

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

1. Local Courts Act Amendment.
2. Electoral Act Amendment.
Adopted.

FIRE BRIGADES ACT.*Disallowance of Regulations.*

Debate resumed from the 4th September on the following motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon:—

That regulations made under the Fire Brigades Act, 1942-1951, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 20th November, 1957, and laid on the Table of the House on the 26th November, 1957, be and are hereby disallowed.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (Minister for Railways—North) [4.11]: This motion, as a consequence of the opinion of the House last night in connection with the health regulations, would now have no effect. Therefore I suggest that the hon. member withdraw his motion.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—in reply) [4.12]: I think that is the best course. I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

House adjourned at 4.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 18th September, 1958.

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.**EGG FLOORS.***Date of Erection and Cost of Running in Country.*

1. Mr. **WILD** asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) On what date were the egg floors in the country erected, and at what cost?

(2) What is the annual cost of running each of the country egg floors?

(3) Have they all been run at a profit since their inception; if not, which floors showed a loss and what was the deficit?

(4) What were the receivals annually on each of the floors in the country?

(5) Are these receivals graded in the country; or alternatively, forwarded to the metropolitan grading floor?

(6) What was the percentage comparison of receivals and gradings during the past 12 months on each of the country floors?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) **Narrogin Floor:** Land and building purchased in December, 1948—original cost £1,250. Additions and alterations of a capital nature to the building since date of purchase amounted to £2,494 2s. 10d. to the 5th July, 1958.

Bunbury Floor: Land purchased March 1953, at a cost of £1,251 18s. 11d. Building erected and completed by October, 1954, at a cost of £9,568 13s. 2d.

Geraldton Floor: Land purchased February, 1954 at a cost of £354. Building erected and completed by June, 1955, at a cost of £7,851 4s. 1d.

(2)

	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57	1957-58
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Narrogin	6,405 13 11	6,636 16 1	5,945 18 11	6,639 8 4	6,767 10 6	5,722 14 1
Bunbury	3,547 8 4	3,970 9 10	3,760 12 11	3,825 1 9	3,611 3 9	3,923 13 11
Geraldton	2,722 16 9	3,176 13 11	3,551 14 1	3,447 19 4	3,561 7 1	3,486 5 1

(3)

Narrogin—						
Profit	611 18 9	27 19 11	604 6 5	603 6 0	898 19 10	257 1 11
Loss ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Bunbury—						
Profit	499 14 0	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Loss ....	.....	126 3 10	522 15 11	1,018 6 10	329 5 7	968 13 0
Geraldton—						
Profit ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	214 17 2	.....
Loss	487 4 9	297 13 3	615 11 8	360 5 3	.....	278 18 1

(4)

Year ended	Narrogin	Bunbury	Geraldton
	doz.	doz.	doz.
30/6/47	281,133	.....	.....
30/6/48	381,661	.....	.....
30/6/49	429,161	111,528	.....
30/6/50	405,893	142,482	.....
30/6/51	484,994	145,968	29,306
30/6/52	496,098	280,756	91,187
30/6/53	486,370	275,839	153,335
30/6/54	440,764	255,482	199,320
30/6/55	452,802	219,888	201,331
30/6/56	461,709	176,204	195,483
30/6/57	459,982	186,336	226,571
30/6/58	320,316	172,418	192,426

(5) All eggs received at country depots are candled and graded there.

Only under exceptional circumstances, mainly shortage of grading staff, would uncandled eggs be forwarded to Perth for grading, and such consignments would be very limited.

(6) Year ended the 30th June, 1958.

	Narrogin		Bunbury		Geraldton	
		%		%		%
Export Hen	2,330	-73	5,533	3.21	48,404	25.16
Export 16 lb.	12,913	4.03	5,707	3.31	37,306	19.39
Export 14 lb.	4,970	1.55	5,362	3.11	15,665	8.14
Overweights ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	189	.10
Hen	74,215	23.17	33,007	19.14	10,725	5.57
Hen 16 lb.	95,609	29.85	52,564	30.49	38,619	20.07
Hen 14 lb.	41,903	13.08	15,516	9.00	12,607	6.55
Washed Hen	14,210	4.44	29,420	17.06	247	.13
Hen 12 lb.	12,789	3.99	7,004	4.06	10,396	5.40
Duck	50	.02	238	.13	97	.05
	258,989	80.86	154,351	89.51	174,255	90.55
2nd Quality	59,347	18.52	16,039	9.30	17,248	8.96
Cracks ....	.....	.....	75	.04	14	.01
Blood Spot	520	.16	204	.12	186	.10
Rejects	1,460	.46	1,749	1.03	723	.38
	320,316	100.00	172,418	100.00	192,426	100.00

Stabilisation Payments.

2. Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

How much was paid in stabilisation by egg producers during the past 12 months—

- (a) at country grading floors;
(b) at metropolitan grading floors?

The MINISTER replied:

	£	s.	d.
(a) Narrogin Floor	9,773	0	0
Bunbury Floor	5,629	16	4
Geraldton Floor	5,613	17	2
	£21,016	13	6

	£	s.	d.
(b) Perth Floor	144,424	5	5
Fremantle Floor	37,732	14	6
	£182,156	19	11

No. 3. This question was postponed.

FRUIT-FLY INFESTED BANANAS.

Examination of Imported Fruit.

4. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In answer to a question regarding Queensland fruit-fly on the 10th September, it was stated that all bananas arriving by rail must be accompanied by a certificate from the Departments of Agriculture either in Melbourne or in Adelaide, stating that the fruit was in a green condition at the time of dispatch to this State: As bananas are now consigned direct from growers in New South Wales to the Perth merchants, will he advise the House—

- (1) Are these certificates issued only in respect to bananas which are reconsigned from Melbourne or Adelaide; or,
- (2) Are these certificates issued on all bananas which pass through either or both States on a direct consignment to Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

By arrangement with the South Australian Department of Agriculture, all bananas consigned to Western Australia from New South Wales or elsewhere are diverted to the South Australian inspection shed where they are inspected on our behalf by officers of the South Australian Department of Agriculture to ensure that no damaged or ripe bananas leave South Australia for this State.

No. 5: This question was postponed.

BUNBURY REGIONAL HOSPITAL.

Finality as to Siting.

6. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

(1) When, approximately, will the various departments concerned reach finality in relation to the area and location of the 17 acres of land set aside for a regional hospital in Bunbury?

(2) Is any other site being considered?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

Representatives of various departments concerned will visit Bunbury shortly to select a site for this purpose.

PARADISE ROAD BRIDGE.

Re-siting and Widening.

7. Mr. ROWBERRY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has any priority been given to re-siting and widening the narrow bridge on the Paradise-rd. some three miles north of Dardanup on the South-West Highway?

(2) If not, will he consider giving this work priority in the near future as this could be a potential danger spot?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) No.

(2) The relative urgency for widening this bridge on the Dardanup-Waterloo-rd. will be closely watched.

LEEDERVILLE BUILDING TRADES HIGH SCHOOL.

Commencement and Completion.

8. Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) When is it anticipated that building operations will commence at the Leeder-ville Building Trades High School to allow transfer of further units of the building trade?

(2) When is it anticipated that this building will be completed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Early in the new year.

(2) Towards the end of 1959.

Nos. 9, 10, and 11. *These questions were postponed.*

CLAREMONT MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Improvements.

12. Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What improvements of a major nature, and at what cost for the items, have been carried out at the Claremont Mental Hospital for the years ended the 30th June—

(a) 1957;

(b) 1958?

(2) What improvements is it intended to proceed with, and at what cost for the current financial year?

(3) Will these improvements tend to better conditions for both patients and staff?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) Expenditure for 1956-57:

	£
Dairy improvements	878
Water supply	2,025
Sewerage	4,560
Conversion of wards for	
Montrose House	14,190

	£
Cooks' change room	997
Maintenance and improvements to roads	4,150
General maintenance of buildings	13,822
Furniture	3,155
	<hr/>
	£43,777
	<hr/>
	£
Expenditure for 1957-58:	
Remodel Ward 6	16,071
Male orderlies' lavatories	749
Maintenance and improvements to roads	7,480
Cooks' change room	728
Furniture for Montrose House	3,047
General maintenance	24,172
Furniture	3,114
	<hr/>
	£55,361

(2) Proposed Expenditure for 1958-59:

	£
Remodel Ward 6	14,169
Paving	1,400
Furniture for Montrose House	7,190
New kitchen block	30,000
Additional medical officer's quarters	6,000
New laundry block	15,000
Maintenance of buildings	21,500
Furniture	2,000
	<hr/>
	£97,259

(3) Yes.

FRUIT FOR EXPORT.*Permission to Cart Apples by Road to Bunbury.*

13. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Transport:

Should the export of apples through the port of Bunbury become a reality in the near future, would permission be granted to—

(a) apple growers;

(b) fruit exporting firms;

to cart their apples into Bunbury by road, when ships loading schedules warrant and/or require?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) An apple grower may transport his apples to Bunbury without permit in accordance with exemption.

(b) Past practice in connection with apples shipped from Fremantle or Albany has been to rail apples according to shipping arrangements, but where an emergency has arisen which could not be met by rail, the Transport Board has

granted road permits, approval being given by telephone in cases of urgency. The same procedure would apply in the case of Bunbury.

Cartage of Soft Fruit in Refrigerated Railway Vans.

14. Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) When will the new refrigerated railway vans be available for traffic?

(2) Will any of these vans be available for export fruit, particularly soft fruits?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is "No," what steps does the Railway Department intend to take to handle the export of soft fruit?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) New fully refrigerated bogie vans are as yet only in the proposal stage.

(2) In view of the large tonnages of soft fruit and season of the year, it is not anticipated that these vans if and when constructed would be available for the purpose requested, but will be used for more highly perishable and frozen products which require low temperatures.

(3) Arrangements can be made for transport of soft fruits with our augmented fleet of ice-cooled insulated vans to lift large tonnages quickly.

WRECK POINT-WEDGE ISLAND AREA.*Survey of Townsite and Road.*

15. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it a fact that a townsite is being surveyed for the Wreck Point-Wedge Island area?

(2) Is it a further fact that an access road to this area is being surveyed?

(3) If so, when will these surveys be completed?

(4) Will lots in the townsite be put up for sale; and if so, by what method, and when?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Wreck Point and Wedge Island are not in the same area. Wreck Point is 42 miles north of Perth, whilst Wedge Island is 137 miles north of Perth.

Instructions to survey a townsite at either Wreck Point or Wedge Island have not been issued.

(2) The matter of providing an access road to Wreck Point is under consideration. There is road access to Wedge Island via Lancelin.

(3) and (4) Answered by No. (1).

