

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It can be a very irksome privilege because it could interfere with a man's business. If these women who wish to serve on a jury consider it a privilege, there is nothing to prevent them from serving if this amendment is agreed to.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	10
Majority for	5

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. E. Hearn	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. R. Jones	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker	Hon. R. F. Hutchison
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
	(Teller.)

Pair.

Aye.	No.
Hon. H. K. Watson	Hon. G. Bennetts

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I draw the Chief Secretary's attention to the inadequacy of those portions of the clause from line 25 onwards, in which it states, "or exemption under Section 8 of this Act". That means, in other words, that women are exempt under Section 8 which previously referred to the exemption of men. There are occupations in which women serve that should be included in the exemptions. To call a matron or a theatre sister away from a hospital to serve on a jury could be very awkward, yet no thought has been given to extending the exemption categories.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: According to the terms of the amendment agreed to, they would not be listed. They would have to apply.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes, perhaps that is so; but the clause, in my opinion, should be amended to provide further exemptions.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—HONEY POOL.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 18th October, 1955.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Associations Incorporation Act Amendment.
- 2, Electoral Districts Act Amendment.
- 3, University of Western Australia Act Amendment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Hon. C. F. J. North and Press Report on Standardisation of Railway Gauge.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: In this morning's issue of "The West Australian" the appointment of Mr. C. R. A. Stewart as the new Chief Civil Engineer of the W.A. Government Railways was announced. Portion of the report in that connection included some remarks made by Mr. Stewart which concluded as follows:—

It was possible that there would soon be a standardised gauge in the Commonwealth, which would mean further changes.

This article followed a report in "The West Australian" a few days ago, commencing thus—

A problem of profound national importance, particularly affecting Western Australia, was resurrected in Parliament this week—the standardisation of the rail gauge.

I wish to comment on these few lines that follow—

In 1921 the public demand rose to such a height that the Federal Government appointed a Royal Commission to probe into the problem.

It concluded that complete standardisation of mainland gauges would then have cost £57,200,000. Nothing happened.

However, something did happen. In 1926, the Western Australian Parliament carried a motion through both Houses, urging the Commonwealth Government to carry out its policy of standardising gauges in Western Australia. A similar motion was carried in 1936 in the Legislative Assembly and by 1946 Sir Harold Clapp's plan for the standardisation of gauges was under way. Whilst Queensland pulled out, the McLarty-Watts Government later announced as a major decision, the standardisation of gauges in Western Australia.

These matters are being mentioned by me to put both the State Parliament and the Claremont electors in the clear in regard to them. I conclude by asserting that the present Australian railway situation can only be described as the "quintessence of incompetence."

QUESTIONS.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Method of Financing.

Hon. SIR ROSS McLARTY asked the Treasurer:

(1) On what basis are tenders now being called for public buildings?

(2) Is it a fact that builders are not to be paid in cash, but by means of bills of exchange bearing 5 per cent. interest, and redeemable at some future date?

(3) If the answer to the above question is "Yes," does this mean of providing loan money meet with the approval of the Loan Council, and has approval been obtained for the higher interest rate offered?

(4) If not, is it likely that financial institutions will be prepared to discount the bills of exchange?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Certain tenders are being called on a deferred payment basis.

(2) In relation to the tenders referred to in No. (1), yes.

(3) Before the first contract was let under the deferred payment scheme, the State Treasury referred the proposal to the Commonwealth Treasury. Advice was received that there was no need to submit the proposal to the Loan Council and there were no objections to it from the Commonwealth Treasury.

(4) Tenders are being received under the deferred payment scheme, which would indicate that builders have been able to make satisfactory arrangements with financial institutions.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

North-West Branch Officers.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Will he advise the House of the number of officers in the field and their respective titles—employed in the field by the North-West branch of the Department of Agriculture during 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955?

(2) The number of officers employed in the field by the North-West branch who resigned during 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955, their respective titles and their length of service with the Agricultural Department?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 1951—8 officers:

- 3 Agricultural advisers,
- 1 tropical adviser,
- 1 cattle instructor,
- 3 research station managers.

1952—10 officers:

- 4 Agricultural advisers,
- 1 tropical adviser,
- 1 cattle instructor,
- 3 research station managers,
- 1 agrostologist.

1953—11 officers:

- 4 agricultural advisers,
- 2 tropical advisers,
- 1 cattle instructor,
- 2 research station managers,
- 1 agrostologist.

1954—14 officers:

- 6 Agricultural advisers,
- 1 tropical adviser,
- 1 cattle instructor,
- 3 research station managers,
- 1 agrostologist,
- 2 field assistants.

1955—16 officers:

- 5 Agricultural advisers,
- 1 tropical adviser,
- 1 cattle instructor,
- 3 research station managers,
- 1 agrostologist,
- 3 field assistants,
- 2 field technicians.

(2) 1951—Nil.

1952—Nil.

1953—2 officers:

- 1 Tropical adviser; service four years two months.
- 1 Agricultural adviser; service three years 10 months. (subsequently rejoined North-West branch on 15/12/54.)

1954—1 officer:

- Agricultural adviser; service three years one month.

1955—2 officers:

- 1 Agricultural adviser; service three years six months.
- 1 Agrostologist; service three years four months.

WHEAT.*Storage, Production and Handling.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the probable carry-over of wheat in storage in—

- (a) Western Australia;
- (b) Australia;

as at the 31st October, 1955?

(2) What was the average annual wheat production in—

- (a) Western Australia;
- (b) Australia;

over the last five years?

(3) Does he consider that it is practicable for handling authorities to receive next season the equivalent of the average crop of the last five years in Western Australia?

(4) If not, does he consider that an authoritative statement should be made to guide producers before they outlay too much in preparation for next season's cropping?

(5) If the answer to No. (4) is "Yes," will he treat the subject as urgent?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) 25,500,000 bushels.

(b) No recent estimates available but probably in vicinity of 110,000,000 bushels.

(2) (a) 39,900,000 bushels.

(b) 180,800,000 bushels.

(3) The storage position for the 1956-57 harvest will depend upon sales during the next 12 months.

(4) Any such statement would necessarily have to be on a Commonwealth-wide basis, and cannot therefore be made by any one State.

(5) Answered by No. (4).

BETTING.*Shop at Swanbourne.*

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is it a fact that a family in Swanbourne near the hotel is being evicted from a residence in order that a betting shop may be established there?

(2) Will he accept my assurance that the local residents resent this site being used, since it is bordered on either side by dwellings?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The board is not aware whether or not it is a fact that a family in Swanbourne near the hotel is being evicted from a residence in order that a betting shop may be established. The board has no authority to intervene as between landlords and tenants. The local authority granted a permit for the erection of a shop on this block.

(2) Yes.

LIBRARIES.*Future of Archives Department.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

If the Acts Amendment (Libraries) Bill is passed and the new Library Board takes over the premises now occupied by the Public Library, what will happen to the Archives Department with regard to its future administration and control?

The MINISTER replied:

Although the matter is already receiving consideration, any proposals submitted by the hon. member will receive close attention.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Contributions by Local Authorities.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Health:

What was the total annual amount of money paid by all local governing authorities as their contributions towards the cost of maintenance and treatment of persons suffering from infectious diseases for each of the last five years?

The MINISTER replied:

	£	s.	d.
1950-51	5,474	0	1
1951-52	6,033	4	5
1952-53	7,210	5	7
1953-54	5,689	2	9
1954-55	4,738	11	5

POISON 1080.

Future Distribution.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware that in South Australia farmers wishing to use sodium fluoroacetate, usually known as 1080, to poison rabbits, may obtain supplies after fulfilling the following proposed conditions:—

- The landholder who farms more than 10 acres and who wishes to purchase 1080 poisoned oats will complete an application for a permit on the prescribed form obtainable from officers of the Department of Agriculture, or the Department of Public Health, 17 Flinders Street, Adelaide.
- This application must be endorsed by an officer of the Department of Agriculture.
- The endorsed application will then be forwarded by the applicant with a fee of 5s. to the Department of Public Health, 17 Flinders Street, Adelaide, who may issue the necessary permit to the applicant.
- This permit is then produced to an approved distributor (a list of distributors will be published later) at the time of ordering the required quantity of poisoned oats?

(2) What are his comments on the South Australian proposal?

(3) Is it likely that in the near future 1080 will be more freely available to farmers?

(4) What consideration is being given to permitting distribution of poison 1080 by local authorities?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It is considered that the rabbit control scheme operated by the Agriculture Protection Board in Western Australia is more effective and costs the farmer four to five times less.

(3) Yes, by expansion of the present rabbit control scheme.

(4) Local authorities participate in the rabbit control scheme operating in their districts.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Obligations of Rocky Gully Settlers.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Referring to question No. (6) of those answered on the 13th October with reference to war service land settlers on lease at Rocky Gully, will he lay on the Table of the House a copy of the form of perpetual lease to which he referred?

(2) What is the total number of settlers at Rocky Gully inclusive of the 38 now on lease?

(3) If the settlers on lease do not pay rent, what annual obligations have they, and to whom?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Rocky Gully, 51; Perillup, 10.

(3) The answer to question No. (4) asked on the 13th October, 1955, related specifically to the two properties in question No. (2) of the same date. Under the present assessment policy, commitments, including rental, are assessed on a sliding scale relating to the productivity of the individual farm. Concessional payments commence with a carrying capacity of 600 sheep, rising to full commitments as the carrying capacity increases. Where the carrying capacity of a farm under lease is less than 600 sheep, a lessee is not required to meet any commitments. Commitments are payable by lessees to the Lands Department on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

I have the form of perpetual lease referred to in question No. (1) and present it for tabling.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

Use of Oil Fuel.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is the State Electricity Commission using oil at the present time as fuel?

(2) What quantity of oil for fuel, if any, was consumed by the commission during each week since the 1st July, 1955?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Nil. It should be noted that it is necessary to use some oil for starting up purposes when Collie coal is used as pulverised fuel. For this purpose approximately 6,000 gallons per week are used.

RAILWAYS.

Comparison Between Steam and Diesel Locomotives.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What has been the extra cost as a result of the modifications of the "X" class diesel engines?

(2) What are the comparable running hours as between diesels and steam locomotive engines, without repairs and maintenance?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A number of modifications have been made as a result of experience gained during the operation of the "X" class locomotives, but as the locomotives are still within the period of warranty, the cost thereof is being met by the contractors.

(2) The "X" class locomotives have not been in service sufficiently long to enable a reliable comparison to be made at this stage.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways, and read a first time.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Medical Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Council.
- 3, Cemeteries Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—SOIL CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th October.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [4.46]: I rise to support this Bill. Every member of this Chamber will agree with me when I say that it is a most important measure. The main purpose is to repeal Part V. of the Soil Conservation Act and insert a new part in lieu. As the Minister explained when introducing this measure, Part V is not satisfactory for the carrying out of the work of the committee. He made

one important point in that under the existing provisions of that portion of the Act, a settler or farmer can appeal against decisions of the committee and prolong any final decision being arrived at for 12 months. That is most unsatisfactory.

The Soil Conservation Committee comprises men who take a real interest in soil erosion. For instance, Mr. Ernest Lee Steere, who is the chairman, is a man who loves the land and will do everything possible to prevent erosion of any kind from occurring. Owing to the hilly nature of his own property he knows from experience what farmers have to put up with. I can go through the names of the whole of the committee and show that the members are all men of standing who are out to do their best.

Soil erosion has done a tremendous amount of damage to the land in this State. I remember seeing the serious effect of water erosion when I visited the Yandooka estate. It is amazing how at times a settler is careless in regard to erosion. On one property which I visited recently, the settler had just finished fallowing, but to my amazement he drove straight from where he had finished, up a hill through the fallows that he had made, and thus formed two channels which, during the next heavy rains, will become two small creeks. In many instances the settlers should co-operate more closely with the committee. They should realise the effect of their actions and take steps to prevent erosion from occurring.

On one of my visits to the Lakes District, I was amazed to note the extent of the wind erosion that had occurred. No doubt our farmers have been too anxious to clear as much timber as possible. They certainly cleared too much of their land and did not leave sufficient timber to protect their properties from wind erosion. I have walked over areas where the timber had been burnt years before and, as a result of wind erosion, most of the small stumps were standing as much as 12 inches above the ground level, the whole of that soil having been removed by the wind.

Much more attention is now being paid to contour ploughing, which is most important in hilly country. This has the effect of dividing up the flow of water so that it can drain away without doing damage to the soil. I whole-heartedly support the Bill. I wish to compliment the committee upon its very keen interest and efforts to do everything possible to assist the farmers in preventing soil erosion. The Bill is a timely one and should be passed without difficulty.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC BUNBURY CHURCH PROPERTY.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.57] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of the Bill is to vest in the Roman Catholic Bishop of Bunbury and his successors in office all property belonging to or held in trust for or on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church within that diocese and to make provision so that the bishop may deal with that property.

It was only recently that a Roman Catholic bishop was appointed to the Bunbury diocese. Up to the present, all property belonging to the diocese has been vested in the Archbishop of Perth. Now that a bishop has been appointed at Bunbury, it is the desire of the archbishop that all property in the Bunbury diocese should be vested in the Bishop of Bunbury.

Although the diocese is described as the diocese of Bunbury, it extends far beyond the boundaries of the Bunbury municipality. I understand that the Roman Catholic diocese extends well into the South-West, as far distant as Manjimup, and consequently the diocese is very large in area. A considerable number of pieces of land belonging to the Roman Catholic authorities in the diocese are at present vested in the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, and so the passing of legislation to authorise the Bishop of Bunbury to have all this property vested in his name and the name of his successors will bring about a large transfer of property from the Archbishop of Perth into the name of the Bishop of Bunbury.

