

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Clauses 36 to 38 are consequential on the knocking out of the plural voting provisions.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 37 and 38—negatived.

Clauses 39 to 44—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 11th December, 1945.

	PAGE
Questions: Regional hospitals, as to Planning Committee's report	2650
Collie coal industry—(a) as to report of Commonwealth Commission	2650
(b) as to stone drive to Co-operative Mine	2650
School desks—(a) as to manufacture by State Implement Works	2651
(b) as to requirements of Education Department	2651
Wool handling at Fremantle, as to carry-over of trucks and demurrage	2651
BILLS: Workers' Homes Act Amendment, 3r.	2651
Legislative Council Referendum, 3a.	2652
Building Operations and Building Materials Control, returned	2655
Industrial Development (Resumption of Land), returned	2655
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, returned	2655
Adoption of Children Act Amendment, returned	2655
Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, Council's amendment	2655
Superannuation and Family Benefits Act Amendment, 2r., remaining stages	2655
Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, 2r., remaining stages	2667
Road Closure, 2r.	2668
Reserves, 2r.	2670
Bush Fires Act Amendment, 2r.	2673
Milk, 2r., Com.	2674
Adjournment, special	2696

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

QUESTIONS.

REGIONAL HOSPITALS.

As to Planning Committee's Report.

Mr. TELFER asked the Minister for Health:

1, Has the hospital planning committee reported as to the potential regional hospitals for the State?

2, Is Kellerberrin or Merredin chosen as a regional hospital site?

3, Immediately manpower and materials are available will steps be taken to have the regional hospital built and completed?

4, Will a pathologist be attached to such hospital?

5, Have any efforts been made to have restrictions lifted so as to allow nursing staff to approach the State Arbitration Court in order that nurses may receive salary commensurate to the services they have rendered?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The committee has made tentative proposals.

2, Merredin is recommended.

3, The plan is one for progressive fulfilment, and hospitals will be constructed or enlarged in order of urgency and practicability in relation to other urgent demands for labour and materials.

4, Pathological services will be available. It is probable that a laboratory assistant will be attached to each regional hospital and more difficult pathological examinations be referred to the central pathological laboratory.

5, Yes—by prolonged correspondence and personal representations to Federal Ministers.

COLLIE COAL INDUSTRY.

(a) As to Report of Commonwealth Commission.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Has the report of the Commonwealth Government's Commission—headed by Sir Raphael Cilento—on the Collie coal mining industry been received by his Department?

2, If so, does that report contain recommendations regarding health matters, modern bathrooms for mine workers, prevention of dangerous and careless use of high explosives, and the humane treatment of horses working underground?

3, When is it intended to implement the recommendations contained in the report?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2 and 3, Answered by 1.

(b) As to Stone Drive to Co-operative Mine.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Is it a fact that for the past five years the Collie Miners' Union and myself have

pressed by deputation on several occasions to the Premier's Department and Mines Department for the urgent necessity of a stone drive being driven to connect with the coal seam at the Co-operative Mine at Collie?

2, Did Mr. Mighell, the Federal Coal Commissioner, recommend the above?

3, Who has been responsible for retarding this important development work?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, The Mines Department and the Coal Commission were both agreed as to the necessity for this work, which is now almost completed.

3, Various war-time circumstances have been advanced as being responsible for the delay.

SCHOOL DESKS.

(a) *As to Manufacture by State Implement Works.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Works: In view of the serious delay in the completion of orders received by the State Implement Works from the Department of Education for school desks, was due consideration given to the advisability of the retention of some, at least, of the 115 men transferred and/or dismissed from the works since the 1st August, 1945, in order to permit of more expeditious execution of those orders?

The MINISTER replied: Yes. Moulders, carpenters and painters are involved in the manufacture of these desks, and no tradesmen within this category were included in the 115 men concerned.

(b) *As to Requirements of Education Department.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Education:

1, Will the order for 1,736 school desks, given to the State Implement Works, provide sufficient desks to meet the whole of the requirements of the department and permit the supply of proper desks to all schools where such have been requested?

2, If not, when will orders be placed for the balance of requirements?

3, In view of the urgency of the requirement of these desks, in the interest of the children, and the fact that their manufac-

ture is likely to be excessively delayed because of suitable timber supplies not being immediately available, will he make strong representations in the proper quarters for this work to be given special priority in the supply of materials?

4, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The order for 1,736 school desks will enable the department to replace with dual desks the obsolete long desks in all Government schools.

2, Orders for replacement of old dual desks will be placed with the manufacturers at the earliest favourable opportunity.

3, Yes.

4, Answered by No. 3.

WOOL HANDLING AT FREMANTLE.

As to Carry-over of Trucks and Demurrage.

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Railways:

1, What daily carry-over of trucks was there from and including the 15th October, 1945, to the 30th October, 1945, at Elder, Smith & Co.'s Fremantle wool stores?

2, What demurrage was charged for those particular carry-overs that occasioned delay in release of trucks?

3, If no demurrage was charged, what amount (if any) would have been charged?

4, If not charged, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 15th October, 64; 16th October, 40; 17th October, 1; 18th October, 49; 19th October, 53; 20th October, 69; 22nd October, 97; 23rd October, 79; 24th October, 87; 25th October, 75; 26th October, 53; 27th October, 57; 29th October, 49; 30th October, nil.

2, Nil.

3, £402.

4, Owing to a misunderstanding, the officer-in-charge failed to have the demurrage charges raised, but debit is being rendered to the company today.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFERENDUM

Third Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gasecoyne) [4.36]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.37]: While it is true that the will of the people, as freely expressed after a free and fair presentation of both sides of the case, should be followed, I think I am correct in stating that it is Parliament's duty to determine what questions should be put to the electors. That, I think, is a generally recognised principle. Were it otherwise there would be no means, as I understand the position, of determining what questions were to be submitted, nor indeed would there be any means of prescribing that any question be submitted at all. It is, therefore, perfectly clear that Parliament has the right to determine what questions are suitable for an expression of opinion by the people. Thus, although we know that a referendum is expressly provided for in the Australian Constitution, it is there provided that no referendum can be submitted to the people unless a Bill prescribing the question or questions to be asked of the people shall first be submitted to both Houses of Parliament and be passed by both Houses, showing that Parliament regards the question or questions to be submitted as reasonable and proper to be put to the people.

Thus, also, I may point out that this House has on several occasions decided to prevent the people from determining matters connected with the licensing laws, as they should have by legislative right under the Licensing Act to determine those questions at such specific times as the Act requires such polls to be taken, seeing that Parliament has decided that those polls shall not be taken. Thus it is party to suspending a law to deprive the people of the right that they have to decide such a question as Parliament may choose, and in respect of which Parliament has by legislative action determined that they have an undoubted right to exercise the franchise. I would remind the House that Parliament has been a party to preventing the verdict of the people being obtained on a matter which, as I said, they have the right

by legislative act to determine. I will go further and ask the member for East Perth, and other members as well, whether they are prepared to submit to a referendum of the people any question which the fertile brain of any member of this House could evolve for the purpose of incorporating in legislation and submitting to the people by way of a referendum.

Is the member for East Perth, for instance, prepared to submit to the people the question whether the Metropolitan Council of the Australian Labour Federation, in connection with which, I understand, he holds an honourable position, should continue to exist, because I can assure him that opinions on that subject would be as much divided as are opinions on the abolition of the Legislative Council in the minds of the people of this State.

Mr. Withers: Or the abolition of the Country and Democratic League!

Mr. WATTS: Opinion would be strongly divided on that, I know. Or would the hon. member like to submit to the electors the question whether the Caucus system of the Labour Party, as applied to legislation, should be made unlawful? I might say that it is viewed with distaste by many people in the State, as it can result in minority legislation; it can result in the views of a minority of Parliament imposing its will upon the majority of Parliament, and I have no doubt it frequently does that very thing. So I think that in those circumstances even the member for East Perth would claim the right to oppose legislation which submitted important questions, perhaps of that kind, perhaps of other kinds which I cannot think of this afternoon, to the people by way of a referendum. This opposition would arise naturally in his heart; it would, as it were, be part and parcel of him notwithstanding that he alleges, as I do, that the will of the people, when fairly ascertained—and I lay emphasis upon the word "fairly"—should be observed.

It will be quite clear, therefore, that the questions to be submitted to the electors must be the determining factor in registering support for or opposition to any Bill by every member. Speaking on this occasion not only for myself but for those associated with me, I do not favour the abolition of the Legislative Council. Hitherto, no such suggestion has ever been made; but before I

pass on to deal with that question I feel myself able to paraphrase a writing of Rudyard Kipling. I can say, I think, that perhaps I am one of those who can bear to hear the words he has spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools. The position is that I made certain statements in this House, approximately a year ago, by which I am prepared to abide, because I do not make statements, as a general rule, I think, lightly or inadvisedly. It has been suggested that in an effort to influence the opinion of certain members of this House I spoke on that occasion, as I have just said I did on this occasion, for those who are associated with me. Therefore, in fairness to myself and in fairness to those who are associated with me on these benches, I will read a few of the remarks that I made in the opening stanzas of my speech on the 7th September, 1944, at page 474 of "Hansard" of that year. I started with these words—

Unlike members on the Government side, I and those associated with me in the platform to which we subscribe make no reference to the Legislative Council.