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.*Eneabba Project.*

16. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the total capital average cost per acre to date for development at the war service land settlement project at Eneabba?

(2) When will the first settlers be established and how many?

(3) Will the scheme be extended?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Based on the developed area of 1,600 acres per farm, average costs to date are—

	Per acre.		
	£	s.	d.
Clearing	3	16	0
Pasture	4	0	0
Structures	3	8	0
Total	£11	4	0

(2) At least 8 in 1959. Depending on seasonal conditions there could be 40.

(3) The Eneabba project will not be extended under the war service land settlement scheme.

STATES GRANTS (MENTAL INSTITUTIONS) ACT.*Amount Received and Basis of Assistance.*

17. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What amount of money has the Western Australian Government received under the States Grants (Mental Institutions) Act, 1955, for the years 1955-56; 1956-57; 1957-58?

(2) Is there any limit as to the amount or period of time in which assistance can be claimed?

(3) On what basis does the Commonwealth contribute towards the cost of providing mental hospital facilities?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) 1955-56—£12,259.
1956-57—£49,580.
1957-58—£29,236.

(2) Limit of £720,000 to be claimed before the 30th June, 1965.

(3) Commonwealth recoups £1 for every £2 expended by the State.

DEEP SEWERAGE.*Assistance to Merredin and Other Local Authorities.*

18. Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In the "Merredin Mercury" of the 11th September it was stated that the whole of the work of planning and constructing the deep sewerage scheme at Merredin will be in the hands of the Public Works Department. Is this correct?

(2) If so, will other local authorities which have requested departmental assistance in similar projects be treated likewise?

(3) What amount (if any) of financial assistance will be made available by the Government towards the capital cost of the Merredin sewerage scheme?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Yes. The work is being financed by the local authority.

(2) Yes; under similar circumstances and as staff is available.

(3) Nil.

No. 19. This question was postponed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.**PRICE CONTROL RECORDS.***Availability to Unfair Trading Commissioner.*

1. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

Is it proposed to continue the practice of making available to the Unfair Trading Control Commissioner the price control records?

Mr. Graham: What are you afraid of?

The MINISTER replied:

I would say at this stage that I am not prepared to give a specific reply for obvious reasons. When the matter of access to price control records was mentioned some considerable time ago after the passing of the Unfair Trading and Profit Control Act—I am speaking from memory—I am sure we sought the advice of the Crown Solicitor or the Solicitor-General.

I think it was only yesterday that certain opinions were tabled. Until I obtain legal advice in connection with access to these records, I feel I should not give a reply, and will refer the question to the Crown Law Department for advice. If the hon. member for Nedlands will place this question on the notice paper, it will be given the consideration it deserves.

FRUIT-GROWING INDUSTRY.*Contribution to the Fight Against Pests.*

2. Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Was he correctly reported in "The West Australian" this morning in regard to the statement attributed to him when opening the conference of the Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association in which he said that the industry contribution to the Government's fight against pests amounted to .06d. in the £?

The MINISTER replied:

I was correctly reported. That is the figure I gave the conference.

3. Mr. OWEN: Would the Minister make it quite clear to the House and to the public generally, that these figures refer merely to the contribution to the orchard registration tax, which is only part of the orchardists' contribution in the fight against that pest?

The MINISTER:

If my memory serves me rightly, the remark I passed at the conference yesterday was in connection only with the registration of domestic and commercial orchards.

Mr. Watts: But there is another fund.

The MINISTER: There are several other small funds which are not nearly as large as this one; and I think I made comment in that regard also, but there is no mention of it in the Press.

B.P. REFINERY (KWINANA).

Discussions with Other Companies re By-products.

4. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Premier:

Is he aware of any negotiations or discussions between the proprietors of B.P. Refinery (Kwinana) and any firm other than those associated with the parent company in England, for the use of the by-products of the refinery?

The PREMIER replied:

I think it is preferable not to answer the question at this stage.

5. Mr. BRAND: It may be preferable not to answer the question, but could the Premier say "yes" or "no" as to whether there were any negotiations? We are not asking him to tell us what was discussed, or the outcome of any discussions.

The PREMIER: This question affects private companies. If, every time someone thinks up a question, we are going to throw into the ring at Parliament House the business negotiations between one private company and another, we could very well, I think, prejudice the standing of the companies; and we could also very well prejudice any negotiations which they were transacting.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I hope you will remember that next year.

Mr. Brand: Yes; I hope so, too.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Tuberculosis (Commonwealth and State Arrangement).

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Health).

2, Electoral Act Amendment (No. 3).

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Justice).

BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Recommittal.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [2.35]: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

Those hon. members who were present when we were discussing the Bill in Committee will recall that the hon. member for Roe had some amendments on the notice paper that were ahead of mine; and after the first amendment had been fairly lengthily debated, it was defeated. The hon. member for Roe then withdrew his further amendments, which were all relative to the first one, and he asked the Minister to clarify a certain point.

I waited for the Minister to rise, thinking he might reply to the hon. member. But the Minister did not do so, and the Chairman put the whole clause, notwithstanding the fact that my amendment was still on the notice paper. For that reason the clause was passed. I ask that the Bill be recommitted, because by that means we can discuss the amendment I had on the notice paper.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Hon. L. F. Kelly (Minister for Lands) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Section 38 amended:

MR. HEARMAN: I move an amendment—

Page 3—Delete paragraph (i).

This is the provision under which fire weather officers are appointed. The reason for wishing to delete the paragraph is not to take powers from the forestry officers, but to overcome some of the objections raised by the Minister to the proposition put forward by the hon. member for Roe. He proposed to appoint more than one fire weather officer in an area controlled by more than one local authority. The Minister's objection was that there could be duplication and conflict of opinion. If all forestry officers are to become fire weather officers, obviously that objection will arise. In the Preston Road Board area there would be at least two forestry officers, as well as the man appointed by the local authority, who would be fire weather officers.

Obviously, the objections which the Minister raised to the proposition put forward by the hon. member for Roe would be valid in this case. Earlier I said I did not intend to take powers from the forestry officers. If the Minister for Forests is getting concerned about this, I refer him to Sections 45 and 46.

Mr. Graham: He knows them off by heart.

Mr. HEARMAN: The forestry officer has widespread powers, under Section 45, once a fire has broken out. The forestry officer already has all the powers that he could possibly need or want, but the paragraph in the Bill refers to his powers with respect to forest land. The question of who lights fires, and when they are to be lit on forest land, is exclusively the responsibility of the forestry officer. Therefore, this paragraph is redundant.

If the paragraph is not struck out, I think we will make the position for local authorities more difficult because they will have trouble in getting people to take on the job of fire weather officer. Good relationships must be maintained between the local authorities and the Forests Department, and so we should make the legislation more acceptable to those who are directly concerned with it. I can see no danger in agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. KELLY: I do not think there is anything wrong with the paragraph. The position could arise that a forestry officer was in a locality where a fire weather officer was in overall charge, and he would have no authority or power under the Act if the amendment were agreed to. I think that would be undesirable.

Mr. HEARMAN: A forestry officer can still deal with a fire up to two miles from a State forest.

Mr. KELLY: The section of the Act we are amending by this Bill is quite clear, and the paragraph the hon. member wishes to delete would give to a forestry officer the same power in respect to forest land as it is proposed to give to a fire weather officer with respect to land other than forest land. I have discussed the matter with the Bush Fires Board, which feels that the paragraph should be retained. All that the fire weather officer would be controlling would be bushland; whereas the forestry officer would have an over-riding and overall authority over forest land.

Mr. HEARMAN: I thank the Minister for his explanation; but I think the chances of a forestry officer wanting to light a fire in a State forest during a period when there was a dangerous fire hazard forecast would be remote—so remote, in fact, that we need take no notice of the possibility. I think we should make this legislation as palatable as we can for the local authorities. If the paragraph is struck out we will not be taking any authority away from the forestry officer. I have had requests from local authorities in my electorate to see if something can be done about the matter, and I think the best thing is to delete the paragraph altogether.

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

Bill reported with an amendment.

LICENSED SURVEYORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

THE HON. L. F. KELLY (Minister for Lands—Merrredin-Yilgarn) [2.51] in moving the second reading said: The parent Act, the Licensed Surveyors Act, was assented to in 1909, and was designed to control the practices of licensed and registered land surveyors. In accordance with a special resolution passed unanimously at the Conference of Reciprocating Surveyors' Boards of Australia and New Zealand, held in Sydney in December, 1954, a reciprocal agreement has now been reached between these boards and the land surveying division of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, London, whereby licensed surveyors registered with any of the Australian Boards or with the New Zealand Board—subject to certain requirements—may be admitted to professional membership of the land surveying division of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, and vice versa.

In its letters of the 7th August, 1957, the recess committee advised that the reciprocal arrangement is now in force. Broadly speaking, Section 10 of the Western Australian Act provides that the board may enter into such agreements with the boards or other competent authorities of our State, colony or dominion. Any such agreement may contain a condition that the person applying shall furnish additional evidence of character and competency.

It will be noticed that this section does not include the United Kingdom or Great Britain in reciprocal arrangements, and the Crown Law Department has advised that though the agreement concluded is in order as an agreement, an amendment to the Act will be necessary to enable the Land Surveyors' Licensing Board of Western Australia to conclude the agreement. This Bill, therefore, is designed to amend Section 10 of the Act so that the W.A. branch may be in a position to implement the recent agreement. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hearman, debate adjourned.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

NATIVES (STATUS AS CITIZENS) BILL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th September.

THE HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [2.54]: I have read the report of the special committee which was constituted by the Minister for Native Welfare to investigate and report on the best means to

advance the welfare of natives in Western Australia. What struck me forcibly in the first place—as has been already pointed out by the hon. member for Narrogin—is that this special committee has departed to a very considerable degree from its terms of reference. The motion that was carried in this House on the 30th October, 1957, stated—

That in the opinion of this House an investigation should be made for the purpose of ascertaining the cost involved in providing adequately for the requirements of the natives in Western Australia, to what extent Commonwealth assistance is necessary to enable these requirements to be fully met and that representations be made to the Commonwealth accordingly and that such investigations shall be undertaken by a committee of five persons appointed by the Minister, whereof not more than three shall be civil servants.

The main recommendations of the committee are that citizenship rights should be provided, but there is no mention of this in the terms of reference. As one who represents a country electorate, I think that if this particular matter was to be the chief concern of Parliament—so far as this Bill is concerned—the personnel of the committee appointed by the Minister should have been somewhat different.