This is the desire and wish of all those directly and particularly concerned, because it is considered that the property held by the church in the Bunbury diocese should now be vested in the diocese and in the name of the Bishop of Bunbury. That broadly is the main purpose and practically the only purpose of the Bill. There are other incidental provisions in the measure, but all of them relate to this major objective. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.0] in moving the second reading said: When the Act was passed in the

year 1898, provision was made for the trustees to have the right to raise money by way of mortgage upon land and buildings to a maximum of £5,000. Some years later, by an amendment of the Act, that maximum was raised to £7,000, and the trustees now desire that the figure should be further raised to £15,000. They feel that, with the changing value of money, the time has come when the present maximum of £7,000 is altogether inadequate.

Just as the value of money has decreased, so, in money terms at any rate, has the value of land and buildings increased, and in addition, of course, further buildings have been erected in the South Perth Zoo. The trustees are anxious to effect yet other improvements in the future, and for that purpose they will have to raise additional finance which, unless the present maximum of £7,000 is increased, they will not be able to do. It is thought that the proposed new maximum of £15,000 is reasonable and that it will be adequate to meet the needs of the trustees for a number of years to come. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA MEDICAL SCHOOL APPEAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS AUTHORISATION.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.4] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has already received the blessing of members in another place, and is one which proposes to authorise local governing authorities to expend amounts from revenue exceeding three per centum of the total ordinary revenue, to make donations to the medical school appeal fund. A number of local governing authorities within the State have expressed their anxiety to make substantial donations to the fund for the proposed medical school but, owing to the limitation in the existing legislation, they are not able to subscribe as much as they would wish to, and consequently a request has been made to the Government to introduce amending legislation in order to leave to the discretion of the local governing authority concerned the amount of money which it might desire to donate to this appeal fund.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Does the Bill deal only with the existing appeal?

THE PREMIER: Yes. Different communities have different approaches to the appeal, just as they have to most matters.

In some communities, the individual rate-payers subscribe according to their own wish, and in other districts the majority opinion seems to favour a total donation by the local governing authority, as against individual donations. Those who prefer and advocate this second course of approach argue that when the local authority makes the donation all the ratepayers contribute more or less equally to it, whereas in an instance where donations are left entirely to individuals, it is only the more generous-minded of the rate-payers who subscribe. Others in that community, because they are not generous-minded, or for some other reason, make no donations.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: But under this measure some of them would be paying twice.

The PREMIER: That may be so, but I am sure that those who make voluntary donations would raise no objection to some total donation which might be made by the local authority of the district in which they live. The Bill proposes to leave to the absolute discretion of each local authority the amount, if any, which it will donate to the medical school appeal fund, over and above what it would be allowed to donate within the present 3 per cent. limit of the ordinary revenue. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [5.7]: I intend to support the various provisions contained in this measure, the first of which deals with the fact that a local authority is to be allowed to make an arrangement with ratepayers in regard to the connection of their premises with the sewerage system and the repayment of the cost of the work over a period of years, under an agreement entered into between the respective parties. That is an arrangement which has been sought by the Local Government Association, and its inclusion in the Bill is the result of representations made to the Minister by that body. I feel that the proposal is a very sound one.

There is at present in operation a scheme under which local governing authorities can enter into agreements with ratepayers in regard to the installation of septic tanks. There is also a modified and limited scheme whereby the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department assists a restricted number of people in the matter of sewerage connections, but the amount of finance available under that scheme at present is too

small to allow any considerable number of people to benefit. The proposal contained in the Bill appears to be sound, as it would allow local authorities to enter into financial agreements with rate-payers in regard to sewerage connections.

If agreed to, that provision will mean that the ancient and outmoded pan system, which operates in certain districts, will be dispensed with considerably sooner than would be the case under the present set-up. A further provision deals with the boiling of pig-swill or offal, and apparently it has been included to safeguard the public in this regard. I think it is a necessary amendment to the Act because, if the organisms present in pig-swill are not killed by boiling for one hour—it has been found by scientific experiments that they are not—it is necessary that we make it mandatory for a two-hour period of boiling to be adopted.

I believe the member for Avon Valley may have something to say on this matter, and his ideas in this regard may be more revolutionary than any views I would care to express, but he, of course, being interested in the raising of pigs, will know more about the subject than I do. At all events, I feel that this provision is satisfactory, particularly as it will bring the relevant section of the Health Act into line with the provision in the Stock Diseases Act in regard to the time required for boiling of pig-swill.

The portion of the measure which deals with infectious diseases and sets out the type of contributory scheme for financing the treatment of such complaints is slightly more controversial than other provisions of the measure, but it is controversial only in so far as it goes merely a certain way along the lines desired by the local governing authorities. As most members are aware, local authorities pay a proportion of the cost of dealing with and controlling the incidence of infectious diseases. Under the old regime, it was found that the local authorities were unable to budget properly for their commitments in regard to infectious diseases.

The proposal contained in the Bill will allow local governing bodies to budget for their liabilities in this direction, and it is practically an insurance scheme. In the past, I believe the Belmont Road Board was hit rather severely by an epidemic and found it hard to meet its obligations in that regard. That local authority had not been able to budget for the epidemic and found itself in rather troubled financial waters. As far as I can make out, the proposal meets with general satisfaction. However, some local authorities feel that under this insurance scheme, although they will be able to budget for the sum that they will have to pay towards the cost of infectious diseases, it will be greatly in advance of the actual costs incurred in adopting their immunisation schemes.

Some of these authorities are particularly proud of the manner in which they have maintained a high standard of efficiency in regard to the treatment of infectious diseases at their source—that is, under the immunisation schemes that they have. Those local authorities who are proud of their record feel that they could be imposed upon with respect to the increased insurance payment because other local authorities might, to a certain extent, neglect their responsibilities in the belief that any expense incurred within their boundaries, in regard to infectious diseases, would be met from the common fund. The local governing bodies who are playing the game feel that the rate might be increased whereas at present it could be regarded as more than necessary as far as they are concerned. But all in all I think that they are fairly well satisfied, despite those few complaints, because they realise that they will be able to budget for their commitments and so the scheme might be regarded as sound insurance.

I mentioned earlier that the Local Government Association is particularly keen that the moneys paid under the infectious diseases section of the Act should not come from local government sources. As far as they are concerned, it is a matter for general complaint that in Western Australia the Health Department still requires local government to pay a proportion of the cost of the maintenance and treatment of persons suffering from infectious diseases whereas the Governments of N.S.W. and Victoria give complete freedom to local government of any need to contribute towards this cost. The association feels that it is time the State Government relieved its members of their financial responsibilities in this matter. The Government or the Health Department might contend that if that policy were to be adopted some local authorities might not carry on with the high standard of treatment necessary for the care of immunisation of people within their boundaries. But I am led to believe, by officials of the Local Government Association, that that would not be the case; the reverse would most probably be the position.

In my opinion, the time is rapidly approaching when the Government might well give serious consideration to allowing complete freedom to local governing authorities in this regard. Tonight I was able to ascertain from the Minister for Health some figures showing the total sum of money paid by all local authorities towards the cost of the maintenance and treatment of persons suffering from infectious diseases. These figures relate to the last five years and the yearly sum is as follows:—

	£
1950-51	5,474
1951-52	6,033
1952-53	7,210
1953-54	5,689
1954-55	4,738

They were the total sums paid by all local authorities and members can see that for the five years the total cost was approximately £25,000. That is not a large sum for the State Government to forgo, particularly when there is considerable doubt as to why local government should have to pay it.

The Local Government Association is striving for complete freedom in this respect and it feels that this State Government might well follow the good example set some years ago by the Governments of N.S.W. and Victoria. For the time being the new form of payment, under which the local authorities contribute towards the cost of maintenance and treatment of persons suffering with infectious diseases, will be far more acceptable than in the past because it will enable the local governing authorities to budget in an efficient manner for what they may be expected to pay.

There is yet another proposal in the Bill which was hailed by the Minister and the Press as the beginning of a new deal in the care of the aged. This proposal strikes out the limited sum which the local governing authorities may contribute towards the care of the aged, or towards any institution for the care of the sick and needy. At present, under the Act, the sum that local governing authorities may contribute, within their own boundaries, is a sum not exceeding 10 per cent. of their ordinary income or £100, whichever is the greater. I feel that it is rather foolish to have that limit in the Act; however, I cannot agree that the proposal in the Bill ushers in a new era in the care of the aged.

While local authorities may, under this measure, give an increased sum in this respect, it is still only permissive and I am extremely doubtful as to whether any of the local bodies will be able to contribute more money towards the scheme than has been the case in the past. There may be one or two exceptions where local authorities may have particular schemes in view. I would be very happy, and I have no doubt that all members would be happy, if this amendment did bring about a state of affairs whereby the aged could be cared for properly and decently within the confines of a local governing body's boundaries. But I am afraid that so far as the local authorities themselves are concerned, money will still be tight in the future. I have no objection to the amendment but I feel that the hopes that may have been raised may be blasted when it is found that the expectations are not realised.

I find myself in agreement with all the proposals in the Bill, except that one of them does not go far enough. I refer there to the provision which I discussed earlier and I believe that Governments should, in the future, try to realise that complete exemption from payment for

the treatment of infectious diseases should be given to local governing authorities. I propose to support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [5.31]: I wish to support the amendment envisaged in the Bill. Members will recall that the measure has for its purpose the gradual reducing of the age at which electors can record their franchise at an election, so that by 1962—approximately seven years hence—teenagers at the age of 18 will be able to go to the polls, and help choose the person who is to represent them in the Parliament of the State. I know some members of the Opposition have ridiculed the Government for introducing this measure, and by very facetious remarks have endeavoured to belittle it for doing so.

If members will give the measure passing consideration, I feel sure they will realise that there is a great deal more merit in the proposition that the Government is now putting forward to encourage teenagers to take an interest in their own future and the future of the State, if I may put it in that manner, than would appear at first sight. If people would only give a little thought to what the teenage section of our community does in the economic life of the State, and to the responsibilities which the teenagers are prepared to accept, they would realise that there is a great deal more in the proposed amendment than they first thought.

Quite a number of our teenage youth today attend the universities, whereas young people were denied that opportunity many years ago. But, because of the economic trend in the community today and because parents are able to afford the money as a result of child endowment and other social payments that are made available to them, it is possible for them to send their children to the university. This may also be made possible by the lessening of the numbers in families. However, by the time these young people are 18, 19 or 20 years of age, I think it can honestly be said, whether members like to agree or not, that a great many more of our teenagers are able to vote more intelligently than was the case with the young people 25 or 30 years ago.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not you think that applies to other things as well?

Mr. BRADY: Yes, I do think that applies to other matters as well, and I will link that with my discussion to show that it is actually the case today. If members were honest with themselves, I feel sure they would agree that a lad of 19 or 20 years of age who has attended the university could pass a more intelligent judgment on many issues than could a man of 22 or 23 years of age 25 or 30 years ago. We must encourage that trend in the future, otherwise we might just as well abolish our secondary education and do away with our universities. What is the good of encouraging these young people to take advantage of improved education if we do not give them some opportunity of using it?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is it not of use to them when they turn 21?

Mr. BRADY: They have the right to vote at 21, and they had that right 30 or 40 years ago. What advantage is there in going to the university and getting a superior education if they are not permitted to use it? They might as well not be encouraged to attend the university or take advantage of a secondary education. We should give the State the benefit of their improved intelligence, and we should continue to encourage these young people.

If members on both sides of the House will give the matter a few minutes thought, I feel sure they will agree that a young man or woman who is carrying on a small business, or helping his or her parents in major projects should be given the right to vote. Let us consider the question of matrimony. There are many young couples today, under the age of 21, who have accepted matrimony and parenthood, and who are now rearing young families. Not only are they carrying on the duties of parents and finding homes, but they are also paying through their noses by way of taxation as a direct deduction from wages. They pay sales tax, amusement tax, and so on.

It is considered to be the essence of democracy that there should be no taxation without the right to vote. I think that was one of the catchcries of those who fought in the Eureka Stockade: No taxation if there is no vote. Yet we find these young people who are accepting parenthood and building homes for their young families, are paying taxation out of their wages—sometimes both members of the family are working and they are both taxed when they attend an entertainment or when they buy household goods—and yet are not entitled to vote! I think it can reasonably be argued—not unreasonably—that these people should have the right to vote in such circumstances.

Let us consider the matter of war. Do the Governments of the day question the right of the young man, or the young woman, of 18 years of age to fight and give his or her life for their country? Of course they do not. These young people have to go overseas, and there are some cases on record where they have done so before the age of 18, in order to fight for their country. Throughout the various army camps in Australia, and even in this State at the moment, there are young men and women who, at the age of 18 years, are being trained in defence matters, so that they will know the best means of defending their country during war.

To my mind, it is just as logical to train these young people in electoral matters; to train them so that they will take an intelligent interest in their own welfare by recording an intelligent vote at election time. If these young people were given the right to vote, the right to fill in claim cards, attend election meetings and listen to what was being said, they would become more mature in electoral matters much earlier than they do now. The fact remains that, as teenagers, they are led to believe that they have no direct interest in election matters.

There are thousands of cases around the metropolitan area of young couples of 18, 19 or 20 years of age, who have been living with their in-laws—either the husband's or the wife's family—and have been unable to get homes. It would be a good thing if they were encouraged to believe that in the event of their taking a more intelligent interest in electoral matters from time to time, they would have the right to choose people who would be able to get these homes for them. It would help them to be of great service to the community. I feel we cannot get young people interested soon enough. As teenagers, they have only a very scant idea of what politics means. It is only when they receive the jolt of not being able to find a home, or secure a leasehold or rental property, that they begin to realise the value of a vote.

It is very strange that we should give a vote to new Australians whom we bring into this country, and yet deny these young people a similar privilege. The new Australians to whom I refer can barely speak the language—in fact, some of them cannot speak it at all—and after being here a few years they are permitted to vote, but the young people who are reared in our midst and who go to the university at 15 or 16 years of age, are not entitled to vote, even though they may have attended the university for three or four years and have attained the age of 19 or 20. On the other hand—and I would like to stress the point again—we have new Australians from southern or northern Italy, from Yugoslavia, from Germany and Latvia, who

though they have very little knowledge of what our democracy and economic life mean, are given the right to vote.

