

Act will apply, and means have been taken to ensure that the remains are accorded decent burial within a reasonable period. The Act was not hastily passed in 1930. It was the subject of consideration by Select Committee of this Chamber, several members of which still occupy seats in the House, namely, Mr. Drew, Mr. Seddon and myself. Members may recall that the late Mr. A. Lovekin was chairman of the committee. I trust that the Bill will receive the favourable consideration of the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 16th October, 1946.

	PAGE
Question : Field experiments, as to transport facilities for farmers	1326
Leave of absence	1326
Bills : Land Alienation Restriction Act Continuance, 1R.	1326
Fisheries Act Amendment, 3R.	1326
Legal Practitioners Act Amendment, report	1326
Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R.	1326
Transfer of Land Act Amendment (No. 2), 2a.	1327
Supply (No. 2), £2,200,000, Message, Standing	
Orders suspension, all stages	1328
Vermin Act Amendment, 2R.	1329
Factories and Shops Act Amendment (No. 3), Com.	1360
Annual Estimates : Votes and Items discussed	1343

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

QUESTION.

FIELD EXPERIMENTS.

As to Transport Facilities for Farmers.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is he aware that many farmers are prevented, through lack of transport, from viewing field experiments conducted periodically by the Department of Agriculture?

2, Does he know that for that reason farmers will be prevented from seeing on Saturday next the experiments carried out at Mr. Whitehead's farm at Hines Hill?

3, Will he arrange for the running of a Diesel car from, say, Narrogin to Merredin and back, so that farmers desirous of so doing may attend the field day on Saturday next?

The MINISTER replied:

1, I have heard statements made to that effect, but I have no information concerning the number of farmers who would have availed themselves of a special train service had one been provided.

2, No.

3, The Railway Department will endeavour to make special arrangements for persons desirous of attending the demonstration at Hines Hill, for whom no suitable train service is already scheduled, if there are sufficient intending passengers to warrant such action.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Cross (Canning) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—LAND ALIENATION RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

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

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

MR. HILL (Albany) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: Of recent weeks there has been a campaign for greater safety on the roads. That movement naturally had the whole-hearted support of this

House. There is no doubt why we should support it and the experiences of members themselves should be an added inducement to do so. We have all some acquaintance with problems in connection with motor transport, and I have been induced to introduce this legislation because of my own experiences. The object of the measure is to place all roads, including those on Government or private property, under the control of the police in the metropolitan area and under the traffic inspectors in the various country districts.

Some few weeks ago I arrived at Albany by train and my wife and children were there to meet me. As they were going across the road by the railway station, a motorcar went by to the danger of my children. Later on I was speaking to the traffic inspector and told him of the incident. He said in reply, "I have no control over that road. It is on railway property and is under the control of the Railway Department." I saw the Town Clerk of Albany, who confirmed that opinion. On another occasion I had a further personal experience. There is a private roadway at Albany known as Royal George Lane. It leads down to the main road, Stirling-terrace. On this occasion, I was to attend a meeting, and was going down to Lower Stirling-terrace. Fortunately, I was driving. When I got out of the driver's seat, my wife stepped off, and it took her a few seconds before she took her place at the wheel.

I was walking towards Lower Stirling-terrace, which is about 20 feet below Stirling-terrace itself, when I heard a row and a bang. I looked up and I saw a horse rearing up and apparently about to jump the fence. I visualised a smash in the terrace. My wife thought that the horse and cart were on top of me. She was on the point of driving ahead when the horse galloped out of the by-road and into the main street. I dread to think what would have happened had the horse and cart collided broadside on with my car. In the metropolitan area we have the area in front of the Perth railway station, which is under the control of the Railway Department.

Members generally are aware that the police can control traffic far better than anyone else. Another private road in Perth where the police may not have the right to control traffic is Cathedral-avenue. The Bill will

place the position beyond doubt, and all roads will be under the control of the police or local traffic inspectors. If this legislation be agreed to, it will tend to the greater safety of the public. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to amend Section 14 of the Transfer of Land Act passed in 1893. The section deals with the appointment of sworn valuers. Under the Act it was considered desirable that there should be a class of men competent to make valuations who could be appointed and licensed as sworn valuers, so that the public might have confidence in any valuations that they might make. Section 14 provides—

The Governor in Council may appoint persons to be sworn valuers under this Act and at pleasure annul the appointment of any such person. Every such person shall within fourteen days from his appointment and before making any valuation under this Act take the following oath before a judge:—

I, A.B., do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and honestly and to the best of my skill and ability make any valuation required of me under the provisions of "The Transfer of Land Act, 1893." So help me God.

Representations have been made to me to have the Act amended so as to enable a sworn valuator to take the prescribed oath before a magistrate. At the present time he can only take the oath before a judge of the Supreme Court. In 1890 the population of this State was approximately 29,000; and even in 1893 it was probably not very much larger. Nearly all the people who would be likely to become sworn valuers would probably have resided in the metropolitan area. Now that our population is approaching 500,000, there are many people in outlying parts of the State whose services are needed as sworn valuers and whom it is desirable to appoint as such under the Act. A specific case has been brought under my notice. A man was recently appointed a sworn valuator. He lives

some hundreds of miles from Perth, and wrote to me as follows:—

This—

That is, having to come to Perth to take the oath before a judge—

—seems to me a great hardship on people from country districts or from places far distant from Perth. In June of this year I was called on to make a special trip to Perth and I was given a certain time, by which time I had to be sworn. If it had not been for the splendid help and guidance of the officers of the Crown Law Department and for the courtesy of the Chief Justice, who was sitting that morning (Friday), it would have been necessary for me to spend the weekend in Perth; but as it was, it cost me just on £12, not including the £5 for the certificate.

There are cases—and will be—where men living at Wyndham, Port Hedland or in some distant town on the Goldfields or, for example, at Esperance, might desire to be appointed sworn valuers and might receive the appointment. They would have to travel all the way to Perth to take the necessary oath.

Mr. Withers: Does that apply in all instances today?

Mr. McDONALD: The Act requires them to take the oath before a judge. The Bill seeks to amend the section by inserting in line 5, after the word "judge" the words "or a stipendiary resident or police magistrate or magistrate of a local court." That would mean that any man receiving an appointment as sworn valuator could take the prescribed oath before a judge or before a resident, stipendiary or police magistrate, or the magistrate of a local court. I think these gentlemen of the magistracy could administer the oath quite satisfactorily for the purposes of the Act.

The other amendment deals with the time within which the appointee must take the oath. Under the Act, he must within fourteen days from his appointment take the prescribed oath. It may be that if a little longer time were allowed he might be able to defer his trip until such time as he had some other business to attend to at the place where he would take the oath; or he might be able to wait until a resident magistrate came to the district in which he was living. It seems to me not unreasonable to allow such a man 28 days from the date of his appointment within which to take the prescribed oath, instead of the present short period of 14 days. Representations have been made to me that it will be a help to country people if they could take this oath before a magistrate and if they were allowed a little longer time from the date of their appointment to take the prescribed oath. I think the proposal is reasonable and I move—

tations have been made to me that it will be a help to country people if they could take this oath before a magistrate and if they were allowed a little longer time from the date of their appointment to take the prescribed oath. I think the proposal is reasonable and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £2,200,000.

Message.

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

Standing Orders Suspension.

On the motion by the Premier resolved: That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day.

In Committee of Supply.

The House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.50]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1947, a sum not exceeding £2,200,000.

The purpose of the second Supply Bill is to provide Supply to carry on the finances of the State until the Estimates are passed, and until, following the Estimates, the Appropriation Bill is agreed to. The first Supply Bill, passed earlier in the session, provided for £2,700,000, including £2,200,000 from Consolidated Revenue Fund, £200,000 from the General Loan Fund and £300,000 from the Treasurer's advance. The expenditure to the 30th September, 1946, out of Supply, was—

Consolidated Revenue Fund, £2,405,853;
General Loan Fund, £328,176.

The amount sought in this Bill is £2,200,000, consisting of £1,800,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and £400,000 from the General Loan Fund. It is anticipated that this sum will be sufficient to enable the Gov-

ernment to carry on until the Estimates, together with the Appropriation Bill, are passed.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.52]: This is the usual second Supply Bill, and I do not propose to say very much on it. The Appropriation Bill will come down later in the session and we will then be able to see the position on a fuller scale. In the meantime this Bill involves appropriation of a sum of £400,000 more than did the corresponding measure of last year. That sum includes an extra £200,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and an extra £200,000 from the General Loan Fund. With more manpower and, I hope, an increase in materials available, the opportunity of spending loan money on much needed works, particularly in relation to schools and hospitals, is, I expect, greater than it was at this time last year. I cannot recall how the revenue position is. Is it showing any marked variation from last year?

The Premier: It has improved since last year.

Mr. McDONALD: This Bill is the normal one to provide the necessary funds to carry on the services of the State, and I support it.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.51]: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1947, a sum not exceeding £1,800,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and £400,000 from the General Loan Fund.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

All Stages.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced, passed through all stages without debate and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.58]: Let me say at the outset that I propose to support the second reading of this measure, but I do so in much the same mind as a man would receive a slice of bread when he expected to get the better part of a loaf. He would doubtless be glad to have some sustenance rather than none, and that, I may say, is substantially my attitude towards the Bill. The Minister for Agriculture, in addressing himself to this measure, observed that there were very few rabbits about today. He said that it was not an uncommon experience to travel many miles through agricultural districts without seeing a rabbit, but they would breed up again as they had done previously, and that now was the time to make a determined effort to reduce vermin to a point where its numbers would be so small as to be almost negligible.

With those sentiments I agree, but submit that this measure does not, and cannot, make a much greater contribution towards that activity than can the existing law, because it makes no fundamental changes in the methods that have been adopted over the past 30 years for the destruction of vermin; not only rabbits, but vermin of other types which, during the period when rabbits may for a time have been decreasing in numbers, had very substantially increased, and whose depredations have been causing considerable concern. I refer particularly to wild dogs, dingoes and foxes, which have increased over a long period of years and which, notwithstanding the considerable destruction that has taken place, are still increasing.

For a long time there was a feeling among many members of the farming community that foxes should be looked upon with a less unfriendly eye than some other animals that were declared to be vermin. It was alleged by many people that foxes did not kill lambs or do anything like the amount of damage that was alleged against them in regard to other types of livestock, and particularly in regard to bird life. As the months have gone by, however, there has been conclusive proof that the foxes are equally as important, if not more so, in the matter of damage and loss, as the other types of vermin.

As I said at the outset, it does not appear to me that the provisions of this Bill will make any great contribution towards a better state of affairs than has existed in the last 30 years prior to the report of the Honorary Royal Commission to which the Minister made reference. He has selected and put into the Bill perhaps two or three of the recommendations made by that Commission. Taken by themselves, and unsupported by some of the other recommendations, it is my opinion that the contribution they will make to the solution of the problem is not nearly as great as it would have been had they been taken in conjunction with certain other recommendations of the Honorary Royal Commission to which I referred.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, but legislation is not necessary for them all. Many of them can be put into operation by regulation.

Mr. WATTS: If the Minister will refrain from endeavouring to make my speech for me, I will perhaps be able to tell him what recommendations I refer to, which could not be put into operation by regulation, although I am not without some knowledge of the fact that it is possible to put some of the recommendations into force by that means, and I will now anticipate what I hoped to say later. I did not gather, from the Minister's observations, and I think we were entitled to be told if such a point of view was in his mind, that he was going to implement any other of the recommendations by regulation, or by any other means. His speech confined itself to the subject matter of the Bill and some minor criticisms of one or two other recommendations which I submit will have to be put into force by legislation, if at all, and not by regulation.

I was about to explain to the Minister, and incidentally to the House, that I feared there was some misunderstanding in the Minister's mind as to one of the major recommendations of the Commission. I refer to the recommendation which suggested that a substantial portion of the onus for the destruction of vermin should be placed on the shoulders of local authorities. It will be remembered, at least by those members who have read the report of the Honorary Royal Commission, that although it recommended the transfer of the onus for the destruction

of vermin to the local authorities in a substantial way, it observed, on page 11 of its report—

At the same time no obstacle should be placed in the way of the farmer himself in co-operating in vermin destruction on his own property for his own benefit.

Therefore it was not by any means intended to exclude the activities of the individual farmer on his own property, for his own benefit, but to ensure that the operations carried out by him, on his own property, could not possibly be nullified by the failure of other persons in his vicinity to take similar action. Let us traverse for a minute what has been the procedure since the passing of the Vermin Act of 1919, in the destruction of vermin. The onus was upon the farmer. We will say, for example, that there are three farmers, out of a group of eight or ten, who take strenuous action to destroy vermin on their properties and who go to great trouble and considerable expense, in addition to the payment of the rate that they are called upon to pay, and in addition to their contribution to the Central Vermin Fund.

Their neighbours to greater or less extent fail to take similar action, and, in consequence, the inspector appointed by the local authority—if such an inspector is appointed—goes round and ascertains that vermin are plentiful or conspicuous on the properties of people who have not taken action for their destruction, and he therefore issues them with notices that they must do certain things, such as laying poison baits, or whatever it might be, within a stipulated time, failing which a prosecution will follow. The prosecutions take place in the court of petty sessions in the nearest town, or before the resident magistrate, and a fine is inflicted. That could not of itself destroy any vermin. The fact that the farmer had paid a fine, for the time being, at any rate, might easily relieve him of any further inspection where districts are fairly large and inspections take place periodically. Though the farmer paid the fine of £1 or £2 inflicted by the magistrate, the vermin would still play happily on the property, and if he did not choose or was unable—which in many cases might be the case—to carry on the duties cast upon him by the Vermin Act, the vermin would remain and, what is worse, would be quite likely to reinfest

the properties of the three farmers, out of the eight or ten, who had taken strong punitive action against the vermin.

The net result very often has been that in three or four cases out of the group strenuous action was taken to eradicate vermin, but that was not done generally, and in a few months the whole group was reinfested and the work of the three or four was nullified, so that nobody was in a satisfactory position. That would continue until the next year, or after a period of six months, as the case might be, when the same process would be repeated, with another inspection and so on, but neither the inspection nor the prosecution would result in the destruction of one rabbit or of any other type of vermin. No-one took any physical action in the destruction of the vermin.

The idea of the Commission as I understood it—I think I understood it fairly well and correctly—was that that state of affairs was unsatisfactory. The departmental officers—or some of them—who appeared before the Commission, ventured the suggestion that the cure for the trouble was to force, or require, every local authority to appoint an inspector to operate all the year round—a full-time inspector as he was called. It is true that many of the inspectors who had been engaged had been appointed for only a portion of the year and the work of examination, frequently followed by prosecution, had resulted from a part-time employment. Therefore some of the officers of the department suggested that there should be full-time inspectors appointed by all local authorities, and that their duties should be to go round and see what was being done in the matter of the eradication of vermin, and to prosecute where no action had been taken. But in no circumstances, as I understand it, were they physically to apply themselves to destruction of any type of vermin.

On top of that, because apparently the inspectors appointed by local authorities, and paid and employed on a full-time basis, were not in all cases guaranteed to carry out their inspections in the most efficient and continuous manner, it was suggested that there should be a departmental inspector appointed to inspect the inspectors. None of them, as I understood the sug-

gested position, was to take any physical action in the destruction of any vermin. I, and the remainder of the members of the Commission were unable to discern in this proposal, which was estimated to cost up to £60,000 per annum, with something like 100 local authorities to be contended with, anything to show that it was likely to result in the destruction of vermin on properties where the farmers had either not attended to their obligations or had, for one reason or another, been unable to do so. The net result would simply have been—at considerably more public expense so far as we could see—a continuance of the existing position, which was not very satisfactory at all.