When we look at the personnel of the committee, we find Mr. F. E. Gare, from the Department of Native Welfare (chairman); Mr. E. C. Gare, from the Native Welfare Council; Dr. Snow, of the Public Health Department; Mr. G. F. Thornbury, of the Education Department; and Mrs. K. Wilson, of the Australian Labour Party, are all city residents. This proposal, to give full citizenship rights to all natives throughout the State, creates much more interest in country districts than in the metropolitan area. Yet not one representative from a country area was appointed to this committee. Why not? Perhaps the Minister can explain.

In the circumstances, I think that the Farmers' Union and the Pastoralists' Association could have been asked to appoint a representative, because both of those organisations have a great deal to do with natives, not only from the personal side but also from the employment side. You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in your own electorate, could think of many people who reside in that district who have a very close and practical experience of native affairs generally. I repeat again that the personnel of this committee is purely metropolitan in character, and no representation has been given to country interests.

It is true—and the Minister will probably point it out—that evidence was invited from anybody who cared to give it; and,

in fact, evidence was given by representatives from country areas. Even so, that is not the same as having a representative appointed to this important committee. The Bill is the same as that presented last year; and the speech made by the Minister when introducing it is, in the main—if not wholly—made up from the references contained in the report of the special committee.

I agree that, in the past, natives have not received the treatment and consideration that they should have been given.

We are taking a very different outlook today. It is generally realised that we owe a debt to the natives, and we should try to uplift them. We should remember that they are human beings; and as far as possible, they should be assimilated into the life of the community.

When my own Government was in office, Sir Ross McDonald, then Minister for Native Affairs, took a most active interest in these matters. Without trying to introduce party politics into this debate, I can say that no previous Minister for Native Affairs took such an active interest and gave so much thought to the native problem as did Sir Ross McDonald. When he accompanied me to one Premiers' Conference he asked for permission to raise the question of native welfare. The Prime Minister at that time, the late Mr. Chifley, agreed to time being given to deal with the matter. Sir Ross made a very eloquent plea to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance in order that the natives might be given the opportunity which he considered they deserved.

Whilst I am not advocating that we should approach the Commonwealth Government for everything we need, and condemn that Government if we do not receive it, I approve of the present approach to the Commonwealth Government to obtain financial assistance for the betterment of our native population. One can say that this is a national problem. As the original inhabitants of this country, the natives should receive special assistance with a view to uplifting them as much as possible. I know that the request is for a large sum of money—over £3,800,000—to be spent over three years. If the request were acceded to the Department of Native Welfare might find great difficulty in spending such a huge sum over three years.

I am not opposed to the proposal. I hope the Commonwealth Government will give financial assistance, if not in full, then in part. At present, the State is spending £500,000 a year on native welfare. A great deal of this money is allocated to the missions. That is a wise way to spend the funds of that department, because everyone realises that the missions are doing extremely good work; that they are short of funds; and that any help from the Government will be for the benefit of the natives in general. We notice that as the years pass

the grants to the Native Welfare Department grow bigger and bigger. In the time of my Government the vote of the Department of Native Welfare was increased substantially from year to year.

I want to say something about the steps that should be taken. Every effort should be made to improve the conditions of the natives, particularly those under which they live. A step is taken in the right direction when an effort is made to provide housing for natives. I can call to mind several families in my own district who will be all the better off if they have decent houses. I know that in certain districts houses have been provided for natives, with some disappointing results. Even so, we should not be deterred. One way of uplifting the natives is by the provision of reasonable housing accommodation.

Nowadays native children are compelled to attend school. They mix with the white children, and that is something which should be encouraged. It was only a few years ago that there was considerable objection to the mixing of native and white children at schools, but that feeling seems to have died down. For some time I have not heard of any resentment from parents against native children attending the same schools as white children. In these days natives are admitted into hospitals, public places of sport and amusement, and so forth. All this helps the native and breaks down any prejudices which might have existed previously.

Mr. O'Brien: The matron of the Leonora Hospital is a native woman.

Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know that some natives are being trained as nurses and have done very well. I thought the hon. member for Narrogin made a very thoughtful speech on this subject. I regard it as one of the most practical speeches made in this House on native welfare. It was deserving of more publicity than it received. The hon. member must have put in a great deal of time into research on the question. On reading through his speech yesterday and today I was very impressed with what he had to say, and the Minister would be wise to give serious consideration to some of the proposals which he put forward.

Mr. Rhatigan: What do you think of the speech of the hon. member for South Perth?

Sir ROSS McLARTY: I was going to make reference to that speech, so I shall do so now. The hon. member for South Perth has taken a very deep interest in native affairs, particularly since he returned to State politics. He has put himself to a great deal of inconvenience in visiting the far-distant parts of this State to observe the tribal natives. I listened to only part of his speech, but I have since read what he said. In some respects

he made a most devastating attack on the Bill, yet he said he would support the second reading.

He did that mainly for two reasons: Firstly, because the Bill will give the natives full citizenship rights; secondly, because he approved of the approach to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance and of some of the minor recommendations contained in the report of the special committee.

The hon. member was most critical of some of the clauses in this Bill. He said that under the Bill, the Commissioner of Native Affairs would be given the power to take native children away from their parents if he thought fit. He would also have power to take away their property, if he thought fit. The hon. member went on to say—and I think with some justification—that these are very wide and sweeping powers. He failed to see how this could be considered as giving natives full citizenship rights, even though this Bill becomes law and they are granted those rights.

So I would say this: If in Committee, the hon. member for South Perth is not able to have what he terms "most objectionable clauses" eliminated from the Bill, he has in my opinion no other alternative but to vote against the third reading. However, that is his business; and no doubt he contemplates certain action when the Bill gets into Committee.

I have had some experience with natives, because in the Pinjarra district, in which I have resided all my life, there have always been natives in fairly large numbers. In the early days it was one of their chief camping grounds; and from the earliest days of the colony down to today, despite the fact that the original inhabitants of that district have all disappeared, the Pinjarra district is a place where many natives wish to live. Of course, hon. members may know of other districts which are just as popular as far as natives are concerned.

Because so many natives have lived in Pinjarra, I have gained some practical knowledge of their ways and habits; and I think that to a considerable extent the way they live in the southern areas corresponds fairly closely to the way the aborigines live in the North-West and in the Kimberleys. Of course, I know that the natives in those parts roam over very much larger areas, and they have not such a wide choice in regard to employment as they have in the South-West. The problem also arises, in both places—particularly with the half-castes—as regards education, sanitation, hospitalisation, and so on.

As I have said, this report makes certain recommendations, a number of which I agree with. But it has brought up the all-important question of citizenship rights; and I say what I said when the Bill

was introduced in the last session of Parliament: I do not think the natives, on the whole, are ready for citizenship rights.

Mr. Gaffy: How long do you think it will take?

Sir ROSS McLARTY: I will deal with that as I proceed. It has been said, when reforms have been suggested, that the time is not yet ripe. To a certain extent that is true. In a number of cases that saying has been justified, but not in all. Where the argument has been used to obstruct progress, I would agree that it is undesirable. It must not be thought by those who advocate full citizenship rights that those who are opposing this proposal in one fell swoop have no interest in native welfare. I assure hon. members that there are many people opposed to this particular proposal who are keenly desirous of doing something constructive for native welfare.

I repeat again that I do not think it is desirable, in the interests of natives, that we should support this particular Bill at this time; and even if we do support it—and this question has been asked by previous speakers—what benefit will it be to the native population as a whole if it is passed? Personally I cannot see that it will be of any benefit.

Let me digress from this particular matter for a moment and refer to some of the criticism from overseas that has been levelled at Australian Governments in regard to the treatment of our natives. These critics, I think, are ill-informed and have tried to make political capital out of it by charging our Governments with neglect of our native population. As I have said previously, we cannot be charged with neglect, because with each year that passes increasingly large sums of money are being devoted to native welfare for their education, hospitalisation, and all those other matters which make for the progress of the natives generally.

Mr. O'Brien: A lot of the natives are paying taxation too.

Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. I do not know how many. I would say a very minute percentage indeed; but, as the hon. member for Murchison says, some of them are paying taxation.

What additional privileges will full citizenship rights give them and how much more will they benefit? They will have two rights: the right to vote and the right to consume liquor; and the report says that in regard to the consumption of liquor they are getting it now; and that is true, to a certain extent at any rate. There is that undesirable class of white people who will exploit the natives in order to supply them with liquor.

I ask hon. members—particularly those who represent country areas, where there is a considerable percentage of native

people—whether the natives are concerned about the right to vote. I do not think they are to the slightest degree. Do they consider that any hardship is being inflicted upon them by being denied the right to vote? Again, I do not think so at all. Unless we compel them to enrol and vote, I do not think they will worry their heads about it. Hon. members who know our natives will realise that they would have no knowledge of whom they were voting for or why. I regard this measure as so much eye-wash, and I do not think it will get our natives anywhere or help them in any practical way.

I know that the consumption of alcoholic liquor has a most unfortunate effect on natives, and I am aware that some of those who have gained their citizenship rights have not advanced their status in the community because of the consumption of liquor. The report says—

The violence displayed by some natives while under the influence of liquor could well be due to resentment at their underprivileged position. Citizenship would do much to dispel this resentment.

That is absolute nonsense, and I do not think it has anything to do with behaviour of natives who are affected by liquor. If the Bill is passed, there will be a rush by natives to secure liquor; because at present they are looking forward to the right to obtain liquor as one of the greatest prizes offered them by citizenship. They are interested only in the right to enter hotels and obtain as much liquor as they desire.

There is no racial bitterness in this country at present. We know that in the early days of the colony there were some incidents that created considerable bitterness; but it is now many years since that feeling has existed to any degree; and I believe that it has been almost, if not entirely, eliminated. However, if this measure is passed and comes into operation, we might easily be again faced with racial bitterness, particularly in certain districts where some racial discrimination will be inevitable.

Mr. Lapham: If the trouble which you anticipate developed, would not the solution be to tighten up our liquor laws, rather than prevent these people from becoming Australian citizens?

Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not know what the hon. member means by "tightening up our liquor laws." We would still have hotels and wine shops, and they would still sell liquor. Once a native obtained full citizenship rights he would be perfectly at liberty to enter any licensed premises. The report says, further—

To withhold full citizenship rights is un-Christian, undemocratic and un-Australian.

I believe those words have been lightly written. To say the withholding of citizenship rights is un-Christian is nonsense; and to say it is un-Australian is also nonsensical. The people who are advocating full citizenship rights for natives at present should not pride themselves that they are more Christian in their outlook than are other sections of the community which do not hold the same view. The hon. member for Narrogin said that there should be a 10-year programme of assistance and promotion for natives; and that he believed a lot could be accomplished under such a plan in 10 years, although he doubted whether all natives would be ready for full citizenship at the end of that period.