Hon. A. R. V. Abbott: When?

Mr. BRADY: Sometimes after five years. There was a time when they had the right to vote after two years.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They must be accepted as citizens.

Mr. BRADY: That is so. I have attended swearing-in ceremonies, and found that some of these people could not read half a dozen lines; the ceremony had to be repeated for them, word for word, to help them attain citizenship. Within half an hour, they could sign a claim form to have their names placed on the roll. If those people can be accepted as citizens, and given all the rights that attend citizenship, then our young Australians should be given the same rights at 18 years of age. I do not think it would create any great difficulty for the country if they were given that right.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They would also have to be over 21.

Mr. BRADY: The new Australians are over 21 years of age. The fact remains that these people live among their own fraternity and speak the language of their country—we see Germans living together, Italians living together and Yugoslavs living together. They are barely able to speak English, but once they are given citizenship rights they are able to vote for both the Commonwealth and the State Parliaments.

The Premier: Even for the Legislative Council.

Mr. BRADY: We have young folk who are being guided in the political activities of the nation; they are shown electoral cards and Acts of Parliament; they are shown copies of "Hansard" and are brought to the metropolitan area from the country to listen to addresses by competent officers; they are able to attend sessions of Parliament, and yet, because they are perhaps 18 years of age, they are not permitted to vote. They can, however, go to war and fight for their country, and perhaps give their lives for their country. There is no question about that.

If these young folk can go out as farm hands and as shearers; if they can run businesses and motor garages, and can take part in all such activities, they should be permitted to vote for the State Parliament that is making the laws that govern them. That is an important point. If we take it to its logical conclusion, it is a cruel position for teenagers to be in. They can get married and accept the responsibilities of parenthood; they can pay three or four types of tax, and yet the Opposition says that these people should not be given the right to vote, or decide how the taxation which they are paying should be spent.

or how the laws should be made. Admittedly, some of the young people would not appreciate, in the first or second year, the value of the vote. But by the time they were 20 or 21 they would do so.

The protection for the community as a whole is this: After all is said and done, the teenagers who voted before the age of 21 would be only a small percentage of the number of people who would vote. As the Premier said the other night, many people over 21 who are sick and aged or imbeciles are given the right to vote and help to make the laws of the country through the persons for whom they vote. Postal officers visit people who are sick in bed, and who are between 65 and 70 years of age, and persuade them to vote. Yet many of them have not the sense of a teenager of 18, particularly the one who is of marriageable age and has entered into matrimony, and the one who has been to the university.

More than once it has been mentioned in the debate that young people of that age are not of mature mind. After having spent many years as an adult, I would sooner accept the opinion of some teenagers in regard to many matters than that of mature men. In what are the teenagers not mature? Mostly in the vices of the community. They are immature in matters of that kind. They are mature in matters affecting a good home life, a good education, a good church life, a good friendly society life, and a good sports life. If they were casting votes, they would cast them for people who represented those things, and I feel they would be an asset to the community as a voting strength.

In the main, young people of 18 come from what might be called sheltered places, from colleges and homes and—I speak now of natives—from missions. They come from sheltered places where they are taught the right things of life. It is only when they go out into the wide world and are what is called educated that they come across the bad things; and because they do that, they are then considered to be more mature and able to vote. I feel that the teenagers of 18 should be encouraged to vote and this Bill will do no harm in affording them that encouragement. In many fields young people of that age are at their peak. That is the case in the realm of sport. Recently a football medal was awarded to a young man of 18 from Fremantle; and similarly, in swimming and cricket, young men are at their peak at that age. If that is the case, there is no reason why, provided they are given the proper encouragement and induced to think along political lines, they should not be the cream of the community in regard to electoral matters.

Let me remind the Opposition that many of these young people go into legal offices at the age of 14 or 15, and I think it will be agreed that there are young folk of

19 and 20 who are qualified accountants and qualified nurses. Young women enter hospitals at that age, and others follow pharmaceutical pursuits in which they are qualified, or almost qualified. Is anyone going to say that these young people have not the maturity sufficient to enable them to vote? I do not think that members of the Opposition, in ridiculing the Bill and facetiously dealing with it, have seriously applied themselves to the matter.

Twenty-five years ago, or 30 or 40 years ago, people voted at the age of 21. Surely it is a bad reflection on our educational system to say that after all that time people between 18 and 20 years of age are not mature enough to vote at elections. It is admitted that probably for the first year or two there would be teething trouble if these young people were allowed to vote. But when they came to realise what politics meant to them from the economic point of view, and what it meant to them from the point of view of securing homes, I think they would be much keener to do the right thing by the State. I compliment the Government on making this effort—whether it is successful or not—to encourage young people in this matter, and I hope that the Bill will be agreed to. I support the second reading.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [5.51]: After that impassioned oration by the member for Guildford-Midland, I thought that, as the father of a boy who is nearly 18, as well as being the father of several other boys, I should have a few words to say. I cannot agree with very much of what the hon. member said. I oppose the measure but not because I am afraid that the preponderance of voters under 21 might be on one side or the other. I have my own views as to which way they would vote. At the moment I am of the opinion that the preponderance would not be unfavourable to our side of politics, so it is not on that score that I oppose the measure.

Mr. Johnson: You underrate their intelligence.

Mr. COURT: I would rather refrain from commenting on the member for Leederville.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: He should be on the front bench!

Mr. COURT: Much emphasis has been placed on the reasons why persons under 21 should vote. The member for Guildford-Midland emphasised achievements in sport, and he also mentioned that some people are married before they are 21 and accept parental responsibility. As we know they pay taxes if their earnings are great enough.

The Minister for Works: How do you get over the matter of taxation without representation?

Mr. COURT: I think that such issues are not worthy ones on which to decide this matter.

The Minister for Works: That is a real issue—no taxation without representation.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What about a child of five or six who could have an income and be taxed?

Mr. Heal: Who is making this speech?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker! If the supporters of the measure feel so strongly in favour of it, and if they feel so strongly regarding the capacity of people under 21, they must automatically carry the matter to its logical conclusion and amend related laws, such as those concerning marriage and betting, the law of contracts and so on. If it is logical to amend the law in this major particular respecting voting for elections in this State, it follows that a person subscribing to such a view should also hold that all these other things should be made available to those below the age of 21. I submit that if specific cases are taken into consideration, there are people of 16 who have a much greater capacity and much more commonsense than many of 50; but they are selected cases. Likewise, one could take selected people of 18, 19 and 20, and if they were to be selected on the basis of capacity and commonsense, they would not be entrusted with certain responsibilities because they could be said not to be mature enough.

That brings me to the point that because a person turns 21 he does not necessarily inherit some greater capacity than he possessed the evening before. But for legal and other convenience we have accepted a date which we regard as that on which a person reaches his majority for many purposes, particularly legal purposes. I am not going to argue against the contention that many people of 18 have more capacity than other people of an age in excess of 21.

Emphasis has been laid on war service. I know that that argument is trotted out at intervals in support of giving the franchise to people below the age of 21. I want to point out that when persons enlist below the age of 21 they are probably at the most highly controlled period of their lives. People in the armed services are subject to very severe rules and regulations and to stringent discipline. Very rarely are they allowed the opportunity to act independently or on their own initiative. They are part of a team which is highly trained and disciplined. We know that the authorities go as far as they can to prevent young men under 21 from being permitted to go into action, unless there are special circumstances and they have had adequate training.

The Minister for Works: If a man is not too young to fight for his country surely he should be allowed to vote for it!

Hon. A. R. V. Abbott: He cannot fight without the consent of his parents.

The Minister for Works: Well, let him vote with the consent of his parents.

Mr. COURT: The Minister well knows that a man has to get permission from his parents to serve if he is below the age of 21.

The Minister for Works: What has that to do with it? He could get permission to vote.

Mr. COURT: The Minister's logic is not up to its usual form.

The Minister for Works: That is a hard argument to get over.

Mr. COURT: Such arguments are trotted out without due regard to circumstances. When any person joins the armed services—whether it be the navy, the army or the air force—he is subject to very strict discipline and does not act on his own personal initiative as he would do in the ordinary course of life.

As I said earlier, I have a son of my own who is approaching the age of 18, and I have asked myself what my attitude is towards his having a vote at the age of 18. As a father, I naturally think that he is as intelligent as the average boy. He is in the process of sitting for his Leaving Examination, and after that he will either go to the university or start on the professional career that he seems to favour. I suggest that at the moment he is too busy and worried about his studies, and is too occupied in fitting in a little sport and following the general interests of the average boy in youth and church activities to be concerned about this problem of voting.

The Premier: All of those things would apply to a large number of people over 21.

Mr. COURT: The Premier was not here when I gave my views on the question of the selection of the age of 21.

The Premier: Yes; I heard you.

Mr. COURT: I am sorry. I feel that it is an arbitrary age but it has served a useful purpose and there is no need to change it at this stage. There are some boys who follow a different calling and do not undertake much study outside of their normal work. They go to work at 15 or 16; and when the time comes to knock off, they go home and interest themselves in activities other than study. But we have to preserve a balance in this matter and allow for some people undertaking higher professional and academic studies as against those that engage in political and other studies. No doubt by the time they are 18 or 19 those in the latter group have a fairly sound grasp of political principles as put forward by the several parties.

We have to take a view of the situation as a whole. I think that the Minister for Works, with his experience in education, will agree that until a person is 21 years of age, if he has decided on a professional or academic career, he is fully committed in learning his various subjects. If he is attending the university, his time is taken up by lectures and studies, so that he has very little time for other activities. If a person decides to follow a professional career, whether it be accountancy or some other branch, he is fully committed, and if he is a sound young man his ambition is to become qualified at the earliest possible date.

Admittedly many do not become qualified until they are well over 21, and here it may be said that my argument breaks down, and that a person should not vote until he is qualified. That, I feel, is carrying the position too far; I feel the happy medium is the one we have accepted throughout the years, wherein the majority has been acknowledged at 21 for various purposes including voting, entry to hotels and betting shops, and the like.

For this reason I am opposed to the Bill. I am not opposed to it on the ground that I feel that many of these young people would not be sufficiently intelligent to exercise a vote, but because, firstly, I do not think they demand it at this stage; secondly, I do not believe they are very interested in the matter; and thirdly, a big proportion of them are far too busy with their careers to be bothered about this particular responsibility. They are quite happy to accept the situation as it is, whereby they have the right to vote when they reach their majority at the age of 21.

On motion by Mr. O'Brien, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th September.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [6.21]: As the Minister explained, the Bill, first of all provides for the marketing board to retain all fractions less than $\frac{1}{4}$ d. Secondly, its purpose is to authorise the board to make deductions, on the authority of the growers, for payments to be made into the fund established under the Soil Fertility Research Act, such contributions not to exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a bushel. Thirdly, due to the fact that most grains are marketed by bulkhandling, rather than the old method of bagging, the position may arise when the board, on behalf of the oats and barley growers, may wish to handle the grain in bulk.

The present legislation provides only for a three-year agreement with Co-Operative Bulk Handling Ltd., whereas the Bill sets

out to make provision for a 20-year agreement. The Minister, in summing up the position, said, firstly, that power was sought to collect voluntary contributions from the growers for fractions of less than $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a bushel; secondly, the board was able to contribute to the soil fertility research fund by amounts not exceeding $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a bushel; and thirdly the life of the board was to be extended to 20 years. I am not a farmer, and I have not the knowledge of this legislation that the member for Moore has, but I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [6.5]: At the outset I want to say that this amendment to the Marketing of Barley Act has my full support. I would appreciate it if you, Mr. Speaker, allowed me some latitude whilst I am speaking on this measure because it is closely interwoven with the legislation dealing with wheat and the other coarse grain, oats. In fact, the idea of the amendment is to bring the barley grower into the same position, with regard to responsibility, as that in which the growers of the other two grains find themselves.

Recently when I was in the United Kingdom I had the opportunity of gaining some information which, I believe, will be of interest to most members and certainly it will be of interest to the grain-growing population of the State, who really provide so much of the labour and find so much of the revenue for the Government instrumentalities. For this reason I think it is advisable to give them some of the information which I gained whilst I was in the United Kingdom.

The Bill, first of all, aims to give authority to pay into the funds already set up by the wheat growers, the fraction of less than $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in finalisation of the barley payments. For many years this was done by the voluntary wheat pool of Western Australia, with the result that large sums of money, which it would have been difficult and costly to distribute amongst the growers, have been used to build up a considerable fund that has been of benefit not only to those who contributed towards it, but to all the primary producers of the State. So it is suggested that this small fraction of $\frac{1}{4}$ d.—less than $\frac{1}{4}$ d.—should be put into the fund, the same as has been done with the wheat growers' money, except that in this instance it would be for the specific purpose of increasing soil fertility.

Secondly, the Bill authorises the deduction of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel on the barley delivered to the receiving agents, to be paid into the fund already established by the wheat growers. As members know, that fund is the soil fertility research fund. In the third instance, we come to the only controversial part of the measure, and that is to increase the period of the legislation governing the barley industry from three to 20 years. This will bring the

barley growers into line with the wheat growers of Western Australia, and it will also tie up with the wheat growers and Co-Operative Bulk Handling.

Members may recall that a previous Administration entered into an agreement with Co-Operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for a period which will expire in 1975, with reference to an installation which has been built at Albany and one which it is intended to build at Geraldton. As provision has to be made for barley exactly as it has been for wheat by this handling company, the idea was to make the payments extend over the whole period until 1975. You may be interested to know, Sir, that already an organisation which was set up to handle only one grain—wheat—is now handling four grains, and this has been the cause of a great deal of concern and worry, with the result that much ingenuity has been displayed to make it possible for the organisation to handle effectively not only one grain, but four grains; and they must be kept entirely separate.