I went on to say—

Therefore, in the circumstances, in discussing this Bill, I find myself speaking for myself, leaving each of my colleagues to speak as his conscience dictates.

It is very easy for any member of Parliament who desires not to act entirely fairly to tear text from context of the speech of any other member and refrain, therefore, from setting out the situation which he has raised in a fair and reasonable manner. Consequently, I have gone to some pains to quote that as an indication that, while I am prepared fully, as at all times, to accept responsibility for what I say, I am not prepared to have that responsibility imposed upon those associated with me, if and when I have been at pains for obvious and clear reasons to state at the outset of my remarks that they were in no sense under any obligation of any kind to support me unless they wished to do so. But let me turn back to the question that I do not favour—nor have I ever said that I did, nor do I believe I shall ever say that I favour—the abolition of the Legislative Council. Hitherto no such suggestion, except perhaps by an inconsequential remark, has been made in reference to the matter in this House. It has certainly not in my period here been the subject of

any suggestion by way of legislation. But I will proceed and say this: The abolition of the Legislative Council seems to me to be unwarranted and I have never had it suggested to me that such abolition was necessary or desirable for the preservation of the public good in this State.

The amendment of the franchise is an entirely different matter and another question. But support of this Bill entails support of a proposal for that abolition being submitted to the people. I agree with the member for West Perth that a suitable alternative question would have been that regarding the so-called deadlocks Bill; but that particular amendment, when moved, was ruled out of order in the Committee of this House. The Bill therefore contains, in addition to a question to which I would offer no objection, a proposal to which I have never subscribed and which I will not support. The bi-cameral system is part and parcel of Parliamentary government in almost all British communities of importance. It prevents hasty and ill-conceived legislation. However the second House is constituted even if it is elected by adult suffrage as is the Senate in the Australian Commonwealth, always the presence of a second Chamber ensures the more careful consideration of legislation. Quite apart from the activities of second Chambers themselves their presence in my view prevents the other House from hastily passing legislation by virtue of a mere Government majority and by that means ensures a reasonable opportunity for the public to acquaint itself with the terms of the legislation and the effect of the proposed law and to submit through its members of Parliament varying points of view thereon. A second Chamber, however constituted, is a public protection and should be viewed as such.

But I have another and perhaps greater complaint against this measure. There is no provision for the cases for and against the proposals being submitted to the elector at the public expense. In the course of my remarks on the 7th September, 1944, I said "I hold that the will of the people, properly ascertained, should be supreme." The will of the people is not going to be properly ascertained under this measure. There is no suggestion—not a scintilla of suggestion—for any method of properly ascertaining

it in this Bill. Properly to ascertain the will of the electors in a Bill of this kind, supposing both the questions asked were desirable, it would be necessary to see that the cases for and against the proposals were submitted at the public expense; and any Government which in my view desires to put forward a fair and reasonable proposition to the Parliament of the State in this matter would not have hesitated for one moment to incorporate in this measure provisions similar to those, or having the same effect as those, which are to be found in the Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act, 1906-1928, of the Commonwealth of Australia. At Section 6 (a) of that law we find these words—

6A. (1) If within nine weeks after the passage of the proposed law,—

That is the law which, in the first place, provides that a question shall be submitted to the electors—

—through both Houses there is forwarded to the Chief Electoral Officer—

- (a) an argument in favour of the proposed law, consisting of not more than two thousand words, and authorised by a majority of those members of both Houses of the Parliament who voted for the proposed law; or
- (b) an argument against the proposed law, consisting of not more than two thousand words, and authorised by a majority of those members of both Houses of the Parliament who voted against the proposed law,

the Chief Electoral Officer shall, within two months after the expiry of those nine weeks, and not later than two weeks after the issue of the writ, cause to be printed and posted to each elector, as nearly as practicable, a pamphlet containing the arguments together with a statement showing the textual alterations and additions proposed to be made to the Constitution.

(2) When there are to be referendums upon more than one proposed law on the same day—

- (a) the arguments in regard to all the proposed laws shall be printed in one pamphlet,
- (b) the argument in favour of any proposed law may exceed two thousand words if the arguments in favour of all the proposed laws do not average more than two thousand words each; and the argument against any proposed law may exceed two thousand words if the arguments against all the proposed laws do not average more than two thousand words each,
- (c) instead of separate statements in regard to each proposed law, there may be one statement setting out all the

alterations and additions to the Constitution to be made by all the proposed laws, with marginal notes identifying the proposed law by which each alteration is proposed to be made.

7. A copy of the writ and a copy of the proposed law or of the statement (if any) attached to the writ shall immediately after the issue of the same be forwarded to the Governors of the several States.

There we have a reasonable and considered attempt to acquaint the people who are to be concerned in the referendum with the arguments that can be adduced by those who support and by those who do not favour the proposals. That is done at the public expense. There is an opportunity for everyone, if he will, to acquaint himself with the points of view to be put forward by those for and those against the respective proposals submitted to the electors. The absence from this Bill of a similar provision has, as I said, immediately placed the Government in the position of being unwilling properly to ascertain the will of a people who are in possession of the facts. No doubt if this Bill were to pass in its present form and without provision for making known the alternative case at the public expense, the Government, as the Commonwealth Government did in the last referendum, would place its resources of finance and propaganda, derived from the funds of the taxpayers, at the services of the vote "Yes" cause in addition, I have no doubt, to the funds and resources of the A.L.P., and those holding a contrary view would find themselves financing some meagre publicity from their private resources instead of the presentation, in a fair and equitable manner, of both sides, being made a burden on the public purse.

Hence, in my view, there is nothing else to do but to reject this Bill on two counts. The first is that it proposes to submit two questions, one of which is undesirable, and, for the reasons that I have given, it is the duty of Parliament to determine what questions are desirable. Had the Bill contained one question only, leaving out the matter of abolition, my views on that aspect of the measure would be different from what they are. But the Bill contains two paragraphs, one of which I do not favour. As a member of this House I feel under no obligation to submit that ques-

tion to the electors any more than the Commonwealth Parliament is under an obligation to submit to the public a question which both Houses of that Parliament do not favour.

In conclusion let me say I trust that if a verdict of the people is ever obtained on this question the Government will be more anxious, if it happens not to register a success, to adopt the verdict of the electors than its confreres in the Federal sphere seem anxious to do as they are disinclined, it appears, to accept the electors' verdict since the recent referendum. I do not think my second objection can at any stage be overcome. Unless the Government had been prepared to insert in this Bill, as it was originally presented, a provision to enable the case—on both sides—to be fairly presented at the public expense, it is impossible for the necessary amendment to be inserted. Because it would involve public expense it is beyond the capacity of a private member or of another place. I trust, therefore, that, on these two grounds, this House will reject the measure, or, if it does not, that it will be rejected by another place on the same grounds.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (4)—RETURNED.

1, Building Operations and Building Materials Control.

2, Industrial Development (Resumption of Land).

With amendments.

3, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.

4, Adoption of Children Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 2, Subclause (1):—Delete the words "thirty-first day of December" in line 12 and substitute the words "thirtieth day of November."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is a simple amendment. We amended Subclause (2) of Clause 2 by substituting the word "November" for "December", but by some inadvertence overlooked amending Subclause (1). The Leader of the House, in another place, moved an amendment to bring Subclause (1) into conformity with Subclause (2). I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th December.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.1]: It is unfortunate that this Bill should have to be introduced to amend the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act at this stage, because when that measure was before the House—I have been at some pains to read again the debates that took place at that time—it seemed to everyone, and I think one could safely say the measure was passed in that belief, that the most expert calculations had been made and that the contributions and calculations were regarded as quite satisfactory and unlikely to require any drastic change to ensure successful operation of the fund. It is true that the then Premier, now the member for Geraldton, when introducing that measure, went into the question of the difficulties involved in superannuation schemes of this character and said, in the course of his remarks, "But almost invariably the rock on which the proposals can split is that of finance." I do not suppose the then Premier ventured that as a prophecy at the time, but it is unfortunate that today that is the position of the fund.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: We took advantage of the actuaries.

Mr. WATTS: Yes, it was worked on actuarial calculations which apparently were based on tables of mortality existing then for approximately 27 years, and now for approximately 35 years, which have been found to be faulty in that they did not take into consideration the increased life of a large proportion of individuals, probably consequent upon advancements in medical science and better nutrition. The fact remains that those actuarial calculations were made, and in good faith. I do not think anybody would venture to dispute that, but in the net result we are today finding that, on what I think is correctly described as an actuarial reserve basis, we are £386,000 short. That does not mean that the fund is deficient to that extent now. As the Premier said, it could go on for a number of years successfully, as far as payments to beneficiaries were concerned. It would not be successful, however, because there would come a day of reckoning. It is to put the prospect of that reckoning out of sight, and also out of mind, that this Bill has been introduced.