I believe that proposal has a lot to commend it, particularly in view of the increasing interest that is being taken and the way in which the native population is being educated. However, I do not think we could say that even at the end of 10 years all our natives would be ready for full citizenship rights. I would prefer to see a gradual development along the lines suggested by the hon. member, with thought given to a still longer period. It may be said that I am stalling for time, but that is not so. I am endeavouring to support a plan—with some modification—which I believe would be in the interests of our natives.

Do not let it be forgotten that, under the Act at present, citizenship rights are being obtained pretty frequently by natives; and under the Bill there is a protected native clause, which would mean that there would still be large numbers of natives in the State who would not receive full citizenship rights. I believe there should be a gradual development of the granting of full citizenship rights to all natives; and that meanwhile we should continue, as at present, to supply the missions with as much money as we can.

We should insist on native children attending schools; and every effort should be made to provide natives with better housing, and to teach them more about sanitation. We should impress them with their responsibility in regard to employment; because at present many of them have not the same responsibility in that regard as have the white population. They must be made to realise the responsibilities they shoulder when they obtain citizenship rights, and they must be made to realise that they have to live up to those responsibilities.

While, together with other hon. members, I am sympathetic towards any proposal that will uplift our native population, I favour an appeal to the Commonwealth for financial assistance and think we should proceed with a generally progressive policy in regard to native enlightenment; but I cannot support the

second reading of the Bill, as I do not think it would be in the interests of our native population. I would prefer something along the lines suggested by the hon. member for Narrogin, and I feel we would be well advised to work to that end.

On motion by Mr. Rhatigan, debate adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

THE HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [3.30]: This Bill is, of course, introduced today in the same form that it was in when it left the Legislative Assembly something like a year ago. That was not in a very greatly amended form from that in which it was introduced into the Assembly during the latter part of last year's session. There may be a few amendments that have been accepted, after a great deal of argument by the Minister; and which, so far as I can follow them, appear to have been inserted in this measure now before us. But it still contains very large sections that are completely objectionable to me, and to those great numbers of people who, I believe, think like me. To those provisions in the Bill we are as much opposed as ever.

I admit it was regrettable that, when amendments designed to satisfy the greater part of the point of view which I expressed on the second reading last year had been carried in the Legislative Council, a unanimous and a reasonable spirit of compromise did not prevail, so that the measure could have been incorporated on our statute book; because it is a long time since it was first introduced for discussion in the Legislature here.

It is possible to some extent, and with a little care and ingenuity, to reconcile some divergent views. It was not, however, possible to reconcile the position to adult franchise for local government, and it was confidently believed that that proposal would have been abandoned had compromise been reached on other sections of the measure. That was not to be so; and the situation is that, as a consequence, we have to debate this measure again. It still contains the proposal for adult suffrage based on six months' residence, by naturalised or natural born persons over 21 years, in the district. It has, in consequence, as I said last year, reduced the ratepayer—in which term I am prepared to include the occupier—to something less than a rubber stamp.

As I believe I said in the House last year, a rubber stamp at least would make some impression on a piece of paper; but in many aspects the ratepayer, as such, under this Bill would make no impression whatever upon the local government of the

district. He is, for all practical purposes, completely ignored. I cannot concede that that is the right method for the control of local government in this State. As the assessment of taxation is invariably done upon the value of the land, either on the unimproved capital value, or the annual value as the case may be, I feel that the holder of that land—and, as I said, I will include the occupier in that term—should be entitled to some priority in respect of the management of the local authority.

I said last year, and I repeat now, that it might be practicable, although it does not seem to be practicable under this Bill, to make some provision for a limited franchise for those who contribute to the revenue of local authorities per medium of motor-vehicle licences. But, as I say, that is not in the measure, and I cannot see that it is practicable to insert it in its present shape. But it is something that may, at some future time, receive consideration if we not only retain—as I believe we ought to retain—the right of the property owner and his occupier to have some priority in respect of voting for the local authority, but also allow him some extra votes dependent upon the size—to some degree, anyway—of the contribution he makes to the local authority's revenue.

The Bill—contrary to the recommendations of the Royal Commission which some years ago sat upon the question contained in this measure—proposes to enact adult suffrage, and to abolish plural voting even in the limited form to which I have referred. The Royal Commission did not recommend either of those things. The local authorities themselves did not recommend either of those things in the great majority of cases, particularly in the rural districts. I would assert it is highly desirable that the owner of land, particularly farming land, should have prior rights, seeing the important position he holds in the community, and the demand for funds towards the maintenance of the local authority which is always made upon him. In very few cases are there any substantial number of persons other than the owner and his family resident upon the land to be taken into consideration.

So it seems to me that this measure is as objectionable today as it was last year, from those two points of view in particular. While I propose to support the second reading of the Bill, I cannot support its contents in regard to those two or three matters to which I have just referred. Nor can I accept the proposition that the president of the shire council should be elected by popular ballot. I do not think that more than a very small fraction of the people whose local governments will be shire councils desire anything of the kind.

I am very glad that, when introducing the measure on this occasion, the Minister did not repeat the statement he made last year about chairmen of road boards being

creatures of the council; because, as I said, that statement implied that they are without honour and without leadership. That has not been the position at all. But, unquestionably, in areas where there are going to be shire councils—which will be mainly where there are road boards, if not entirely so—one frequently finds that the chairman comes from outside the urban area that is constituted in the middle of that local authority.

It has been found that such a person is better suited by the verdict of his fellow-members to take the chair and exercise the powers of that office than any other member of the board. If we are going to have adult suffrage and popular election, such as this Bill proposes, in my opinion, we are going to make it a moral certainty that the president will be elected from the urban area where the preponderance of votes must exist.

That is, in some respects, contrary to the situation we have set up under our electoral laws. We have not failed to recognise the necessity for weighting the representation of the rural districts of the State as against the more crowded metropolitan districts. In some respects, the problem to which I have just referred is the same. If there were any sound reason why the president should not be elected by his fellow-members we might hunt around for a suitable alternative. But what has happened in local government to justify the assertion that the present system is unsuitable, bearing in mind all aspects that surround the case? Nothing has happened that I know of.

One hardly ever, if at all, hears of a chairman of a local authority who is reprimanded by the Minister for Local Government or dismissed from office. There is nothing of that kind to indicate that the services he has rendered, and the control he has had in his local government area have been unsatisfactory or dishonourable. On the contrary, they have the highest record; and in my opinion there is not the slightest need to alter the present situation.

Dealing with the staff of local authorities, the Bill—as it did last year—proposes that for any new appointments there shall be certain qualifications to be attained by examination or otherwise for appointment as secretary, engineer, town clerk, and the like for local government. For future years there is much to commend such a proposition; but the Bill makes no provision whatever to safeguard the position of those people who—without being able, even if they had the desire, to obtain these qualifications—have been appointed as road board secretaries, engineers, town clerks, and the like.

It does not make any provision to safeguard their position that they can, in the future, be appointed to some other local

authority than the one which they at present serve, which under the present law is, of course, their right. I think that while the Minister observed last year that by-laws could be passed to rectify the matter, to leave it on a by-law basis is completely ridiculous; and there should be an amendment to the Bill to safeguard the position of those people and ensure their reasonable rights are preserved. We all know what can happen in a series of by-laws and regulations dealing with such cases. I hope there will be, at one stage or another in the discussion on this Bill, an amendment made in that direction.

Another aspect that requires more attention than has been given in this measure is that of the position of members of local authorities and their voting rights when they have some interest in the matter being discussed before the local authority. It is true that the exemptions from disqualification have been very largely widened in this Bill; and I think that the new exemptions are not objectionable in any way. But they have not preserved the right of voting for the member of the local authority; and we have had cases, and will have cases in the future, where every member of the local authority has been prevented from voting under provisions similar to those in this Bill. I will explain this a little later.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.4 p.m.

Mr. WATTS: When the sitting was suspended, I was saying that nothing was included in the Bill to facilitate the position of road board members who had some interest in certain institutions whose affairs occasionally had to be discussed by the local authority.

I am aware of one instance where every member of the board was a member of the local agricultural society. When the question of a concession being made to the agricultural society, in respect of the use of land vested in the board, came up, a point of order was taken that every member of the board was a member of the agricultural society. A ruling was sought; and when it was given, it was to the effect that none of the members was entitled to vote. But they were not disqualified from membership of the board, of course.

In consequence, it was impossible for the board, I am informed, to function on that occasion. In fact, I have been told that several members of the board subsequently deliberately failed to renew their membership of the agricultural society in order that when the matter came before the board at a later date they could lawfully take part in and vote on the question as members of the board and not of the agricultural society.

I believe that taking the legal opinion to the nth degree—as I understand it has been taken in some cases—the position of road board members who belong to

almost any institution of a local character and which institution in certain circumstances has to do business with the board, is that they are not within the four corners of the law; or, alternatively, in the case I have mentioned, they have to refrain from doing anything until a suitable occasion arises when they can overcome the position, as did the people I have just mentioned.

It seems to me that there must be some further examination of this aspect so that we may not run the risk of making a farce of local government in certain circumstances. I trust that either here, or in another place, careful consideration will be given to the clause which deals with this aspect of local government. As I have said, some attempt has been made to clear up the question of disqualification by widening out the exemptions, but that has not altogether solved the problem, because the final paragraph of the clause in question provides—

A person excepted from disqualification by paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of this section shall not take part in a discussion, or vote on a question relating to a matter mentioned in that paragraph and in which he is directly or indirectly interested.

That is the problem which I think has to be solved in order that we will not run the risk of the proceedings of local authorities becoming impracticable or farcical at certain times.

I do not know whether the opinion which I understand is being obtained by the Road Board Association and the Local Government Association from a certain Mr. Gifford who was here from the Eastern States during Local Government Week, will make any contribution towards the satisfactory settlement of the little problem I have just been discussing. I know it is the opinion of both the local government associations I have named, that the services that can be rendered to them by Mr. Gifford, in view of his considerable knowledge of local government law and lore, will be very great. I am waiting to see what production comes from the pen of that gentleman.

It was, I think, about three weeks after the opening of Local Government Week that he was expected to be able to finish his inquiry into the matters he wanted to advise on. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that before the Bill leaves this House, or reaches another place, an opportunity will be afforded us of knowing exactly what he has said. I do not know whether he will produce a suitable contribution to solve some of the questions that will arise, not only in regard to the point I have mentioned but in respect to various other aspects of local government which, I understand, have been discussed with him. Anyway, that aspect must be left at this point.

I am just as much opposed, as I was last year, to the compulsory requirement in the Bill that local authorities should accept the Taxation Department valuation for rating purposes, and that they should be compelled to rate upon the unimproved capital value. The acceptance of the Taxation Department values, to my way of thinking, is placing a central control upon local government. The present position is that the figures are supplied to the local authority by the Taxation Department. The local authority then exercises its discretion as to whether it will adopt those figures in whole or in part; and as such, it fulfils the function of local government.