At the present time the company is building an experimental-type silo which, instead of having one holding unit, will have eight. This silo is being built at Trayning, and it is felt that not only will the grains be handled most satisfactorily there, but it will be possible to turn them so that when they are held for long periods there is a greater chance of preventing infestation by weevils and other enemies of grains that are held for a long time.

So it is suggested that this period should be extended to the full term. This will enable the handling company to pay off the whole of the indebtedness that will be caused by the extra expense which the company has already commenced to incur, and which it will incur in ever-increasing amounts during the next few years, in order to handle these coarse grains. During the whole of the period, the idea is that the 4d. per bushel shall be collected from the coarse grain growers in exactly the same way as it is being collected from the wheat growers at the present time.

Members are aware that last year the wheat growers contributed 4d. a bushel on all the wheat which was delivered to the handling organisation; or at least from all the farmers who were prepared to make a voluntary contribution of 4d. A sum of £27,739 8s. 6d. was contributed by 85 per cent. of the wheat growers who delivered their wheat to the handling organisation. This means that 26,250,000 bushels were levied to the extent of 4d. per bushel in order to make this contribution.

I am not very fond of compulsion—though I did introduce legislation with reference to oats some time ago—but I do feel rather bitter that 85 per cent. contribute, but all the wheat growers get very great benefits from it. It does seem a pity that 15 per cent. of those people should be

in receipt of all the benefits without making any contribution. This year, the quantity of grain which will be grown and delivered in Western Australia will exceed that which has been delivered for many years past. Some 3,019,000 acres have been sown to wheat.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ACKLAND: Before the tea suspension, I had reached the third provision in the Bill; the one I consider is controversial. This clause proposes to increase the tenure of the W.A. Barley Marketing Board from three years to 20 years. The object of this, of course, is to bring the legislation into line with that dealing with wheat and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and to provide for a recoup of the capital expenditure already incurred at Albany and that proposed to be incurred at Geraldton, so that barley can make its full contribution towards the money spent in those two centres and towards that which is proposed to be spent at most of the receiving sidings throughout the State.

I went on to mention that some £27,739 had been received from 85 per cent. of the wheat growers of Western Australia as a result of their 4d. contributions. This, together with the 4d. that is to be paid by barley growers, as proposed in this Bill, is purely a voluntary contribution. This year it is anticipated that the total contribution to be paid into this research fund will be much greater than that received last year. Already it is expected that more than 40,000,000 bushels of wheat will be delivered to the receivers and that, if another 85 per cent. of the growers contribute to the fund, it will be found that the wheat growers will pay to the trustees a sum of approximately £40,000.

Because barley and oats growers will enjoy the same benefits from any expenditure from this fund, the Bill provides for including them in the scheme. This year, 700,000 acres are under oats and in view of the wonderful feed year we are experiencing, it is anticipated that more than 10,000,000 bushels of oats will either be received by the voluntary oats pool or will be delivered to merchants for sale. Therefore, arrangements have been made, both with the voluntary oats pool and the merchants, to deduct 4d. per bushel from those growers who are agreeable to paying that contribution. If this is realised, it is expected that oats growers will contribute approximately £8,750.

For the first time, the two-row barley crop is likely to exceed the requirements of Western Australian maltsters. The growers have 255,700 acres sown with six-row barley, and 64,680 sown with two-row English barley. On a conservative estimate, a yield in the vicinity of 15 bushels to the acre is expected, which will mean that there will be nearly 5,000,000 bushels of barley delivered to the receivers and, on

the basis of 80 per cent. of the full amount on a 4d. contribution, this will represent nearly £4,000. So it will be seen that this purely voluntary fund established by the growers is likely to produce approximately £52,000 this coming year for research work.

I was extremely interested to hear the Minister for Agriculture, when introducing the Bill, make this comment—

This is a voluntary system and as no compulsion whatsoever is being placed on growers to make any contributions, I do not think that members will see any objection to this measure. It is also well known that wheat growers of this State have initiated something to their everlasting credit, and that is, that instead of depending on government finance and officers for research work, they have inaugurated a fund to which they contribute 4d. a bushel for the purpose of conducting research work in the industry.

With that comment I entirely agree. It is a sum of money which in itself must instil in Dr. Underwood and those associated with him in his work at the university, a feeling of confidence, in that the research will be guaranteed some continuity. I also think it should be an incentive to the Government of this State to make more money available for agricultural research work. It is all very well for the Minister for Agriculture to make a statement such as that, which I know was absolutely sincere, but I would like to know what the Government is going to do about this. What will its contribution be?

It is my belief that the soil is the real wealth of any nation and, as one who thoroughly agrees with the freehold tenure of land, I am of the opinion that with the person who holds the title deeds of any property goes a great deal of responsibility because he should be obliged to maintain the asset of the country to its fullest capacity and should leave the land in a better state of fertility than he found it. But it is a responsibility of governments as well as of those who hold the title deeds of land to ensure that encouragement is given to those people to continue the good work they have started.

I should like to see that the security of those who are farming in this country is assured; that they can have a feeling of security that what they are attempting is also being backed by the Government. At present, we are facing a critical period in the history of this country. Members will have noticed from the Press that wool growing is not nearly as lucrative as it was a few years ago and it is true that the prosperity of Australia at the present time is carried entirely by the wool industry. It has been and is at present the only really solvent industry in the Commonwealth; the only industry that can meet competition from other parts of the world.

In this morning's Press it is reported that already this year the return from a much larger quantity of wool sold has been reduced by almost £11,000,000, and it is anticipated that the wool yield this year will be down by some £60,000,000 below the figures for last year. The average price being received for wool today is 55d. Last year it was 72d. It has been reasonably computed that it costs more than 4s. to produce one lb. of wool. So we are getting very near to the danger line. Already wheat is returning a price that is well below the cost of production.

Mr. May: Who made that estimated figure for wool?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not know. However, it has been made. I have not the authority with me today. If the hon. member is interested enough to have the information obtained for him—that is, if he does not care to do it himself—it could easily be secured. As I have said, the price of the product which represents the second largest industry of Australia, namely, wheat, is already well below cost of production. I do not know how far you will let me go with this Sir—

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member had better keep it for the Estimates.

Mr. ACKLAND: While I was in the United Kingdom, I took the opportunity of meeting most of the heads of the corn trade. They looked with a great deal of concern at what is happening, not only in the wheat market but also in the oats and barley markets of today. All three cereals are closely allied. I will now tell the House what the United Kingdom is doing for primary producers with a view to making primary production a payable industry in that country. It is a move similar to what is proposed by this Bill in trying to assist corn growers in this State. It is interesting to note that last year the United Kingdom spent £282,000,000 in the form of subsidies to all its primary producers. That represented £352,500,000 in Australian currency. The United Kingdom has done that not only by research work but also by making direct subsidies to agriculture. In the annual review published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in 1955, these figures appear—

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member has got away from the Bill. He is now speaking on a different matter altogether. He must confine his remarks to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ACKLAND: Very well, Sir. I am afraid I shall have to weary the House on another occasion. However, I would point out that the position is so serious that it is one I think the Premier and Cabinet, as well as Parliament, must seriously consider before this session ends. During the debate on the Estimates I shall make an effort to give these figures to members to show what is being done in other parts of

the world and how far behind we are when compared with the United Kingdom and France in particular in regard to their support of agriculture. I was of the opinion that you, Sir, could have allowed me some latitude because this Bill makes provision in a small way to adopt what is provided for by the Governments in the countries I have mentioned.

I support the second reading of the Bill. It deals with self-help, something of which I have been a great advocate. The Western Australian primary producer, particularly the grain grower, has practised more self-help than any other section of the community. The reason for the 20-year period is very sound. It brings the barley industry into line with the wheat industry in regard to the period of repayment for building the required grain storage facilities in the State. It makes it possible for the handling company to make provision for the years ahead, knowing full well that the people to be served by such a provision will meet the cost. I support the second reading.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [7.47]: This House should give careful consideration to the Bill before it because the provisions of the parent Act enable drastic action to be taken against the liberty of the farmer. We must realise that it is proposed to extend the operations of the Act for a period of 20 years. In addition to the provision for extension, there are others which will enable the Marketing of Barley Board, with the consent of the farmers, to retain certain moneys and to distribute them in a certain manner. I am not sure whether such action has to be authorised by law. I am inclined to think it could have been done in a voluntary manner, because any voluntary action can be agreed to.

Apparently it was thought that legislative authority was desirable. I have no objection to this part of the Bill, but when it is proposed to extend the term of this Act for 20 years—an Act which severely imposes on the liberty of the subject and the farmer—then careful consideration should be given to it. The parent Act was first passed in 1946 and it had to come into operation by proclamation. It was provided that the Act should continue for three years after proclamation. By referring to the provisions in the Act, it will be appreciated why the limitation was inserted.

Section 20 provides that any person may apply to the board for a licence to produce barley for sale and delivery to the board, and shall supply such information as the board requires. Thus no person shall be entitled to the issue of any such licence as of right. So the board may, of its own discretion, decide who shall and who shall not grow barley in Western Australia. That section also provides that if a person is granted a licence he becomes

a producer for the purposes of the Act, that every licence shall specify the maximum quantity of barley which the grower is permitted to produce for sale and delivery, and that even if a person has a licence he may be limited by the board as to the quantity grown.

It further provides that no person shall, without the consent in writing of the board, produce barley for sale or for delivery to the board in contravention of the provisions of the licence.

The Premier: It sounds like Russia.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Then it provides that a licence may be cancelled by the board, and unless it is cancelled it shall continue in force until the 31st March next following the granting of the licence. So, we see that a licence is granted for only one year. It stipulates that no person other than a producer licensed under the Act shall produce barley for sale, and the board may refuse to accept delivery of any barley licensed to be produced for sale but not delivered to the board prior to the closing date. Then there is further provision that all barley produced by a producer immediately on being harvested vests in the board, and all the producer has is a right to claim for compensation. So, a producer cannot sell his barley because it belongs to the board. He merely has a right of compensation.

These are very similar to the powers of resumption. I do not think that we should lightly agree to such a long extension of the Act. There is a distinction between the Marketing of Barley Board and the Wheat Marketing Board. The latter was established on an Australia-wide basis after a ballot of all wheat growers had been conducted, and there is no provision that a producer must have a licence to grow wheat. Any farmer may grow wheat, as much or as little as he chooses to sow.

Under the proposed legislation a person cannot grow barley unless he has obtained permission, and that can be refused by the board at its discretion. I am aware that the powers mentioned may on the recommendation of the board be suspended by the Minister, but it must be borne in mind that this can be done only on the recommendation of the board. The Minister has no discretion in the matter.

Mr. May: Do you think that all the barley grown at present is under licence?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not. Probably it will be found that the board has recommended that the provisions of Section 20 be suspended for the time being, but the power is in existence that may prevent a farmer from growing barley for sale. Before the liberties of the subject are taken away, the matter should receive careful consideration. If this Bill were to enable people to join together and provide money, even for a period of 20 years, I would have no objection, but when it is provided that

although a farmer wishes to produce barley he may not do so; and if he does so, it does not belong to him and he has only a right of compensation, then I do object. I think the period of 20 years is too long.

It is not my intention to oppose the second reading of the Bill. So far the board has not only respected the interests of the farmer, but also those of the community. This is the type of Bill over which strict control should be taken. In Committee I propose to alter the period of 20 years to three years. The Act has been extended from time to time for three years—from 1949 to 1952, and from 1952 to 1955. With an Act of this nature I think that a period of three years is long enough. I support the second reading.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [7.56]: I agree with the proposed amendment suggested by the member for Mt. Lawley. I do not like the provision in the Bill which seeks to bind the barley grower to certain conditions for 20 years. It is far too long. I am surprised that the Minister has introduced a Bill in such a form. Members will recall that the member for Moore introduced a Bill relating to the marketing of oats, very similar to this one, but through the opposition of members now sitting on the Government benches, together with four or five rebels on this side of the House, the Bill was defeated, and rightly so.

Now the Minister, at the instigation of the Farmers' Union or the Marketing of Barley Board, has decided to introduce a measure similar to the Bill relating to the marketing of oats. The barley grower has had no say regarding the measure because no ballot has been taken. I myself do not grow any barley but my son does, and there has been no ballot taken of barley growers. I am not surprised that the Minister has decided, at the dictation of the Barley Board, to make contributions to the Soil Fertility Research Fund, and agreed for fractions to be deducted from sales for the purpose of building storages for barley.

Under the Wheat Marketing Act contributions are voluntary. The member for Moore said it was entirely free in regard to wheat. It is intended to control the barley grower and say what he shall do.

Mr. Ackland: Wheat is not free.

Mr. MANN: There is no compulsory deduction in regard to wheat.

Mr. Ackland: Of course there is!

Mr. MANN: The Minister has stated that it is not compulsory.

Mr. Ackland: One gets compensation under the system of marketing wheat.

Mr. MANN: I have read the Minister's speech. His views are that it is not compulsory. Surely we have had enough of

control over primary producers. There are the Milk Board and the Egg Board, but the greatest farce of all is the Meat Board which has control for 15 years over meat produced in Australia for export, by a contract with Great Britain. The Australian producer is tied hand and foot to England through the action of the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. McEwen. Why producers would want to be controlled by some organisation is beyond me.

The provision of the Bill which gives a life of 20 years to the board appears to be a vicious measure because, if passed, the rising generation will be tied for 20 years and restricted in growing barley at the discretion of the barley board. We all talk of freedom, but there is no freedom in this measure. I support the second reading of the Bill on the two main issues, but in Committee I shall oppose the extension of the Act for a period of 20 years. I consider that three years is quite long enough. Why extend the measure beyond that time? Would it hurt members to consider the Act every three years?