We therefore cast around for some method that might result in an improvement of the situation and, having come to the conclusion that the farmer should by no means be prevented from destroying vermin or have any obstacle placed in the way of his destroying vermin on his own property, we decided that when the officials of the local authorities, whatever we might call them, were of the opinion that vermin should be destroyed on adjoining properties, they should be empowered physically and in person to enter upon such properties, and carry out whatever they considered necessary for the destruction of vermin, because the farmer had not done it himself, to the betterment of that property and, incidentally, we hoped, to the prevention of the reinfestation of the adjoining properties where the work had been done under good faith.

The question then arose of how that proposition was to be paid for. We recommended—and the Minister has grasped the idea in this Bill—that there should be a minimum rate struck for the local authority of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound. I think we also recommended that the Minister in certain cases should have the right to make it a minimum of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, if he considered that in that particular case the extra amount of money was warranted, and that the local authorities concerned should employ people where necessary to go around those properties where the work had not been done and pay portion of the cost out of the rates while the other portion they should collect by way of payment for the

work done, to be recoverable as rates from the landholder who had not given reasonable attention to his obligations.

We were of the opinion that the net result would be that a great deal more work in the destruction of vermin would be done and ultimately a great deal more work would be undertaken by the farmers who hitherto had not given the fullest attention they might have to the job. This placing of the obligation on them to pay, firstly, the rates, secondly, the contribution to the vermin fund and, thirdly, 12s. 6d. per man per day towards the work to be done by the local authorities, could very easily, and we felt probably would, turn out to be such an expensive proposition to the individual that he would immediately seek to minimise it. After one or two shots, he certainly would seek to minimise this cost by doing the work himself. That was the reason underlying the proposition we put forward that the onus should be substantially placed on the local authority for the destruction of this vermin while, at the same time, no obstacle should be placed in the way of the individual farmer in destroying vermin on his own property.

I venture to say that had this scheme been carried into effect under the supervision and control of an authority such as we suggested, clothed with power to supervise the whole of the business and supported by finance in the manner we recommended, the destruction of vermin over the period of five years, which was the period recommended, would have reached very considerable proportions—far greater proportions than it has ever reached under the existing law or is likely to reach under this Bill. While the Minister has provided for a minimum rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound to be imposed by the local authority, he has not provided for any other of the additional sources of revenue, except in a minor way, that we proposed in our report. In consequence, the assistance which the central authority—call it what we will or constitute it how we like—could have rendered in cases where local authorities were in some financial difficulty—and it would have been entirely the decision of the central authority—will not be forthcoming, and this has prevented the scheme, in my opinion, from being given proper effect.

To my way of thinking the Minister did not appear thoroughly to understand the idea

underlying the recommendation in regard to shifting the onus of destruction. If he had done so, I am convinced that he would have been prepared to give it more favourable consideration than has been practicable for him up to the present time.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is an invitation to the lazy farmer to do nothing and leave the work of destruction to someone else.

Mr. WATTS: There is an invitation now to the lazy farmer to do nothing and there is no-one else to do the work of destruction. The result is that vermin reinfests properties where work has been done, and no results are achieved. I would be better to have the lazy man pay for the labour on his property rather than have the lazy man not do anything and have the vermin undestroyed, which is the alternative that remains if we do not adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission or some other scheme that will achieve greater results.

Let not any member imagine that I regard the recommendations of the Royal Commission as the only word that can be spoken on the subject of securing an improvement in the present state of affairs. In the light of the evidence tendered to the Commission and after much discussion, it is the only thing we could conclude that would make a contribution to this end, but there may have been some other proposal which could have been advanced and which could be brought forward now that would achieve as good or perhaps even better results. But I venture to say there is very little in this measure that will make any substantial alteration to the conditions that have existed over the last 25 or 30 years in regard to this particular problem. So I want the House to understand that these were the reasons that actuated the Royal Commission in making its recommendation on that particular subject. May I say too, that the Minister observed in the course of his remarks that he had received a deputation from representatives of local authorities regarding this matter and had come to the conclusion that they were opposed to our suggestion.

The Minister for Agriculture: They said straight-out they were opposed to it.

Mr. WATTS: Very well. I venture to say they expressed their opposition once

again without fully understanding how the scheme could be made to work if the whole, or the greater part, of the Commission's recommendations had been absorbed into legislation, because the effectiveness of it, had it been fully discussed with them, would have been clear to them. We must not lose sight of the fact that the annual conference of road boards in Western Australia two or three years ago passed a resolution, as the Commission mentioned in its report, stating that the destruction of vermin was beyond the physical capacity of the individual farmer. Here is the resolution of the Road Board Conference in 1943—

That this conference is of the opinion that the rabbit problem is one of State importance and that it is beyond the power of the individual farmer, both physically and economically, to cope with.

If it is beyond the power of the individual farmer, physically and economically, to cope with, in the opinion of the Road Board Association, then surely it is necessary to find some organisation beyond whose power it would not be physically and economically impossible to cope. It was this resolution that directed the attention of the Royal Commission to this aspect of the problem in the way it was afterwards dealt with. As the Commission states in its report—

This resolution will be found in the evidence of the president of the Road Board Association at page 685. The point of view, therefore, that the destruction of rabbits is beyond the power of the individual farmer must, in view of this resolution, be taken to represent the considered opinion of the road boards of Western Australia. Those who submitted that view in this representative manner must have given consideration to the need for discovering some methods other than the present method which can better grapple with the problems of vermin and the vast losses occasioned by them. The duty of this Commission was to discover some means of providing some reasonable alternative, to state the broad principles involved therein and, at the same time, to assure itself that this alternative was practicable.

Your Commission has tackled this problem to the best of its ability in the light of evidence given to it and in the face of some not unexpected conflict of evidence, and in consequence it submits the above recommendations.

If the present position is physically and economically beyond the power of the individual farmer, then it must be within the physical and economic power of someone else, and we had to ascertain within whose physical and economic power it was. We were rather restricted in our outlook. We

could not suggest that a couple of hundred thousand men be brought in to tackle the problem, or that some vast machinery of the kind should be set up. Consequently, we presented finally the point of view contained in the report that I have endeavoured to explain.

I think this proposal worthy of far more favourable consideration than it has received, unless somebody can produce a much better scheme. The position today definitely is that we are entitled—obligated, I would say—to find some better proposition than the existing state of the law or the law as it will be when amended by this Bill. However, I leave that aspect of the matter for the time being. The Minister, in the course of his remarks, said he took some exception to our statement that we felt we should say that the majority of the local authorities had done their best in the existing difficult circumstances. He asked, "What are the existing difficult circumstances?" Well, there is a variety of existing difficult circumstances, to some of which reference is made in various parts of the Commission's report. Let me first of all point out some of the things mentioned in the report itself. I will start from the place in the report where we make the observation, taking the text from the context that the Minister quoted—

We feel at this stage, however, that we should say that in our opinion the majority of the local authorities have done their best in the existing difficult circumstances. But it is clearly necessary that power should be given to some central authority to supersede a local vermin board and appoint a commissioner to carry out the Vermin Act functions without interference with their local government activities where circumstances indicate it to be desirable and that this power should be used whenever and wherever necessary without procrastination....

Having indulged in this necessary criticism of present methods in general and of certain local vermin boards in particular, we feel constrained to emphasise that much of the inefficiency of certain local authorities has, in our opinion, been occasioned by something akin to a feeling of despair. Vermin, it appeared, would be always with them. The poison cart in which phosphorous poison was used has produced thousands of unrecoverable carcasses.

I may interpolate that the department over a period of years has insisted on the use of phosphorous poison as the best way of destroying vermin, without regard to the related loss which I and the Commission were convinced took place through toxic

paralysis and other diseases probably caused by the presence of rabbit carcasses on various properties.

Mr. Mann: And the destruction of valuable bird life, too.

Mr. WATTS: Yes, as the hon. member reminds me, the destruction of valuable bird life. The report continued—

Nutritional deficiencies, apparently, had caused the livestock to eat thereof. Toxic paralysis in livestock had followed, (although this is now preventible by inoculation) and blowflies, which were a recurring cause of heavy loss and much work without much success, probably had been increased. Strychnine had been increasingly difficult to obtain and when obtained had in some districts joined the fox in the destruction of many of man's feathered friends, the insect-eating birds, so that pests of other kinds grew and multiplied. New pests were appearing.

Successfully to cope with all these problems required the expenditure of funds which some boards found it difficult or wellnigh impossible to raise. In recent years (if these funds could have been raised), because of manpower difficulties they would have provided no competent labour. In addition, the comments we make in paragraph 10 of this report have also much bearing on this aspect.

Now I will quote from paragraphs 10 and 11—

Crown Lands, Abandoned Lands and Reserves.

10. Hitherto, in our opinion, one of the greatest deterrents to any really concerted and wholehearted attack upon the vermin in many districts has been the almost complete absence of activity on Crown lands, abandoned holdings and reserves. There are those who argue that rabbits and other vermin do not inhabit Crown lands or forest country except within short distances of cultivation. Your Commissioners can only be guided by evidence, and this is, in our opinion conclusive, that in many parts vermin are found throughout these lands and rabbits are to be found many miles from cultivation in many places where conditions are congenial to them. Therefore, to state that the vermin problem can be faced without active measures for their eradication on Crown lands and reserves would merely be to postulate for their perpetuation as a menace to the State's development. There are, be it remembered, districts controlled by local authorities (some of them among the most energetic) who have up to three-fifths (and in the outer areas even more) of their area consisting of this type of land. This land is presumably an asset of the State, particularly if in areas close to or capable of settlement. We have no right any longer deliberately to allow it to remain a liability of all those who attempt to settle adjacent to it. We will later set out the methods by which we consider the obligation of the Crown could be reasonably discharged.

Liability for Vermin Rates.

11. Similar remarks apply to abandoned holdings prior to their actual return to Crown land, whether they have been mortgaged to the Agricultural (or Rural) Bank or any other lending institution. No longer should the liability for vermin rates be open to the quibble as to whether the mortgagee is in possession or not. The liability for such vermin rates as are imposed should be upon the registered holder (if in occupation) and the mortgagee equally. If the former fails to pay within six months of assessment, the latter, on receipt of notice, should immediately become liable for the amount assessed. It must also be the duty of every mortgagee when the security becomes vacant to advise the appropriate Vermin Board and the Taxation Department at once. If the property is leased to any person under any agreement, that such person shall pay rates as part of the leasing arrangement, then at least as far as vermin rates are concerned (and no other is within the scope of this inquiry) the obligation of the tenant should be to pay them to his landlord who would be the party responsible to the assessing authority. This leaves only properties which have been abandoned and while not returned to the Crown are unoccupied and not leased. In respect of these the mortgagees (who will have given notice of his position) should pay not less than 10s. per thousand acres per annum—pastoral leases excluded. Vermin rates should be recoverable in priority to rates and taxes of all other kinds and Section 62 should be amended accordingly.

There are some of the difficulties, embodied in those paragraphs, which have faced local authorities. Many of the local authorities, and particularly those further out in the South-West Land Division, have had large areas of abandoned properties of one kind and another mortgaged to various people and institutions—not Government institutions only—and there has been no-one to pay the rates. We had produced to us by some of the local authorities lists of vermin rates outstanding and unrecoverable because there was nobody to claim them from. The mortgagees were holding on to the properties in the hope of an ultimate sale but were not in legal possession and not liable for the rates, so the local authorities got nothing. The properties were harbouring grounds for vermin and it was impossible to deal with them unless substantial sums of money were available for the purpose; and, with all the difficulties I have mentioned, there was unquestionably, in some of the local authorities—particularly at the time of this inquiry, in the fifth year of the war—a feeling akin to despair.

So to skim over the suggestion that some of the local authorities at least did not face

very considerable difficulties, or to say, "What are the existing difficult circumstances?", ignoring all these things which have been the subject of representations by the Road Board Association over a long period of years—and particularly this rating question—is hardly a fair way to address oneself to this particular problem, as the Minister did when he spoke to the House upon it; because nothing has been done to alter the situation. We were unanimously of the opinion that the collection of vermin rates, in view of the depredations of vermin and the losses which were made in some small attempt to assist, should undoubtedly be a prior charge upon the land, and everybody with any interest in the land at all should be compelled to pay so that the rates could be recovered within the year of assessment; and that, coupled with the other propositions we made in regard to finance would, in our opinion, through the central authority and the local authorities, have enabled strenuous and practical efforts to be made in the destruction of vermin in those particular places, and in those particular localities which unquestionably acted as buffer areas to some of the more favourably situated districts. But no action was taken in regard to that.

The situation can remain exactly as it has been for the last 25 to 30 years. The local authorities are to expect no more sympathetic consideration in regard to the collection of their rates—at whatever figure they may be assessed or however anxious they may be to co-operate in the destruction of vermin—than they have had over the last long period of years. It is not a very great contribution to the solution of the problem to ignore all these recommendations as they have been ignored, because they certainly could not be put into force by regulation. They would have to be the subject of legislation by this House and another place in order to be made effective. We found also that the efforts of the Railway Department, for example, as a government department, were virtually confined, with the exception of the actual permanent way and embankments to areas of the railway reserves that were adjacent to farms where an attack had properly been made upon the vermin. In consequence, there were large areas of railway reserves—according to the evidence and from the observation of our own eyes in some instances—where vermin were increasing and distributing themselves from their

habitat on railway land to the surrounding country.

We thought, and I still think so, that the proper course to take was to relieve the Railway Department of any physical responsibility in regard to the destruction of vermin other than upon their actual embankments where the railway line runs—and for the safety of the public that must be in their hands—and to cause them to contribute to the central authority, which we proposed should be created, a sum of money that would enable co-ordination of activity and financial resources towards the destruction of vermin on that land. But there is no suggestion in this Bill that any action is being taken in that regard and I do not think in that case either the subject is a suitable one for regulation. It is a suitable subject for legislation, as I see it, and that legislation has not been offered to us.

Later on in his speech the Minister made some reference to the minimum rating proposal and condemned local authorities in some instances for the small rates they had imposed. So did the Royal Commission. I think that the Royal Commission in this particular instance was eminently fair to the department and to the subject-matter it was investigating. It did not deny—in fact it proved and stated in its report—that some of the local authorities had struck rates that were ridiculously low. But it also pointed out the peculiar position of certain local authorities by comparison with others when they did strike a reasonable rate. It pointed out that some local authorities have exceptionally small areas comparatively thickly populated and with ratepayers who are more or less successfully established in their farming operations. The report continues—

The Bunbury Road Board, for example, comprises an area of only 77 sq. miles, but the Northampton Road Board an area of 7,600 sq. miles, and these are far exceeded by the areas of local authorities in the North and North-Western portions of the State, and in the outer areas further south. Extraordinary differences appear moreover in different districts. Let us take as an example on this point, a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate on the unimproved capital value in the Moora Road Board District. This produced a revenue of £805 for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1944, which year will cover all our references. On the same rate the Narrogin Road Board obtained a revenue of £269. Had the Northampton Road Board struck the same rate, it would have produced a revenue of £422. The same rate struck by the Bunbury Road Board would have produced a revenue of £215. Tak-

ing these last two figures into consideration, we find that an area of 77 sq. miles will produce a revenue of one-half that which can be raised on a similar rate by a local authority whose area is 7,600 sq. miles or 100 times greater. So that an area of one per cent. in size can on a similar rate, produce 50 per cent. of revenue. It will be quite clear therefore that the tasks facing the various local authorities are by no means comparable. To raise enough money to deal with the requirements of an area such as that comprised in the Northampton Board which involves catering for tremendous areas of Crown land, would obviously be quite beyond the local authority. On the other hand, it is possible that the rate struck by the Bunbury Road Board would be sufficient for every reasonable effort expected of it in so small an area. That, in our opinion, should be a matter for the discretion of the Agricultural Protection Board because it will exercise its discretion in the light of facts from time to time and in the light of funds available to it. So it seems reasonable to us that the Agriculture Protection Board should be empowered to assist any local authority on the lines we have already mentioned in paragraph 18. But we are not prepared to say that any local authority should be subsidised unless it has made a reasonable effort to raise funds within its own district. If there were no such considerations as these, all a local authority would have to do would be to strike the smallest possible rate and then ask for assistance.