The intention of the Bill, in this particular department, can only be regarded as striving to prevent local government from functioning properly, and to impose upon the third arm of government—as I have frequently heard it called—an obligation to do what it is told by a central authority in regard to one of its prime duties—to wit, the assessment of values and rates. So I consider it essential that the discretion which local governing authorities now have should be retained by them.

Similar arguments apply to the use of valuations on unimproved capital values for rating purposes. I know that some local authorities hold strong views on this subject. Only this morning I received a letter—it may have arrived a day or so ago as I have been away—from the North Fremantle Municipality, setting out strongly its objections to the proposal that it should be compelled to use unimproved capital values. This local authority says—

A recent survey of the effect of a change to unimproved capital valuations has shown that industrial premises would pay some £765 a year less in rates at the expense of dwellings, a minor adjustment in a total revenue of approximately £20,500, and certainly no cause for concern. But the effect on individual properties is so inconsistent as to be ridiculous.

This local authority, obviously, has gone fairly carefully into the question. I submit this is a matter for local government and not for direction. At present the local authorities have some option, and I do not think they should be deprived of it. They should be allowed to continue in substantially the same position as they are in today so that the opportunity to use, in urban areas particularly, the unimproved capital values, should still be available to them. I do not propose to be a party to depriving them of their discretion in those two matters.

I have covered only the four or five major objections to this measure, as presented to the House. There are, naturally,

a number of other provisions in the Bill, to which some exception could be taken, or to which some amendment is desirable; but my purpose today was to declare, quite unequivocally, that I and those associated with me will not have a bar of those proposals with which I have dealt; namely: adult suffrage; the alteration in the system of election of heads of shire councils; the compulsion to use Taxation Department and unimproved capital values; and the question of Government auditors, which also has to be raised.

There, again, while I am satisfied with the operations of the Government audit system in respect of road boards that will become shire councils, I do not know that we should legislate in respect of the substantial urban authorities that do not want this system. I think that, provided qualified persons are employed to undertake the auditing duties for the latter type of local authority, they should be allowed the option of employing them.

Mr. Brand: It has worked well so far.

Mr. WATTS: It has. It has been satisfactory in regard to the municipal authorities up to recent times; and I do not see any need, following the general principle, to deprive them of the optional right. I think there should be that optional right, and certainly they should not be deprived of the right to have their own auditor when it can be shown that that method is satisfactory and that the person concerned is properly qualified.

The situation in regard to this Bill, of course, is that last year we battled very hard in this Chamber in respect of certain amendments, and particularly those dealing with the aspects to which I have made reference today. Of course, we got precisely nowhere with the amendments we moved then; because the provisions concerned have been inserted in the Bill, in most cases, not in pursuance of the desire of any local authority, or in pursuance of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, but in accordance with the policy of the party which the Premier leads; and so, naturally, he has very substantial support from his colleagues on that side of the House.

Local government wants this Bill placed on the statute book; and the longer we, in this House, take to deal with the measure, the slower it will be in reaching another place; and I can assure the House that in another place there will be a substantial number of amendments to the Bill moved; and, I have no doubt, a substantial proportion of them will be agreed to, just as occurred last year. Ultimately the Bill will come back here considerably amended, and I do not want to postpone that time any more than I must.

So my suggestion is that members on this side of the House should make their views perfectly plain whilst speaking to the second reading of the Bill, in regard to the major matters at least, as I have striven to do this afternoon; and when they have done that, they should, except perhaps in regard to one or two matters which might receive the Minister's consideration during the Committee stage, allow the Bill to get to another place as rapidly as possible.

That, so far as I can see, is the only prospect that the local authorities have of having the Bill passed this session. If it is not passed this session, I suggest it will never be passed at all; because with the general election intervening next year we will have to start off with the measure afresh and will get about as far in those circumstances, as we will get this session if the course I have suggested is not followed. Then the next year there will be the Legislative Council election, and so we shall have to start off afresh once more; and therefore I say that if the Bill does not become the law of the country during this session, it will never be placed on the statute book. That is an opinion I have formed after careful consideration of the matter.

I know that the local authorities desire this measure in an acceptable form—although not in its present form—and want it to become the law of the country this year. I think it is our duty, so far as we reasonably can, to make every effort to expedite the passage of the measure. For those reasons I propose to adopt the attitude to which I have just referred, and I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Hon. D. Brand, debate adjourned.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1958-59.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the financial year 1958-59, and recommending appropriation.

In Committee.

The House resolved into Committee to consider the Loan Estimates, Mr. Sewell in the Chair.

Vote—Railways, £3,250,000:

THE HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Treasurer—Northam) [4.22]: The total borrowing programme of the Governments of the Commonwealth and States for this financial year has been fixed by the Loan Council meeting at a total of £210,000,000, which is £10,000,000 more than the figure for the last financial year. Our share of the £210,000,000 is £19,760,000. Of that

sum, £3,000,000 has been allocated to the Commonwealth-State housing projects to be carried out in Western Australia, leaving a balance of £16,760,000 for general loan works. In addition, loan repayments are expected to yield a further £1,420,500 and therefore a total expenditure of £18,180,500 is envisaged. This will represent an increase of approximately £500,000 on the total loan expenditure in this State during the last financial year. Hon. members who desire to study the details of the expenditure from the General Loan Fund for this year, will find those details in the printed Estimates which were distributed in the Chamber a few moments ago.

Railways.

The total expenditure by the Railway Department last financial year was £2,904,134. For a number of years prior to the 30th June, 1957, a substantial part of railway loan allocation was absorbed to meet overseas contractual commitments for locomotives and rolling stock; such expenditure for the year just concluded approximated only £40,000. This naturally was a very great relief to the Railway Department and particularly to the officers of the Treasury Department, and the Treasurer himself.

The main items of expenditure in connection with the railways last financial year were—

	£
Additions and improvements to opened railways	2,594,671
Rolling stock	228,341
Welshpool marshalling yard land resumption	74,374

For the current financial year £3,250,000 has been allocated for railway capital needs, and of this sum £1,880,000 is for replacement of track and track structures. Other improvement items are—

	£
Re-laying and ballasting	980,000
Renewal of track components, rails, sleepers, bridges and culverts	900,000
Station yard improvements and South-Western railway centralised traffic control	202,000
Water supplies, stock yards, weighbridges and cranes	93,000
Housing, barracks and industrial necessities	67,000
Workshops, machines and plant	260,000
New waggon stock and refrigerated vans	190,000
Welshpool marshalling yards and connecting railways—land resumption	200,000

Last year 92 miles of track were relayed with heavier rails, and ballasting proceeded on the re-layed sections. For the current year the programme provides for re-laying 85 miles on the Eastern Goldfields, Great Southern and metropolitan sections of the railway system.

Tramways.

The total loan expenditure on this item last financial year was £78,834. The principal items were £47,000 for the balance of the cost of 20 Daimler omnibuses, and £15,100 for the conversion of the Inglewood tram service to trolleybuses, and extension of the line. For the current year, provision has been made for converting the equipment of the Cook-st. substation from 40 to 50 cycles, re-routing trolleybus lines in the city area, land resumption for the workshops, overhauls of buses, and additional workshops' equipment at a total estimated cost of £39,000.

State Electricity Commission.

Expenditure from the General Loan Fund on this item last year amounted to £1,240,000. Of this sum, £100,000 was expended on the change of frequency in the metropolitan area. Funds totalling £2,250,000 were obtained by the commission by means of subscribed loans. That sum, of course, was in addition to the £1,240,000 made available to the commission from the General Loan Fund. The major expenditure during the year ended the 30th June last was on the construction of the Bunbury power station, and the erection of transmission and distribution lines throughout both the metropolitan and country districts.

A sum of £1,200,000 has been allocated for the use of the commission during this year; and in addition, it will raise the balance of its requirements from subscribed loans. The major expenditure to be made by the commission this financial year will again be at the Bunbury power station where the second, third and fourth units are under construction.

Mr. Brand: When is it proposed to raise the next loan for the S.E.C.?

Mr. HAWKE: I could not say off-hand, but I should say it would be during the next two or three months. The second unit of the Bunbury power station will be completed towards the end of this financial year. Construction of the second 132 kv line connecting this station with the metropolitan system will be continued. Work will also be continued throughout the metropolitan system on the erection of high and low tension mains, the construction of substations to meet the increasing demand by industrial and domestic consumers, and on measures to improve the supply.

Gas Services.

These services will be extended and improved by the laying of high pressure gas feeder mains and general service throughout the suburbs, and by the construction of a refrigerant plant at the East Perth gas works. Additional mains and transmission lines will be erected in country districts. Major works will be the construction of high tension lines from Collie to Wagin and Cunderdin to Merredin, and a sum of £100,000 has been allocated to complete the change of frequency from 40 to 50 cycles in the metropolitan area.

This programme of changing the cycle frequency in the metropolitan area, as hon. members would be aware, has been under way for several years. When it was first proposed that this work should be carried out negotiations were entered into between the State and Commonwealth Governments, with the result that the Commonwealth Government agreed to subsidise the work, if I remember rightly, on a £ for £ basis, with a ceiling on the total amount which the Commonwealth Government would be prepared to make available in all.

Public Works.

Provision has been made in this year's Loan Estimates for an expenditure of £2,935,000 on the construction of public buildings. The sum expended last financial year for the same purpose was £2,622,606. A large programme of school works is planned, including the completion of the John Curtin, Midland area, Mt. Lawley, Armadale and Tuart Hill high schools and the commencement of a new high school at Scarborough. Further stages of the Belmont, Applecross, Hollywood, Merredin and Manjimup high schools are to be erected. Extensive additions are to be made to Perth Modern School, and extensions to the Bunbury, Collie, Eastern Goldfields, Albany, Geraldton, Northam and Narrogin high schools are planned.

The programme includes the erection of new primary schools and additions to primary schools, comprising in all 50 new classrooms. Extensions are to be made to the Leederville Technical College, and the commencement of a new automotive trades school is planned.

Hospital works in progress include the new regional hospital at Albany, Royal Perth Hospital, and extensive additions at Fremantle and Manjimup. New major hospital works include extensive additions to King Edward Memorial Hospital; Narrogin and Katanning Hospitals; new hospitals at Osborne Park and Esperance; new x-ray laboratories; and a new central hospital laundry. A start is to be made on the new mental hospital at Guildford and a new kitchen and laundry block are to be erected at the Claremont mental hospital. New police stations and police

quarters are to be erected at Waroona and Mundijong—both, I think, in the electorate of the hon. member for Murray.

Sir Ross McLarty: One only.