We must realise that members of this House are appointed for three years and the members of another place for six years. Are we to bind succeeding Governments by the decision of present members? I am sorry that the Minister has fallen for this proposal, but let me assure him that the provision of a 20-year period would be a very dangerous principle to adopt and I hope that that proposal will be altered in Committee.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [8.01]: I support the second reading and the general principles contained in the Bill (but, with the two previous speakers, I object to extending the duration of this legislation as proposed in the measure. It is nine years since the original statute was introduced by the Wise Government. That Government decided, and rightly so, that an initial period of three years was quite sufficient for legislation of this nature to remain in force. In 1949 the Liberal-Country Party Coalition Government, taking into consideration experience of the world markets and the development of the agricultural industry, thought it advisable to continue the Act and adopted three years as a sufficient period for the extension.

When the matter came before the House in 1952, the Liberal-Country Party Government again decided to grant an extension for three years. I have been unable to find in the debate any organised opposition to the limitation of the period to three years. One or two members, when speaking to the Bill on those occasions, expressed a desire that the period should be longer, but a large majority of the members decided that three years was long enough.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That has certain advantages.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes, there are certain advantages in having the Act brought up for review every three years. If at any time it was deemed undesirable to continue the control of the marketing of barley, the legislation could be allowed to lapse. Those who advocate a duration of 20 years for the Act will probably contend that, if at any time it were found necessary to repeal the Act, that could be done, but experience has shown how difficult it is to repeal legislation because the measure must be passed by both Houses. It is far easier, when the legislation comes up for review at the end of the three years, simply not to pass it.

The Minister for Labour: You repealed the Profiteering Prevention Act a couple of years ago.

Mr. OLDFIELD: At the moment we are dealing with the Marketing of Barley Bill. As the member for Avon Valley pointed out, 20 years is a long period to tie down our agriculturists in regard to the growing and marketing of barley. The farmer is at liberty to grow barley for his own use, but, before he can produce it for marketing, he must obtain a licence. That savours of restraint of trade; it restricts the farmer from utilising his land in the manner he considers to be most beneficial. Surely if a man is willing to go on the land and produce, he should be entitled to grow whatever produce he considers will give him the best return!

During wartime I agree that it is necessary to impose restrictions upon certain growers as regards the acreage to be cropped. We have various Acts under which acreages may be restricted; for instance, those relating to the growing of onions and potatoes. This probably causes hardship from time to time and it certainly prevents new producers from entering those fields. In two Bills that have occupied our attention this session, we have heard references to restraint of trade, and members seem to agree that there should be no restriction against a newcomer's entering a certain field of production, and that those established in an industry should not enjoy a complete monopoly for ever and a day.

I agree that the Act is necessary to control the marketing of barley at the present stage, but I cannot bring myself willingly to grant the board an extension for 20 years. If the board wishes to utilise certain funds to provide storage space for barley, there is reason for asking for an extension. It could provide the requisite storage so that if farmers ceased growing the present quantity of wheat in favour of growing oats, barley and other crops, the storage space would be available. If storage bins were provided and

the Act were not continued after the expiration of another three or six years, the bins could be used for the storage of other cereals or rented to a merchant, pool or other body handling one or other of those products. Western Australia will continue to grow wheat, oats and barley and storage space will be required for them, so whatever space the board may provide for the present marketing of barley will not be wasted if the Act at some later date is not continued.

When the Committee stage is reached, I hope that the Minister will favourably consider the arguments advanced against granting a 20-year extension. I hope he will bear in mind that this measure, to become effective, must pass both Houses of Parliament, and that we have to consider not merely one section of the community but three sections, namely, the producer, the merchant and the consumer. In any legislation that is presented for our consideration, the interests of those three sections should receive attention. Unfortunately, two sections are almost always overlooked, namely, the consumer and the merchant; in fact the merchant is sometimes represented in an unfavourable light as a middleman and spoken of as if he had no right to exist.

While I can appreciate the action of a Country Party member in speaking as a farmer, we should not consider the interests of the farmers without paying due regard to the interests of the other sections of the community. Some people might ask what barley means to the ordinary consumer. This grain plays a rather important part in his life. Racehorses are fed on barley and all people that drink beer are consumers of barley. I would say that the brewers and maltsters are the largest users of barley in the State. Most of the barley that is exported is sent to malting plants and ultimately is used for the manufacture of beer. Consequently, when we are dealing with the subject of barley, we must bear in mind the interests of all those people.

I have no quarrel with the idea of the board that orderly marketing is required in the industry, but hardship is suffered from time to time by certain merchants who must make their purchases from the board. When merchants purchase barley from the board for resale, it is to cater for one type of trade, namely, to supply racehorse owners and trainers. The racehorse is given only the best of fodder, and owners and trainers are very loth to feed anything to a horse that might prove detrimental to its health.

From time to time the only barley available from the board contains foreign matter such as wild oats, turnip seed and wheat, so that it is not a clean sample. When it contains such foreign matters as wild oats or turnip seed, or fully-headed

wheat, it is no good for the horse. Consequently, merchants are confronted with difficulties from time to time because the only barley procurable from the board contains such foreign matter. However, we must forget those factors as we are dealing with the majority of the people and therefore legislation of this nature is essential. I ask the House to give consideration to reducing the period from 20 years to something more in keeping with the provision in other legislation of this kind.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [8.16]: I am pleased to know that, generally speaking, members are in accord with this measure and with the requirements of the barley and oats section of the Farmers' Union. Members appear to have no objection to the fraction of a penny deduction proposed in order that the barley growers may at some future time provide storage facilities or anything else necessary to further their industry, nor do they object to the soil research levy. I assure members that the departure from the normal three-year period, at the end of which Parliament generally reviews legislation of this character, is due to modern developments which make it necessary.

If at some time in the future the Potato Marketing Board found it necessary to erect an expensive building for the storage of potatoes, or as a central marketing floor, it would have to ask Parliament for an extension of time before it could seek approval of a loan from any section of the banking industry, because no one will lend large sums of money today on a security of only three years. When we began to change from bagged to bulk wheat we had to give Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. a tenure which does not expire until 1975. That organisation knew it was hopeless to approach any financial institution for the large sum of money required if it had a tenure of office of only three years.

The same principle applies in relation to barley. There is not the restriction here which the member for Mt. Lawley alleged existed, even though the legislation provides power for restrictions. If we examine today's production of barley, together with the estimate for 1955-1956 it will be seen that there is no restriction from the board's point of view on the barley growers of this State.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Should it not be at the Minister's discretion rather than at that of the board?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The position has not been altered by this Government. In the recently concluded season deliveries of six-row barley to the board totalled 1,000,000 bushels and 360,000 bushels of two-row barley. The six-row barley was far below the estimate of 2,368,351 bushels, because we did not get

anywhere near half of that quantity. However, the estimate for the coming year is no less than 4,000,000 bushels of six-row barley and nearly 1,000,000 bushels of two-row. The reason for this provision is that we have now developed an export market which did not exist previously. We require something like 400,000 bushels of two-row barley for local consumption and it is only recently that we have gone beyond that in our production. Much of our barley production is now going to various overseas markets and so the situation has entirely changed. I repeat that the estimated production of barley for the coming year is 5,000,000 bushels and provision must be made for storing it.

Mr. Ackland: The estimate has gone up by 1,000,000 bushels since then.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not surprised, in view of the season. This estimated production will possibly increase from year to year if our overseas markets are maintained and we cannot expect any organisation to raise the money required to provide storage facilities if it has only three years as its term of security.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Should not some of the authority provided in the Bill have been reviewed, in that case?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think there is any need at the moment to restrict it so long as the permits that are issued for the production of barley exceed our normal requirements—which they do—and so from an operative point of view this is a most generous board so far as the growers are concerned. It is planning for the future and for a large export of barley.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The board might change its point of view in 20 years.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is why the barley growers' organisation does not wish to trust to the whim of Parliament on a three-year basis where such large sums of money are involved. This provision is contained in the Bill only to bring it into line with what was provided for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., so that the legislation could come up for review in 1975.

It is not as the member for Avon Valley suggested—that there was any restrictive power with the board. The growers had an opportunity of expressing their wishes and this was not just a matter of a deputation from the executive to me. The decision was made at the last congress of the growers, that the Government should be approached to see whether these three items could be incorporated in a Bill to ensure the future of the industry. If members agree that the growers should be allowed to erect storage facilities and so on to suit modern requirements they must agree to the long term, as a three-year term would not work.

Mr. Court: Can I take it that there is no restriction through licences?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The only restriction that could occur is through the board.

Mr. Ackland: There is no restriction except on the selling.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If there were any restriction on production, the figures I gave could not be correct. We must do for the barley and oats growers what we have already done for the wheat growers and give them legislation which will enable them to raise money to provide storage for their products.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 41 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: A period of 20 years might not be unreasonable if this were a normal marketing Act, but here the provision for licensing may be suspended by the Minister, but only on the recommendation of the board—

The Minister for Agriculture: It is working very well.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If we are to agree to such a long period there should be no restriction. It might be more reasonable if the Minister himself had the discretion, but I think it is only fair that anyone who wishes to should be free to grow barley. This provision, if included at all, should be under the jurisdiction of the Minister—

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you agree to the 20 years if the control were in the hands of the Minister?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I would agree to it if anyone had the right to grow barley. I move an amendment—

That the words "seventy-five" in line 31, page 2, be struck out with a view to inserting the words "fifty-eight".

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have already expressed my considered opinion in regard to this point. If the amendment is agreed to, we will have destroyed forever any chance of the barley growers arranging their own future, according to their requirements, because I know, after discussions with them, that if an amendment such as this is accepted, they will make no attempt to organise storage to the extent that will be required, bearing in mind our future production. If it were accepted, it would give them no security and naturally they would not be prepared to expend a large sum of money.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They cannot expect it in a measure like this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is trying to prevent the barley growers from carrying on a system of marketing to meet modern requirements, and I am surprised that any member opposite should try to do that. Members over there are always telling people how they are behind the farmers, but I would like to see some practical demonstration of it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not you think a farmer is entitled to grow barley if he wants to do so?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He cannot do it under this Act.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is nothing in the Bill that alters the Act in that regard.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But there should have been.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It makes no difference to the desire of the barley growers to have a sufficiently long period of time to warrant the investment of money in building storage and other facilities. That is all the Bill seeks to do.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You could produce a better Bill within three days.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the hon. member wishes to introduce an amendment to the Act, he can do so; but this Bill has nothing to do with that aspect. The Bill is limited entirely to putting into practice the desire of the barley growers to purchase facilities for the marketing of their product. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. ACKLAND: This is one occasion when I find myself in agreement with the Minister. The majority of those sitting on this side of the Chamber lay claim to the fact that they have some knowledge of finance, and the alteration from three years to 20 years is purely because of the financial aspect. The barley industry is up against competition from the rest of the world and has to reduce its costs and wants to make use of bulkhandling facilities. So much money would be involved in an alteration of the present set-up to make provision for it, that the barley growers must have a reasonable proposition to enable them to raise the necessary finance. I shall support the Minister and oppose the amendment.

A remark was made that this Bill has been introduced purely because of a wish of the executive of the barley section of the Farmers' Union. Such is not the case. It was done because of an almost unanimous resolution carried at the last conference held in Perth some few months ago.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is right.

Mr. ACKLAND: The request was that this legislation should be introduced and they requested that they should be held reasonably responsible to meet the money being expended on their behalf; but I am inclined to think that there might have been a better way to do it. I listened with a good deal of interest to those who have spoken to the Bill, but if the barley grower is to receive the benefit of installing satisfactory facilities for handling his product, he will need an extended period, such as the Bill will give him, to make the necessary financial arrangements. The member for Mt. Lawley must know, probably better than anybody else, that the barley growers cannot go to a financial institution and borrow several million pounds if they have security for only three years.

Mr. OLDFIELD: During the second reading debate I said that the period of 20 years was rather long and I also said that it was a long time for a farmer to be restricted in his operations in regard to the growing of barley. I cannot understand the Minister's insistence on a 20-year term. If he is not prepared to accept the three-year period, mentioned in the amendment of the member for Mt. Lawley, would he agree to a seven-year or 10-year period, so that we would have some control over the position within the foreseeable future. A period of 20 years is a long time in the life of any Parliament.

The Minister for Agriculture: What attitude did you take in regard to co-operative bulkhandling?

Mr. Ackland: At that time they were given more than 20 years.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: A different matter altogether.

Mr. Ackland: Exactly the same thing.

Mr. OLDFIELD: It was not because the Marketing of Barley Act controls the growing and marketing of barley. The Bill dealing with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. dealt purely and simply with the handling of the product.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is all this proposal is for.

Mr. OLDFIELD: No.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, it is.

Mr. OLDFIELD: This Bill will continue the whole operations of the Act. It will prevent a farmer from growing barley for sale, without a licence, until 1975—if the amendment is defeated.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is no restriction. If a farmer today wants to grow barley, he can grow it.

Mr. OLDFIELD: He has to apply for a licence.

The Minister for Agriculture: What is wrong with that? A person who wants to grow potatoes has to apply for a licence.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Act clearly states that any person may apply to the board for a licence to produce barley for sale and delivery to the board and shall supply such information as the board requires. No person shall be entitled to any such licence as of right. So that at any time a farmer who has been growing barley for a number of years could, when he applies for a renewal of his licence, be told that his acreage had been restricted. It is the restrictive nature of the legislation which I do not like continued because it is not altogether fair to the farmer. As the member for Avon Valley mentioned, we are going to sign away some of the rights of barley growers for a period of 20 years. I would like to know whether the Minister would agree to a lesser period.