There seem to us to be two ways of overcoming the difficulty. One is to require a uniform rate in every district. That we do not favour, because we desire to leave some initiative and considerable authority to local vermin boards. The other method is to require a minimum rate to be struck in every district, leaving the local authority to strike a higher rate if it considers it desirable or if, after consultation with the Agriculture Protection Board, it finds that authority's funds will not permit of sufficient being made available to it to cope with the work it has in hand without such extra rate above the minimum. On looking through the list of rates struck by local vermin boards during the year mentioned, we find that rates have ranged from as low as one twenty-fourth of a penny to as high as twopence.

So we told the Minister that in the course of our report, and we proceeded—

The first, namely, one twenty-fourth of a penny, had in conjunction with it, a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per hundred acres on pastoral leases and raised a total of £108 7s. 5d. The board which struck a rate of 2d. in the pound on the unimproved capital value raised only £169. Neither of these amounts seems to us to be reasonable; the first because the rate was ridiculously low and the second because a very high rate will produce so little revenue. We are of the opinion that local authorities should be compelled to strike a minimum rate of not less than $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound on the unimproved capi-

tal value of agricultural lands and of not less than $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per 100 acres on pastoral leases. We think that the Minister should have power, on the advice of the Agricultural Protection Board to require the minimum rate in any district (other than on pastoral leases) to be increased to $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £1, as a condition of financial assistance, but that this power should be exercised sparingly in cases where the revenue to be derived from $\frac{1}{4}$ d. seems to be too small for a reasonable contribution from local authority. By way of comment we would say that the examples quoted and many similar examples show how impracticable was an earlier proposal brought to our notice that each local board should be required to employ a full time inspector.

Members will realise that a full-time inspector could not be employed on a salary of only £269, but the Greenbushes Road Board, which I think it was, struck a rate of 2d. in the pound and provided that sum. Thus it would presumably require a rate of about 4d. in the pound in order to provide funds to pay a full-time inspector. In Northampton if a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound were struck, provision might be made for the employment of a full-time inspector there. But what a glorious time that man would have energising himself over an area of between 3,000 and 4,000 square miles, a great deal of it Crown land, and leaving out a large portion of the road board's district, without a penny of the board's funds to be spent on anything but his salary!

So I say that in my view evidence accumulated that the suggestions that have been made not only would provide for no active combating of the vermin, but would be financially impracticable unless some new scheme were undertaken to bring about changed financial conditions. Therefore, bearing all these facts in mind and realising that the situation was one requiring fairly drastic action and bearing in mind, too, the repeated request of the Road Board Association and finding that many of the witnesses who did not come from rural areas but from urban districts, thought that everybody ought to be taking more interest in the vermin destruction problem, we recommended that throughout the State a small rate should be struck over all land not hitherto rated. That rate was to be not more than five-sixteenths of a penny in the pound or half the minimum rate that was to be struck on rural lands by local authorities, in addition to which the rural land was to subscribe an additional rate to the Central Vermin Fund, to be struck through

the Taxation Department and collected by it.

This, we estimated on the best evidence we could obtain, would have provided approximately a sum of about £35,000 a year, which we claimed, if supplemented by an appropriation not to exceed £12,000 which we requested from Consolidated Revenue, that £12,000 to be expended entirely in the North-Western areas of the State and included with the funds raised by the local authorities and the existing vermin fund, would have enabled the plan proposed by the Royal Commission—or some other plan more suitable to achieve the same results—to be given effect to in order to secure the ends we desired.

But the Bill under consideration provides that the minimum rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound and a rate on pastoral leases shall be imposed. It provides for the imposition of a rate on areas not greater than 160 acres of rural land which have not hitherto been exempted. But so far there is provided no additional contribution to the Central Vermin Fund. There the Bill, practically speaking, comes to a dead stop. In the net result as I see it the objective to be achieved can only be half baked. There may be some little extra money—in fact, there will be—that will be available. One could anticipate in view of the increase in the number of foxes that are being destroyed and the fact that the Central Vermin Fund is well known to have been in a worse position at the end of the last financial year than it had been in for some years past, it means that the extra money that will be available will be spent on bonuses and the salaries of those very valuable persons in a majority of cases who are known as doggers or wild-dog trappers.

Nothing else will be done to remedy something that for 30 years and possibly longer, I believe, has been one of the worst menaces to the successful development of the outer areas of the State. Let us contemplate for a moment what the general secretary of the Pastoralists' Association said with regard to the position in the North-West, which the Royal Commission quoted in its report in attempting to estimate the damage done to the wool industry alone, which has been calculated on a fairly conservative basis at not less than about £2,000,000 a year. This is what Mr. H. R.

C. Adkins, the secretary of the Pastoralists' Association was asked—

It has been stated, and I should be glad to have the view of your association on this, that unless some method is devised to minimise considerably the ravages of various pests in the central and North-West areas, a great part of that territory will shortly become untenable for stock raising.

Mr. Adkins answered—

I think that is a fair picture of the position in certain areas. It applies to dogs and kangaroos. It applies to kangaroos more particularly in the North-West proper, Port Hedland, Marble Bar and Nullagine. It applies to dogs on the fringe right down to Mr. Hogarth's area (i.e., in the East Dundas district).

Later on Mr. Hogarth was asked a question as to what was his area and he replied—

It is 900,000 acres. We have approximately 400,000 acres dog-proof fenced. For 12 years I never had a dog inside of it. In the last 18 months, however, dogs have increased in spite of all I could do. Eighty per cent. of my work is trapping dogs outside of my area so far as I can get. Last year I had 30 dogs inside which killed 3,900 of my limited flock. I have never reared a lamb for two years on account of dogs, so it means to say we have to get out. It is pretty hard after the fight we have made. These dogs will travel to other people's property.

Mr. Hogarth was then asked—

What is the maximum you were carrying?

He answered—

It was 9,000. Now I am down to about 2,000. I am inside a netted fence which is patrolled every week. I never miss it.

Then again if members peruse the report of the evidence they will find that on page 805 Mr. G. C. Rose, of Mt. Anderson Station, Derby, was asked—

Do you think that unless some determined effort is made to keep down these pests it will be impossible to run sheep stations in the West Kimberleys?

He answered—

It is possible that wild donkeys, goats and pigs will become a greater menace than kangaroos because they have only recently got out of hand and by nature must increase to the detriment of other stock. . . . It is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the loss in carrying capacity of country by kangaroos, but it is certain they have greatly lessened the sheep population which cannot be improved until the pest is suitably dealt with.

Then again Mr. E. H. Greene, the chairman of the Marble Bar Road Board, was asked—

What is going to happen to your country if these kangaroos are not dealt with?

He answered—

We shall have to walk off. I am not referring to the whole of the North, of course, but to this hilly country where the inland stations are. My remarks would apply to the country within a radius of 80 miles of Marble Bar, and possibly a bit more.

Mr. Seward: Plenty of those properties have since been abandoned.

Mr. WATTS: I believe that is so, and yet although the Commission recommended there should be an appropriation by Parliament of £12,000 a year, subject to the recommendation of the agriculture protection board, to be devoted to a determined attack on these particular pests in the North-West, which recommendation was brought before Parliament approximately 18 months ago, we find that no such provision has been included in the legislation—I know of no provision elsewhere—to provide that there shall be a sufficient sum of money available for this particular purpose.

Are we assume that it is not worth while attempting to do this job? I refuse to assume that that is so. In my opinion it is as necessary now as it was when the Royal Commission's report was presented and that we shall be lacking in our duty if we do not take the necessary steps to make provision accordingly. Unfortunately no provision is contained in the Bill to deal with either of the matters to which I have been referring. Equally unfortunate is it that it is beyond my capacity or power as a private member of this Chamber to make any alteration to the Bill along those lines.

That is one reason I said the measure was like a slice of bread when one had expected to receive a loaf. One accepts the slice of bread as better than nothing, but does not leave the table a very satisfied individual. That is my position with regard to this measure. For the parts of the Royal Commission's report that the Minister has adopted I can express my small measure of satisfaction, but separated from the major recommendations embodied in the report it seems to me that the measure is a very unsatisfactory document indeed.

The Minister for Agriculture: Your satisfaction is in direct ratio to the number of recommendations adopted.

Mr. WATTS: It has nothing whatever to do with that. I have stated already that if

anyone can suggest a better scheme and the Minister includes it in his Bill, I am prepared to give it serious consideration, but I object to this type of legislation because it fails to tackle the problem adequately. The Minister is simply going round it.

Mr. Rodoreda: Leaving it where it was.

Mr. WATTS: That is the trouble. The Minister is just on the fringe of the trouble. I do not suggest that he should accept the whole of the recommendations that were included in our report. Probably the Minister can do better.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do not get cross!

Mr. WATTS: I have explained my objection to the measure in a reasonable manner and have been engaged in doing so for half an hour. If the Minister adopts the attitude that I am annoyed because our recommendations were not accepted, I say that that is not so. The assumption that I am annoyed because some of our recommendations have not been accepted is quite wrong. If the Minister could do something better and included it in the Bill and I could understand his proposals, which I probably would be able to do, I should be prepared to give consideration to them, even if it meant putting the Royal Commission's recommendations into the waste paper basket in favour of something better. But the Minister has produced nothing better.

There are one or two other aspects to which I shall refer. One has regard to the committee the Minister proposes to set up. We suggested that the advisory committee of three persons that existed should be abolished, and the position of Chief Inspector as well, because we were of the opinion that their control and management, so far as it had gone, mostly of an advisory character, had not produced the results required. Expressing my personal opinion, I would say they had travelled for a long period along the same lines and therefore would be reluctant to depart from them. Therefore, in my opinion—I do not say it is the opinion of the other members of the Commission, as I did not ask them—it was necessary to appoint new people to the job. There would be a brand new method of tackling the problem.

The Minister for Agriculture: The same old problem!

Mr. WATTS: There would be a brand new method of tackling the problem and new people would be wanted to do it. We therefore suggested that a new committee should be set up, and the Minister has criticised the suggestion by saying there would be too many members on the committee. That is a tenable criticism, I quite agree. It is a matter of opinion whether there should be five, ten or eleven members. We had sound reasons for suggesting that the number should be 11. We said first that there should be a director appointed who should be a member of the board which we proposed should be set up, that is, the "Agriculture Protection Board". He should also be in charge of noxious weeds, which, in our opinion as a Commission, represented a somewhat smaller problem than did the vermin.

As we saw the situation when moving about very large areas of the State, we thought that when we had this gentleman on the board, we ought to have someone skilled in the eradication of noxious weeds along with him. We therefore suggested the Government Botanist or his nominee. We then recommended that the Treasury should be in the business to the extent of a few thousand pounds a year. It has been the custom with a great many boards to include a representative of the Treasury specifically appointed when such circumstances existed, and so we recommended that there should be a Treasury representative on this board.

Realising the situation which existed in the North-West and having in mind the two different problems to be solved there, one further north and one nearer the south, we recommended that two members of the Pastoralists' Association should be appointed to advise the committee as to the peculiar problems in their respective areas of the North-West. We realised that the North-West as a whole was too big for one man readily to get a grasp of all its problems. We then suggested that five representatives of the Road Board Association of Western Australia should be appointed to the board. That number could perhaps be reasonably reduced; it has been reduced too far in this Bill, which contemplates only one representative. The number might have been reduced below five; but our view was that the Road Board Association, as everyone knows, has divided itself into a considerable number of wards, northern, southern, eastern

and so forth. We considered it would be a good scheme to have one representative from each of those wards, such representatives to be appointed by the association, because there are differing problems and differing circumstances in those wards, and advice by persons acquainted with the conditions of the areas from which they came would, we thought, be most advantageous to the agriculture protection board.

Finally, we said that if rates were imposed on lands at present exempt, then so long as that state of affairs continued—and we recommended, I think, a period of five years only—the local authorities should have representation on the board, so that they might see to the fair expenditure of the money contributed by the people in the different districts which they represented. We proposed to give rather wide powers to the board. We were authorising it to borrow up to £100,000 for the purpose of providing farmers with wirenetting at cost price; but there is no such provision for the Minister's advisory board to do anything like that. Oh, dear, no!

When it comes to a question of doing anything which might help to solve the problem or minimise the inroads of certain types of vermin by providing assistance to the farming community at the cheapest possible rates, we find no such provision in the Bill. It is gleefully and blissfully ignored. We also provided that the agriculture protection board should acquire poisons which were used by local authorities and distribute them at cost price in order to make the money go as far as it possibly could. The local authorities have been asking for this sort of thing, individually and collectively, for a deuce of a long time, but nothing has been done about it. It might be done by regulation, but it seems to me that it would be a great deal better if the power were given by the Bill itself.

It is quite clear to me that the advisory board could not provide wirenetting or raise £100,000 for that purpose, as is suggested by the Commission's report, unless it were given legislative authority. Those interesting recommendations have not been given any great attention; and nobody has suggested anything likely to be an efficient substitute for them. Therefore, we can only assume that up to the present nobody has made a better proposition and that the de-

partment has decided to allow the existing state of affairs to continue, much as it has been continued for many years past. The department does not want to do anything about it. I could continue for quite a considerable time to deal with the weaknesses in and omissions from the Bill, but I shall content myself by repeating what I said at the beginning, that I propose to support the second reading, although I do not regard the measure as being a very handsome contribution to the solution of a very pressing problem.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [6.7]: I am of the opinion that the Government has every desire to eradicate vermin in Western Australia, whether that vermin be in the pastoral districts or in the farming districts of the southern portion of the State. I really believe that is the Government's ambition and intention, but the Bill introduced by the Minister for Agriculture will in no way achieve that objective. In my opinion, I cannot see any possibility of effecting an alteration in the vermin situation by the provisions of this Bill. I do not know the amount of damage done to primary production in this State by rabbits and dogs, and I presume nobody could give us a correct estimate. As far as we can gather, however, millions of pounds worth of primary production in the State has been destroyed by vermin in a short space of time. I refer to livestock and feed.

The few pounds which the Royal Commission suggested should be set aside for the purpose of combating vermin is infinitesimal when compared with the havoc which can be wrought within a short space of time by vermin. If one travels through the farming areas today, one will not notice a great number of rabbits. Their numbers have been reduced probably in three ways; first, by a very wet season which destroyed many young rabbits in some parts of the State; secondly, by a dry season which also resulted in the death of many young rabbits; and, thirdly, by the very high price paid for rabbits exported quite recently. That resulted in the destruction of large numbers of the rodents, and therefore the menace is not nearly so serious as it was when the Commission was inquiring into this question. In my opinion,

now is the time to take vigorous measures in order to ensure the destruction of rabbits, because at present the rabbit population is low. I think the adoption of such measures would result in practically exterminating the rabbit in Western Australia.

Mr. Doney: Rabbits have a remarkable capacity to breed.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes; if given the opportunity, but the time to strike is while the numbers are small.

Mr. Doney: Quite so.

Mr. TRIAT: I realise that the rabbit population could increase enormously within 12 months, and the conditions now existing might not exist in 1947. The dingo question in Western Australia is not so serious in the populated areas, by which I mean districts as far up as North Murchison. Dingoes are in great numbers in the Kimberleys. But it is not the dingo that does the biggest damage to the flocks in my district. Dogs that are a cross between cattle dogs and other dogs and have gone bush do more damage than dingoes. Recently, as I was travelling through a portion of my electorate, I was speaking with a man who has been battling on a station for 29 years. He was out on a push bike; he was unable to use a horse as stock feed was too costly to transport. He was putting sheep into a paddock to be held for shearing. He had had 780 sheep in the bush, but was able to muster only 420. The rest had been eaten by dogs. That man might as well walk off his property. He had employed one of the best trappers in Western Australia, a man named Herbert, to trap the dogs, and I would point out that he did not pay a paltry £2 per head. He paid £12 for every dog killed.