When one considers the relative position of civil servants under the 1871 law, until April, 1905, compared with the position of civil servants employed since that time, under the Superannuation Act, one is struck by the great difference in the benefits to be derived by the one section, such few of them as now exist, compared with those of the other section that are contributors to the superannuation scheme, and one is compelled to the point of view that it was most unfortunate that attempts at and ideas for the building up of superannuation and family benefits many years ago were not put into operation long before they were, because, had that been done, the difficulties we are facing today—at a time when the State's finances are not in a position to stand a much greater strain—would have been obviated, in that the fund would have been established successfully and those financial difficulties substantially removed many years ago. Of course, it is no use crying over spilt milk and we have to face the position as it is.

I think the Premier, in introducing this Bill, made the position quite plain. He made it apparent that there are only three possible courses, the abandonment of the

fund, doing nothing, or the passing of legislation such as we have now before us. I agree that the fund cannot be abandoned. That would be a distinct breach of contract with the Government employees who are members of that fund and subscribers to it. To leave the position as it is would involve, in the future, another distinct breach of contract with a large proportion of the persons concerned or, alternatively, such vast contributions from the resources of the State that we have no guarantee that they could be made. It is therefore a matter of facing up to the responsibility and determining whether the proposals that have been put forward are likely to solve the question. There, of course, we are in exactly the same position as we were in 1938. We were assured then by actuaries, in good faith, that the scheme would function. We are assured now by other actuaries, in equal good faith, that the additional contributions and altered proposals in the measure will mean that the scheme will function successfully in the future.

We, particularly, on this side of the House, who have not been able to examine this matter inch by inch as it has progressed from 1938 to the present time, in close contact with all its ramifications, are obliged, perhaps even more strongly than members of the Government itself, who should be more closely in touch with it, to accept the verdict of the actuaries and assume that in the future everything will be satisfactory in that, within a reasonable period of years, the fund will catch up on its apparent insolvency. If that is not to be the position, it will produce great difficulties and heartburnings in the future, because any further increase in the contributions, especially those on the female side which, for actuarial reasons again, are being increased more than those on the male side, would be a hardship on the persons concerned, because there is no corresponding benefit to be derived in the way of annual payments, and there is always to be faced the increased cost of living which we have discussed in this House on another occasion in relation to this subject. It is to be hoped that there is no possibility of error this time because a future approach to the matter, if it had to be made on lines similar to this Bill would, in my opinion, be catastrophic.

I found, in perusing the debate, that at page 2079 of 1938 "Hansard", the Premier said, "At the commencement the State scheme will cost a little more than it will cost after the scheme has been in operation for some time," and he estimated that for the first year the State's contribution would be nil, as 26 fortnightly contributions would have to be paid by the subscribers. He estimated that for the second year the State's contribution would be £15,000, for the third year £45,000, for the fourth year £85,000, and for the fifth year £120,000. That was based, according to the then Premier, on a suggestion that the membership of the fund might be as high as 15,000, which I believe was practically all the members of the service concerned at that time. The then Premier went on to say that if only half the members of the service concerned were to join the scheme, the State's contribution over that period of years would be correspondingly reduced.

At no time, on the figures given us by the Premier, have there been more than approximately two-thirds of that number of subscribers to the fund. It has been 10,000 odd out of the figure of 15,000 mentioned by the then Premier, and now it is in the vicinity of 9,000, roughly two-thirds of the total. In those circumstances, it could have been expected, in the fifth year of the fund, that the expenditure by the State would not have exceeded more than two-thirds of £120,000, or £80,000, but the situation is that there is approximately double that figure involved as a State contribution and that, again, is distinct evidence that whoever made the estimate, at the time when the original Act was prepared as a Bill, was a long way short of estimating properly the financial obligations that the State might have to undertake as its contribution to the payments, particularly those due to subscribers who had not been subscribing over a period of years but who were entitled to benefits under the Act.

It seems to me there is a dismal record of anticipation in this matter; a record that, while I have nothing to say against the bona fides of those who made it, indicates that estimates, made bona fide and carefully, in the future in matters such as this, must be discounted if we are to be certain that we are not to have problems of this

kind arising in other matters, and indeed in this matter itself. I am in sympathy with the Premier in the proposal he has brought down. I think it is a bona fide attempt, though one that must be regretted, and not viewed with favour, to overcome difficulties that have been forced on him by no fault of his own and by no fault of those who preceded him, except that there was a too-ready acceptance of estimates which have been proved to be faulty. In that belief, and being unable to find in the measure any injustice or unfairness being imposed on subscribers, I have no alternative, though reluctantly in the circumstances, but to offer my support to the Bill.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.15]: I much regret the circumstances that have necessitated the bringing before the Chamber of this measure. and I do not suppose any member derives any pleasure from it. I know the unhappy experiences of Government employees, particularly railway men, in connection with a number of benefit and provident funds in the past. I do not know in what mind these hair-brained schemes were conceived, but almost without exception for 25 or 30 years, every scheme in which the railway men have participated has either bankrupted itself or the contributions have had to be increased and the benefits decreased. We were told that those funds had proved to be unstable because they had not been actuarially tested beforehand. We were, to a degree, satisfied with the assurance that the Superannuation and Family Benefits Bill had been subjected to that test before being introduced into Parliament, but now we find, unfortunately and to the discomfort of the contributors, that it is just as unstable as were other funds that preceded it.

The question that arises in the minds of contributors is: Will this be the last time that contributions will be increased or will it happen that benefits will be decreased next time? They are justified in asking that question because we assured them on the best advice it was possible to secure—that of the Government Actuary—that the fund was solvent and would remain solvent. It is inconceivable to me that a man holding the position of Government Actuary should make such a colossal blunder as to take

the mortality experience of the 1911 census and use it in 1938 when it must have been known that already the superannuation schemes of two States and of the Commonwealth, which had been assessed on the same census figures, had proved to be unworkable and unstable.

I think the proposals contained in the Bill will improve the Act. Apart from the increase in contributions which, in the case of a man with only four units is not great—it is only a matter of 6d. a week extra or an increase from 8s. 5d. to 9s. 5d. per fortnight—I think the other proposals will be an improvement. Where a person has four concessional units as at the age of 30, assuming he is 55 years of age and has taken out an additional two units, the additional units will cost him in the vicinity of 4s. 6d. per fortnight extra, so that it will cost him about 9s. for the four units.

There is another proposal that will improve the Act. Assuming that a contributor is paying for four units, when he reaches the retiring age, he will have the option of taking the full pension of £2 per week, representing the value of his four units, or he may accept £1 a week representing the value of two units and a refund of the contributions made for the other two units. While this is an improvement, something better should have been done in connection with the surrender value of the two units. If it cannot be done now, it should be done at some future date. Assume that a person joined the fund at 30 years of age, he would pay in for 35 years before reaching the retiring age and, for the two units at the concessional rate, he will have paid into the fund about £215. It must be remembered that the whole of the time the fund has that money it is receiving 3½ per cent. interest for it, but it is proposed to return to the contributor only the bare amount of the contributions he has paid.

I should say that if a man went to an insurance company and put up a proposition to pay approximately £6 5s. a year for 35 years, representing about £215, the value of the policy that would be offered him would be at least £350. So it is a gilt-edged proposition from the point of view of the fund.

The Premier: What would its surrender value be?

Mr. STYANTS: That would depend upon how long he had been contributing before surrendering the policy. I am assuming that the man was approaching the retiring age, which would be the case of the contributor to the superannuation fund. The fact of a contributor withdrawing his money costs the fund nothing. If he did not withdraw the money in a lump sum, he would be entitled to £1 per week for the rest of his life. So the fact of his withdrawing the £215 would not cost the fund anything; the fund would be handing over the liability to the Commonwealth Government under the old-age pensions scheme. Assume that the contributor desires to take a lump sum settlement for his two units, I consider that the fund should pay him simple interest on the contributions paid for those two units for the 35 years.

Another alteration that might be of advantage is that a contributor may surrender any additional units for not less than 75 per cent. of the amount he has paid or, after five years, 84 per cent. and, I think, after 16 years 100 per cent. This means that if a contributor has four units as at the age of 30 and assuming that he is 55 and has an additional two units, and finds that the increase in the rate for the additional units is too heavy, he shall have the right to surrender the two additional units and will receive at least 75 per cent. of the contributions he has paid or, after five years, 84 per cent. or, after 16 years 100 per cent. I feel sure that a number of contributors who have taken out additional units will find the impost particularly heavy and will want to surrender them. This amendment, I believe, will provide a little sugar-coating to the pill of increased contributions.

Another provision is that a pensioner who desires to leave the State must present a doctor's certificate to the board. I quite believe in that, but the Bill goes further and stipulates that the board shall have the right to refuse him permission to leave the State or, if he does leave, the board may stop his pension. A pensioner desiring to leave the State should produce a doctor's certificate, but that should be sufficient evidence for the board that it is not going to be injurious to the man's health if he leaves the State. To say, however, that after having produced the doc-

tor's certificate, the board shall have the right to say, "You shall not leave the State and if you do we can stop your pension" is entirely wrong. The latter portion of the provision should be deleted.