Mr. COURT: I have listened to the debate and I would like to know whether I have understood the position correctly because my understanding of it will materially affect my approach to the amendment. I would like the Minister to tell me if I am wrong in my assumption that, firstly, a person can grow unlimited quantities of barley, regardless of the principal Act; and, secondly, people do not come under the restrictions until they attempt to sell the barley. In other words, if the barley is for their own use, farmers can grow unlimited quantities, but the only channel through which they can dispose of it is through the board—that is, for sale in Western Australia or abroad. That means that all local users, the maltsters in particular, have to acquire their barley through the board. Is that correct?

The Minister for Agriculture: You cannot do any better than quote the Act.

Mr. COURT: Up to the present there has been a suspension under Section 20, Subsection (8), with respect to licences and no one has been worried about the situation because there has been an adequate demand for all that has been produced; but for the first time we look like having a surplus and the question of export arises. If the clause in its present form is agreed to, the whole of the marketing of barley will be in the hands of the board until 1975. In the wheat industry there is difficulty in finding a ready market because of a world surplus.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would mean in effect the control of the marketing of barley and if world conditions changed so much as to require an amendment to the Act proper, it could be done in the normal way. There is no need to do that today.

Mr. COURT: I do not know that the Minister could come back to Parliament and ask for an Act to be altered, after

giving these people his word and introducing an Act to give effect to it; unless, of course, the Government accepted financial responsibility.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am not talking about going back on my word in regard to the 20-year period. I am talking about all the extraneous matters that have been introduced into the debate tonight. Those matters could be altered without going back on our word in regard to the period.

Mr. COURT: The Minister is referring particularly to the licensing provisions under Section 20 as distinct from the actual rights of the board and the project it has in mind to build bulkhandling facilities throughout the State?

The Minister for Agriculture: If you wanted to take control away from the board and give it to the Minister at any time, you could do that by an amendment to the Act if the circumstances warranted it.

Mr. COURT: I do not think that would be right, not if we extended the term of the Act to 20 years. It would not be right to take it away from the board two or three years hence. We will have committed the board to continue its operations for that period. We might regret having to go on with this for 20 years. I would rather see the whole Act approached rather than a particular section of it.

By all means, let us give these people financial security. It could be possible that if we extended it after three years, the Government of the day could stand behind the financial commitment. The member for Moore envisages that several millions will be involved in the bulkhandling problem of barley. I think we should have something more specific in relation to the bulkhandling conditions of barley. The Government could say that it would give a three or four year extension and would not wish them to be stuck with their financial commitments.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I doubt whether the barley growers appreciate the situation in which they are placed. Where a restrictive Act is suspended, people forget about it and it goes on and on until something occurs, and then there is trouble. A great many people then protest, but nothing can be done about it; at any rate, not for some time. Even if Parliament is in session, there is sometimes a difference of opinion between the Government of the day and Parliament. This Government has found that it has not been able to bring some of its policies into operation because of Parliament, and that is a danger I foresee. The Government should review the Act as a whole before extending the period for 20 years.

It would be easy for the Minister to bring in an amending Bill quickly, and I am sure he would have more support than he has at the moment.

Mr. MAY: We are attempting to tell the producers of barley what to do with their product. At their annual conference, through their organisation, the producers asked for this legislation. Can anyone say that the producers do not know what they are talking about?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not think the majority would know.

Mr. MAY: I am surprised that the member for Mt. Lawley should tie himself up with legislation of this sort. I do not think he knows what he is talking about and, in effect, he is telling the farmers that they do not know what they are talking about. The farmers of this State know what they want, and know how to go about getting it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: You probably know more about Collie.

Mr. MAY: I think I also know more about barley. Unless the barley growers get this provision placed in the Act, the question of the storage of barley will be in jeopardy. The only restriction on barley growers is that they must sell their barley through the barley board. There is no other restriction. I have never seen so much barley growing as I have this year, and there is no restriction of the amount that should be grown. All the growers have to agree to is to sell it to the board, as is done with wheat.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not the same.

Mr. MAY: Wheat has to be sold through the Wheat Board; it cannot be sold privately.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: You can grow what wheat you like privately.

Mr. MAY: No seller of barley can sell it privately. It has to go through the board. It makes for orderly marketing. I am right behind the barley growers in their desire for this legislation.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. OLDFIELD: May I ask, Mr. Chairman, whether it would be in order for me to move to repeal Section 41 of the principal Act?

The CHAIRMAN: No, I am afraid the hon. member cannot do that at this stage.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	15
Noes	....	....	....	....	12
Majority for	....	....	....	....	3

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland
Mr. Andrew
Mr. Brady
Mr. Hawke
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Johnson

Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Moir
Mr. Owen
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Styants
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Court
Mr. Doney
Mr. Hill
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Mann

Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Nalder
Mr. North
Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Thorp
Mr. Nimmo

(Teller.)

Pairs.**Ayes.**

Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Lapham
Mr. Graham
Mr. Heal
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Norton
Mr. Sewell
Mr. O'Brien

Noes.

Mr. Bovell
Mr. Yates
Mr. Cornell
Mr. Brand
Dame P. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman
Mr. Manning
Mr. Wild
Mr. Perkins

Clause thus passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendment No. 3.

BILL—SOIL FERTILITY RESEARCH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th September.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [8.58]: It will not be necessary for me to detain the House very long on the short amendment contained in this measure. Having passed the Marketing of Barley Act Amendment Bill, it is now necessary for us to provide for representation of the Barley Board on the research committee. The Bill seeks to appoint the president of the barley section of the Farmers' Union to that position, and I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—HONEY POOL.*Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 13. Page 9—Delete the word "thirteen" in line 37 and substitute the word "twelve".

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Legislative Council has drawn attention to a minor mistake. Quite apart from the general powers the corporation will have, there are subsidiary powers, and one of them is with regard to the vesting of property and the control of reserve funds. Where the provision states "to act as trustee of any reserve fund or funds mentioned in Section 13 of this Act" the reference should be to Section 12 as is pointed out by the Legislative Council. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1955-56.*In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 29th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. Moir in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £7,453:

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [9.5]: The Budget certainly cannot be described as an exciting one. On the contrary, it could be described as a plain, unimaginative Budget. Of course, taxation did not figure in it at all, and we know that the interesting items of taxation are now dealt with by the Commonwealth. However, there are some items of taxation and charges that have a very considerable effect on our people. There was no mention of any decreased charges of any kind or any decreased taxes.

I would have thought that in this Budget the Treasurer would make some reference to the increased pensions of which he has given notice in his Bill and that he would tell us of the amount likely to be involved. I see that, according to tonight's paper, additional money is to be provided for school requirements—school books, etc. I think that that sort of information, too, could have been given to us in the Budget. I thought the Treasurer, gave us rather a doleful tale. He told us about the very substantial drop in wool prices. We know that wool is our greatest revenue producer. I was reading

recently an extract from the report on the national income and expenditure for 1954-55 as presented by the Federal Treasurer on the occasion of the delivery of his Budget speech. He said—

Farm income fell by about £72,000,000 in 1954-55 following a fall of £41,000,000 in the previous year.

After remaining stable at just over £1,160,000,000 in both 1952-53 and 1953-54 the gross value of farm output is estimated to have fallen by nearly £40,000,000 in 1954-55. The main factors accounting for this decline were a fall of some 30,000,000 bushels (valued at nearly £20,000,000) in the wheat crop and a fall of over £40,000,000 in the value of wool produced, despite an estimated increase of over 3 per cent in the quantity. These deductions were partly offset by substantial increases in the value of meat and butter output.

I might say here that there has been a change in that direction, too, in the last few months. The Federal Treasurer went on to say—

Because of increased costs, the decline in net farm income exceeded the decline in the value of farm output by over £30,000,000.

When one hears that farm income in one year—1954-55—fell by £72,000,000, and by £41,000,000 the previous year, and realises that indications point strongly to a further fall in farm income or in primary producers' income this year, one tries to visualise what effect that will have upon the national economy and the income of the State generally.

In view of the position that has arisen, I ask myself just what steps Governments are taking—in this case, of course, I am particularly interested in regard to the State Government—concerning government expenditure in this financial year. We were also told by the Treasurer that there is difficulty in selling our wheat abroad. I cannot see any early signs of an improvement in that direction. In fact, it appears to me that the difficulties with regard to our wheat position and the sale of our wheat abroad are increasing. The Treasurer went on to say—

Other primary products such as fat lambs, meat, honey, eggs and fruit have found a ready market but not all at profitable prices.

How long can we go on selling any products if they are not being sold at profitable prices? It is a poor look-out if our goods are sold in markets that are not profitable. I would like to know from the Treasurer what action he has taken to see what can be done about markets for these industries. It might be said that this is a Commonwealth matter; that it is the duty of the Commonwealth to find markets. I do not agree. The State also has

an obligation in that respect. We do not want to leave the whole of our marketing problems to the Commonwealth.

For some years we were in the fortunate position of having ready markets and did not have to look for them. But with these changing conditions I think the duty devolves upon the State Government to see what can be done with regard to marketing generally. Let us take one particular industry—that of flour-milling. Would it not be possible to find markets abroad for our flour and thereby help our primary producers—not only the wheat-grower but other sections of primary production that are dependent on wheat offal? I would ask the Treasurer whether there have been any discussions with the Farmers' Union or the exporters with regard to the finding of markets and doing something about unprofitable markets.

It was said by the Treasurer that research work was being extended in a number of directions to assist primary producers. I see that there has been a fairly substantial increase in the amount of money provided for research and I certainly commend that. Research work in this State has meant that millions of pounds have been provided for primary production and this expert advice should be encouraged. However, I hope I shall be able to have something to say about this when the Department of Agriculture Estimates are under discussion.

The figures given by the Treasurer relating to our imports and exports were interesting but not very pleasant to listen to. I should think they would give members considerable concern. If we take the figures for last year as given to us by the Treasurer—that is, for both interstate and overseas trade—we find we have an adverse trade balance of £45,000,000. Our credit balance overseas was £21,632,948. Then we turn to the position of a number of our great exportable primary products, and the difficulties of overseas markets.

Despite the good season we are having, we could face a further deterioration in our overseas credits. Of course, we know that we just cannot go on indefinitely like this. We should be making the greatest possible efforts to obtain an extension of the home market. The Treasurer told us that this was necessary, but I would ask him what his Government is doing about it. What can he say he has done to create an expanding home market? We were told that last year the mining industry produced 850,540 ounces of gold for a value of £13,314,000, being an increase of £414,000 on the previous year.

Gold must have been a great factor in assisting us to obtain a credit balance overseas. Our overseas credits stand at £21,600,000 so there is no doubt about the prime importance of our gold mining industry. It should receive every encouragement. The South African Government is

on the move again to get an increased price for gold. On several occasions, when I was in office, I urged at Premiers' Conferences that there should be an increase in the price of gold. Since the price was fixed, there has been a considerable increase.

I suggest to the Premier that he strongly impress upon the Commonwealth Government that it should support an increase in the price of gold. Just what the increase should be, I do not know, but I did see something recently which was written by a mining authority in which he said that the increase should be as much as £5 an ounce. I do not know whether that is the amount required, but I certainly think some increase is justified.

The Treasurer: I think the main difficulty is that there is only one buyer.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That has been the difficulty for a number of years; the United States of America has been the chief buyer. For a time there was a free market for gold, but it was limited and the gold-producing countries took considerable advantage of it. Even so, taking into consideration the increasing costs of gold-mining, I think that we can join with those other gold-producing nations which are asking for a further increase. I understand that the Commonwealth subsidy is of considerable assistance to the industry. Recently I read an article by Mr. Lindsay Clark who said that the subsidy was of considerable benefit to the gold mining industry.

During his speech, the Treasurer also spoke of oil exploration. We are told that one company is to spend £4,000,000 this year in its search for oil. This is a clear indication that the company believes there is a good prospect of finding oil in Western Australia. Some time ago it was stated that £10,000,000 would be spent by the company in Western Australia in its search for oil. I think that is a further indication that the company has hopes—I should think high hopes—that it will find oil in payable quantities in this State.

Considering not only the tremendous amount of money that is being spent, but also the highly valuable technical and expert advice that is being provided, it is proof positive that if oil can be found in payable quantities in Western Australia, only those companies that have the necessary financial backing plus the expert advisers will be able to carry out the search successfully. For this reason, they should be given every possible encouragement and security for their investments. The recent action of the Government in giving them a five-year term will meet with the approval of everyone who hopes that oil will be found in this State.

It is satisfactory to know of the progress at Kwinana. There is no doubt that the Kwinana Oil Refinery, plus the other industries in that area, will do a great deal

to assist the general economy of the State. I have not heard how the State Electricity Commission loan is going, but the probabilities are that it will be oversubscribed—here I am making a guess—and if it is, I hope that the whole amount will be made available to the commission. When I was Treasurer we had the experience that the loan was oversubscribed.

If on this occasion it is oversubscribed again, I think the Treasurer should make immediate representations to the Loan Council to be allowed to keep the whole of the subscribed amount. I do not think there will be much difficulty about this. The other members of the Loan Council will have to be consulted, and it would be done by wire, of course. Any oversubscription could be usefully applied at the present time in providing power extensions. There is a keen demand for the extension of power; the demand seems to grow every day. I agree that the policy should be to push on with these extensions as rapidly as possible.

The Treasurer referred to North-Western shipping and to the difficulties in connection with it. I think it is certain that further losses are unavoidable in this direction, and I would not be surprised if they are substantially more than those sustained this year. I would say to the Treasurer that he should face those losses. The visit some months ago of the all-party committee to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the Minister for National Development will have had some effect upon the Commonwealth Government so that it will now have a greater realisation of the difficulties of the North than it has previously.

Whilst the delegation did not meet with the success it hoped, I think the Commonwealth is better informed of the difficulties of the North, and I do not think it will prove to be unsympathetic. So, in regard to shipping losses, if I were the Treasurer, I would face up to them inasmuch as I would place the position before the Grants Commission, explain the difficulties and costs of transport in the North and ask the commission to take a favourable view of the position. In the North we have the mining industry and the cattle industry, both of which are facing some difficulties today.