These pastoralists are prepared to penalise themselves to the extent of paying £12 for every dog caught in the Black Range district. That man is not the only one affected in that way. Many others also suffered damage from the same cause. They state that their sheep are eaten by wild dogs. The man on the Trans. line who was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition was in a bad way because he was far removed from anyone who could assist him. The people I refer to, however, are on adjacent holdings. Something must be done

if we are to protect the flocks of these men from the ravages of the wild dogs.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are many of the dogs destroyed by the trappers?

Mr. TRIAT: A reasonable number. Unfortunately, dogs come in from the breeding places. The Vermin Department knows all about these districts but nobody is sent out to destroy the dogs where they breed. That is the unfortunate part of the matter. Unless the Government is prepared to say for the destruction of these dogs the position will become most serious. The fox menace is already serious. I hope the Government will give further consideration to this Bill and to the proposal of the Royal Commission that a certain sum of money should be set apart from revenue for the purpose of getting the position under control.

Mr. McDonald: Is the fox menace serious in your district?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. Foxes will eat grown sheep if there are no rabbits available. Farmers told the Commission that grown sheep had been destroyed by foxes, which will eat the sheep when smaller game is not available.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Do the foxes eat half the sheep?

Mr. TRIAT: They eat the tongue and the sheep dies as a result of the mutilation. I am surprised the Government has not given consideration to certain proposals of the Commission. I realise it could not give effect to all of the Commission's proposals; but I am of the opinion that when a Select Committee or a Royal Commission comes to the stage of completing its report, the Minister in control of the department concerned with the investigation, together with the Under Secretary and other officers required to deal with the problem, should meet the members of the Commission and discuss with them their findings.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TRIAT: I was remarking that it was my opinion that when a Select Committee has given consideration to the evidence it has taken and is preparing its report, the Minister and the departmental officer connected with the subject of investigation

would be well advised to attend a meeting of such committee to discuss the suggestions to be embodied in the report. I am of the opinion that it is practically impossible for a departmental officer, or even a Minister himself, to be quite in accord with everything in a Select Committee's report; but as the result of a little discussion with the people preparing the report, the viewpoint of the Minister or the departmental officer could very easily be changed. It is not competent for any one man to absorb the whole of the evidence given to a Select Committee and to say that he knows all the yeas and nays of the case. Therefore I think the advice I have given is reasonably sound. It costs the State a good deal of money to obtain evidence by way of Select Committee and once that evidence has been secured it is foolish not to take advantage of the opportunity to have the information so gathered made available to Parliament through the Minister.

In this instance, the Minister for Agriculture suggests that the idea of the Royal Commission on vermin to have the work of eradicating rabbits taken from the individual and put in the hands of a board means that men will be encouraged to become lazy; but, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, one bad spot in a district can affect the whole of that district; and no matter how hard the balance of the inhabitants may work, if one area is left untouched there is no possibility of eradicating vermin. In the event of disease occurring, we seek to tackle it at the source and there are consequently no further complaints; but in this instance we leave the source alone so that it infects the balance of the district.

I am surprised that the Minister did not realise that position; but evidently he did not quite grasp the point. We have no possible chance of eradicating pests unless sufficient money is made available. I do not like calling upon the Government on every occasion and asking it to find money for this and for that, but the eradication of vermin is important and the damage done in one season is so great that the amount of £12,000, which it is suggested the Government should contribute each year for a period of five years, could well be spent. Left alone, vermin would do that much dam-

age—whether those vermin be dingoes, foxes, rabbits or grasshoppers.

We know from the Press that grasshoppers have become a menace in New South Wales and, in my opinion, Western Australia could easily be infested. In my visit through the back country recently I found that grasshoppers were plentiful. They were not there in plague form, but there were plenty of them. We have seen their ravages. In Beneubbin the damage they did was enormous. The crops had reached the headed stage and the heads were completely removed from the stalk, so that there was no grain left to harvest.

Mr. STYANTS: It is estimated that rabbits do £10,000,000 worth of damage annually in Australia.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not know how much damage they do in Western Australia, but the evidence is that they do a terrific amount of harm. If proper efforts at eradication were successful, the amount expended would result in less damage being done than if the pest were not tackled wholeheartedly. The Leader of the Opposition discussed the position of Crown lands. What he said was true. Crown lands are infested; we have seen that for ourselves. Dogs will live in any bush country which is isolated and quiet. They live on Crown lands and wherever the surroundings are peaceful, in order that they may rear their pups. They go out after food; and the food in my district mostly consists of sheep, because kangaroos have been depleted.

The Premier: And the turkeys have gone.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes; they have been destroyed by dingoes and foxes. The only thing on which the dog is able to live is the sheep and the result is that the damage done to flocks is very extensive. I have previously mentioned that over 40 per cent. of a man's flock was eaten out in two months by dogs. The amount of £12,000 required from the Government towards the eradication of vermin is only a fleabite to what would be required—approximately £75,000. It is easy to say that people in the metropolitan and urban areas do not like contributing to the destruction of vermin. Of course they do not like to contribute! But for the sake of the State and for the sake of the people who live in the metropolitan and urban areas

and who eat the food supplied by producers, these vermin must be eradicated. The small amount of tax levied for that purpose would not be missed by the taxpayers.

Though we may not like the imposition of taxation, we should tax people for the benefit of the State in general. The amount to be imposed on the people of the metropolitan area and closely settled districts is very small, but it would result in a lot of money being obtained for the purpose. The suggestion of providing mobile plants to destroy vermin is sound. On examination, we found that the poison cart certainly poisoned some rabbits, but did not destroy their breeding grounds; and our observation and the information we received convinced us that the proper method is to destroy those breeding grounds. Burrows must be torn up or crushed in so that the rabbits cannot return to them. They should be kept above ground. The moment rabbits are allowed to return to burrows they commence to breed and they cannot be eradicated. It was proved to us conclusively that men who did not have their properties fenced could, by destroying the burrows, eradicate the rabbits.

I do not propose to delay the House, because I consider the arguments submitted by the Leader of the Opposition were quite sound. He dealt extensively with the report and there is no occasion for me to go into the matter. I would say that, by and large, the effort made by the Agricultural Department over many years past in the eradication of pests has been very feeble. Probably the department did its best, but its best achieved nothing. The Bill will not make any alteration to the position and there will be no great departure from the existing practice which has operated for years.

So I consider that the Minister would be well advised if he realised the Bill is not of much use. This is not a party measure, and members are free to please themselves how they vote. I suggest that further consideration of the Bill should be postponed indefinitely. I do not like voting for the second reading because there is nothing in the Bill; and if there is nothing of importance in the Bill, I do not see why we should alter the old system along the lines suggested. It is not a question of a few pence

but a lot of money if the job is to be done properly; and if the Minister allowed the Bill to be postponed till the end of the session and then to lapse, he would be doing a good job.

On motion by Mr. Seward, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 8th October; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Votes—Labour, £3,112; Factories, £10,220; Arbitration Court, £6,100; State Insurance Office, £5—agreed to.

Vote—Chief Secretary, £25,011.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [7.41]: The Estimates of the Chief Secretary's Department include the Votes for the Registry and Friendly Societies, Prisons and Observatory services. They are in the usual form, except that there is provision for a slight increase which has been caused by extra assistance in the way of gaol officers and others. Increases also arise out of reclassifications and the replacement of temporary officers by men who have returned from the Services. The Correspondence Despatch Office is controlled by the Chief Secretary's Department, and the usual procedure has been for that office to look after the delivery of all Government messages and materials. No innovation has been made other than that the business has increased because the service has been extended to cover some of the larger of the outer centres, such as Kalgoorlie.

The Prisons Department has increased its expenditure a little by virtue of the fact that the 44-hour week was introduced in 1945, and because there has been an increase in the number of gaol officers. Also, the military authorities have vacated the Fremantle Gaol, and the transferring of men from Barton's Mill to Fremantle has meant an increase in the staff. When we vacated Fremantle early in the war, many of the houses and buildings belonging to the department were leased to private people. When it became necessary to return, it was difficult to find the accommodation necessary

for the staff. The result has been that many members of the staff have had to be accommodated in hotels and other places, and the extra cost has had to be met by the department.

The position at Barton's Mill has considerably improved, because the department has had some of the better-class prisoners cutting firewood for use in various Government offices and hospitals. In fact, firewood has been supplied from Barton's Mill to gaols in other parts of the State. That has given the better-class prisoners something to occupy their minds and, at the same time, it has helped to reduce the expenditure of the Chief Secretary's Department. The Prisons Department is trying to rectify the position that arose at Pardelup by trying out the better-class prisoners at Barton's Mill before permitting them to be sent to Pardelup. Since doing that we have had little or no trouble at the Pardelup Prison Farm. Some extra work has been undertaken there and some hundreds of acres have been cleared and put under pasture. This provides a better class of employment for the prisoners, and it helps them to be more contented. It has also probably been a factor in preventing the breakaways that were taking place in the earlier stages of the Pardelup Prison Farm. The experiment at Barton's Mill has proved successful to the extent that we have latterly had few or no escapes or disturbances there and the prisoners have a certain amount of liberty because they are out cutting firewood. As a result, the department gets a better understanding of those who are thought fit to be transferred to Pardelup.

Extra expenditure has been incurred by the Prisons Department because of the resumption of the pearling industry and the opening up of other activities along the North-West coast. These activities have made it necessary to send an assistant to the gaoler at Broome where the gaol was, during the war, closed for a number of years. It has, however, been reopened, and for the first year or so, there was just one gaoler in charge but recently we have had to send him assistance. That does not mean that we have wild people in the North; it is simply the result of the re-opening of the pearling and mining industries. The necessity for the increase in the estimated expenditure for the

current financial year may be summarised as follows:—

1. Recent reclassification of administrative staff.
2. Additional staff at Fremantle for the whole year owing to military withdrawal.
3. Increase in the basic wage.
4. Rental allowance to officers pending quarters becoming available.
5. Retention of some six extra officers to relieve for annual and long service leave.
6. Supply of arrears in staff uniforms.
7. Supply of prisoners' clothing, bedding, etc.
8. Supply of farm machinery and motor vehicles for Pardelup.

The motor vehicles referred to consist of some farming machinery found necessary for the work of the inmates in clearing the land and laying down pastures. That, of course, will not be a recurring expenditure. The vehicles will last a number of years and will help in the industrial development of the prison area. It is proposed to establish a nursery for growing fruit stock at Pardelup, where a large orchard is being planted. There is also the supply of tools and equipment for the various workshops, and general renovations and improvements to all institutions, including minor repairs and maintenance at police gaols. Those are the factors that have caused a slight increase in the Vote for the Prisons Department.

A new activity created during the war under the War Funds Act was the control of patriotic funds. Collections by the organisations concerned reached a total of £2,500,000. The supervision of all organisations responsible for the raising of this amount is vested in the War Funds Council, with the Chief Secretary as chairman. The departmental staff is a charge on the Chief Secretary's Department. Of the total funds raised, £444,000 remains unexpended. The annual report setting out the individual collections of all war funds was tabled in Parliament recently. Three hundred and seventy war funds have been registered to date and 205 of them have been cancelled. Most of the others have ceased or are ceasing their activities. Satisfactory final statements of accounts must be submitted in all instances before cancellation is effected under the Act.

This House will shortly be asked to pass a resolution authorising the transfer of the

surplus moneys of three of the major patriotic funds, namely, the Australian Comforts Fund, the R.A.A.F. Comforts Fund and the Naval Welfare and Comforts Fund to other purposes connected with the war. This procedure is provided for under Section 5 of the War Funds Regulation Act. It will be remembered that when we passed that legislation there was debate as to what would happen when the war ended and there were unexpended funds left over. That is provided for under the War Funds Regulation Act. It must be dealt with by the War Funds Council, and will then be submitted to this House for confirmation. The major war funds are as follows:—Australian Red Cross Society; Australia Comforts Fund; Y.M.C.A. War Service Appeal; Salvation Army Wartime Fund; R.A.A.F. Comforts Fund; Naval Welfare and Comforts Fund; British Sailors' Society Welfare Fund; Merchant Seamen Comforts Fund; Citizens' Reception Council; W.A. War Patriotic Fund for Soldiers Dependents, and W.A. Sportsmen's Organising Council for Patriotic Funds. The assets of those organisations are being dealt with at the present time, and the procedure that has been outlined will be followed where necessary. The control of collections for purposes of the war has been so effective that legislation is being prepared to extend the scope of the Act to permit the regulation and control of all public collections. A Bill to that end will be submitted within a few weeks. With the passing of the War Funds Regulation Act the public has had more confidence in subscribing to the various collections than was the case prior to when the Bill was passed. The public knew that Parliament had agreed to those organisations conducting their appeals, and that they were being supervised under the Act by the Chief Secretary's Department, and that all money had to be accounted for and so on. Such organisations now feel that the Act should be widened in scope, and have requested the Chief Secretary's Department to try to extend control of all collections, because under that arrangement the public responds more readily. Parliament will be asked to consider that matter later. There is only a small increase in the Estimate this year for the Observatory Department. The Vote asked for this year is £1,531, last year's estimate being £1,485; an increase

this year of £46. The work carried out by the Observatory includes the supply of time signals which are broadcast by the Applecross wireless station, special daily signals to the Telegraph Department, hourly time signals to the broadcasting stations, the Railway Department and the G.P.O.; daily gun signals at 1 p.m., telephone time checks for many subscribers, including the R.A.A.F. and the various aviation companies. A continuous record is kept of all earth movements, and tide tables are kept for the North-West coast. The tide tables relate particularly to north-western ports and are compiled annually, the printed proofs being checked at the Observatory. Those tables are fundamentally important in the arrangement of shipping schedules and all navigation along our north-western coast. Astronomical tables and data are supplied daily to the public and the Press, and educational and research work is carried out. One particular phase of the Observatory's activities, which was not generally known, was that associated with the war, during which the services already mentioned were maintained continuously. With the fall of Manila the naval station time service, previously broadcast from Cavite, Philippines, was carried out by our Observatory. The generous acknowledgment received from the American Navy indicates how valuable this service was to ships, submarines and aeroplanes in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. In addition, all chronometers at Qantas Empire Airways were rated and checked for the Perth-Ceylon service for several years. This work was and still is performed for the Fremantle Harbour Trust. A great number of sextants, compasses and other instruments was inspected and adjusted for the Navy, the Army and Australian National Airways Limited. Astronomical information was also supplied to the Navy, Army and Air Force for military purposes. The staff at the Observatory is comprised of the Government Astronomer, a first assistant, a general assistant, a part-time evening assistant, a gardener and a handy man. Prior to the war an astronomical advisory committee was set up to advise the Government regarding the activities of the Observatory. War circumstances precluded its operation during the war, but the committee, comprised of the Surveyor General,

Professor A. D. Ross, the Under Treasurer or his representative, the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department and the Government Astronomer, is being called together again to continue its work. There is not much more information that I can give on these Estimates, but if there are any items respecting which members desire further details I will endeavour to supply them.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [7.58]: I do not desire to say very much on these Estimates, but in explaining the increase in the Vote for the Prisons Department, the Minister said that much of it was due to increased expenditure at Barton's Mill. I believe there was a Joint Parliamentary Committee appointed last session to inquire into the matter of prisons, but so far I do not remember having seen the report of that body.

Mr. North: We have all signed that report.