The Bill also contains a proposal that, where a pensioner is receiving an invalidity pension and he enters an occupation or business, the board shall have the right to cancel the pension. I think that is fair. There have been instances of men having retired from the service and been in receipt of invalidity pensions having engaged in occupations that suited them and have thus been able to earn as much as £6 or £7 a week and, in addition, have drawn the invalid pension from the fund. I think there is a man drawing an invalidity pension who is engaged in business, has a number of employees and is making probably £10 to £20 a week. It is right that the board should be able to cancel the pension in those cases, but provision should be made to ensure that, unless the man's invalidity pension plus his earnings are greater than the basic wage for the district he is living in, the board shall not interfere with his pension. The board would probably take that attitude, but there is nothing to say that it shall do so. The matter is left to the discretion of the board. We might be prepared to leave it to the discretion of the board and if, with the passing of time, we find that course is not followed, we can amend the Act to provide that if the invalidity pension and the man's earnings do not exceed the basic wage in the district in which he is living, the board shall not have the right to interfere with his pension.

I particularly regret the need for this Bill. As the Premier pointed out, there was one of three courses open to us. We could have continued and shut our eyes to the fact that the fund was not paying its way and would probably operate for 15 or 20 years and then become insolvent with the result that those who had contributed for many years, particularly the younger people, would find that no funds were available to meet the pensions they had been expecting on their retirement. We could have said that we would close the fund on the ground that it had been a bad job and had got us into a sorry mess and that it would be preferable to cut the loss.

The third course open to us was to do what is proposed in the Bill. I believe that this is the wise course to adopt and I think the increase of 1s. per fortnight as in the case I mentioned will not be prohibitive. I shall support the second reading.

MR. McDONALD (West-Perth) [5.29]

I agree that we have to keep faith with the members of the Public Service for whom this Parliament made provision under a superannuation scheme. Therefore we have to pass the Bill, and the Government has adopted the right course in bringing the measure down immediately in order to guard against the dangers that now threaten the fund. I wish to say a few words on general lines. I agree that the State, as an employer, is entitled to set an example and that members of the civil service, who are not in a position to make very great provision for old age, should have an assurance that they will not have to fear poverty when they leave the service on reaching the retiring age or on account of sickness. But these pension systems want a general overhaul, not only in this State, but throughout Australia. There are objections to them on both sides.

There are civil servants under this pensions system who feel that they would be as well off if they simply came under the existing old-age pension scheme, especially when it comes to the amount they might get for their widows. On the other hand, we have the spectacle that the money for the benefits which are to go to a special class is found by the great mass of people who will never enjoy those benefits themselves. So the general system of pensions, whether old-age or invalidity, requires a complete overhaul and co-ordination in the interests of an efficient system and also in the interests of more consideration to the great mass of the people who are not members of some Government institution or service, and who perhaps have very limited incomes and on retirement have nothing to look forward to beyond the present old-age pension and the disabilities through the means tests and otherwise which are at present associated with our old-age pensions system.

I come now to the Bill before the House on more particular grounds. First of all, it has been represented to me that there is considerable feeling on the part of female

contributors of the Public Service that their contributions are unduly high, or the increases are unduly great as compared with those of male contributors. In introducing the Bill, the Premier explained that experience has shown that female contributors enjoy the favourable circumstance of living, on the whole, longer than the male contributors and that was some reason for the considerably increased contributions proportionately they will have to make in future.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They retire earlier, too; at 60!

Mr. McDONALD: That is true. On the other hand, I am informed that the women say that the male contributor's pension covers his widow; and she, being a woman, will have the same favourable experience regarding length of life as is attributed to the female contributors in the Public Service. Therefore, they are not able so far to see things from the same viewpoint as the learned actuary who has advised the Government. I am not going to move an amendment or make a suggestion to alter the rates proposed under the present legislation; because, as the Leader of the Opposition said, that is essentially an actuarial matter on which a lay member is completely without any ability to form any judgment. But I suggest that the Premier might take the opportunity to make a fuller explanation for the reassurance of the female contributors on the point concerning the increase in the amount of contributions. The other point is this: I am informed there is considerable feeling amongst women employed in the Public Service that they should have the option of retiring at the age of 55. Many of them feel that they wish to do so; and they argue that no possible harm could be done to the Public Service, because there is considerable merit in people going out at a comparatively early age to make an opportunity for younger members of the service, for young people to come forward who are more full of energy and possibly may be more efficient in the discharge of their duties.

The suggestion is that the female contributors under this scheme, on reaching the age of 55, or any age between 55 and 60—60 being the present optional retiring age—should be entitled to elect to retire; and that, on paying into the fund the actuarial

equivalent of the payments they would have made up to 60 or 65 years of age should, on retirement at the earlier age, enjoy the same pension they would have had if they had continued working until 60 or 65. The position regarding the fund would be exactly the same. In other words, the female contributor who wants to retire at 55 pays up the contributions she would have paid between the age of 55 and 60 if she had remained for the normal time in the Public Service. Having paid up to the fund the contributions for the unexpired period, she is then allowed to retire at any age between 55 and 60 on the same pension which she would have had if she had continued in the service until she was 60 and had continued paying contributions to the fund during that time.

The Minister for Works: She would be on the pension five years longer.

Mr. McDONALD: I think it would be intended to cover whatever factor there might be in the interjection. The matter essentially to be attended to is the amount she pays; that is, the actuarial equivalent which has to be paid by her to the fund in respect of the fact that she retired five, four, three or two years before the normal retiring age. It is a matter of the female contributor being allowed to retire at 55 or later. She puts the fund in all respects in the same position as if she had retired at 60.

The Minister for Works: But the Government would have to pay its share for the five additional years.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is supposed to pay that now.

Hon. N. Keenan: She would have to pay the equivalent of interest; that is all.

Mr. McDONALD: I have an amendment which I propose to move in order that the Committee may form an opinion on this matter; but I must confess that with all these Bills coming down, the time I gave to it was five minutes. That time I spent in reading the parent Act and the amending Act and drawing up the amendment. If the Committee thinks it worthy of consideration, I strongly recommend the Premier to refer it to his Crown Law advisers to have the wording considered. In addition, it would necessarily have to go to his

actuarial advisers for comment on the soundness of the proposal from the financial point of view.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Our actuary lives in Melbourne.

Mr. McDONALD: Is there no local actuary?

Mr. Watts: We ought to appoint one or educate one.

Mr. Mann: What a state of affairs!

The Premier: We cannot help it if somebody dies.

Mr. McDONALD: I freely concede that I do not think it would be reasonable to expect the Treasurer to accept an amendment of this kind without professional advice from an actuary; but the principle is one which, if the financial side is sound, seems to be free from objection. We are often told it is a good thing for people to retire at a younger age and for young people to have a chance of replacing them. Here is an opportunity to put that into force. I hope that aspect will receive consideration; and if the Premier wishes to say, as he might reasonably do, that he could not accept the amendment if I moved it in Committee today or tomorrow, in the absence of actuarial advice, but that he would be prepared to entertain the amendment and, if it were sound, entertain it favourably, we might then get a step forward. If this Bill by any chance does not go through, or is postponed to a session early next year, we might have an opportunity to include this provision in the final legislation.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.40]: I desire to make only a few observations on this Bill. They are not so much directed to the matter that has been discussed up to this stage, but to quite another matter. This is a measure which would appear, on the face of it, to be due to faulty work on the part of the actuary who was employed for the purpose of preparing the scheme that was embodied in the Act we are now proposing to amend. That actuary is dead and I feel we should be very careful about imputing blame to him unless that blame is clearly deserved. It is said quite openly, for instance, that he made some gross blunder in the calculation of longevity; that he only took into account figures

that were-outmoded and out-dated; and that he used those figures for the purpose of making his calculation. I do not believe a word of it.

I knew the actuary, as did the member for Geraldton. He was a man of high qualifications and was not in the least sense ignorant of the fact—it was almost common knowledge; I think all of us at some time or other in the course of the last few years, and certainly before the date this Bill became an Act, read of it in various publications—that there has been a large increase in the number of years that human life can reasonably be expected to carry off for. There is no doubt in the world that Mr. Bennett had that full information before him; but in justice to his memory and reputation, I would like to know what facts were placed before him when he was asked to work out the correct premium to be charged under this insurance scheme. Was he told, for instance, that those who wished to join the scheme and who were almost on the very boundary of the years when they would be allowed to insure at all, were going to be allowed in, not at some premium at all commensurate with their age, but at a purely fanciful premium and one which, on the face of it, would make an enormous difference in the amount of premium that the other contributors to the scheme would have to pay?

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The Government accepted responsibility.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not mind one atom about the Government having accepted responsibility. I want to find out what information Mr. Bennett had. I want to clear his memory so that he will not carry the blame for a blunder which may have been due to many causes and which is now being attributed to him. I would also like to know whether the actuary had any estimate of the number of public servants likely to come under the scheme. Was he told that it was going to be purely voluntary and that therefore it would be rushed under specially favourable circumstances by all the aged members of the services and that very likely it would not be subscribed to at all by the younger members—as indeed happened?