It looks as though the State Government will have to provide some assistance for the Blue Asbestos Co. at Wittenoom Gorge. One practical way of providing assistance would be by allowing reduced freight charges. The transport costs are heavy and a reduction would be of assistance. We built a town there at great cost and we hoped it would be permanent. Even at this stage I am still hoping that the Commonwealth Government will render some assistance in regard to it.

The cattle growers in the North are today facing keener competition than the previously experienced in recent years. The

subsidy of 1½d. per lb., which was provided by the Commonwealth Government, has been of considerable benefit to the growers, particularly those in the East Kimberleys who have to rely solely on that market and are unable to bring their cattle to the market at Robbs Jetty. Even so, those who bring their cattle to Robbs Jetty are at a disadvantage today because of the prices local cattle are bringing. I would say that on the average the price would be anything from £8 to £10 lower and the marketing costs would probably be £10 as against half the cost locally.

This competition will get keener. I do not think there is any doubt about that. Today there is a demand for what is termed baby beef which brings a much better price than does the cattle from the North. The consumers will take it in preference to northern beef. Under present conditions the cattle raisers in the North are not able to produce baby beef and market it in the southern areas. Reference was made by the Treasurer to an amount of £100,000 to assist dairy farmers to erect rabbit-proof fences.

No mention was made in the Budget to the promise made some time ago by the Treasurer to provide £250,000 to assist the dairying industry. It may be that this money is to come from loan, and not revenue. Here again, however, I would think that some reference would be made to this proposal. It was a definite promise, and I would like to know from the Treasurer just how he proposes to carry out that promise because it is going to be carried out, at least in part, whether Federal money is provided or otherwise. However, it may be that he is waiting for the Loan Estimates to be introduced and perhaps he will mention that all this money will be provided from loan.

Last year's financial transactions showed that revenue amounted to £45,720,000 and expenditure to £46,204,000; the deficit being £484,000. The Treasurer went on to explain how this came about. He said that marginal increases granted to Government employees cost £840,000 and a reclassification of teachers showed an expenditure of £157,000. So we see that in those two items alone, expenditure mounted to just on £1,000,000.

I fully recognise the need for a sufficient and efficient Public Service and it is accepted that we are being well served and have been well served in the past by our public servants. However, the tendency throughout Australia today, including this State, is to continue to build up the number of government employees. I said somewhere that it has been worked out that one person in every six of the population of Australia is a government employee.

The Treasurer: That must be within certain age range, surely.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes, I would say within the employable class. I refer to public servants and all classes of government employees. Also, we would not include among them pensioners, for instance, who are entirely dependent on the Government. I am referring to every one in six of those who are working in Australia. This fact has been taken into consideration in regard to government employees, because once they are appointed to their positions they are regarded as being life appointments with superannuation benefits, long service leave and any other rights which they obtain.

In these circumstances it would be very hard for one to dismiss them, for many of them would find it difficult to find outside employment. We know that with an increasing population more work devolves upon government employees, particularly those in permanent employment and an increase in the number of public servants becomes necessary. This being so, it does not mean that the various Governments should let the number of public servants go on increasing without satisfying themselves that those employees are being usefully engaged.

I am wondering how we compare with other countries on a percentage basis in regard to the number of government employees we have not only in Australia, but also in this State. I suggest that the Treasurer should tell us whether any steps are taken to guard against unnecessary expenditure on government employment and whether government departments are as efficient as they should be.

The Treasurer: New and additional permanent appointments are few and far between.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not know. It would be interesting, if we could get the figures, to know what the increase in government employment has been over the last few years. I repeat that I know that an expanding population requires more government employees to deal with the public's requirements. However, the point I am trying to make is that this is a matter that could get out of hand. I am wondering whether sufficient supervision is being exercised in this direction.

Past experience has taught us that some departments can build up extremely rapidly and some departmental heads go all out to increase their personnel. We have all had that experience. The more a departmental head can build up his staff, the more important his position becomes. So it is necessary, as it is in all businesses, for the Treasurer to know, if administration costs have increased and why they have increased, and he should be fully acquainted with the facts. I know, of my own experience, that I used to try to discuss the matter of increased departmental costs with my Ministers in an endeavour to find out why additional expenditure

was necessary and what work was involved. It is easy to realise why additional nurses, policemen and other officers are required.

The Minister for Education: And agricultural advisers?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: You would not argue about their appointments.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No, I commend them. Even so, the Government is such a large employing agency that looseness of employment must be guarded against. Of course, under the present set-up we have a Public Service Commissioner who makes the appointments and I think he has been fairly careful in the past and, as far as possible, he has tried to make appointments only when he considered they were absolutely necessary. But we can take other departments, such as the railways, for instance. That department is an extremely large employer and a careful watch has to be kept on the employment position there.

The Minister for Railways: We are 400 men below strength now.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I suppose that is in the whole department?

The Minister for Railways: Principally for the maintenance of the tracks. We are very short in our gangs.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister says that we are 400 men short on the railways. It would be interesting to know, from year to year, what the increase in employment has been in the Railway Department.

The Minister for Railways: We are hauling record tonnages.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am glad to know that the huge amount of money that has been spent on railway rehabilitation over the past seven or eight years has resulted in a record tonnage being carried, because that is to be expected. We should also expect greater efficiency in the railway service generally.

The Minister for Railways: The replacement of obsolete locos and the building up of the tracks has taken a great deal of money. It is the financial starvation over the past 40 years that has brought that about.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know it has taken huge sums of money to rehabilitate the railways, but we have been spending this money over a long period and I should think that there would be greater efficiency in the railway working generally. No mention was made by the Treasurer, when introducing his Budget, of the new price fixing department that may come into being. I venture to say that it may cost £100,000 a year.

The Treasurer: Nothing like that!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Well, when price fixing was being administered previously it was costing £50,000 to £60,000 a year and the Treasurer was getting a certain amount of that expenditure from the Commonwealth Government. I would think that my estimate of £100,000 would not be far short of the mark.

The Treasurer: That would be double the figure, at least.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister for Labour is also going to set up another office to deal with the protection of free enterprise and apparently he proposes to appoint a commissioner to administer that, but I do not know with what staff.

The Minister for Labour: Under what Bill?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Under the Free Enterprise Protection Bill. The Minister has told us of the staff that will be necessary.

The Minister for Labour: I did not tell you anything.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Perhaps not but the Minister will need to have a staff to make his proposal workable. What size will the staff be and at what cost?

[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]

Hon. L. Thorn: He has not worked that out.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Well, we thus go merrily along with more and more costs involved. There is no doubt that it becomes more and more difficult for an ordinary member of Parliament to come to grips with the State's financial position and to watch what money is being spent to the best advantage. In fact we devote too little time to this side of government. After all is said and done it is a most important function of government.

I have heard it stated that the administrative side is more important than the political side of government and I think there is a great deal of truth in that statement. During the years I have been interested in politics I have heard certain Ministers being referred to as good administrators. That means that the Minister knew what was going on in his department. He knew how to assist in its organisation. He knew what was going on in regard to its administration and what the department was costing.

The Minister for Lands: You have heard that over the past few years.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have not heard that said of the Minister for Agriculture.

The Treasurer: The farmers reckon it is not too bad.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I will not make any comment in regard to that. The Treasurer has told us that over 40 per cent. of the State's revenue comes from Commonwealth sources. He also stated that 28 per cent. of our revenue was obtained from the railways. We made a loss on railway transactions and I know that this year it amounted to £3,572,245, including £1,387,466 for interest. When one sees figures such as those in the return, I think we will all agree that a close watch has to be kept on railway expenditure.

The Treasurer went on to say that every avenue for obtaining revenue for the State is closely watched by the Treasury and the departments. I do not doubt that. It is perfectly true. However, it would have been more reassuring if he had said that every avenue of government expenditure was being closely watched. I know that additional money was received from probate duties and land tax as a result of increased valuations of land and properties generally. We know that there is a direct way of obtaining increased taxation and also an indirect way. The indirect way is to increase valuations. There is no doubt that the Government is making full use of that method.

The interest and sinking fund payments amount to £6,928,473, or 15 per cent. of the total expenditure of over £46,000,000. The debt per head of population has increased by £26 7s. 5d. since this Government has been in office. It would be interesting to hear from the Treasurer what he has to show for this big increase of indebtedness per head. There is no doubt that this indebtedness is growing rapidly. I must confess that I am unable to see any outstanding achievement by the Government as a result. From my own figures the interest paid by every man, woman and child in this State is approximately £11 10s. per head. I worked it out from the figures supplied, and it is approximate.

Coming to Commonwealth and State finances, Western Australia will receive from income tax reimbursement the sum of £11,205,000 under the grant formula. No doubt the Treasurer has heard a lot about this formula since he has been attending the Premiers' Conferences. This amount of £11,205,000 will be received by the State, in addition to £1,130,000 for special financial assistance, making a total of £12,335,000 from income tax reimbursement. The Commonwealth has provided a sum of £157,000,000 as income tax reimbursement to the States, including special financial assistance amounting to 16,200,000.

This year we are to receive £8,900,000 also, on the recommendation of the Grants Commission, or £1,450,000 more than last year. So from these two sources alone the State will receive £21,235,000. Therefore, apart from the £11,205,000 from income tax reimbursement set out in the

formula, we will receive with the addition of the special grant recommended by the Grants Commission, over £10,000,000, all of which comes from Commonwealth revenue. I do not wonder that the Premier does not want to take back the income tax powers, because, as he told us, he would have to tax the people of this State much more heavily if those powers were restored to us.

I learn that Mr. Bolte, Premier of Victoria, has gone to Sydney to discuss with Mr. Cahill, the Premier of New South Wales, the question of restoring the taxing powers to the States, his idea being to interest Mr. Cahill in joining with him to make an appeal to the High Court or the Privy Council to restore those powers to the States. I feel sure that there will be no difficulty, so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, because when I was attending the Premiers' Conferences some years ago, the Prime Minister clearly indicated that the Commonwealth Government would be glad to hand back to the States the powers in regard to income tax.

Mr. McCulloch: He was not serious.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: He was serious. I can understand any Government wanting to get away from the odium of imposing taxation. Everybody admits that an unsatisfactory state of affairs has arisen under the present set-up. It is a natural consequence that when a Government receives money without having to impose taxation, there is not the same careful spending as when it has the responsibility of collecting its own taxation.

The Minister for Lands: Would you say that of your own Government?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Unlike Mr. Bolte, I would not desire the taxing powers to be restored to the States. I have said this on a number of occasions. There are real problems to be faced in returning the taxing powers to the States. When that question was under discussion, the matter of company taxation was shown to present a very real problem. There are large companies with headquarters in a certain State and operating in the rest of the Commonwealth. How would they be dealt with in regard to State taxation?

The Minister for Works: You have changed your tune a bit on the question of taxation.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have not.

The Minister for Works: Your views were quite different in 1947.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have always held the same view. I would want to know firstly what fields of taxation were available.

The Minister for Works: You were all out to get back the taxing powers for the State at one time.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The hon. member has left out the proviso.

The Minister for Works: You wanted those powers restored.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No, I was explicit on that point.

The Minister for Lands: Your views change just as the wind changes direction.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The hon. member knows nothing about this matter.

The Minister for Lands: I know just as much about it as you do.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I suggest the Minister confines himself to subjects he knows.

Hon. L. Thorn: He is just a nuisance value.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The proposal by the Premier of Victoria must be causing the Treasurer in this State some concern. I do not know what the decision of the Privy Council will be in this regard. For some considerable time, it has been urged that a convention of the Commonwealth and the States be held to deal with the financial set-up. Irrespective of the opinion of the High Court or the Privy Council, I do think there is a need to clarify the position in regard to Commonwealth and State finances; the sooner it is done, the better.

I repeat that under the present set-up I would not like to be the State Treasurer when the income tax powers are restored to the States, because there will be real difficulty. The Prime Minister has said that if the income tax rights were restored to the States, the Disabilities Commission would still continue to function. That is reassuring, but even so, to take back the powers of taxation under existing conditions would not be suitable to this State.

Mr. McCulloch: It would not be good politics.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It would not be good business. The Treasurer anticipates a deficit of £453,000 for this financial year. He said that his anticipated expenditure will be £49,746,000. No doubt he anticipates that the Grants Commission will recommend an increased amount again. I wonder how long the Commonwealth will go on agreeing to the recommendations of that commission. Up to date they have not been questioned, but they are certainly assuming very large proportions as time goes on.

Last year £150,000 was received from the winning bets tax, which no longer operates, but the Treasurer stated that in the current year stamp duty on betting tickets and normal increase of stamp duty should more than make up for this figure. In addition, he expects to receive £350,000 from the tax on bookmakers' turnover and bookmakers' licence fees. I shall not be surprised if he raises considerably more than this as a result of the greatly increased volume of betting which will come about from the licensing of off-course betting.

In every return published, there has been a tremendous increase of revenue from this source, and there is every indication that the increase will continue. The estimated increase in railway revenue is disappointing. It is expected to collect an additional £281,000. With the huge expenditure provided for railway rehabilitation during the past eight years, one would have expected that the earning capacity would increase much more considerably. Because of the greater efficiency that has been brought about, the working expenses should not increase in the same ratio as earnings.

The Minister for Railways: The cost per ton mile is being reduced progressively, and the cost per train mile is being reduced every quarter.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: We are entitled to expect that.

The Minister for Railways: Diesel engines alone would account for a great saving.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No doubt. They are much more economical to run.

The Treasurer: Wheat has been moving in small quantities.

The Minister for Railways: We have lost the coal traffic to the Goldfields.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: With great efficiency, the earning capacity of the railways should increase at a greater rate compared with the working expenses.