Mr. SEWARD: I think it is about time members knew what is contained in it. If we are to continue spending money at Barton's Mill I would like to know whether it is intended to make that institution the main prison. If not, why expend extra money there? Why not get on with the job and spend money on the site that the main prison is eventually to occupy. At all events we are entitled to ask what has become of the Joint Committee's report. There is also the question of the farm work carried on by prisoners at Pardelup. Is anything being produced by the prisoners there and being sold that the place may eventually become self-supporting? I do not know what the cost of the prison is, but if the prisoners are the better behaved ones and are doing farm work, they should be supplying vegetables and other requirements and so reducing the cost to the State of the institution. Under this department mention is made of the War Funds Regulation Act including street collections. This is a matter which should receive the attention of Parliament. During the years of war, one could not very well object to being stuck up to buy a button or a badge.

The Minister for Lands: We are introducing a Bill to control that.

Mr. SEWARD: I am glad to have that assurance from the Minister. The time has

come when these street collections should be stopped. People do not want to be bailed up every Friday as they have been in the past. Some of the objects for which collections are made may be praiseworthy, but I do not think the continuance of street collections for the maintenance of institutions that should be financed in another way is altogether creditable to us.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [8.2]: The estimated revenue from prisons this year is £3,690. I should like some information about the Pardelup Prison Farm, especially the extent to which it is revenue-producing and whether it is expected that with time and development it may become, in the not distant future, a producer of substantial revenue. With a large number of men on the farm and in a very favourable position from the point of view of manpower as compared with other farmers, there should be a possibility of substantial revenue being obtained from this institution.

I am not sure whether I understood the Minister aright, but I gathered the intention is to deal with the matter of accumulated war funds that now have to be dedicated to some purpose, which may be connected with the war or with activities since the war. There are many activities since the war relating to soldiers, disabled soldiers and necessitous soldiers, for which funds would be very acceptable. I should also like to know whether my impression is correct that the Government intends by legislation to make provision for the raising of funds for charitable purposes.

The Minister for Lands: There is a Bill in preparation now.

Mr. McDONALD: I have some sympathy with such a proposal. When the public is asked for money, there should be some degree of supervision and some guarantee that the funds are being raised under proper auspices and will be used in the interests of the community.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [8.5]: With the member for Pingelly, I should like to know what is the policy of the Government as regards prisons. Is it intended to proceed with the erection of a new prison and has any particular site been resolved on as a result of the Joint Parliamentary Committee's inquiry? The Minister might

have mentioned this matter during his speech but, if he did, it was inaudible from this part of the Chamber. If it is the intention of the Government to proceed with the erection of a prison on modern lines, it is only wasting money to expend funds on Barton's Mill, at Fremantle, or indeed on the prison farm at Pardelup. I presume the new prison will possess all the necessary conveniences for dealing with prisoners, both those who are kept in confinement and those who are allowed a certain amount of liberty.

There is another matter, a small one, it is true, but one that affects the finances of the State. Why has no approach been made to the Commonwealth to take over the Government Astronomer? This is essentially a Commonwealth office. Already the Commonwealth has an officer who exercises the right to occupy the official residence. True, as the Minister said, the astronomer was very useful for supplying information to submarines, but that necessity has ended, I hope for a considerable period of time. Not only should the officer be taken over by the Commonwealth, but some arrangement should be made for its taking over the building and plant. This matter has awaited settlement for years. If the Commonwealth did take over the observatory, the present occupant would doubtless continue in office. He has been very successful in his work, and there would be no reason for not continuing him in the office, but he should be a servant of the Commonwealth and not of the State, because he is discharging what is essentially Commonwealth work.

MR. DONEY (Williams—Narrogin) [8.8]: It is generally understood that the prison farm at Pardelup is kept entirely for prisoners with good records, but the farm prison was very much in the public eye 12 or 18 months ago when it was necessary to keep at Pardelup prisoners with bad criminal records. I do not know whether that practice has been discontinued; I hope it has. At the time I speak of, there were frequent references in the Press to escapes from the prison and to the escapees being a considerable nuisance to women and children on farms in the district. I take it for granted that prisoners of this type are no longer sent here. Apart from this, members will be interested to have a little general information as to what happens at Pardelup. What I mean is, just exactly what the prisoners

there do, whether they produce anything on the farm—as I presume they do, or at least should be required to do—to make themselves self-supporting. Are they self-supporting so far as meat and vegetables are concerned? I suppose nothing beyond that could be expected, but that much at least should be required.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [8.11]:

The objects of imprisonment, as I understand them, are threefold, firstly, to protect the public from men who are not fit to be at large in the community; secondly, to punish and discipline those who have offended against the law, with a view to preventing others from following suit; and thirdly, to reform those who have offended against the law so that, when released, they can be set on the road to become good citizens. I do not propose to say anything about the confinement of criminals who are not fit to be at large—I refer to homicidal criminals whom it would be dangerous to set free.

Undoubtedly, the prison farms at Pardelup and Barton's Mill are a big improvement on the old type of prison, when hard labour consisted of picking oakum and quarrying or breaking stone, because I can see nothing in that type of work that is of a reformatory nature. In my opinion, there should be some intermediate disciplinary work for prisoners to do in order to qualify for the work of, say, the average farm labourer, or even for better work than the prisoners are doing at present at Pardelup and Barton's Mill. The work should be of some benefit to the community, because more often than not the community suffers and is put to considerable expense on account of the prisoner having transgressed the law. I would like to have an intermediate stage where prisoners would be obliged to do what might be considered more objectionable work in connection with the development of the country than that done at Pardelup. They should serve a period during which they would clear and develop land.

We have a vast area near Albany which I understand is likely to be developed by the Government. It is situated away from large centres of population and I see no reason why good-conduct prisoners should not serve a term in a camp in that district developing the land. This would be of some permanent advantage to the State and would

in some degree compensate for the expense to which the prisoner has put the community. There is no reason why that work should be made more monotonous than need be, as mechanical aids to the work could be furnished. Such work would have a reformatory influence over the prisoners, who would learn to handle modern equipment for clearing the land. It would help them to rest their minds and take an interest in the work. I suggest that is something which the Government might consider in any future policy of prison reform.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.15]: It is unfortunate for the Committee that the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee appointed to inquire into our gaols has not yet been made public. It would not be right either for me or the member for South Fremantle to make any reference to the report, but I think we could have anticipated some of the remarks of the member for North Perth. When issued, I think the report will be found to be very interesting. There is one phase of the prison question upon which I can touch without referring to the report—it is well known to every member of this Chamber—and that is our wonderful record of a small prison population. For a country with a population of half a million to have only 300 people incarcerated is a very fine record and I doubt whether it is equalled anywhere else in the world. It speaks well for our mode of life, notwithstanding that in many respects we are looked upon as an out-of-date country, with old-fashioned methods and no large cities. Nevertheless, we have a far better record in this respect than bigger countries with modern facilities.

Leaving that question, because the report is not yet available, I want to make two or three remarks about the Observatory. Some years ago the Committee was entertained by the then member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie with criticism of our Observatory, but were he alive today he would, I think, revise his technique. Much is happening in the world today which is bringing astronomy more prominently before the average man. Members will have observed in the papers during the last two or three days that negotiations are taking place between the Commonwealth Government and the British Government with regard to taking over a large tract of

country in the Never-Never. Questions have been raised as to whether the aborigines will not be endangered; but one of the points to be studied, it is said, is the testing of space-ships.

Interplanetary travel is becoming practical politics and the public will expect the Observatory to take some active part in educating the people in some of the questions that in the past have been, in this Chamber at least, almost the subject of ridicule. The ordinary members of the public will be entitled to know the answers to certain questions which in the past have not bothered them. For instance, many ordinary people would like to know why it is that the heavenly body nearest the earth—the moon—is only seen on one side, like the head of a shilling. That needs a lot of explaining to the average man. To him it is an extraordinary phenomenon. There are many other questions the answers to which he would like to know.

The Premier: It might be awkward to get a space-ship refuelled in order to return to the earth.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. Some people in my district are worrying about the fact that it is possible to see the sun in the heavens at the same time as the moon, which also is well up in the heavens. These things are hard to explain by calculations, but could be perhaps made plain by astronomers. Many people in Western Australia would like to hear a few sessions over the air during which our astronomer could acquaint them of these astronomical matters which in the past have been of so little practical interest to them, but which in the near future, if these experiments in the Never-Never are to take place, will mean so much more to them.

The only other observation I would make in this regard is to congratulate whoever it is—I refer to the clerk of the weather—on his wonderful forecasts week after week, for he gets the temperature right within two or three degrees almost every day. I am not too sure whether that is the same department; I think it is a Federal matter. That was a slight aberration. It seems to me, however, that we could learn a great deal more from this department than we have in the past. The whole of the knowledge the members of the department have amongst themselves and

which they keep in their very select circle should be spilled over to the public for its benefit and education.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley—in reply) [8.22]: Regarding the member for Pingelly's inquiry about the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, I shall make inquiries from the Chief Secretary, and give the hon. member what information I can at a later date. The member for West Perth asked whether Pardelup was a revenue-producing institution or whether it was self-supporting, and what it actually did. It is not self-supporting, and I do not know of any prison that would be. The idea of the prison farm is to find employment for a certain calibre of offender instead of putting him with other prisoners in the Fremantle Gaol. It was thought better to have such people in a different environment.

Mr. Watts: You slipped once or twice, did you not?

The **MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST**: I said previously that we had altered the procedure. Instead of taking a man at his face value, we now send him to Barton's Mill for a trial to find out whether he is fitted to go to Pardelup. He serves his apprenticeship at Barton's Mill, where he is not under strict lock-and-key supervision but is sent out cutting firewood and doing other work of that kind. It is thus much easier for warders to ascertain whether a man is fitted to be given an opportunity at Pardelup. Since that innovation, we have had no trouble with escapees or any trouble at Pardelup at all. So the scheme has proved successful up to date.

The work proceeding in the Pardelup area is mostly clearing and the planting of orchards. It will be some time before that type of undertaking will begin to show a profit or to return revenue. While it is the intention of the department to try to make these places at least self-supporting, I do not think Pardelup is looked upon as an immediate revenue-producing venture. It is our objective to try to make these places pay for themselves and I should imagine that if the country is good enough to produce satisfactory orchards and fruit, the orchards will be self-supporting in a few years. At the moment, Pardelup is not self-supporting.

Mr. Watts: Does it produce revenue to any extent?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No, it does not produce revenue worth considering from the point of view of its being a self-supporting proposition.

Mr. Watts: You are dealing with unskilled labour, too.

The Premier: A lot of the revenue is absorbed in the upkeep of the prisoners.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: One member asked about the control of street collections. As I said when introducing the Estimates, it is the intention of the Chief Secretary to bring down a Bill this session to control all collections. Quite a number of permanent organisations that depend on street and other collections are in agreement that, since control has been exercised people appear to have been more willing to subscribe to such collections; and they have asked for this control to be extended. It is the intention of the Chief Secretary to introduce a Bill for that purpose. A question was asked as to what had happened to the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the new prison site. The committee's report has recently been received by the Government but has not yet been given consideration. I imagine, however, that, no matter what the report says, the Pardelup Prison Farm will be continued.

I cannot give any information as to what the report contains, but I should say that Pardelup Prison Farm will be looked upon as a permanent part of the Prisons Department, no matter where the new prison site is situated. The Pardelup Prison Farm will be continued as part of the prison system in Western Australia. That is one of the reasons why the area has been cleared and planted with fruit-trees. If it were not looked upon as part of the prison system, we would not be clearing large areas of land, laying down pastures, and establishing orchards. I agree with the member for North Perth that there are many people who, unfortunate enough to be sent to prison, should not be confined with criminals at Fremantle Gaol.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Registry and Friendly Societies, £21,727; Prisons, £55,474; Observatory, £1,531—agreed to.

Vote—Police, £326,843:

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn—Coolgardie) [8.28]: I do not desire to detain the Committee for any great length of time. Mention was made earlier this evening of the success of Safety Week. I feel that the authorities responsible for that innovation are to be complimented on a very excellent job. I do not speak from the point of view of the number of accidents that were perhaps averted, but from the point of view of instruction given to many people who benefited very considerably from the activities of the police and other voluntary helpers who assisted materially during that week to make the venture the outstanding success it was. However, breaches of the traffic regulations have by no means been reduced; or, at any rate, if they have been reduced at all, it has been only to a very small extent.

Breaches are very prevalent. I heard it said recently that many road hogs are still out of their sties. I think that is a true indication of the lack of courtesy and road sense exhibited by many people practically every day of the week, both during daylight hours and at night. There has been no marked diminution of breaches during the time that has elapsed since Safety Week. We find that there are plenty of bicycles still on the road without head or tail lights; there are many cars without them and some with only one light and others with very glaring headlights. There has been little reduction in the speed of many motorists when coming from side streets into highways. Indications as to the intention of motorists are long delayed. The Act provides that such indications should be given at a considerable distance before the intended action is to take place. But the number of offences of this nature are probably far greater than most others. Frequently a last-minute decision by a motorist to make a turning is the cause of an accident. In nine out of ten such cases the motorist swears that he put out his hand, but I can assure the Committee that, generally speaking, that is not so. There is only one way to overcome these difficulties, and that is by doubling the number of our traffic cops.

The Estimates provide an increased sum of £24,079, most of which is to be used for salaries. I hope that much of that money will be spent in an endeavour to make our roads safer and so reduce the number of accidents and the loss of life that have been so marked in the past 12 months. The traffic cops could achieve a great amount of success by displaying courtesy which would promote, in most instances, a realisation of road sense and a knowledge of the important part that each person plays in the carrying out of the Traffic Act. This type of friendliness should extend also to those officers patrolling the parking areas. If the right approach to offenders were adopted it would mean that the education of the careless and inconsiderate motorist would be far more quickly accomplished. No doubt many would not benefit by such an approach because their policy is at all times against the law. Such people should be quickly brought to book and punished accordingly.

Part of the training of the school that the young officers attend should include the proper approach to the many people with whom they come in contact. If that were so these difficulties would gradually be improved and the work of the officers made much easier. I have no fault to find with the newly-appointed men, amongst whom there are some very fine types. They are doing excellent work, and so are the new pointsmen.

The matter of parking within the city boundaries is causing much concern in many directions. The position has been accentuated since the operation of the new traffic regulations dealing with parking within the city. Any member who wishes to know just how complicated is the parking system within the city boundaries need only have recourse to a pamphlet issued by the Traffic Department. The system is an involved one which is difficult for the average person to follow. It is all right for anyone who parks within a certain area at all times according to the period allowed, but many people who have numerous calls to make are finding it increasingly difficult to park within the boundaries of the city. The white disks, with their small black lettering, are not a success. In many instances the disks are inadequate and in some cases misleading.

It is all very well for a disk to be displayed stating that parking is prohibited within a certain area in certain hours, but

to some people that does not convey the information as to whether they can park, particularly when there might be other vehicles already parked at the kerbside—and those parked vehicles might, unwittingly, be transgressing. That system should be abolished because it is confusing and will remain so for as long as it continues. I believe that we should adopt a colour system whereby parking could take place on lines similar to the method adopted at bus stops. We could have a colour system by which motorists would know for how long they could park at any time.

Under such a scheme a series of red marks on the kerb would let anyone know that at that particular spot parking was prohibited. Similarly, red and white spots conjoined, or at intervals, would indicate to a motorist that he could park for only five minutes. Something different could be displayed at places where a 15-minute limit applied at all times. If a yellow mark, similar to what we now see on our roadways, were used, it would be a clear indication to a motorist that 15 minutes would be the maximum parking period permitted at any time in the morning or the afternoon. I think the peak periods are well known to us, and a yellow and red mark could be used to show where 15 minutes' parking was allowed except at times when all parking was prohibited. I include there the red spot, because it is a danger signal in most circumstances and, together with the yellow marking, it would show the motorist that he was not allowed to park there at all during peak periods. A yellow and white mark could be used for places where parking is allowed for 15 minutes at most times during the day and five minutes only during peak periods.