Mr. HAWKE: Yes, Waroona is in the Harvey electorate, which means that one is in the electorate of the hon. member for Murray. But the other is very close to his electorate.

Mr. May: It would not make any difference; both are actually in the electorate of Murray.

Mr. HAWKE: Work will be continued on the new Government Printing Office and works at Subiaco. Other large miscellaneous works include a new reformatory for hardened delinquent boys at Caversham; additions to the Supreme Court buildings to accommodate women jurors; a new court-house and police offices at Manjimup; additions to the Kalgoorlie School of Mines; a new dining and kitchen block at Stoneville Boys' Home; and, at long last, additions to Parliament House.

Mr. May: Hear, hear!

Comprehensive Water Scheme.

Mr. HAWKE: Expenditure on the comprehensive water supply scheme from State Loan funds is estimated at £496,000 for the current financial year. The allocation to the northern section is approximately £433,000. This amount will be spent on completing mains to Koorda, Wyalkatchem, and Dowerin, together with further farm land reticulation in areas south of Merredin and north of Kellerberrin. In the southern section an amount of £63,000 will be used to complete the main from Pingelly to Brookton, reticulating a number of small towns on the Great Southern line, and completing minor works associated with the supply of water under this scheme to Wagin and Katanning.

Work at Wellington Dam.

An amount of £269,000 has been provided in the programme for water supplies for towns. The major items are £60,000 for Denmark; £48,000 for Northampton; £34,000 for Albany; £23,000 for Manjimup and £14,000 for Geraldton. The expenditure last financial year, spent to cover drainage and irrigation, amounted to £385,090. Provision is made this year for a total expenditure of £416,000, of which £290,000 will be used to continue the raising of the retaining wall at Wellington Dam.

I think all members are aware that the raising of this wall will enable the reservoir to have its original holding capacity increased from about 7,500 million gallons to about 40,000 million gallons. Therefore, the great value of this

work can readily be appreciated. On further improvements to the main Collier irrigation channel, £61,000 will be spent, together with £10,000 for irrigation in the North Brunswick area.

Expenditure on the North-West.

Expenditure on water supplies, public buildings and additions and improvements to jetties and other work in the North-West amounted to £321,758 from the General Loan Fund last financial year, and provision is made to expend £549,000 on these works during the current financial year. Last year, £916,000 approximately was spent by the State Shipping Service. Instalments on the "Dorriga," "Dulverton" and "Delamere" totalled £69,000. An amount of £459,000 was spent for the electrification, conversion and equipping of the "Delamere"; £376,000 for progress payments and equipping the new ship "Koolama" and final payment on "Koolarra"; and purchase of residence at Darwin amounted to £12,000.

Value of State Shipping Service.

Provision has been made in this year's Estimates to meet the final payment on the "Koolama"—£231,000; the annual instalments on the three "D" class vessels, £42,000, and further alterations to the "Delamere," £9,000. Those figures make it very clear to members that the State Shipping Service, which is provided for the benefit of the people in the North-West does make a very heavy drain upon loan funds. However, the shipping service which is provided as a result of that expenditure is not only of considerable advantage to North-West people but also is of considerable advantage to manufacturers and many commercial men in Western Australia because the ships provide a regular, frequent and extremely efficient service as between the port of Fremantle, particularly, and the port of Darwin.

In consequence, a large quantity of goods which, I think, would almost certainly be taken to Darwin from Sydney and Melbourne, are now shipped from Fremantle, with the result that Western Australia receives the benefit of that manufacture and trade instead of the manufacturers and the men of commerce on the other side of Australia having the benefit of it.

Mr. Brand: Did you notice that the State will be spending about £400,000 less on the North-West as compared with that which was spent last year?

Mr. HAWKE: In the main, this is brought about with the reducing payments made on the ships which now comprise the shipping service between Fremantle and the North-West. The expenditure from the General Loan Fund upon this service over the last two or three years

has been exceptionally heavy—far heavier, I think, than the average of any previous two years of the shipping service.

Extension of Service South of Esperance.

Mr. Roberts: Has consideration been given, in recent years, to the extension of the State Shipping Service to all ports south of Esperance?

Mr. HAWKE: Yes, consideration is given periodically to that problem. However, it is a problem which at present is outside the ability and the scope of the State Shipping Service to provide in view of the great and increasing demand upon the ships from the people in the North-West and from Darwin. However, I am fairly confident that with the increasing development in the South-West and the southern areas a time will come when the State Shipping Service—provided the Opposition does not object too strongly and too emphatically at the time—will be expanded to take in South-West and southern ports.

Naturally the operation of this State Shipping Service is carried out at a considerable loss. However, the members of the Grants Commission appreciate the situation; and, I think, each year the recommendations they make covering a special grant for Western Australia, include the whole, or a greater part of the losses incurred in the operations of these services; and the Commonwealth Government and Parliament have, on every occasion, as hon. members know, honoured the recommendations of the Grants Commission.

Metropolitan Water Supplies.

Provision has been made in this year's Estimates for expenditure of £1,651,500 in connection with the metropolitan water supply. The actual expenditure last year was £1,568,828. The expenditure during this year on the Serpentine project will amount to £687,000, and will enable the completion of the construction of the 48-inch main from the Serpentine Pipe Head Dam to Victoria Park. This work should be completed by November of this year. This in turn will enable the completion of the 42-inch main from Victoria Park to Mt. Yokine, and will ensure a supply of water from the Serpentine to Mt. Eliza and Mt. Yokine reservoirs, and also the completion of the diversion of the river, and the commencement of construction of the main Serpentine dam.

An amount of £394,000 is provided to enable the completion of the Victoria Park-Mt. Yokine trunk main. This will make available for consumption water from Serpentine which would be lost if the work were not carried out. To extend an adequate supply to the Mt. Yokine-Nollamara high level area, £28,000 has been

provided in this year's Estimates; and a sum of £186,500 has been provided for extensions of reticulation mains to serve new houses and areas as well as improvements to existing water mains. During last year £186,000 was expended for these purposes.

To augment the supply in the North Beach-Waterman's Bay area, a sum of £37,000 has been provided. This will enable future extensions to be made in these areas and in Marmion and Sorrento. In the Riverton-Melville area an amount of £93,000 has been provided for the construction of the first stage of a link main direct from the Serpentine main to the Melville reservoir which will provide an improved supply to the Brentwood area.

Sewerage.

A total of £326,000 will be made available this financial year for sewerage works. The amount spent last year was £254,665. The current year's programme in connection with sewerage works includes the following:—

An amount of £210,000 for the Subiaco treatment works amplification. This will continue the construction of a plant to provide for the high rate activated sludge process of sewage treatment to improve the quality of the effluent discharged into the ocean. (The importance of this work has been highlighted by the fact that it was considered necessary as well as desirable last summer to close the beach in the City Beach area.)

A sum of £50,000 has been set aside for sewerage works at Preston Point. The first stage in sewerage of a residential area is being built up rapidly in which septic tank discharge into the ground is not satisfactory.

For requisite minor extensions within the sewerage areas an amount of £15,000 has been provided.

Drainage.

Last year a sum of £101,720 was spent on drainage works, and included in the current Estimates is £250,000. This amount will provide for the following main drainage works:—

To continue the construction at Belmont of stormwater drainage in areas subject to flooding in winter an amount of £57,000 is to be set aside.

At Bayswater, £100,000 is provided to commence the construction of a new drainage scheme to serve an area where many houses are subject to flooding.

An amount of £10,000 is set aside for Bassendean for the construction of a new outlet section of the Brook-st. drain; and £37,000 for pumping

from Jolimont to Mongers Lake. It is also necessary to provide £28,000 for the Maylands-Inglewood extension to Catherine-st.

Mining.

The major work contemplated by the Mines Department this year will again be deep drilling activities. In addition to diamond drilling on gold and mineral areas, however, boring for water will be undertaken by the newly-formed hydrological section of the department. This work will be carried out in approved districts following geological examinations, and at the request of farmers, who will be required to reimburse the department the cost of successful holes put down by the drills. Loans will continue to be made available to promising mines where financial assistance is required by the companies operating them. The scheme of assistance to approved prospectors will be continued. A further loan was made last financial year to the Sons of Gwalia Ltd. and as a result it is hoped that this mine will be able to re-establish itself on a satisfactory basis, both in regard to the quality of the ore, and the quantity which can be produced and treated.

State Housing Commission.

The State Housing Commission has completed the erection of 269 houses under the provisions of the State Housing Act in the past year; and on the 30th June, 1958, had 250 houses under construction. An amount of £508,000 is provided for the completion of these homes and for the letting of further contracts during this financial year.

Provision is again being made to assist home builders by way of second mortgage and £100,000 has been provided under this heading. In the past year 135 loans were approved for a total amount of £108,000. The actual payments amounted to £100,000. An amount of £30,000 will be provided this financial year to assist self-help builders, and for additions to existing homes.

It is estimated that £300,000 will be expended on acquisition for land and development, and loans to local authorities, for road construction in areas being developed by the commission. Provision has been made in the programme to repay £100,000 to British Petroleum Refinery (Kwinana) Ltd., which is the balance of the £500,000 loaned. This will mean, of course, that the loan will in the near future be totally repaid.

In this connection I wish, at this stage to publicly express appreciation to the company for the consideration which it showed the Government and for the financial help it made available at a time when loan funds in this State were very short of requirements.

Agriculture—South Perth Laboratories

The total expenditure last year was approximately £177,000. Of that amount, £146,620 was spent on the new laboratories at South Perth. The building programme at South Perth has been expanded and, as a result, the whole of the department will eventually be housed in that area. It is considered that this will be a major contribution to the department's efficiency. The first main block of this building in South Perth was occupied in the beginning of July this year. Fortunately this has permitted the evacuation of the worst of the old accommodation.

Hon. members who have inspected the old accommodation will realise how shockingly bad it was. I am sure they will rejoice in the fact that the worst of that old accommodation is no longer in use. I also hope that they will rejoice in the fact that, in the course of time—and not a very long time—all the officers of the department will be suitably housed in new buildings at South Perth. They will therefore be able to do their work under much more favourable conditions and give even better results than they have given to the agricultural industry in the past.

It is estimated that the second block at South Perth will be occupied at about the end of this calendar year. Construction of the third block, which will house the stock division, including the animal health laboratories, is well under way.

The balance of loan expenditure under the heading of "Agriculture" went last year to the construction of new district offices at Katanning and Moora, and in making improvements to the research stations in the way of new quarters and improved farm buildings.

An advance of capital to the Blackwood Flax Co-operative Company Limited was made for the ultimate benefit of the flax growing and processing industry at Boyup Brook.

The allocation under the heading of "Agriculture" for the current financial year is £190,000. The major item of this expenditure will be the carrying out of further work on the South Perth buildings. These are estimated to cost £150,000 in this financial year.