Mr. Brady: There would be even great economy if diesels were designed and built locally.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I hope this will come about, but there may be difficulties. This year the transport of water should not be so great because of the rains which have fallen and are still falling. The burden placed on the railways for carting water should be reduced considerably. In the past that has been a large item. I remember in the days when the late Hon. Alex McCallum was Minister for Works he used to tell us that the Department of Public Works was the greatest spending department, and it was a barometer of the State's prosperity. In latter years that role has been taken over by the Railway Department, which today is the greatest spending department.

Mr. Court: What about the barometer portion?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The railway need the closest tie-up with the Treasurer, so that its financial position may be examined frequently.

The Minister for Railways: The Treasurer has the Railway Department tied up.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not blame the Treasurer for keeping a close watch on railway expenditure. It is vital

An interesting item is the increase in interest and sinking fund account. This year the increase will be £841,000, bringing the total to £7,769,000. The public debt is approximately £178,000,000, and the net deficiency is shown as £8,754,464. It should interest members to study the budget tables in Return No. 15. I intended to quote some of them but I shall not do so at this stage. Those tables make very interesting reading. Members will see in that return which of our loan works are fully productive, those that are partially productive, and those totally unproductive. The fully productive works show a surplus of £152,146; the partially productive show a deficiency of £1,959,957 and the totally unproductive show a deficiency of £6,795,193.

Some of the business undertakings are worth a close scrutiny. The charcoal iron and steel industry made a loss of £51,576, on a loan capital of £1,322,445. I know that the losses on this industry have been progressively reduced during the past four or five years, but even so, before any further loan expenditure is decided upon for the expansion of this industry, Parliament should be given the fullest possible information regarding the long-range prospects of the home market and of the overseas market as well; and also as to whether loan moneys should be provided for an expansion of this industry when we are constantly being told that there is a shortage of money for other urgent requirements.

I should like to hear from the Treasurer how the Government is faring regarding loans or financial backing to industry. What are the interests costs to the Government? Huge sums are involved in certain industries that must be costing the Government a tremendous amount. How long can we go on like this? What are the prospects of those industries? Do we intend to carry them indefinitely or are we going to do something about them? Would it be better to sell some of these industries and cut our losses rather than go on indefinitely?

I think there would be a prospect of selling some of them even though this might mean a substantial loss to the Government, but in the long run it would probably prove to be of benefit. The industry would be carried on, employment would be continued and altogether it would probably be in the best interests of the State.

Mr. Johnson: Have you in mind the B.H.P.?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I did not have the B.H.P. in mind. I think there are other concerns that would be interested in those industries, but Parliament should be given the fullest details of those undertakings. Now I wish to say something about the position of Leader of the Opposition in this State.

Mr. Heal: Drawing money under false pretences?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: A very unjustifiable remark which should be withdrawn, but I shall regard it as being facetious and therefore may well ignore it. The office is one that is recognised as part of the set-up of our system of government, and as Leader of the Opposition, I do not want to complain of the treatment that has been meted out to me. In fact, I have probably received more generous treatment at the hands of the Premier than any previous occupant of the position has had, but when I go to the Eastern States and see Leaders of the Opposition there, I find that each has a secretary and quite a staff to assist him with his work. But not so in this State. The Leader of the Opposition is given a typist and that represents the whole of his staff.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: For many years the Leader of the Opposition did not have a secretary.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is so. The conditions under which she works in her very small box of a room are no credit to Parliament.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Now, if you had only built a few more rooms when you were Premier!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: There were Premiers before me and there has been one since.

The Minister for Lands: Are you advocating an increase in the number of Government servants?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am. The position of Leader of the Opposition is regarded as an essential part of our set-up. He is expected to be able to offer criticism, sometimes constructive, sometimes destructive, and is supposed to keep an eye on governmental activities generally. With the staff provided for him, he cannot do so. If we glance at the Federal sphere, the Leader of the Opposition there has what might be described as a large staff.

The Leader of the Opposition here is expected to travel extensively, which is quite necessary in order that he may be au fait with what is going on in various parts of the State. I have done that, and I do not complain of the treatment I have received from the Premier, but I think that whoever occupies the position of Leader of the Opposition in future will find difficulty in carrying on his work with the staff at his command and doing all that is expected of him in various parts of the State.

Mr. Johnson: That applies to private members as well.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: But not to the same extent. I was a private member for many years and I know that the calls

made upon private members are considerable, but they are mostly in regard to their own constituencies, whereas the Leader of the Opposition has calls made upon him on a State-wide basis. I do not want it to be thought that I am asking for extra money for myself. I repeat that I am well satisfied with the treatment I have received on the personal side, but if the office is to be carried on as it should be, additional staff is required. I would say, for the benefit of the Minister for Lands—

The Minister for Lands: Do not say anything for my benefit. I can believe it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: One addition to the staff of the Leader of the Opposition would be sufficient. That is all I wish to say on the Estimates at this stage. When we reach the various departments, I shall have further comments to make.

Progress reported.

[Mr. Hill took the Chair.]

BILL—UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [10.13] in moving the second reading said: This Bill sets out the method that is being adopted by the Government and the University Senate, in co-operation, to finance the contribution of £150,000 which the Government, acting on behalf of the State, has undertaken to provide in connection with the capital cost of the proposed medical school. As members are aware, the total estimated capital cost of the school is £300,000. The Government has undertaken to finance one-half of that total.

The University Senate, acting through a special medical school fund appeal committee, has undertaken to raise the balance of £150,000 and, in addition, by way of appeal to the public, a further £250,000 to finance a great amount of medical research, including the provision of apparatus. The public appeal is now well under way. In fact, I do not think it would be going too far to say that the complete success of the appeal made to the public is now well in sight. This is a magnificent result, particularly in view of the short period during which the appeal has been under way. The success achieved is a great credit to the members of the appeal committee and to all those who have helped them in any way. It is also a great compliment to the generous attitude of the people of this State towards the appeal.

The quick success of this appeal will I am sure, add to the reputation and prestige of the people of Western Australia in regard to their willingness and ability to respond in such a wonderful way to a worthwhile appeal that may be made to them from time to time. The method which the Government and the University Senate have agreed upon, in relation to the provision by the State of £150,000 which is half the estimated capital cost of the proposed medical school, is one which will enable the University Senate in the first place, to borrow, in three six-monthly periods, £50,000 during each six months, making a total of £150,000 over the three six-monthly periods.

This money will be borrowed by the University Senate upon such security as is subject to such other terms and conditions as are approved. The Treasurer of the State, under the terms of the Bill, will undertake to repay to the university, in half-yearly instalments or payments, the total amount borrowed by the university in the three six-monthly periods, plus whatever interest might be due and payable during each six months.

Members will obtain a clear idea of what the State will be involved in by studying the schedule to the Bill which appears on page 4. The schedule sets out the amount of each of the 30 half-yearly instalments to be paid by the Government, plus the interest which will have to be paid in connection with each instalment. It is thought that this method of financing the State contribution is the best that could be developed and the most suitable and acceptable in the circumstances. It is true that the State could take £150,000 from loan funds and make it available to finance the State's contribution of £150,000.

If the loan funds received by the State from time to time were adequate in total to finance the urgent requirements of the community in relation to housing, schools, hospitals and so on, I think any Government would choose that method. However, we know that the total loan funds coming to the State each year are not sufficient fully to finance our most urgent requirements under the headings I have mentioned. Consequently it would be unwise for the Government to take £150,000 from the loan funds available in any one year, or even to take £75,000 from the loan funds, say, this year and another £75,000 from that source next year. Any action taken along those lines would mean the building of fewer schools, hospital houses and so on which, I think all members will agree, would be undesirable and would indeed have serious repercussions upon various sections of our community.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is this a change from the original idea of the Government for the financing of this scheme?

The PREMIER: No, originally the Government has in mind that there would be consultations between Treasury officers and representatives of the other people involved, including the University Senate, to see what might be the best method to adopt to finance the State's contribution. It was finally agreed among those representatives—I think unanimously—that the method set out in the Bill would be the most acceptable to all concerned.

Mr. Court: Has the university at this stage any indication of from where it will get the money?

The PREMIER: I think I can go so far as to say that tentative arrangements have already been made between the University Senate and one large financial institution in this State to make the money available in three six-monthly instalments, and therefore there need be no doubt at all of the ability of the Senate to raise the money. When the university does raise the money on the basis of the method set out in the Bill, the Government will, at the appropriate time, commence the payment of the half-yearly instalments to the university, plus the amount of interest which will be involved in relation to each instalment.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Then the loan to the university must be for 15 years, also.

The PREMIER: Yes, the loan to be raised by the University Senate will be for a period of 15 years, which is the period over which the Government will make the 30 half-yearly repayments to the university plus interest. In all the circumstances this appears to be a happy solution of what would otherwise have been a difficult financial problem and I think the method that has been devised should gain the approval and support of all members of both Houses of Parliament. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [10.25] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to amend the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act which was originally passed in 1938. The number of amendments contained in the measure is small but two or three of them are quite important in

point of principle. At present when a contributor to the superannuation scheme reaches the retiring age but continues in Government employment and is dismissed after reaching the retiring age, he is entitled only to the return of his own contributions to the fund.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: After that time?

The TREASURER: No, he is entitled to receive only the total contributions which he has made to the fund during the whole period for which he has been a contributor. It is thought by members of the Government that once a contributor carries out, in fact, the terms of his contract he should be able to receive the benefits of the contract. If for some reason the Government is prepared to allow a contributor to carry on in its service after he has reached the retiring age, which is beyond the period of the contract, and subsequent to what would have been his retiring date he does something which merits dismissal, it is felt that he should not, because of what had occurred subsequent to his normal date of retirement from Government service, be penalised to the extent to which he is penalised under the present law.

Mr. Court: Have there been such cases?

The TREASURER: Yes. We feel that, having carried out the terms of his contract, the contributor should beyond doubt be entitled to the benefits of the contract and the fact that the Government has carried on his employment beyond the elected retiring date should not be allowed to interfere with the carrying out of the contract by the Government.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I take it there would be only a few such cases.

The TREASURER: Where a contributor does carry on in the Government service beyond the normal retiring date and then does something which merits dismissal, the Government believes that the punishment of dismissal ought to be sufficient penalty for the offence committed by the employee.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: But such cases would be few, I take it?

The Minister for Police: It happens mostly with men who elect to retire at 60 and then decide to work on until they reach 65.

The TREASURER: That is true, and the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition can be answered by saying that the number of cases is small. However, there have been such instances and as the law stands it has had to be applied to them. If this part of the measure becomes law, in future similar cases will receive treatment different from that which has applied in the past. The Government believes that the treatment proposed in this

measure is more just and equitable in the circumstances than that which obtained formerly.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I presume that its operation will begin when the measure is passed.

The TREASURER: Yes. This new provision would become law only from the date on which the amending Act became law; the provision would not have any retrospective application. It is proposed to grant an increase of 7s. 6d. per week for each child of a pensioner and for each child of a deceased contributor. It is thought that an increase is warranted for the children of pensioners or deceased contributors and so the proposal for an increase of 7s. 6d. is set out in the measure. The Bill aims to give the board a discretionary power to determine whether a pensioner who, after retirement, takes part-time employment with the Government should, during the period of such re-employment on a part-time basis, lose the State's share of his superannuation.

Under the present law, any pensioner who, subsequent to retirement, takes on part-time employment with the Government, immediately loses the State's share of the pension he is drawing.

Quite a number of these retired pensioners do take on part-time employment with the Government. It might be part-time employment of short duration each day. Some of them take on the cleaning of schools and some accept other employment which takes up only a few hours a day for one or two half days a week. It is thought that the board should have discretion in such cases to determine whether the State's share of the pension should be deducted or whether it should continue to be paid.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Up to what age are the children covered?

The TREASURER: From memory I think the child has to be dependent and I imagine that the maximum age would be 16 years. Under the present law, female subscribers to the provident fund account, which is set up under the Act, where subscription is not a condition of service, have to continue paying to that fund account for as long as they remain in the service. Strangely enough, that condition does not apply to male contributors to the superannuation fund. Where a male contributor to the superannuation fund has also to be a subscriber to the provident fund account, the male subscriber, after a period of five years, is entitled to claim a refund of the amount which he has paid to the provident fund account, provided the contributions to that account are not a condition of his service with the Government.

Obviously this is an anomaly in the law because it was never intended that females should be treated differently to males in

regard to subscriptions to the provident fund account. The amendment set out in the Bill will place females and males on exactly the same basis and will give the female employees of the Government the right to claim a refund of their contributions to the provident fund account after they have been subscribing for five years, provided that subscription to the fund account was not a condition of service with the Government.

The Bill also proposes to increase the number of additional or excess units which may be subscribed to by any employee of the Government. At present the law allows a contribution for four units in excess of the normal amount applicable to a particular salary and the Bill proposes to increase the excess or additional number from four to eight. If the measure becomes law, any person who wishes to contribute for eight additional units would be entitled to do so. There are several officers in the Government who are anxious to contribute for a greater number of units of pension than they are entitled to do under the present law and the organisations with which they are associated have requested the Government to increase the additional units which may be contributed to from four, which is the present maximum, to a new maximum of eight.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Would they have to make any retrospective payments? Suppose a man is retiring in a year or two; what is his position?

The TREASURER: I think in that circumstance the contributor would have to make contributions which would be based on the additional pension units which he would be entitled to receive on retirement; that would be worked out, I imagine, on an actuarial basis and the contributor would make payments accordingly.

The only other amendment in the Bill to which I desire to make reference deals with the date from which contributions are to be paid. At present contributions date from the day on which the actual election to contribute to a certain number of units is made. This has been found to create a certain amount of administrative difficulty and there is an amendment in the Bill which lays it down that contributions for units of pension are to be paid by the contributor from the date on which he elects to contribute to the fund. That will lay down a principle which will be easy to administer and every new contributor will know just where he stands. Those who administer the fund will find much less difficulty in applying the actual date upon which contributions for units of superannuation are to commence. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.