I do not agree with the five minutes parking period because it is practically impossible for a motorist to do any business in that space of time. I think it could be dispensed with for all practical purposes. If such colour indications were used they would be distinct and easily remembered by the average motorist, and observance of the parking times would be a simple matter. On many of the roads there is a central line which, in most parts of the city, marks the boundary over which an oncoming motorist must not pass. It has proved successful and is of assistance to motorists generally.

I would like to see that principle extended further and either such a line or a mark or spots in the centre of the road, such as one sees in some instances. I commend to the Minister representing the Police Department the introduction of a system on the lines suggested, a system of marking the kerbs in various colours indicating parking regulations.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [8.45]: I join the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie in congratulating the Commissioner of Police on the improvement effected in the number of accidents occurring through negligent motor driving. That aspect of Safety Week has been a success, but ever since then I have thought that, as far as the crossing of streets by pedestrians in the city is concerned, the whole thing was a waste of time. Whenever one attempts to pass over a crosswalk one takes a chance of having to dodge the motorists, who simply go ahead. I heard a policeman telling motorists that the pedestrians have the right of way on the cross-walk, but the other day a motorist turned his car round on the cross-walk and nearly ran over me.

I was struck by the wonderful success of the traffic light demonstrated outside Foy & Gibson's in St. George's-terrace. Motorists travelling along the terrace could see the red light and slow down, or could see that the green light was showing, and go straight ahead, and the same applied to pedestrians. I do not know why we cannot adopt that system of traffic regulation. I would like to see an estimate of the cost of training a constable. The Police Department trains men for duty as constables and then turns them into human semaphores to direct traffic. I notice that there is an increase in the number of sergeants and constables from 553 to 632. Surely we can find something more important for them to do than controlling traffic, which is obviously best controlled by a system of traffic lights.

The Minister for Lands: Such a system works very well in Adelaide and in Melbourne.

MR. SEWARD: I cannot understand why it has not been adopted here, as it would relieve our constables for their more important duties. If we adopted the sug-

gestion of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie we would require the whole of our Police Force to control parking in the city.

MR. KELLY: They are constantly doing it now.

MR. SEWARD: I agree that parking must be controlled, as the city is becoming blocked up with cars. Places will have to be found where cars can be properly parked. Many people take their cars into the city early in the morning and leave them there till 6 p.m., and no-one seems to take any action about it, while other motorists receive a ticket for leaving a car parked in one position for only a short time.

MR. DONEY: They are not supposed to be there for more than a quarter of an hour.

MR. SEWARD: We should not train men for duty as constables and then put them to work looking after the parking of cars in the city. I hope steps will be taken to adopt a system of traffic control by traffic lights. Having seen the recent illustration I have no doubt it is an effective and cheap system. If that were done the Police Department could confine its attention to the other work which it does so admirably in this State.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [8.48]: I do not agree that the controlling of traffic is outside the ordinary and proper duty of a policeman. I have often been told of the admiration, expressed by foreigners, of the London policeman, because of his wonderful capacity for handling traffic. Through constant practice he is able to handle the densest traffic in the British Empire, and keep the whole of it moving. However, the adoption of light signals for traffic control would be a great advance, though it has one weakness. What signal is one to receive if, on approaching a crossing, one wishes to turn to the left? At that time the cross-walks over the direct route are closed to pedestrians, and one is unable to turn to the left.

I do not know of any system under which that could be avoided, except that adopted in London, which is that the turn to the left is only allowed on a special signal from the constable, who thereupon stops the foot traffic on the left-hand side and allows the motor traffic to proceed. I hope the Minister will convey to the Minister in charge of

the Police Department the necessity for controlling foot traffic. There is no attempt at present to prevent jay walking, except in rare instances, and even after taking care to slow down at a cross-walk, when one desires to proceed one is often stopped suddenly by pedestrians crossing the street at all sorts of angles.

Every driver has had that experience. At night time it constitutes a very grave risk. One of the few advantages of the black-out was that bare legs could be seen more readily than dark stockings when worn. Pedestrians often constitute a danger and do not mind if one becomes abusive, as motor drivers sometimes do. Still, many people take no notice. According to their point of view, they are entitled to walk across streets at all angles and at all times in spite of the regulation restricting pedestrians to certain defined cross-walks.

The central white line on roads has been found to be of great use from the point of view of safety. When the Allied Servicemen were here, many of them did not have much regard for other traffic on the road, but they seemed to have regard for the white line. On the Perth-Fremantle road, lorry drivers who frequently had very little regard otherwise for the law did observe the white line to a large degree. In fact, they rarely crossed it. These lines could be maintained without great expense, but if one travels outside a few of the principal streets, one finds the white line has become so faded as to be practically valueless. I ask the Minister to represent to the Chief Secretary that the expenditure of a small sum of money to repaint that line on all thoroughfares where there is a large volume of traffic is imperatively necessary.

I do not agree with the suggestion of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie that motorists turning to the left should be required to signal. A driver would be unable to signal unless he had some mechanical arm worked by a spring. One certainly could not signal on the left-hand side when occupying the driver's seat. If the rule that traffic coming from behind must not attempt to pass on that side were properly observed, motorists could turn with safety and there would be no necessity to make a signal. The reason why a signal is required on the right-hand side is that traffic behind intending to pass would pass on that side.

A booklet, I suggest, should be issued to instruct and guide motorists. Many probably would never bother to read it, or if they did, would not obey the instructions, but such a publication would be instructive and, I believe, would lead to some accidents being averted. A common experience is to see a driver start out from the kerb where there is parallel parking without giving any signal at all. The regulation bearing on this matter should be rigidly enforced. When a man drives out suddenly without giving any signal, it is most dangerous to overtaking motorists, who may be forced over and made to collide with other traffic. I defy any member who is a driver to say that he has not seen drivers, when turning to the right, give just a little wag of the hand as a signal—

The Minister for Lands: And you are not sure whether he is just flicking the ash off a cigarette.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes; instead of putting out his arm at full length and making the signal definitely. Even if a small charge were made for a booklet such as I suggest—and the booklet should contain diagrams—it would be very instructive to motorists as to what was expected of them. On the whole, the police handle the traffic well. Many of them are young men untrained in that class of work and they have to learn, but an improvement is taking place. Those who were raw recruits not so long ago are now handling the traffic with considerable ease and safety. Generally speaking, no-one would complain of lack of tact or politeness on the part of the police, except perhaps some individual who has been stopped when he thought he should have been given the right of passage. We cannot hope for perfection. All we can hope for and all we have a right to expect is moderate success, and that is obtained in Perth, in spite of some criticism. There are small details to be attended to, and when this has been done, there will be nothing to justify complaint.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [8.56]: I wish to tender a word of praise to the police from the Commissioner downwards. The attitude of the police to the general public is one of courtesy and consideration. I had occasion not long ago to hold a conversation with the policeman on the Canning Highway, or rather he had occasion to speak to me.

The Minister for Lands: I thought it was the other way about.

Mr. ABBOTT: He spoke in a tone of sorrow rather than anything else, but that did not prevent its having regrettable and expensive results. However, I felt that his approach to a very aggravated and annoyed man was very praiseworthy. Of course there are a few policemen who have yet to learn that courtesy is expected of any servant of the public, but I think it will not be long before those men are taught that to show courtesy is one of their duties. They have a varied and difficult job to perform.

The other day I saw a constable arrest a person who was incapable of looking after himself. The constable was a very young man and the prisoner was also very young, aged about three, I should say—a child crying on the footpath. The man on point duty watched the child for a time and seemed loth to shoulder the responsibility, but ultimately decided that he must do so. He approached the child and looked around anxiously for about five minutes in the hope of finding the mother. No mother appeared and then, with evident signs of embarrassment, he arrested the child by picking it up and walking off to the police station. As he did so, he went rather red in the face. The police have some very unpleasant and dangerous duties to perform, but I consider they are doing an excellent job.

Coming now to the vexed question of traffic regulations, I know that the Commissioner of Police would like to do many things to facilitate the flow of traffic. As soon as finance permits, I should like to see consideration given to marking cross-roads leading into main traffic roads where the traffic has the right of way. If this were done, I believe it would result in many accidents being averted. Many accidents have occurred in the streets in West Perth that run parallel with King's Park-road. I have seen some serious accidents there, including a bus accident. If the main road could have the intersections marked, it would be of some advantage.

MR. HILL (Albany) [9.1]: I feel I would like to pay a tribute to our Police Force and to express satisfaction at the

fact that the Vote has been increased, although I think we should all realise that the increase is not sufficient. When we look around and see that last year only a little over 500 police were looking after the whole of Western Australia, I think it speaks volumes for the efficiency of the force. The practice of regarding a policeman as a bogeyman is now a thing of the past. I feel that the Commissioner and the members of the force generally must be commended upon the practice of sending constables to schools to talk to the children. The officers are also doing very fine work in the police boys' clubs in the various country districts.

Policemen are, without exception, highly respected and useful members of the community. When there is trouble of any kind, it is always a case of getting police help. I feel it is Parliament's duty to assist the police in every way possible. One urgent need is increased accommodation at police stations. The transferring of police to the Eastern States for the purpose of gaining greater experience is something which should be extended. No matter who the man is, if he is kept in one locality he gets into a narrow groove. I am confident that exchanges of police with the Eastern States could be extended and that they would prove of benefit to the State as a whole.

The establishment of schools in conjunction with the other States of the Commonwealth in which young policemen and promising police officers can be trained is a proposal that should also be adopted. We want to train the young promising men to take on more senior positions. There should be increased travelling allowances for police officers stationed in country districts. Take, for instance, the district of the Plantagenet Road Board, only a small portion of which is in my electorate. There is only one policeman stationed at Mt. Barker, and he has to control the whole of the area. His case is typical of others in country districts. Members will agree that the job is a worrying one. This one man has to control hundreds of square miles of country inhabited by two or three thousand people, or even more. We could increase the usefulness of the police to the community by granting them a greater travelling allowance. We can well feel very proud of our Police Force and should be grateful for the

co-operation existing between it and the civilian members of the community.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [9.5]: In common with other members, I am glad to note the increase in this Vote. I wish the report of the Commissioner of Police was available, as I do not think it possible fully to discuss the activities of this department without having first read it. I do not know why it is not available, but I think members have the right to expect it before this Vote is discussed. I noticed there has been an increase of 79 in the number of sergeants and constables since last year. We all agree that this is necessary. Many country centres have been crying out for police protection for some years, and I hope the Minister will be able to tell us that those centres which were picked out for police protection some considerable time ago will soon be accommodated. I am also pleased to note the number of constables who have been promoted to the rank of sergeant. Two men police stations in the country are now, I understand, mostly in charge of a sergeant. That is highly desirable. Furthermore, it encourages the members of the force and I feel that any encouragement we can give them is fully justified. We ought to encourage the right type of man to join the Police Force.

Mr. Abbott: I think we do.

Mr. McLARTY: If the hon. member had allowed me to proceed, I would have said so. The qualification of a Junior certificate should be insisted on.

The Minister for Lands: They are asked to pass a stiffer examination than that.

Mr. McLARTY: A young person joining the Public Service must have passed the Junior examination. Brawn and muscle are not the only requisites for men in the Police Force. Intelligence and tact are also required. I agree that in the main we have been fortunate in the class of men who have joined the force. Over a number of years it has been my experience that police officers are highly respected and play an important part in the life of their districts. I have not heard any complaints about the way in which they discharge their duties. I have always considered that the members of the Police Force have been underpaid. We have heard a lot of talk tonight about the tact that policemen show, the respon-

sibility they carry and the advice which they give to people, and it is true. I think they are entitled to a higher rate of pay because of the responsibility which they carry and the duties which are expected of them.

The Minister for Lands: What is their pay? Do you know?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. Recently I had a look through a magazine which showed their rates of pay. I assure the Minister that I do know what the rates are.

The Minister for Lands: I was trying to find out. I might think of joining up!

Mr. McLARTY: As I say, I think the pay should be increased. Before young men are admitted to the Police Force, they should undergo some examination.

Hon. N. Keenan: A medical examination?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes; they do. But they should pass an educational examination, an intelligence test and a general fitness test, to prove that they are suitable for the force. I was wondering whether the Minister could tell us if the police do attend schools or refresher courses. Anyone who has had experience of military life knows that officers and N.C.Os. are called upon to attend refresher courses. The Minister shakes his head. I suggest to him that such a course is highly desirable. As we find military conditions continually changing, so do we find conditions changing in the Police Force, and it is necessary that the officers and N.C.Os. should be kept up to date.

For instance, consider the laws of the State. Look at the number of Acts we have amended this session and at the number of Bills we have passed. The police should know all about them. I do not think they can get a complete grasp of them merely by having the Acts sent to them. Again, I feel that if we could arrange for an interchange of officers between the States so that men from elsewhere could attend these schools and lecture to the police, it would be a great advantage. We could, perhaps, have an officer from Sydney to talk to our police. In that city they have much more experience in regard to serious crime than our men have ever had. I hope, of course, that things will never reach that stage here.

The Minister for Lands: Two detectives arrived today on exchange.

Mr. McLARTY: I am glad to hear that; I think it is very desirable. There is no question that with the interchange of police officers lectures by the visitors at the schools I have suggested would be in the best interests of the men and would lead to greater efficiency. I agree with the remarks of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie concerning unlighted bicycles. One strikes them wherever one goes, and there is no question that they are a distinct danger. There does not seem to be much enforcement of the law against them. I understand it is the responsibility of the local authorities and not always that of the police; but whoever is responsible, more attention should be paid to the matter, in some districts at least. I also agree with the hon. member concerning glaring headlights. I hope that notice will be taken of the suggestion of the member for Nedlands about putting down white lines, not only in the city but in the country as well. There is no doubt that white lines are a tremendous help to motorists. I have had experience of following heavily laden trucks. They get right on the crown of the road and some of them have loads that rattle, so that no matter how hard one blows the horn and tries to pass them, they do not take the slightest notice. They do, however, show respect for the white lines and keep to the right side of the road. Although perhaps this is not a matter that should be discussed on this particular Vote, I would like to mention that some of the culverts on our roads are much too narrow, and I hope an opportunity will be taken to widen them.

MR. DONEY (Williams—Narrogin, [9.12]: Perhaps the Minister will inform me of the reason for the increase of 79 sergeants and constables, the total for 1945-46 being 553 and that for 1946-47 being 632. This is not criticism; I am merely seeking information. As a matter of fact, I very gladly associate myself with those members who have been saying nice things about the department. I rose more particularly to mention that on the 15th August I introduced a motion dealing with angle parking. I recall that the Minister, in his speech on that motion, said it would be possible in six weeks' or two months' time—and that two months is now pretty well up—to furnish a report on the attitude of the police towards this question.

The **CHAIRMAN:** I do not think the hon. member can discuss that under this Vote.

Mr. DONEY: The report I am referring to would come from the Police Department.

The **CHAIRMAN:** I doubt whether the hon. member would be in order in discussing it under this Vote.

Mr. DONEY: Very well. I will wait for a more suitable opportunity.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [9.15]: I have a great respect for the Police Force generally. I think its members constitute a very competent and courteous body of men as a whole; but that does not apply to all of them. I want to refer particularly to a very undesirable feature of Safety Week. Certain policemen were placed with loud speakers at vantage points in the city, and it must have been a wonderful satisfaction to some of them to work off their alleged wit against the people they considered were transgressing the traffic laws.

Mr. Abbott: It was very effective, was it not?

