say, "I will not provide a laundry for one family. You can get out and I will find another family that does not desire to use the laundry. Then I shall not have to provide any such convenience." Let us encourage people to wash their own clothes.

Mr. Sampson: There is no virtue in that.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not ask for what is unreasonable.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What are you asking for?

Mr. TONKIN: I am telling the hon. member.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You advocate doing away with all wash-houses.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is what you are asking.

Mr. TONKIN: No. If we cannot make people conform to the requirements of the Health Act, then it is time something was done. What is the use of that Act if, merely because we disallow a by-law or regulation, the enactment becomes inoperative?

Mr. Hughes: A by-law cannot override an Act.

Mr. TONKIN: Of course not.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But the Act does not make the provision you suggest.

Mr. TONKIN: It does.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Read Section 98 of the Act.

Mr. TONKIN: I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the Act of 1932 wherein he will find that a flat shall be regarded as a house. In the definition of "house" the hon. member will see that flats are included, so that each flat is deemed to be a separate house. Regulations made by the Health Department under the Health Act and published in the "Government Gazette" of April, 1938, provide that every house shall have at least one set of two wash troughs. If every building comprising flats is deemed to be a house, then the provision I have referred to must apply. I agree with the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) who asserted that a by-law cannot override an Act of Parliament, and I believe that if we disallow the by-law under consideration, and the Perth City Council refuses to promulgate another in lieu, then it is high time that we saw to it that the provisions of the Act were enforced. I shall not discuss the position further but shall content myself with leaving it to the good sense of members for determination. Do they honestly believe that a laundry with one set of two wash troughs is sufficient for the occupants of 10 flats? If they do, they will not support my motion. If they do not, they will disallow the by-law.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 21st September, 1939.

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

QUESTION—WAR WITH GERMANY.

Employers' Liability Risk, etc.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Does the Government intend to take action to make provision for war risks in connection with employers' liability generally? 2, If this is regarded by the Government as a Federal matter, will the Government take immediate steps to ask the Prime Minister to make special provision to cover such risks as may arise from enemy action, or accident arising out of our own military, naval, or air force activities?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, Consideration is being given to this subject and I will advise the hon. member when a decision is arrived at.

QUESTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

Conference, Minister and Religious Organisations.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Was a conference called between the Honorary Minister (Hon. E. H. Gray), then in charge of the Department of Native Affairs, and the mission and church organisations as to regulations disallowed by the Council? 2, What missions and churches were represented, and what other persons were invited to the conference? 3, How many persons attended