It is well known that the younger members of the Civil Service to a very large

extent indeed refused to come into the scheme and are not in it today. If that was not fully explained to the actuary he is not the man on whose shoulders the blame has to rest for the scheme being now in a parlous position, but some other persons who nowadays want to shelter behind the possible fault or the alleged fault of that actuary. I should like if possible to have the instructions, which no doubt were in writing and were given to the actuary, placed on the Table of the House, so that we may all see them and know to what extent he was guilty, not of any dereliction of duty but of stupidity in carrying out these duties, and also that we may know whether the facts disclosed are of the character I expect they will be and on whose shoulders the blame properly rests.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: He was a member of the committee that prepared the Bill.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I remember asking the then Premier again and again what were the facts on which the whole scheme rested, and what facts were placed before the actuary, but I did not get an answer and I cannot get one now.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There may be some blame attachable to the other side of the House as well.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Everyone was to blame except the one person who, on the face of things, was the most to blame. I wish to say a few words about the Bill itself. There is a question amongst the present subscribers to the fund that this increased premium is being collected from them in order to make good the loss, or the perilous position if not loss, in which the scheme stands owing to past premiums not being sufficiently high. They think that, a blunder having been made, they are called upon to redeem that blunder and that in fact those who are now pensioners will be pensioners at their expense. A number of them know, and a number of us know, that there was at least one other fund in which this position arose, particularly the Police Benefit Fund. Those who were enjoying pensions from that fund were just collecting pensions from the premiums. As soon as the point was reached that the premiums were no longer sufficient, as we all know it ceased to be financial. This is a mistake on the part of the subscribers to the superannuation fund

because, as the Premier informed me, and I informed others who asked me, this present rate is only being passed as a sufficient rate to keep the scheme solvent and not to recoup any losses of the past which will be borne by the State.

Mr. J. Hegney: Solvent for those 30 years hence.

Hon. N. KEENAN: For a considerable period of time. It is not as supposed, and somewhat largely imagined, any attempt to collect money by increasing the premium which would recoup the loss that has happened in the past. I also wish to refer to another matter. There is an impression, which in certain circumstances will be a perfectly just impression, that when the parties applied to take out policies under the scheme, they were parties to a contract on their own side, a contract to pay so much, and on the Government side there was also a contract to pay so much and it was laid down that the scheme would in certain circumstances, which were set out in the contract, yield a certain pension or yield it to the widows if the pensioners died. These people want to know how it is that a contract can be varied without their consent. This is only an instance of not reading the conditions before one enters into these contracts.

According to the conditions of this particular contract, the premiums specified in the Act can from time to time properly be reviewed. Although that may be a hardship now in the case of those who, when they took on the contract, were able to carry on but may now be asked to carry a burden which they will not be able to carry, but that was provided for in the contract and is not cause for just complaint if in fact under the contract an increase is made. These are the few observations I wish to make. I really would not have risen except that I think an unjust slur has been cast on the memory of a man who was a very competent and faithful servant of the State. I think that slur should not have been cast on his memory without there being absolute ground beyond any doubt for so doing. Here for my part, and I am certain on the part of a great number of those others who knew the gentleman, I doubt very much that these grounds exist.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [5.50]: I appreciate the reception given to the Bill, because it appears that members realise the difficult circumstances and the necessity of facing up to them. On the point raised by the member for West Perth in connection with female contributions, insofar as the contribution itself is concerned, rather than to deal with the retiring age point he raised, it is very clear that all of the evidence which we could obtain not only through our own experience but through the experience of the Commonwealth, which had a fresh valuation based on the 20-year experience, rather than in our case in connection with our first quinquennial examination, definitely shows that the female rates were too low as contributions. There is no doubt that an increase in the female rates is fully justified. In the figures which I tabled and in the explanation I gave when introducing the Bill, it was clearly shown that the fact that the female rate at the inception was under the male rate was something that at that time was at least questionable as sound practice. We now have the experiences of the past to guide us, and the experiences of other funds which have been examined since our fund was first introduced.

There is no question that the actuarial examination of our fund and the investigation of the figures applying to other funds means that if we are to be on a sound basis we have no option but to accept the recommendation of the actuary, which is that the female rate should be increased. Even allowing for the varying retiring ages the female rates are at this stage in excess of the male rates until they reach the higher wages for females. On the question of the age rates themselves, for the units to which the females are contributing in excess of the concession units, there is no alternative but to accept the recommendation of the actuary. I quoted figures when introducing the Bill for the age 40 and age 50 persons, and they show that the increase per fortnight is not excessive. On the point in connection with which the hon. member suggests he will move an amendment, should he move it, I think I can explain to his satisfaction reasons why such an amendment should not be pressed.

The member for Nedlands appears to have confused the amount paid to the fund with the amount for which the State is responsible.

I thought I had answered completely the point that no person at present in receipt of a pension can be in any way an imposition on the fund, nor can he affect rates of contributions as revised to which other contributors continue to make payments for the very reason that in all cases where pensions are at present being paid the payment up to 90 per cent. of the amount being paid to pensioners is paid by the State. I gave an example where a person who had contributed only 26 fortnights had contributed to his own pension to the extent of no more than 5d. a week.

Mr. Doney: Do you think you are unduly generous now to those who link up with the scheme at so near the retiring age?

The PREMIER: That is a matter of opinion. In the launching of such a scheme it is necessary at its commencement to give to those at any age then in the service an opportunity to contribute. It may be that the State in its generosity gave to them a concessional advantage which was extra generous. Be that as it may, the point I wish to make for the benefit of the member for Nedlands is that there is in this new adjustment of rates no implication whatever insofar as present contributors contributing to future pensioners are concerned. I gave figures which showed that year by year the State has contributed as much as £142,000, whereas the fund had been drawn upon only to the extent of £18,000.

In regard to the hon. member's reference to fanciful rates of contribution, I point out that when the fund was inaugurated the age 30 was selected as the age at which contributors irrespective of age would contribute for the first four units, and in excess of those units he who elected to contribute for more than four paid at the actual age he or she would be at the time. Therefore, a big proportion of the contributors over the age of 30 are now paying as at the age of 30, and the State makes good the proportion of the contributions between the age 30 and the actual age in addition to their own share of the liability to the State and the proposal which was accepted when the fund was inaugurated.

Mr. Doney: Is that the same method as is followed in the Commonwealth scheme?

The PREMIER: The same method is adopted in the case of all States, although

there is a variation in the age. I understand that at the inauguration of the New South Wales scheme the age at which concessional units were taken was 40. In regard to the voluntary nature of the scheme that he agreed to, the report of the actuary has no influence on the stability of the fund, nor has the fact of this being a voluntary scheme any effect on the fund itself. It matters not whether there are 15,000 or 6,000 contributors; if the rates are actuarially sound, the fund will also be actuarially sound.

Mr. Watts: Does not the age of the majority of contributors make any difference?

The PREMIER: If the fund is to continue, as I am sure it will, it must of course be able to stand on its own feet, and be able actuarially to meet the demands made upon it when all contributors mature. The deficiency found by the actuary is in no way a threat to the fund.

Mr. Watts: It could make a difference in the future if all the young people pulled out.

The PREMIER: But all the young people will not pull out of the scheme. As a matter of fact, we do not know what will be the ultimate effect of the Commonwealth social benefits. At this stage the only prejudice in the eyes of the contributors concerns the effect of the Commonwealth social legislation. If it were not for that point, we would not have the difficulties associated with pensions, which this Bill is designed to alleviate.

Mr. Doney: Is it the Commonwealth social legislation that has caused the drop from 11,000 to 9,000 in the contributors to the scheme?

The PREMIER: No. I gave the House the full figures and tabled all the reports which concerned that point. The member for Nedlands stated that an unjust slur had been cast on the memory of the late Government Actuary. The point I have mentioned—that is, the voluntary nature of the scheme and what he termed the “fanciful” rates of contributions—could have no such effect whatever. The fund, as I indicated when I moved the second reading of the Bill, is in accordance with every modern trend of actuarial calculations and the rates fixed were as recommended by the late Government Actuary

and those associated with him. Their recommendations in the preparation of the Bill are those that have been followed to a large extent; and to the extent they were not followed, it really means the difference between the amount this fund would have shown as at the 30th June, 1944 and what it actually appears to be from the examination of the actuary.

The Commonwealth and the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria have each had the same experience with regard to the endeavours by actuaries to strike a rate anticipating over a long time what may be described as immeasurable factors. At that stage, some of those immeasurable things that could not be foreseen were the downward trend in interest rates and just what would be the earning capacity of the fund from year to year. Some of the funds already existing in Australia have earned high rates of interest. Initial investments from this fund earned over four per cent. interest. Therefore I would like the member for Nedlands to be quite clear in his mind that certainly, on my part, there was no suggestion of guilt, no suggestion of a slur nor any allegation but merely a facing of the facts, taken from the report of the actuary. Because of the accumulated results of immeasurable things, we have been forced to face the future in an endeavour to rectify errors of judgment, the result of miscalculations and other factors that have arisen during the last five years. That is the position.