Mr. STYANTS: It was very effective in raising the ire of a lot of people.

Mr. Abbott: It made them think.

Mr. STYANTS: It made them think, but probably made them think in the wrong direction. The hon. member may consider it is the function of the police to refer to the lack of intelligence of pedestrians, but the pedestrians concerned do not think that way. I heard that sort of thing on a number of occasions. I hope that those members of the Police Force who imagine it is their function to get into altercations with persons they are questioning will be put right by those in authority. Generally, members of the Police Force do not do this. Usually they are level-headed; but on two or three occasions lately I have heard policemen getting into heated argument with motorists whom they have had to question for breaches of the traffic laws. I was not like the member for North Perth; I was one of those concerned. It is not the function of the police to do that, and I doubt whether such conduct raises them in the estimation of the public.

I doubt, too, whether the prestige of the Police Force was raised by the tactics that were adopted during the Safety Week cam-

paign. I am not very enthusiastic about the efficiency of the traffic police, particularly in the metropolitan area. There are too many flagrant breaches of the traffic regulations taking place every hour of the day and apparently unnoticed by the police. The only conclusion that I can come to is that they are deliberately shutting their eyes to offences against the traffic regulations on the part of certain sections of the community. I refer principally to hire vehicles. I suppose there is a higher percentage of accidents in which taxis are concerned than there is in relation to any other class of vehicle on the roads.

There have been prosecutions against civilians recently for exceeding the speed limit. I have no objection to that. If a man exceeds the speed limit, no matter what vocation he is following, he is liable to prosecution. But what I would like to know is: Why are there not some prosecutions against the drivers of hire vehicles? Any day of the week at any hour of the day, one can travel between Perth and Fremantle and trail these hire vehicles and discover that on every trip they will exceed the speed limit. I think the speed limit for big buses is 25 miles per hour. I travelled to Fremantle last Sunday week, and I trailed one of these buses. It was doing 42 miles an hour. I came home via Canning Bridge and I trailed another bus from Applecross. I found that the driver was doing 48 miles an hour.

Mr. Doney: You had some difficulty in passing him, I suppose?

Mr. STYANTS: I did not attempt to pass him, and I did not trail him very far. These are not isolated instances. Every man who drives a motor car in the metropolitan area knows quite well that the greatest offenders against the speed laws are the hire vehicles. I believe the police know what is going on but are prepared, for some reason that is not clear to me, to shut their eyes to the fact that these vehicles are exceeding the speed limit. I cannot recollect any action having been taken by the Traffic Department against drivers of hire vehicles for excessive speed, and yet that is going on every day of the week.

Mr. North: Are you talking of taxis or buses?

Mr. STYANTS: I am talking of taxis and buses, and all other hire vehicles. I

have frequently noticed that in Wellington-street—which is possibly one of the busiest from the point of view of vehicular traffic and where parking is permitted on both sides of the road—near the carriers' rank, the street space is used for the purpose of transshipping goods from one lorry to another. These people are double-banking but we do not see them being accosted by the traffic police. A lorry might be parked one out from the kerb, thus making three lines of parked vehicles, and remain there for a quarter of an hour while its cargo is transhipped, but no action is ever taken.

The drivers of these vehicles also commit many other breaches. Night after night when I go into town I see, within a quarter of a mile of the traffic office, vehicles parked without tail-lights. Frequently when going from Wembley to Perth, at night, I see motorcars with no headlights or with only one headlight or with glaring headlights. I see innumerable push bikes with no head or tail light and, in addition, I frequently see three bicycles travelling abreast in the daytime, and that is against the regulations. Far too many breaches occur for me to be particularly enthusiastic over the job being done in the metropolitan area by the traffic police.

I was pleased to read in the Press a statement by the Commissioner of Police that he intends to take some action against those drivers—particularly of heavy vehicles—who do not give way at intersections to persons on their right, and also against those who hug the centre of the road and refuse to move to their correct side to allow other vehicles to pass them without having to go completely over to the wrong side of the road. The latter is a flagrant breach of the law and motorists experience difficulty in passing these vehicles.

Although we have passed legislation which should, to some extent, relieve the congestion at the traffic office when people are renewing their licenses late in June and early in July, I hope that some initiative will be shown by the officers there in the way of improving the existing arrangements. I know that those premises are somewhat restricted but I am satisfied that, with some slight structural alterations, 50 per cent. of the present congestion could be avoided. To my knowledge no attempt has been made

in the last 10 or 12 years to improve the position and, as a result, chaos and confusion occur there every year. If no-one at the traffic office has any suggestions to make, an officer could be sent from the Principal Architect's Office to carry out structural alterations.

In dealing with the matter of headlights, I remember going some years ago, with other members, to the University to witness a demonstration by Professor Ross in connection with our headlights and speed laws. It is generally considered that the retarding force of one's brakes should, in fair condition, be 40 per cent. of the weight of the vehicle. If they have a retarding force of 50 per cent. they are regarded as being good. Professor Ross gave to each member a typewritten sheet on which was set out the distances in which a motorist would have to stop to abide by the regulations, and he made allowance for the average time of reaction of a driver from when he first realised the possibility of danger.

At that time the regulations provided that no beam of light—at first the regulation dealt with the main beam of light—at a distance of 75 feet should be more than three feet from the ground surface. Professor Ross showed that it was impossible for a driver when travelling at more than 30 miles an hour to stop clear of any obstacle which he was able to see with headlights which conformed to the regulations. Despite what he clearly demonstrated, both by models and by the information on the paper given to members, no alteration has been made in the regulations. That means that in the country a motorist, whose headlights are focused in conformity with the regulations and who is travelling at a speed of 40 miles per hour—which is permitted—would not be able to stop clear of an obstruction from the time that it came within the range of his headlights.

I doubt very much whether there is, in the State, any set of headlights conforming to the regulations. If we are going to say that no beam of light will be more than three feet high at a distance of 75 feet in front of a car, a motorist will not be able to see any more than about 15 feet of the road ahead of him. The question of jay walkers in the the city has been raised. The cross-walks provide a certain amount

of protection to the pedestrians if they would only use them, but constantly one finds people crossing the street only 10 or 15 yards away from the cross-walk, and very probably they are going at an angle of 45 degrees across the street. I am a great advocate of the cross-walk, and agree that traffic lights at cross-walks would be a distinct improvement. However, if they are to be installed the Police Department will have to see that pedestrians use them to a greater extent than they do at present.

Another matter to which I will refer does not actually come within the jurisdiction of the Police Department, though it is connected with traffic in the metropolitan area. I refer to the trolley buses. I believe they are great offenders against the traffic laws, particularly in that when stopping at the stopping places, which are usually before they reach the intersection, they frequently foul the intersection and stop the traffic. I hope the Minister for Railways, who is in charge of the trolley buses, will see that those controlling them give instructions to the drivers that they must stop clear of intersections. In perhaps 25 per cent. of cases on the Wembley route the buses over-run the stopping place and foul the intersection. In some cases they foul it completely and block the whole of the traffic, while in other cases they block only part of the intersection. It adds considerably to the danger, because traffic is then inclined to pass by them, when there is actually not room for two vehicles, and sometimes scarcely room for one to pass.

My admiration for the service being given by the Traffic Department is at present limited. There has been an improvement over the last couple of months, and possibly the "Rafferty's rules" that crept into our vehicular traffic in the metropolitan area during the last four or five years were due to the fact that there were no patrols to send out. Now that patrols are again available, I am looking forward to the time when, by vigilance on the part of the traffic police, a great improvement will be shown in the observance of traffic laws in the metropolitan area. When an improvement takes place I will be just as appreciative of, and enthusiastic about, our traffic police as other members are. For the present I reserve my appreciation, until such time as considerable improvement is effected in the control of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the metropolitan area.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [9.35]: I will refer first to the distribution of the Police Force in Western Australia. From the figures in the Estimates—indeed, I think we knew it before that—we see that there are 632 members of the force for distribution in this State. We have a population of under 500,000, and consequently the number of people in this State per police officer is in the vicinity of 800. I have been informed, on reliable authority, that it will be necessary to withdraw a large number of constables from the country and outer areas of the State, and to bring them to a school in the metropolitan area in order that they may complete their training, which was interfered with by the war and the necessity to place them in various stations before their training was completed.

Consequently, the situation regarding police protection in the rural and outer areas—which in my opinion is bad enough now—will in those circumstances be made worse, temporarily at all events. Even when that temporary difficulty is overcome,—assuming we have no substantial increase in the present number of police officers—I do not think the police protection in the outer areas will be sufficient, when compared with that afforded in larger centres of population, with the average, that I have mentioned, of about 800 persons to each police officer. In recent weeks I have made application to the Commissioner of Police for additional police officers to be stationed at two places in this State, and I know of one or two other applications that have been made by other members of this House, at the request of local residents in other districts.

All those applications have been rejected by the Commissioner, substantially on the ground that there is no reasonable need for the extra officers to be stationed in those places. In one of those cases the population of the district, in which there is one police officer stationed, is stated by the Year Book to be 3,250. The nearest other police officer in one direction is 40 miles away, and in another direction 50 miles away. That particular road board district covers an area of something like 250 or 300 square miles. In my judgment the police officer stationed there has too much to do, if he does all that is required of him and gives proper attention to the peace and good order of the district.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are 3,250 people in that neighbourhood, or that there is such a large distance between that officer and the next, and notwithstanding that the average per head of population is one police officer to 800 people, the Commissioner of Police contends that the application of the local authority in that district for an extra police officer is not justified, and in consequence has rejected it. Of course it has been rejected in a kindly manner, and I am not complaining of the method of the Commissioner and his officers in considering the application. I am merely complaining of the result, because I do not think we should be satisfied with a system of police protection which obviously must provide in some parts a police officer to every 200 or 300 people, and in other parts one officer to 3,000 or 4,000 people.

I know of another instance where the population of a road board district is given by the Year Book as 1,650, which I understand does not include the native population, estimated at a further 350. The single police officer stationed there is 35 miles from the nearest officer in one direction, and 200 miles from the nearest in the other direction. He is also the local Protector of Natives. In conversation with him I found that he is fairly fully occupied for a large part of his time, at all events, in attending to the needs and difficulties that arise out of the presence of those native gentry in his district.

For a long time it has been contended by the local authority that in this district, which not only contains approximately 2,000 souls but also covers an area of 3,000 or 4,000 square miles—a scattered population with a number of small settlements at long distances—the services of another police officer are justified in order that the duties being performed may be carried out more efficiently and that greater attention may be given to the conditions that exist in the immediate vicinity of where the police officer is stationed. The Commissioner of Police again replied in kindly terms that no opportunity was available for an additional officer to be appointed and he did not think there would be any prospect of any such appointment being made in the reasonably near future. He thought, indeed, that the situation was already well in hand, or words to that effect.

I find other places where there is a population given in the "Pocket Year Book" as

over 2,000 people and where there is only one police officer and no other police for a long distance. I venture to say there is just as much necessity for police protection in areas such as I have mentioned where there are numbers of people such as I have referred to as there is in the metropolitan district, and I am inclined to subscribe to the views put forward by the member for Pingelly that there should be some limitation on the number of police who are required for traffic duty in the city.

Any steps that can be taken to provide at suitable places mechanical means for the regulation of traffic, which are so successful, as the Minister for Lands indicated by intersection, in certain of the Eastern States, should be put into effect here. If we are so short of police manpower and if it is so difficult to obtain trained officers to carry out what in this State are the principal functions of the police, namely, the preservation of peace and good order and the discharge of various other duties we know of, we ought to minimise the number of police maintained for traffic duty, so far as possible, and this, I am sure, could be contributed to by a system of mechanical lighting at intersections. This system, in my view, is far more efficient than police control by hand, as it were, which we have had for a long period of years.

Mr. Fox: In Melbourne, where there are traffic lights, you will see policemen at every intersection.

Mr. WATTS: I did not notice them. Probably they were there on the beat in much the same way as we have police on the beat in Perth, while others are on point duty. Quite aside from that, I have no doubt that the lighting system is more efficient and far more easily followed by pedestrians. I have not had the experience of driving a motor vehicle in cities that have this lighting system and I will not express any opinion as regards the motoring public, although I cannot see that it would present any difficulty from the point of view of the motorist or of the pedestrian. As far as pedestrians are concerned, the lighting system in operation in the Eastern capitals is easily followed, and, when observed as it is by a great majority of the pedestrians I have noticed, would give the best possible results.

So we ought not to hesitate to move forward in this matter unless very sound rea-

sons can be shown why this system would not be efficient in Perth. I can conceive of no such reasons. Perth is a much smaller city and it has intersections that run mostly at right-angles and thus lend themselves to this type of traffic control. We ought not to hesitate any longer in putting into operation a scheme of this sort at the principal intersections in the metropolitan area. If this will not relieve any substantial number of police for service elsewhere, it is high time we found some other means of obtaining additional police so that applications of the kind I have mentioned will not meet with refusal.

It is very difficult to make people in the outer places believe that it is fair and reasonable for them to have one police officer to do the work for 3,250 people when, on a State average, it would require four police to do the same work and in many places with a smaller population there would be six or eight police. So I submit to the Minister that the whole matter of distribution of police in this State and the number of police required should be given early and careful consideration. I do not think, and I trust he does not think, that the present state of affairs should be allowed to continue without review. If we cast our eyes over the Estimates of many years ago when the population was about one-half of what it is now, we find that the number of police officers was almost as great as it is at present. Though there has been a large increase in the population, an increase in outer settlement and the creation of many new settlements and townships, there appears to have been no corresponding increase in the number of police officers available. Therefore I say it is high time the whole matter was reviewed.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [9.47]: I have been approached by some of the older members of the Police Force regarding a rumour that they are to be retired at the age of 60. These men have taken out superannuation in expectation of continuing until they attain the age of 65, and unless they pay a substantial sum of money, in the vicinity of £150 odd, they will not be able to draw the amount of superannuation specified for a man retiring at the age of 65. This rumour has caused a lot of worry among the older men. I should like the Minister to inform me whether there is any

likelihood of such men being retired at 60 without any recognition of their superannuation rights and whether they will have to pay more in order to become entitled to their superannuation.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [9.48]: The member for Williams-Narrogin asked for an explanation of the increase in the Police Estimates. I have a note stating that during the past year the Police Force was placed on a 48-hour-week basis and given one rest-day weekly in lieu of one fortnightly. This, together with the ever-growing demand for police protection to be provided, rendered the authorised strength inadequate to meet requirements, and approval was given for the strength to be increased from 598 to 650. The reduction of hours to 48 a week, the weekly holiday in lieu of the fortnightly holiday and the increase of 52 men account for most of the increase in the Vote.

The Leader of the Opposition asked whether there are some police officers who have not completed their training. I believe there are. The Commissioner of Police admits that the force is under strength at present, but arrangements will be made to have the vacancies filled as soon as possible, although suitable recruits are difficult to obtain. The Commissioner also said that some of the men at present serving have had only two weeks' training. They will be given a special course of training at an early date, and until their training is completed it will not be possible to bring the force up to full strength. Owing to the necessity for relieving officers in the country, some of the older men were sent from the metropolitan area while the younger men have been kept in the city to undergo the special course of training to which I have referred.

I have dealt with the main points that have been raised and as to which an explanation was requested. The other matters raised by members will be brought to the notice of the Minister for Police at an early opportunity. In reply to the member for Mt. Magnet, I do not know how the rumour arose that policemen were to be retired at 60 years of age. To my knowledge there is no truth whatever in the rumour. I would say it was a matter of Government policy as to whether police-

men should be retired at that age. The matter has not been discussed at all by the Government.

The Premier: Certain provisions in the Police Act govern that point.