A further £19,000 will be advanced to the Blackwood Flax Co-operative Company Limited to enable it to carry out further and very necessary capital improvements to its works at Boyup Brook.

Forests.

The pine working plan of the Forests Department for 1956 envisaged an ultimate area of 200,000 acres of pines, and an

annual planting rate of 2,000 to 3,000 acres per annum. Since 1956 to the present day, new areas planted were as follows:—

	Acres
1956	1,594
1957	2,372
1958	1,900

The amount of loan moneys allocated for pine planting this year is £100,000. This sum will be supplemented by over £150,000 from the reforestation fund in order to maintain the existing 22,000 acres, and to carry out the proposed programme, the annual estimated cost of which is approximately £250,000.

Fisheries.

During April of this year the Government purchased for £11,000 the motor vessel "Halimah" for use by the Fisheries Department as a fisheries research vessel. This vessel is undergoing a complete overhaul and is being fitted with trawling equipment, including an echo sounder, hydraulic winch and refrigeration, for which £13,000 has been provided in the Estimates.

When the refit has been completed, the Fisheries Department will be enabled to extend its research operations and to obtain important information concerning fish populations and their migratory habits. I might say that I went out on a fishing vessel with the Minister for Fisheries. The vessel appeared to have all the modern gadgets that are required to find any sort of fish that is desired to be found, and in any quantity. Perhaps I had better not say anything more about that!

Industrial Development.

A new item in respect of industrial development has been included in the loan fund programme for this financial year. This new item will enable the Government to extend assistance to industries which are considered to be important to the economy of Western Australia.

Mr. Brand: Is that a total resulting from some details, or is it a sum set aside in anticipation?

Mr. HAWKE: This is a sum set aside which, it is thought, could very well be used during this financial year. It is hoped that this amount will certainly be required this financial year. However, should the negotiations which are currently being carried on not reach a conclusive stage before the 30th June of next year, to the extent required to absorb the whole amount which has been set aside, then the amount could be used, probably, for other purposes. In any event the amount has been set down as a sum which we hope will be required to be utilised to

bring about further manufacturing expansion in the State before the 30th June of next year.

Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry.

In the last financial year an amount of £529,000 was expended on plant extensions to the charcoal iron and steel industry at Wundowie. The No. 2 blast furnace, together with air heaters, blowers, bins, conveyors and other ancillary equipment, was completed and put into operation in January of this year.

A sum of £215,000 has been made available this year. This will enable the plant extensions to be completed, including additions to the steam raising plant, installation of two Lamboitte retorts, conveyor systems and wood handling plant. The expansion programme now under way at Wundowie is expected to be completed during the current financial year.

Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The Fremantle Harbour Trust will, during this financial year, continue with the construction of No. 10 berth; north and south quay reconstruction, including new electrical layout; amenities; roads; railways and maintenance facilities. The total amount provided for the operations of the trust was £564,836 in the last financial year. This year £540,000 has been set down as the amount which the trust is expected to spend.

This money will be expended mainly on the continuance to completion of No. 10 berth; north and south quay reconstruction, including new passenger berth facilities; electric distribution; amenities; roads; railways and maintenance facilities; the completion of the Bellmouth dredging at harbour entrance and the widening of the north channel; and the provision of gangways; a new pilot tender; and a 100-ton slipway.

Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust.

An amount of £500,000 has been included in the Estimates under this item. This money will form part of the capital of the trust. Of that amount, £200,000 will be used for acquisition purposes and will enable the trust to complete the take-over of all the private undertakings. This step has to be completed before any rationalisation of passenger transport services in the metropolitan area can be successfully attempted.

Of that amount, £150,000 will be used to purchase 20 new buses. These are required to replace worn-out units which are in a run-down condition at the time of take-over. The establishment and alteration to depots is estimated to cost £150,000. It is intended to provide a new

depot to alleviate costly dead mileage running and to reduce the number of buses operated from the present depot.

State Building Supplies.

Expenditure from loan funds by State Building Supplies during the last financial year totalled £128,000 approximately, the major activities being the construction of a new mill at Dwellingup which will replace the existing one at Holyoake. Initial work was also carried out on a kiln drying and machining plant at Manjimup.

Provision is made for the expenditure during this financial year of £150,000. This money, among other things, will allow for the completion of the Dwellingup mill and of the project at Manjimup to the stage of commercial operation, and for a high pressure preservative treatment plant at Pemberton for treating cross-arms. The treatment plant will have a capacity of about 1,500 loads per annum, and could be the forerunner of a much larger plant for the treatment of karri sleepers.

University of Western Australia.

Provision is made for an amount of £165,000 in connection with the State University. This is brought about mainly as a result of a decision of the Government to implement the proposals made in connection with the Commonwealth Government's acceptance of the main recommendations as contained in the Murray Report on Australian Universities. Under the Commonwealth Act, the Commonwealth Government will provide 25s. for every 20s. paid by the State for the construction of specified University buildings.

Cockburn Cement Pty Ltd.

The sum of £100,000 is to be advanced to the Cockburn Cement Co. in accordance with the agreement entered into with this company by the McLarty-Watts Government. This will bring total advances by the State to date to £800,000. A further amount of £200,000 will still have to be paid by the State in future years.

Grant to Public Bodies.

Grants of £70,000 to the Alexandra Home, in connection with the new Ngala Home at South Perth, £30,000 to the University Colleges, £12,000 to the Salvation Army, £11,000 to the W.A. School for the Blind, and £10,000 for the Red Cross Society for building purposes, are the major items provided in this year's Estimates under the heading of "Grants to Public Bodies."

Rural and Industries Bank (Delegated Agencies).

Provision is made under the heading of "Rural and Industries Bank (Delegated Agencies)" for the clearance of advances

made last financial year to Chamberlain Industries, the amount being £53,000; and a further amount of £250,000 to the writing down of this firm's liability to the bank. This will be in accordance with the recommendations made by the all-party Parliamentary committee which investigated this industry. The sum of £200,000 is allocated for meeting reductions in guaranteed bank overdrafts.

Of the remaining amount, £92,000 is for additional working capital for the Blackwood Flax Co-operative Ltd., and the balance to assist in the further development of the State's primary and industrial production.

Mr. Court: In regard to the £200,000 for the reduction of guaranteed overdrafts, are they guaranteed by the bank and called up under the guarantee?

Mr. HAWKE: I am not quite clear on that point, and will make the information available to the Committee at a later stage.

Deficit Funding.

An amount of £1,342,000 will be received this year from the Commonwealth Government in part extinguishment of the published deficit of £1,912,368 for the last financial year. The balance of £570,368 will have to be funded by a charge to loan funds. No action can be taken in respect of the deficit for 1957-1958 until the Commonwealth Grants Commission investigates and reports on the budget results for that year.

Broadly, that covers the main features in the proposed loan expenditure programme for the current financial year. On many occasions in the past in this Parliament, we have had very interesting debates—very informative debates—regarding the best methods of using State loan moneys.

In theory, I think we have to agree the best way to use State loan moneys is to make them all reproductive or make a very great proportion of them reproductive. However, when that theory has been subject to critical and practical analysis it has been found to fall far short of actual practical requirements in a developing and expanding State such as our State of Western Australia is undoubtedly at present, has been for years past, and will continue to be for some years to come.

Unreproductive Loan Expenditure.

A great deal of our loan expenditure, unfortunately, has to be used in avenues which are either totally, or very largely, unreproductive in the financial sense. Nevertheless, they are essential to our way of life and to the many important activities carried on in the community. For instance, all expenditure in connection with

school buildings is financially unproductive, and much of our expenditure in connection with hospital buildings is only partly reproductive in the financial sense. Similar remarks could be applied to expenditure under the heading of "Agriculture."

I have already shown that much of our loan expenditure is not fully reproductive financially in connection with the State Shipping Service. In fact, members of the Committee could go through the General Loan Estimates from beginning to end and would find only a few proposed items of expenditure which could be looked upon as being fully reproductive in the financial sense. Clearly, the time has not arrived in Western Australia's development when we can hope to receive a greater financial return upon our loan expenditure in a direct way than we have been receiving, or than we are receiving at the present time.

Real Value of Loan Expenditure Unassessable.

However, this comparatively large loan expenditure from year to year is playing a tremendous part, directly and indirectly, in the greater development of Western Australia. Consequently, we can look forward, I think, with reasonable confidence to the time when a greater financial return will be obtained from the loan money expended from the General Loan Fund in each succeeding loan year. It is impossible, as we all know, to measure at all, let alone to measure to any degree of accuracy, the real value to the community of loan funds which are expended on school buildings, hospitals, and similar sorts of non-reproductive undertakings in the financial sense.

Education is becoming increasingly important, not only in the ordinary three R's sense, but more particularly on the technical and scientific sides. It is generally agreed that Australia as a whole is drastically short of the required number of highly trained technical and scientific men. It is considered that this drastic shortage is holding back, to some extent, the progress which Australia should be making in many fields.

Mechanisation on Farms.

I was thinking only the other day how tremendous have been the mechanical and scientific changes which have taken place over the last 30 or 40 years. It is amazing that in the lifetime of one person, such great changes have already taken place and such additional changes appear to be just around the corner.

I said the other day, at a gathering of farmers, that in my boyhood days the farmer, with the aid of the local blacksmith and about 20 horses or so, could

himself do all that was required in connection with farming operations. Today it is entirely different. So many more people now play a part, indirectly of course, in farming operations. They play a part in the production of raw materials from which machines are made; they play a part in the processing of raw materials; in the manufacture of machines; in the transport of the machines to the farm; and in the servicing of them after they have been in use on the farm for a while; and so on.

One result of that is that the farmers do not employ nearly the same number of people as they did on a per unit basis of production in the horse age; because in the horse age, the farmer not only had to employ more people to enable farm cultivation and production to be carried on, but he also had to produce on the farm a lot of food for the horses. Anyone who has had anything to do with horses on farms in those days, knows what a lot of looking after they entailed, in more ways than one.

Effect on Employment.

So we have seen, as I have said, a tremendous change in that direction. The fact that the farmers do not employ, directly, nearly as many people as are employed on cattle and sheep stations—which too, have become mechanised—means that we have to look to other avenues for the absorption of the greater number of our people into employment.

I think, on balance, if the situation could be accurately assessed, farms today would be found to provide a far greater amount of indirect employment than ever before. Unfortunately for Western Australia, a great deal of that indirect employment is not provided in our State. It is provided in other States of Australia where many of the machines which farmers over here use, are manufactured. The result of all this is that a great deal of the wealth that is received by farmers for their products, whether sold here or overseas, is sent by Western Australians to the Eastern States for the purpose of keeping their factories and workshops busy and keeping their people employed.