Mr. J. Hegney: And even so you have the right to review the position.

The PREMIER: Part of the contract, as I stressed strongly when moving the second reading of the Bill, was the right of examination quinquennially of the fund so that the actuary might recommend a variation in rates should that course be necessary. I think that is quite clear and that the member for Nedlands feels that, in view of all the facts, there was no attempt whatever to cast a slur on any person associated with the Bill and that those who recommended it to the Government were confident that the rates proposed should apply and that they were the appropriate rates to recommend. Time has shown that their anticipations were not to be brought to fruition. In the circumstances the Government has been faced with the

necessity to amend the rates not in any revolutionary way but in a modest manner, in accordance with the recommendations of the actuary with the object in view that over a period of years the position will right itself. I appreciate the approach that members have made to this subject and the contributions they have made to the debate in connection with the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 8:

Mr. WATTS: The clause would seem to indicate the intention of the Government to dispense for all time with the services of a Government actuary—unless the Act should be further amended. For many years we had the advantage of the services of the late Mr. Bennett as Government Actuary and he proved himself a very valuable officer. As I interpret the clause, the intention of the Government is not to have a Government actuary, and I think that is undesirable. I do not know whether an actuary can be obtained at the present time, but if one is available I think his services, should he be suitable, should be availed of by the Government for assistance in this and other matters. If it is intended to make such an appointment, why include the amendment embodied in the clause?

The PREMIER: If I could resort to the vernacular and say that "an actuary is a rare bird," it would describe the position. Throughout Australia, and including those employed by the Commonwealth, there are only seven or eight actuaries. An actuary is a man possessing high qualifications, one who has had to submit himself to vital examinations and to devote himself to all sorts of studies in order to fit himself for this particular and peculiar vocation. If the Government were to wait in anticipation of someone graduating so as to fulfil the duties of Government actuary, it would have a considerable time to wait. In the circumstances, the intention of the Government is to keep the funds safeguarded through the employment of an actuary from another State and to amend the Act so as to give

the fund the benefit of a full board. I assure the Committee that the Government will exert every endeavour to secure the services of an actuary fully qualified if one should be available. For the time being, that is impossible and the Government has availed itself of the services of an actuary from another State, who will act in an advisory capacity.

Mr. DONEY: Do I understand that the gentleman who is taking the place of the late Government Actuary is himself an actuary? Is it the intention of the Government always to have in that position a man who is a qualified actuary? I appreciate that, as the position is at present, difficulty might be experienced if the Act were not amended.

The PREMIER: I have already answered that question but I fear the hon. member was temporarily absent from the Chamber during my second reading speech. I made it clear that the reports I tabled were from Mr. Bennett himself prior to his death and from the Government Actuary of Victoria, Mr. Gawler, whom we employed for this purpose, and whose services were made available to us by the Victorian Government. On the lamented death of Mr. Bennett the then Treasurer immediately conferred with the Premier of Victoria who made the services of the Victorian Government Actuary available and it was his report that I tabled.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 21—agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

New Clause:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—"14. A female contributor may elect to retire on or after attaining the age of 55 years and if she shall contribute in a lump sum or in such smaller sums and at such periods as the board approves the actuarial equivalent of the amount necessary to complete her payments to the fund up to a later age (not exceeding the age of 65 years) she shall be entitled to retire at the age so elected by her for retirement upon a pension equal to that which would have been payable to her if she retired at such later age of retirement."

For example, a female contributor might elect to retire at the age of 55 years. She

would say, "I would like to retire at 55 on a pension which I would have received had I continued working until 60." Thereupon, at 55 years, she pays into the fund the actuarial equivalent of the contribution which she would have made between 55 and 60 had she remained in the service. Having paid that actuarial equivalent, she then retires at 55 on a pension attributable to age 60. That principle is already recognised in the parent Act. By Section 35 (3) of the principal Act it is provided that a contributor who elects to retire on or after attaining the age of 60 years may contribute in a lump sum, or in such smaller sums, and at such period, as the board approves, the actuarial equivalent of the amount necessary to complete his payments to the fund up to a later age, not exceeding the age of 65 years. That is the principle which it is proposed shall be applied by the amendment in the case of women; they are to be carried five years further back to give them the opportunity to retire at the age of 55.

Mr. Doney: Women get the old age pension at an age five years earlier than men.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so. In the case of a woman, she may receive the old age pension at 60 years, whereas a man must have attained the age of 65 years. Men very often do not wish to retire earlier; they desire to continue in their occupation until they are 60 or 65 years. Women are different, and it suits some to retire at an earlier age. I appreciate that the amendment involves possible actuarial calculations. In my amendment I have used the phrase regarding the contribution of the actuarial equivalent that is contained in the principal Act, in the case where a member desires to retire at 60 instead of 65. If a woman desires to retire at 55, it may be that the actuarial equivalent which she should pay might be larger than is required to be paid under the provision in the Act allowing retirement at the age of 60. I appreciate that the Treasurer might require to obtain actuarial advice, and that in consequence of such advice it might be necessary to alter my amendment. I have said that the amendment was drawn by me very hastily in the time at my disposal, and it may require examination by the Crown Law advisers of the Government. However, I place the amendment before the Commit-

tee because it raises a matter of interest to many women members of the service. Even if it be not agreed to now, it might possibly be inserted in the Act at some later stage after actuarial advice has been obtained.

The PREMIER: I acknowledge that the principle is not new, but the further the age as at retirement is contracted the greater will be the impost both on the Crown and on the contributor, if the units are taken as at actual age group. That is not the difficulty associated with the proposal. The retirement age at 55 was considered by the Commonwealth Superannuation Board on two occasions and was turned down on both. The last time it was considered there were two schools of thought; one supported this principle for a review of the position to enable retirement as at age 55; the other was absolutely hostile to the proposal. The opposing views were on the ground that it would be an acceptance of a principle which would encourage, ultimately, compulsory retirement as at age 55, and there are scores of women in the Public Service of Australia to whom such a proposal would be repugnant. The Commonwealth, on that ground, as well as on the ground of the actuarial examination of the impost for the contributor each fortnight, decided against the proposal.

In our case, there is an added objection to this proposal. It would cost at least £400 to £500 of State revenue to meet the earlier retirement of each female concerned. It is not necessary to wait for actuarial calculations as to the effect of the proposal. I have the rates here, and will quote them. As I say, the proposal would have a serious effect on the State's finances; it would mean an added burden five years earlier on Consolidated Revenue. To clear the female contributors on a 90 per cent. basis, as obtains today, after the fund has been in operation for six years, would mean so much more at the higher rate and a continuing added impost, for the reason that females retiring at age 55 would be anticipated to live longer. The comparisons of contribution for retirement at age 55 are: The fortnightly contribution at age 50 would be £6, and if the female concerned were enjoying concessional units, she would be simply paying

under 7s., the State paying the difference between 7s. and £6 for her share, and an equivalent of £6 for the State's share in addition, whereas retirement at age 60 is £2 8s. 4d. per fortnight. So at the actual age group of anywhere between the ages of 40 and 55 the impost would be impossible if the rates had to be contributed by the women themselves.

But the anticipation is that the State would be responsible for the added burden of the female contributor, who will be contributing as at age 30, plus the additional proportion to keep the matter actuarially sound, being the difference between the age 55 rate and the age 60 rate. I therefore oppose the amendment on three grounds, namely, that it presents a proposal to the Government that would add a burden to State revenue; that it would be an impossible prospect for the womenfolk who have added units above the concession units, and that it would bring about the suggestion that age 55 would be the proper age for the retirement of women.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! After studying the import of this new clause I am compelled to rule it out of order. I think the Committee will agree with me after listening to the explanation given by the Premier.

New clause ruled out.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th December.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.47]: I do not think that any member of this House is in a position to offer much opposition to this measure. It has been extremely difficult for me to wade through the agreement which is virtually the Bill. It comprises something like 16 pages of much smaller type than is usual in the Bills themselves. I would say that it is equivalent to approximately 32 pages of a normal Bill as pre-

sented to this House. What we want in Western Australia is a supply of houses at the earliest possible moment and at the cheapest possible rate. No-one wishes to delay opportunities for the Government to provide these houses and, I trust, to be able in the near future to reduce the cost because not only will the Government be advantaged by such reductions but it will indicate to those who wish to build their own homes that they will be able to do so at a price commensurate with their means, which, at present, many are certainly unable to do. We want houses and that should be the ambition not only of the Government but of everyone vitally concerned in the interests of the State and its people.

This agreement, as far as I understand, has been signed by the authorities in almost every State of Australia and is practically an accomplished fact. I, therefore, do not see anything to be gained in the short time at my disposal—because we did not see the Bill until late last week when the House was sitting and engaged in other matters—in forming any opinion or making any suggestion to improve it. I am disinclined to involve myself, in the short time available, and in view of the length of the measure, in an attempt of that nature because, in view of all the circumstances of the agreement, it would profit me and the House but little because it is not to be anticipated that any major amendment, however desirable it might be, could be accepted. We had a similar experience with another measure of a similar type that was recently before the House.