The **MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST**: Yes. A civil servant can be retired at the age of 60 years; but, as I have said, the matter has not been discussed by the Government.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 29:

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause, the following words be added:—"and by deleting in paragraph (b) the words 'a half' and inserting in lieu thereof the words '48 minutes'."

The parent Act deals with all industries not covered by an award if they come within the definition of a shop or a factory. It is possible that some factories may only work a five-day week. I am not sure whether the match factory in Perth does not work a five-day week; the workers there did not come under an award for some considerable time. My object is to provide that the 44-hour week may be worked in five days.

The **MINISTER FOR LABOUR**: I cannot accept the amendment. There is no provision in the Act for a five-day week, nor does the Bill contain such a provision. Before the amendment could be accepted, it would be necessary to alter the Act to provide for a five-day week.

Mr. ABBOTT: I cannot understand the Minister's objection to the amendment, because the Act specifically provides for the maximum number of hours that may be worked in any week. Whatever hours are worked, they must not exceed 44 per week. Why should we not make provision to work the 44 hours in five days?

The Minister for Labour: Then put a five-day week in the Act!

Mr. ABBOTT: No. The Act does not say how many days are to be worked. It does not say that a man shall work 5½ days a week. All it says is that he shall not work more than 44 hours. All I am doing is to give an opportunity for an industry, if it so desires, to work the 44 hours in five days. What is the objection to that?

Mr. McDONALD: I think this point is worth the Minister's attention.

The Minister for Labour: I have given it a lot of attention.

Mr. McDONALD: Then it is worth even more attention! This will apply where there is no award prescribing conditions; and the effect of the Bill as it stands will be to deprive of the five-day week all employees who are not covered by awards. The idea of the member for North Perth is to assist in making an arrangement by which employees can get that benefit.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 39:

Mr. ABBOTT: I propose to move an amendment which I have not placed on the notice paper.

The Minister for Labour: You have had long enough!

Mr. ABBOTT: I move—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

This paragraph provides that Australia Day shall be a holiday. When I said that the 10 days of public holidays a year were provided for by the Arbitration Court, the Minister said I was wrong.

The Minister for Labour: So you were.

Mr. ABBOTT: The actual ruling of the court is this:—

All Western Australian workers not already receiving it will be entitled to a standard of 10 days holidays in each year unless in a particular industry the Australian standard indicates that a lower number is generally applicable elsewhere or proof is advanced to demonstrate that a particular industry cannot stand the economic shock resulting from such imposition or whenever there is some other industrial compensation.

So I was not entirely wrong when I suggested that the Engineers' Award provided

only for nine days, and that is an Australian standard and that in a garage in the country only nine public holidays are allowed. I want to see the maximum number of holidays given that is possible, having in view what is wise in the circumstances. I think the proper authority to decide this is the Arbitration Court and I do not think the Minister will differ from me in that regard. I am merely trying to make this Bill coincide with the determinations of that court so that it may not be embarrassed on any future occasion.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The position is that there are eight holidays set out in the present Act. No matter what the hon. member may try to read into the Arbitration Court award, the award says, "the standard fixed" and the standard was fixed, so far as this State is concerned, by the Drake-Brockman Award for the Railway Union, which was 10 days. The last case so far as this State is concerned resulted in the Drake-Brockman Award, and the Government has agreed to the whole of its workers having 11 days. Private employers have now completed arrangements, to be ratified by the court, providing for 10 days holidays but not necessarily the same 10. It is no good the hon. member shaking his head. It is my job as Minister for Labour to know these things.

It is my job to read what the President of the Arbitration Court says. I admit what he said was ambiguous; but the only anomaly is that some unions want a certain day as a holiday while others want another day. That matter is being ironed out now. As to this being a matter for the Arbitration Court, Section 163 of the parent Act already provides for that. It sets out that any Arbitration Court award or any agreement that has been made a common rule over-rides anything in this Act. All this measure will do is to provide for those individuals who are not covered by an award. There are certain sections of people in different places that it is almost impossible to organise into unions. The effect of the judgment of the President of the Arbitration Court is this: The standard set by the Federal Arbitration Court is 10 days holidays. Now Easter Saturday has come into the measure for those that have to work on that day and that has made it 11 days for this State. The standard is 10 days but in

most cases it would be 11 for those having to work on Easter Saturday. I cannot accept the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (c) the following words be added "and after the word 'accordingly' at the end of the section add the following proviso: Provided that on any public holiday not prescribed as a holiday a factory may be closed, in which case an employee need not present himself for duty and payment may be deducted; but if work be done the ordinary rate of pay shall apply."

This amendment is to carry into effect the ruling given by the President of the Arbitration Court at a special inquiry, at which all parties were represented, held for the purpose of settling the question of annual leave. At the conclusion of the inquiry the President stated what he proposed to insert in every award. I have tried to amend the Bill so as to make it correspond, as nearly as possible, with the standard set by the court as late as the 18th August last. If there are certain public holidays other than those provided by the Act—and the Minister has pointed out that there are more public holidays than are awarded by the court—then a factory may be closed and work not provided. If work is provided it must be paid for.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I again draw attention to the fact that the court has laid down, not a set of holidays, but something which provides for the employers—and I am now talking of private employers—and employees, a standard, and it is then left for them to arrange the holidays. The amendment states, "Provided that on any public holiday not prescribed as a holiday a factory may be closed."

Mr. Abbott: That is in the parent Act.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes, but according to the definition in the Act the only holidays that can be prescribed are those already mentioned and those prescribed by proclamation by the Governor in Council. I frequently have to proclaim a holiday in York for the races, or in Northam for the show, or for some other purpose, but they will be proclaimed and be holidays under the Act. It seems to me impossible to have a holiday as suggested by the hon. member when he speaks of a holiday not prescribed. If it is not prescribed in the

Act or proclaimed, it will not be a public holiday and there will be no necessity to pay single time, double time or anything else.

[Mr. Fox took the Chair.]

Mr. ABBOTT: What the Minister says is quite correct, but the amendment is to provide for a contingency like this: There may be some holiday that is a public holiday for general purposes.

The Minister for Labour: It will be prescribed by the Governor in Council for the purposes of this Act.

Mr. ABBOTT: Not necessarily, but it could be.

The Minister for Labour: It will be.

Mr. ABBOTT: In some awards there are other public holidays. If it is the intention to give only ten holidays there may be some public holiday not prescribed, and this proviso is one which the court has allowed in most awards. Under it if an employer keeps his factory open he pays ordinary pay and, if not, he does not pay anything. The proviso gives him the right to close his factory.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I have had a close acquaintance with the Act since 1920 and the shop assistants have had Easter Saturday since 1919, and it has been the custom to proclaim that day as a holiday for the State. In addition, every now and again the member for Katanning, or someone else, might ask me, because of some big function, to have a certain day proclaimed as a holiday and that is done. But the other ten public holidays will be proclaimed throughout the State as such under the Act, and be the only days that will affect anyone. If a day is not prescribed as a public holiday and an employer keeps his factory open he will not have to pay anything extra.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. ABBOTT: I do not propose to go into a long dissertation on the provisions of my next amendment, but paragraph (b) of my proposed new Subsection (2) is more favourable to the employee than are the provisions of the Act. If a public holiday occurs during an employee's annual leave of 14 days, under the award of the court he gets an extra day's holiday, but under the provisions of the Bill he does not. There are other minor alterations, but basically

the 14 days' annual leave is provided for, and that is in accordance both with the Act and with this amendment. The provision to which I have referred is in favour of the employee, but there are others that are not. I move an amendment—

That all the words after "thereto" in line 1 of paragraph (d) be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu:—

"the following subsections:—

(2) (a) Except as hereinafter provided, a period of two consecutive weeks' leave with payment of ordinary wages as prescribed shall be allowed to an employee by the occupier of a factory after a period of twelve months' service with such employer.

(b) If any holiday provided for by Subsection 1 (a) of this section falls within an employee's period of annual leave and is observed on a day which in the case of that employee would have been an ordinary working day there shall be added to that period one day being an ordinary working day for each such holiday observed as aforesaid.

(c) If after one month's continuous service in a qualifying monthly period an employee lawfully leaves his employment or his employment is terminated by his employer through no fault of the employee, the employee shall be paid one-sixth of a week's pay at his ordinary rate of wage in respect of each completed month of continuous service.

(d) Any time in respect of which an employee is absent from work except time for which he is entitled to claim sick pay, or time spent on holidays or annual leave as prescribed by this section, shall not count for the purpose of determining his rights to holidays.

(3) In the event of an employee being employed by the occupier of a factory for portion only of a year, the employee shall only be entitled, subject to Subsection (2)

(c) of this section, to such holidays on full pay as are proportionate to his length of service during that period with such employer, and if such holidays are not equal to the holidays given to the other employees of the factory he shall not be entitled to work or pay whilst the other employees of such employer are on holidays on full pay.

(4) An employee who is dismissed for misconduct or who illegally severs his contract of service shall not be entitled to the benefits of the provisions of this section.

(5) The provisions of Subsection (2) of this section shall not apply to casual workers."

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If I desired to take advantage of the member for North Perth, I would accept the amendment, but I do not wish to fight one way one moment and accept something directly opposite the next moment. After the stan-

dard set by the Arbitration Court in August, every union has to have its award or agreement ratified to suit the particular industry, and as yet none of them has done so. The hon. member said that if the holiday falls during the annual leave period, the employee, under the award, gets an extra day in lieu. The Government has agreed to that, and that has always obtained, because in both the Railways and Tramways Departments there is continuous service and the employees often work harder on public holidays. In the case of private employers, and this measure has more to do with them than with anybody else, that has not been decided. The standard has been set, and until such time as the various unions go to the court and have the matter settled, it does not apply. I wish this measure to be as nearly as possible in compliance with the awards and agreements. I do not propose to accept the amendment.

Mr. ABBOTT: Why does not the Minister take advantage of the judicial authority in industrial matters in this State, and follow it?

The Minister for Labour: That matter has not yet been finally settled.

Mr. ABBOTT: It has been settled to the extent that there was a careful inquiry held on the 13th August and the president of the court said he would insert the provision in every award, leaving it open for individual unions to apply for an amendment of their awards.

The Minister for Labour: No union has yet done that.

Mr. ABBOTT: Whenever there is a new award, these provisions will be inserted, and they are not all in favour of the employees. An employee who is dismissed for misconduct or who illegally severs his contract of service will not be entitled to the benefit of the provision. I have tried to assist the Minister to make the Bill coincide with what will in future be the average conditions relating to holiday leave in this State.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 61:

Mr. McDONALD: The intention of this amendment is to require a factory-owner or occupier to have his factory so ventilated

as to render harmless, as far as is practicable, all gases, vapours, dust and impurities generated therein. That must be done to the satisfaction of the inspector. If the occupier does not take those steps, he is guilty of a contravention of the Act, and becomes liable to penalties. There may be a reasonable difference of opinion between the inspector and the factory occupier as to whether all the gases and impurities present are harmless, and whether the necessary steps have been taken. The object of my amendment is to give a right of appeal, similar to that under Section 20. Under that section of the parent Act, if the occupier of the factory is dissatisfied with any order of the chief inspector, forbidding the use of premises, he may appeal to the magistrate in the local court held nearest the factory, and the relevant provisions shall apply. The appeals are set out in Section 21.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the member for West Perth referring to the second amendment?

Mr. McDONALD: I do not think the first one is really necessary. It is merely a formality.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for North Perth has an amendment that comes in between that of the hon. member.

Mr. McDONALD: If the member for North Perth deals with his amendment first, I could then probably move mine, because it simply provides for the right of appeal.

The Minister for Labour: I will accept your amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be inserted as follows:—

“(2) By adding thereto a subsection as follows:—

(2) (a) If the occupier shall consider himself aggrieved by any determination of the inspector or chief inspector in respect of any of the matters mentioned in this section he may appeal to the magistrate of the local court held nearest to the factory and the provisions relating to appeals with respect to requisitions by inspectors shall apply.”

Mr. ABBOTT: I do not intend to move the amendment of which I have given notice.

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

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 116:

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That after the figure “(1)” in line 2 of paragraph (a) the following words be inserted:—“and by adding the additional proviso to the section after the proviso now in the section as follows:—

‘Provided that on any public holiday not prescribed as a holiday a shop may be closed, in which case a shop assistant need not present himself for duty and payment may be deducted; but if work be done, the ordinary rate of pay shall apply.’”

The same arguments apply as those advanced in support of the previous amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Act is divided into two sections dealing respectively with factories and shops. The hon. member is seeking to get an amendment relating to shops similar to the one the Committee rejected for factories.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 138:

Mr. McDONALD: The proposed new paragraph (h) provides for a week's notice before an employee's services are terminated. I approve of that. In the case of neglect or refusal to carry out his duties in a satisfactory manner, the employee shall receive a week's notice in the shape of a warning. I do not think an employee should receive a week's warning if he refuses to carry out his duties satisfactorily, though if he neglects to do so, it might be fair to warn him. I move an amendment—

That in lines 7 and 8 of the proposed new paragraph (h) the words “or refusal” be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I cannot follow the hon. member's reasoning. An employee is to receive a week's notice for misconduct or for neglect or refusal to carry out his duties.

Mr. Watts: What is the difference between refusal and neglect?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: A man might neglect to do the right thing or he might neglect to do the job properly, and he might also deliberately refuse to carry out his duties. That is all the new paragraph provides for.

Mr. McDONALD: If an employee refuses to obey orders, he may be summarily dismissed without notice. In the event of neglecting or refusing to carry out his duties in a reasonably satisfactory manner, he must receive a week's notice or warning before being dismissed. A distinction is drawn between a man neglecting to carry out his duties, in which case he is to receive a week's warning, and the man who refuses to carry out his duties, in which case he also is to receive a week's warning. The paragraph is therefore inconsistent. As it reads, if he refuses to obey orders, he may be dismissed without a week's notice, but if he refuses to carry out his duties satisfactorily, he must be given a week's notice.

The Minister for Labour: I do not agree with you, but I do not mind if the words are deleted. It will be one penalty less; that is all.

Mr. McDONALD: If the Minister's advisers consider that the words should be re-inserted, well and good.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: The new paragraph seeks to protect employees from unfair treatment. It provides for a week's notice unless otherwise expressly agreed in writing. A man who is only casually employed in a shop or warehouse should be excepted because most proprietors would not think of getting a written agreement. I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the new proposed paragraph (h):—"Provided that this paragraph shall not apply in the case of any person who is engaged for the purpose of work of a casual description."

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If there were a definition of the word "casual" in the Act or in the Bill, I would not mind accepting the amendment. But that is not the case. There is no definition of "casual."

Mr. Abbott: There is in the dictionary.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: There might also be a definition in some law books. The practice is for every award to define a casual as a person who works less than six days a week. In the circumstances, I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: I will not debate the point at length. I rather thought that the term "casual" had a well-defined meaning.

The Minister for Labour: The trouble is that we are dealing with an Act, not with an Arbitration Court award.

Mr. McDONALD: I will consider the matter and see whether I can frame a better amendment, which I will show to the Minister, and perhaps something might be done to insert it in another place. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: I hope the Minister will make some arrangement to deal with this aspect. It will be easy enough to overcome the provision in the Bill. The employer will protect himself; he will make sure that persons engaged as casual workers will not be able to take advantage of the provision for a week's notice. The employer will overcome the provisions of the Bill by getting an agreement in writing before he employs these people, and that would make the position purely farcical. The casual workers employed at the Fremantle wool stores work a day or a day and a half and are then put off. They understand the position exactly.

The Minister for Labour: Their award contains a definition of "casual."

Mr. WATTS: I am aware of that, but other people are employed in similar circumstances elsewhere who are not covered by an award. I am only referring to these people as a type. I hope the Minister will take steps to ensure that some provision is inserted in the Bill to make the point perfectly clear to all concerned.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 12, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.47 p.m.