The net result to us on that angle of the situation, is that we do not receive the employment benefits which we should receive from the mechanised operations of our farms, and sheep and cattle stations. That, however, is something which is being tackled and which will continue to be tackled; and I should hope that the time will not be far distant when we will begin to make up in a substantial way the disadvantages, disabilities and losses which come to us because of the circumstances to which I have referred.

The loan programme which is submitted on this occasion is, I think, a well-balanced programme—one which will, in the carrying out of it, assist towards increased production in all of our productive industries; and, on the other side of the programme, will add to the essential requirements of our people in regard to the supplies of water, sewerage and so on. Therefore I have very much pleasure in submitting the Estimates for the consideration of the Committee.

On motion by the hon. D. Brand, progress reported for one week.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL.

Second Reading.

THE HON. W. HEGNEY (Minister for Labour—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.24] in moving the second reading said: This is not the first occasion on which a long service leave Bill has been introduced into this Chamber. As hon. members will recall, a measure of this character was introduced last session. Perhaps I may be permitted for one moment to clear up any doubts—if doubts still exist in the minds of the Opposition—regarding the attitude of the Government towards the measure now being introduced. As a matter of fact, hon. members will know that it formed the subject of an amendment to the Address-in-reply.

I would like to say at this stage that, although I did not put on paper a request to the Secretary for Labour, I personally have a vivid recollection of asking him, within two or three days after an agreement was arrived at between the Trade Unions Industrial Council and the Employers' Federation, to proceed with the drafting of a Bill to cover employees who are not covered by awards and agreements, and to use as the pattern the agreement to which I have just referred. The papers will show that I replied to an inquirer on the 22nd May, when he wanted to know whether anything would be done by the Government to provide long service leave for those covered by Federal awards. I indicated then that the matter would be attended to.

The papers also show that as the result of my request to the Secretary for Labour, his industrial officer (Mr. Kelly) dealt with the matter; and on the 23rd of July, the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman was communicated with and asked to draft a Bill on the basis compiled by the Secretary for Labour, with whom I had discussions in the meantime. The records will show that the draftsman proceeded with the compilation of a Bill accordingly.

I mention that, not in a critical way, but to indicate to the House and to the public that we were mindful of the fact that

legislation was required, to give the necessary cover to employees in the State who were not already covered by the terms of agreements entered into between the parties to whom I have referred—

Mr. Court: It would have been much more helpful if you had told us about this at the time when I moved my amendment.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Here he is, starting again!

Mr. Court: I repeat that it would have been much more helpful to the House if you had told us this at the time when I moved my amendment.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It would have been more ethical if, before endeavouring to deal a vital blow at the Government, responsible members opposite had seen fit to make inquiries. They placed enough questions on the notice paper, and it would not have hurt them to ask a further question. Had that been done, they would have been given the information. I have mentioned this to clarify the position and show that the move by the Opposition was entirely unjustified. I will now explain the main provisions of the Bill, and will mention first that the Government proposes to make a 20-year period the basis of long service leave. I may say, briefly, that in the Civil Service in this State, seven years is the basis for long service leave, while wages employees over the last 30 years have been granted the three months after ten years. In the Education Department, as the hon. member for Cottesloe knows, six months' long service leave applies after 15 years' service.

Of the 146 or 147 local authorities in this State, between 130 and 140 have granted their employees long service leave on the basis of three months' leave after ten years' service, and that is implemented by means of the appropriate by-laws. In the Police Department and other branches of the Government service, long service leave provisions apply. We attempted to make that the basis in this State and establish a standard of ten years, but we were unsuccessful. The trade union movement, realising that it had to take a 20-years basis or nothing, entered into negotiations with the employers; and all members know the result of those negotiations. This Bill, therefore, includes provision for three months' long service leave after 20 years of continuous service.

When an employee resigns after 15 years' service, or his service is terminated, except for reasons of wilful misconduct, he is entitled to a pro rata payment; and, should he die at that stage, his dependents are entitled to payment. This provision will not apply to members of the Public Service, the police, or wages employees in the Government service. The exclusions are enumerated in the Bill; and those people

will be exempted from the provision of this measure, as they already enjoy more generous provisions in regard to long service leave.

Members will see, in the Bill, a number of definitions as to what constitutes continuous employment, and other matters. They are all set out in the Bill, together with the conditions regarding the taking of leave. In this respect there is provision that the employee may, by agreement with the employer, take his leave in no more than three periods. A board of reference is set up, constituted of a chairman and a representative of the Trades Union Industrial Council, and a representative of the Employers' Federation, to iron out any difference of opinion with regard to definitions or interpretations, and to ascertain whether in any instance an employee is entitled to long service leave. We hope that in most, if not all, cases there will be no difference of opinion between the employer and the employee as to entitlement to long service leave.

There is provision, as I say, in the event of a disagreement between the unions and the employers, for a board of reference to be set up; and its decisions can be appealed against, to the Arbitration Court, by any party to the dispute. There is provision also in regard to the long service leave agreements entered into between a multiplicity of unions and employers and registered under the provisions of the Arbitration Act. Under that Act, union secretaries have the right to inspect the records of any employer who is bound by an award or industrial agreement. Members will appreciate that the type of person covered by the Bill is such that there will be no organisation to which an appeal can be made; and therefore provision is included in the Bill that in a matter of appeal an employee will have the right to approach the Arbitration Court, either personally or through his or her agent.

Inspectors under the Factories and Shops Act, who are now industrial inspectors under the Industrial Arbitration Act, will be given the rights and powers of union representatives and will be entitled to inspect books of record. When I introduced a similar measure last year, I did so after discussing the matter with the Secretary for Labour; and he was not anxious to have anything official to do with the provisions of the measure, because strong objection was taken to his being involved instead of the Registrar of the Arbitration Court. There will be no argument on that score, because the Secretary for Labour will not come into the picture very much on this occasion, although, had the Bill passed last year, I still consider that he would have been very helpful in carrying out its provisions.

I think I am right in saying that the only departure in principle is the omission of one clause which appears in the

agreement between the unions and the Employers' Federation. This caused a fair amount of controversy last year; why I do not know. It reads—

An employer shall be entitled to offset any payment in respect of leave hereunder against any payment by him to any long service leave scheme, superannuation scheme, pension scheme, retiring allowance scheme, provident fund or the like, or under any combination thereof operative at the 1st day of April, 1958.

That provision has been omitted from the Bill. The trade unions are not very happy about the clause, and we consider that it should be omitted.

Mr. Court: That is the one that was inserted by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: No; the Arbitration Court did not insert it. I do not want the hon. member to mention a certain word, if he can avoid it.

Mr. Court: I thought you said that this clause was in the agreement made between the employers and the unions and agreed to by the court, but you had omitted it from your Bill.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: No; this is the only important clause that has been omitted from the Bill, and which appears in the consent award between the unions and the employers.

Mr. Court: That is the point I was making. This is the only thing that you have changed from what the Arbitration Court agreed to.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: From what was registered in the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Court: That is so.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is the only departure in principle, as hon. members will appreciate if they read the provisions in the Bill. The mention of the Factories and Shops inspectors having certain rights and powers, is not a departure of principle; that is only machinery for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the Act.

There is one other point about which I hope there will be no difference of opinion. Under this agreement between the unions and the employers it is provided that no worker shall accept employment while he is on leave, in substitution of his employment. I could give the name of a certain person—although I will not do so—who is affected by this provision. It has been suggested to me that this clause is being used to withhold payment from an employee who has qualified for long service leave but whose employment has actually been terminated. Hon. members will see

that there is a different proposition altogether in the Bill; and, if I were allowed to mention the number of the clause, I would say it was Clause 30, Subclause (4). I draw hon. members' attention to these things so that they will know where the main departures are.

This Bill will also apply to employees covered by or working under Federal awards and determinations and for whom no long service leave provisions have been obtained. I am advised by the Secretary for Labour, who was good enough to make inquiries for me, that apart from workers employed under Federal awards, between 7,000 and 8,000 employees in this State would be involved under this measure. Without going through the full list, I would like to give hon. members an indication of the type of employee and his calling, so that they will have some idea of who will be covered. They are—

Toy making.

Manufacturing of waterproofing compounds and laboratory work.

Paper and paper products manufacture.

Poultry dressing.

Name plate manufacture and engraving.

Insecticide and fertiliser manufacture.

Paint manufacture.

Yeast and cornflour manufacture.

Manufacture of industrial gases.

No member of Parliament will be entitled to long service leave under the provisions of this Bill, because he is not a worker within the meaning of the Act—up to date—but if any hon. member likes to move an amendment, it will be given serious consideration. The list goes on—

Emulsified bitumen.

Oil seed milling.

Venetian blind manufacture.

Clothing repairs.

Sewing machine, typewriter, calculating machine and time clock repairs.

Millinery and pleating.

Firearm repairs and gunsmith.

Oil refining (reconditioning).

Clothing waste and flock manufacture.

Milling of minerals.

There are a number of others for whom there are no awards or industrial agreements in existence. Workers in those industries have no organisations which can obtain long service leave for them; and,

consequently, it is hoped that this Bill will be wide enough to cover the greatest possible number of employees who are not now entitled to long service leave under the Government scheme or under the agreement made between the employers and the unions. As far as I know, this State is the last State in the Commonwealth to introduce legislation to obtain long service leave for private employees as a whole. I know that some people will say that they could have had it last year, but—

Mr. Court: I was going to say that you held it back for 12 months.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: —we would not do something that would allow it to be passed by Parliament. But I make no apologies. Last year the measure provided for three months' leave after 10 years' service in conformity with the provisions being enjoyed by 40,000 to 50,000 workers in this State. We made arrangements in that Bill for a maturation period of three years; but the basis would have been three months' leave for 10 years' service. However, the unions were obliged to seek some long service leave cover, and that has now been implemented. As a consequence, the Government is anxious to ensure that those who are not covered by awards or industrial agreements shall be given long service leave such as is being enjoyed by employees attached to private industry.

Employees in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria have legislation covering long service leave. I do not think that South Australia has a measure of this nature, although a scheme of long service leave is in operation in that State. In all the circumstances, I think that this measure should receive a warm welcome from all hon. members and there should be very little argument on it. I hope that it will be passed very quickly through both Houses of Parliament so that a number of workers in Western Australia who are not now enjoying the benefits of long service leave will be covered.

I might indicate that I do not expect hon. members to be able to make a study of all the provisions in the Bill tonight; but it is hoped that, if possible—although I am not wedded to the idea—the debate will be resumed on Tuesday, or as soon as possible thereafter. I have much pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned for one week.

House adjourned at 5.46 p.m.