I recollect that in the Legislative Council some few weeks ago a motion was moved and carried for the placing upon the Table of that House papers connected with the housing negotiations between the Commonwealth and the State. After some expression of doubt the Leader of the House finally agreed to have these papers tabled for a period of one week, and certain papers were tabled. While they were tabled I took the opportunity of going to the Legislative Council to peruse them, but I found that they supplied information as to the negotiations that had taken place only up to a period some weeks before the date of the motion and certainly did not include anything that had taken place in connection with the last, and I believe the most im-

portant, conference between the State and Federal authorities on this matter. In consequence but little information could be gleaned from that source. The matter which would have been most valuable in enabling a member to suggest in advance—because of course some legislation on this was anticipated—any alterations that might be reasonable, was not available because the relevant papers were not upon the file that was tabled.

There is no doubt that this housing question is a vital one. I confess to a considerable interest in it from the public standpoint. I would like to have had an opportunity to know at least as much about it as the Government officials who were concerned. They have spent many weary months in dealing with the various aspects raised under this measure but we, on this side of the House—I suppose it is unavoidable—are in the unfortunate position of having to deal with the matter in a very small fraction of that time. Where they have had months we have had days, or perhaps hours. Once again in this measure we find that there is an insistence by the Commonwealth that the financial resources of the State shall be pledged in connection with the carrying of a portion of the anticipated loss on the rental houses, because of the intention to charge a rental based on the income of the occupier rather than upon the cost of the premises.

I have no objection to the idea of making premises available to the occupier on terms that he can reasonably meet out of his weekly earnings. I think the idea of one-fifth of the family income as a maximum rental is quite a fair and reasonable proposition. I have found, however, one interesting passage in the agreement, namely, that the minimum rental shall be 8s. It seems extraordinary that such a provision should be included because it appears to presume a family income of not more than £2 a week which, I trust, does not exist in Western Australia at present in view of the cost of living! But, as I say, I have no objection to the method of allowing the tenant to occupy the premises at a rental that is not greater than one-fifth of the family income but that aspect of the matter and the liability of the State to make up two-fifths of the anticipated loss do lend point to the necessity for ensuring, as rapidly as

possible, that the overall cost of these premises be reduced because then the obligation of the State, which it can ill-afford to bear in view of the financial circumstances that we have discussed many times, would be reduced as early as possible.

I sum up my views on the Bill by saying that the whole of the negotiations have been the responsibility of the Government which must, therefore, accept the responsibility for the success or otherwise of the housing scheme included in the Bill. Whether the results are good, bad or indifferent the Government must accept the responsibility for the measure. We, here, are in no position, as I understand the situation, to amend the proposal because it is already practically an accomplished fact, the agreement having been executed by almost every one of the seven Governments of Australia. Therefore I offer not the slightest opposition to the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [8.0] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Road Closure Bill that is brought down towards the end of the session. In 1914 an area of 24.2 perches was excluded from the Police Reserve 3396 at Bunbury and the Crown grant issued to the West Australian Fire Brigades Board in trust for a fire station site. At the same time a right-of-way between the two reserves was declared for the purpose of giving access to the rear portion of the site. The Fire Brigades Board desires to erect a steel tower on this right-of-way, which cannot be placed elsewhere, but has no right to erect it as long as the right-of-way exists. As the only purpose of the right-of-way is to give access to the fire brigade site itself, there is no reason why the right-of-way should be retained. The local authority is

in support of the proposal to close the right-of-way and the Police Department has no objection. The proposal is supported by the Surveyor General and the Town Planning Commissioner. The purpose of this clause is, therefore, to close this right-of-way so that it may be incorporated in the fire brigade's site and thus enable the board to erect a required steel tower. The position of the right-of-way is shown coloured red on Plan "A."

Caltex Limited have applied for the closure of that portion of Irene-street lying between Ocean Parade and Brack-street at North Fremantle. The company desires to purchase the land. It already owns the whole of the land on one side of this portion of Irene-street, N.F. lots 52 and 53, and Lot 222 and is purchasing from the North Fremantle Council and private owners the land on the other side of the street—N.F. Lot 49. Last session the portion of Lancelot-street between Brack-street and Napier-road was closed to enable the Shell Oil Company who owned land on either side, to purchase it, and some years ago portion of Miriam-street, now Lot 252, was closed for the same purpose. All this land between the sea and the railway is considered to be an industrial area. There are only six houses, three of which are now owned by the Shell Oil Company, and the other three included in the recent purchase by Caltex Limited.

The proposal is supported by the local authority, the Town Planning Commissioner and the Surveyor General. The land, when the road is closed, will be Crown land, and approval is therefore sought, in addition to the closing of the road, for its sale to Caltex Ltd. at a price of £60. The position of that portion of Irene-street to be closed is shown coloured red, and the land owned or being purchased by Caltex Ltd. coloured blue on Plan "B".

Section 7 of the Road Closure Act, 1925, closed certain rights-of-way at North Fremantle, including three rights-of-way on North Fremantle Town Lot 49. No provision was made in that Act for the disposal of the land within the closed rights-of-way and the title still remains in the name of the original subdivider of the land, I. S. Emanuel. The North Fremantle council is the owner of the centre portion

of North Fremantle Lot 49 adjoining these closed rights-of-way and has sold it, together with the land in the closed rights-of-way to Caltex Ltd., who has purchased from other owners the balance of the block. When the council came to transfer the land it found that it had no title to the rights-of-way and now asks that authority be obtained to grant this land to the council for sale to Caltex Ltd. The proposal is supported by the Surveyor General and the Town Planning Commissioner. The position of the closed rights-of-way is shown coloured red on plan "C."

It is proposed to create a greatly extended site for educational purposes adjoining the present school site, Reserve 17035, at Fremantle. The Reserves Bill deals with portion of the Fremantle Public park which is being surrendered by the Fremantle council to be included in this new reserve, as well as Class "A" reserve 21511 at present a reserve for recreation, but which it is intended to include in this new educational purposes reserve. This clause deals with the closing of Park-street and portion of Skinner-street so that they can also be included in this same reserve. The Fremantle council has no objection to the closing of these streets and the whole proposal has the support of the Surveyor General and the Town Planning Commissioner. The roads being closed are shown coloured red on Plan "E."

The Workers' Homes Board purchased certain lands at Joondanna Heights, North Perth. The subdivision of these lands for the purposes of the board has recently been re-designed by the Town Planning Commissioner and, to give effect to this re-subdivision, it is necessary to close portion of two streets, Eleanora-street and Millet-street. The closures will not interfere in any way with the rights or convenience of residents or holders of land in the vicinity. Plan "D" shows coloured green the area of land concerned, and the plan coloured red shows the streets which it is proposed to close. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVES.*Second Reading.***THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon.**

A. H. Panton—Leederville) [8.10] in moving the second reading said: This Bill might be called a cousin to the Closure Bill, as it also comes down towards the end of the session. Reserve 19574 is a Class "A" reserve set apart for recreation—children's playground—and vested in the Nedlands Road Board. In 1938 an area of 30 acres was set aside for a horse depot at Herdsmans Lake, which at that time was considered a suitable site for an animal health and nutrition laboratory. It was then believed to be necessary for numbers of large stock, such as sheep, cattle and pigs to be kept at such laboratory, but it has since been found more convenient to carry out research work involving numbers of livestock at the various research stations where conditions already exist for maintaining and handling such stock. It is, however, necessary to breed small animals such as rabbits, rats, and guinea pigs at such a laboratory. If a veterinary school is started at the University in the future, the veterinary laboratories, if conveniently situated, could be used by students to carry out part of their training.

The Nedlands Road Board has agreed to make this reserve available for the purpose of these laboratories. The area, which is just over three acres, is ample for the erection of the buildings planned, together with any future extension, and facilities for the breeding of small experimental stock. It has the advantage of being close to the University, to bus and tram, and to existing gas, water and electrical services. It will also be easy to reach from the Department of Agriculture. The Town Planning Commissioner, the University authorities and the Surveyor General have all approved of the proposal. The building is now in course of erection, and it is expected that it will be completed early in the new year. This reserve is shown coloured red on Plan "A."

Reserve 2665 situated near Donnybrook was set aside in 1895 for the purpose of a race-course. It comprises an area of about 57½ acres. It is leased to trustees of the Preston Race Club for a period of 99 years from the 1st January, 1900. Two of the trustees are dead and the remaining one has stated that the club is defunct and that he is agreeable to the surrender of the lease.

Mr. Watts: Is that Mitchell?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not sure.

Mr. Doney: If he is alive, it must be, because the other two are dead.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Preston Road Board desires that the land should be set aside for the purpose of a greater sports ground and vested in the board. Before anything can be done to give effect to this desire the existing lease must be surrendered. There would be considerable difficulty in effecting a surrender in the ordinary way in view of the trust and also the fact that two of the trustees are deceased. It is usual to deal with cases of this kind in the Reserves Bill. This clause, therefore, provides for the surrender of this lease and the reversion of the land to the Crown so that it may be dealt with as Crown land under the Land Act. It will then be possible for the area to be set aside for the purpose of a greater sports ground and placed under the control of the Preston Road Board. The reserve in question is shown coloured red on plan "B."

The next clause deals with a block of land of an area of 26 perches, at the corner of Anstey-street and Angelo-street, South Perth. The South Perth Road Board holds the freehold of this lot which it purchased in 1908 for the sum of £40. The department has been informed by the secretary of the road board that that board, by unanimous vote, decided to make this lot available to the R.S.L., free of charge, for the purpose of erecting a building for the use of its members. The road board states that the block was for some time used as a public pound, then as an infant health clinic, and later for A.R.P. purposes, but as it proved unsuitable, new sites were secured. It does not now serve any useful municipal purpose. It is thought by the Crown Law authorities that, even if the Road Districts Act authorised the board to give away freehold land which it had acquired by purchase with the funds of the board, which is doubtful, a trust that it should be used for members of the R.S.L. could not be included in a transfer. It is therefore thought necessary to obtain Parliamentary approval. The Town Planning Commissioner considers that it would be difficult to find a better or more convenient site for the purpose. The Surveyor General approves of

the proposal subject to truncation of the north-west corner of the lot to which the road board has agreed. The clause provides for the surrender by the road board to the Crown, so that it may be created a reserve under the Land Act and a title issued to the R.S.L. The lot is shown coloured green on Plan "C."

Class "A" reserve 8313 was set apart for recreation in 1902. It has never been vested in anyone, is not used for recreation and, according to the Town Clerk of Northam, has not been so used for over 40 years. It is some distance from the existing townsite. The Commissioner of Native Affairs is seeking a permanent reserve for natives in the vicinity of Northam, and he considers that this is the most suitable area. He has asked for the purpose of the reserve to be changed from recreation to natives. The Northam Municipality strongly supports the proposal, which also has the approval of the Town Planning Commissioner and the Surveyor General. As it is a Class "A" reserve, the change of purpose requires Parliamentary approval. The area of the reserve is just over 4½ acres. The reserve is shown coloured red on Plan "D."

The Point Walter reserve, which is a Class "A" reserve for recreation, was at one time under the control of the Melville Road Board. Prior to the coming into operation of the Land Act, 1933, there was no power to lease a Class "A" reserve or any portion thereof. The road board desired to lease the tearooms at Point Walter, but to enable them to do so it was necessary to put through a special Act. An Act was passed in 1921 termed the Permanent Reserve (Point Walter) Act, 1921, to enable the Melville Road Board, with the approval of the Governor, to lease a portion of this Class "A" reserve 4813, not exceeding one acre, for the purpose of public refreshment rooms. In 1929 the board expressed the wish to be relieved of the control of this reserve, and on the 2nd July, 1929, it was placed under the control of the State Gardens Board. That board now desires to lease the tearooms at Point Walter for a period of five years and could normally, since the coming into operation of the Land Act, 1933, be given power to do so by Executive Council minute vesting the land in the board with power to lease. The Crown Law authorities, however, rule

that this cannot be done while the Act No. 23 of 1921 is in existence. Provision is made for the repeal of Act No. 23 of 1921 to enable the State Gardens Board to lease the tearooms.

The Workers' Homes Board has arranged with the trustees of the Public Education Endowment to sell to the board, subject to Parliamentary authority, certain lots at Collie, the Crown grant for which is held by the trustees for the purposes of education endowment. These lots, which comprise an area of about seven acres, are Nos. 881 to 896 inclusive, 907 to 914 inclusive, 917 to 919 inclusive, and 922, making a total of 28 lots of one rood each. The trustees have no power to sell without Parliamentary authority, which is therefore sought. The lots are shown coloured yellow on Plan "E," which also shows coloured green the area which is being retained by the trustees and which is required for the proposed site for a new school.

The trustees of the Public Education Endowment have agreed to sell to the Workers' Homes Board Merredin Lots 446, 467, 468, 473, 474 and 475, a total area of one acre, one rood, 38 perches, for an amount of £250. The Crown grant of these lots is held by the trustees for the purpose of education endowment. Parliamentary authority is required to enable the trustees to sell this land to the board in accordance with the arrangement made. The lots are shown coloured red on Plan "F."

The next one is rather interesting, and I think the facts are known to the member for Middle Swan. Certain blocks of land, being the balance of a private subdivision at Bayswater, were surrendered to the Crown in 1926. These lots were all limited to a 33 ft. frontage. Members will agree that that is a very small frontage. Such a small frontage would not be allowed at the present time, and it is undesirable that a house should be built on such a small block of land. Two owners of land adjoining the surrendered land desire to increase the size of their lots to permit of an extension of their dwellings. Though under normal circumstances the Crown would not submit for auction a lot with a 33 ft. frontage, it agreed in these cases to submit the two adjoining lots to auction to enable the two

persons concerned to obtain a reasonable block of land with a 66 ft. frontage.

Mr. Seward: Will they be protected in buying?

Mr. Doney: I should say not.

Mr. Mann: Let us hear the story.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is the interesting part. It was thought at the time that there was no danger of anyone other than the adjoining holder purchasing the land as there was no demand for land in this locality. One of the persons owned Lot 45 and desired to purchase Lot 44, and in his case there was no competition and he purchased the lot at the upset price of £15. The other person, who owned Lot 40, wished to purchase Lot 41, but unfortunately there was bidding at the auction of this lot and it was purchased by a person other than the adjoining owner at a price of £22.

This purchaser later found that the land was insufficient to enable him to put up a building to meet the local authority's requirements, so to meet his difficulties and also those of the owner of Lot 40, an arrangement was made with the purchaser to accept the adjoining Lot 42, which was also held by the Crown, in exchange for the one purchased by him at auction, and to give him a lease of Lot 43, which would provide him with a 66 feet frontage, and then to give the owner of Lot 40 a lease of Lot 41 which was originally put up for auction. The latter, however, was not inclined to accept a lease, and pointed out with a good deal of reason that it was very inconvenient to have a house built partly on freehold and partly on leasehold land. He asked that the lot should again be put up to auction. It is considered undesirable to put up either of these lots again to auction, which is the only way they can be sold under the Land Act, as some other person might purchase them and the position would be worse than ever. The only way in which these additional lots can be sold to these two persons without going to auction is under Parliamentary authority, and this clause, therefore, provides for the sale of an adjoining lot to each of these owners.

Mr. Watts: How long is it since the auction took place?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Only a few months.

Mr. J. Hegney: Last July.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Plan "G" shows the position. Lot 40 was held by one person and Lot 45 by another. The lots surrendered to the Crown are those coloured red—Lots 41, 42, 43 and 44—which have been renumbered Swan Lots 5076, 5133, 5134 and 5079. The balance of the lots are freehold. Houses are built on both Lots 39 and 40 so that the owner of Lot 40 can only obtain additional land from the Crown. The ultimate result of the arrangement will be that all three persons concerned will have blocks with 66 feet frontages and the Crown will have disposed of the four lots surrendered.

The present school site of just over six acres at the corner of East and Ellen-streets, Fremantle, was surrendered by the Fremantle council to the Crown in exchange for other land. This exchange was authorised by the Fremantle Lands Act, 1921. The Education Department is now seeking a very substantial increase of this site so that ultimately an educational centre can be established there to include post primary boys and girls' schools, science and technical training. The Fremantle council has agreed to give up an additional area amounting to somewhat over 11½ acres from the Fremantle Park (Lot 1517) to increase the school site. The Fremantle council holds the Crown grant of this lot in trust for a public park.

It has also agreed to give up the land lying on the south side of Vale-street between the Old Women's Home and East-street for the same purpose, and raise no objection to the closing of Skinner and Park-streets for inclusion in this new educational site. This last area includes Class A reserve 21511, which is a reserve for recreation and is vested in the Fremantle council. It also includes reserve 17597 which is set apart for municipal purposes and is also vested in the Fremantle Municipal Council. As regards this latter reserve, the transfer can be made without Parliamentary approval, but as reserve 21511 is a Class A reserve, Parliamentary approval is necessary to change the purpose of the reserve from recreation to education and to re-vest the land in the Crown. This Class A reserve No. 21511

was originally a cemetery known as the Skinner-street cemetery.

The Fremantle (Skinner-street) Disused Cemetery Act, 1909, deemed the cemetery to be a disused burial ground under the Cemeteries Act and vested it in the trustees of the Fremantle cemetery. Section 2 of the Fremantle (Skinner-street) Disused Cemetery Amendment Act, 1931, vested the land in the City of Fremantle, and later, the Fremantle (Skinner-street) Disused Cemetery Amendment Act, 1935, all slabs and tombstones having been removed and re-erected in accordance with the provisions in the 1931 Act, created the area a Class A reserve for public recreation. This educational site will also include portion of Lot 1777 at one time the site of the asylum, and later of the Old Women's Home. It is considered that the provision of this site will be a great acquisition to the people of Fremantle and will not interfere with the recreation facilities of the public in this area, which are already adequately provided for on the balance of the Fremantle Park. The Public Works Department, the Lands Department, and the Town Planning Commissioner, are all agreed on the suitability of this site for the purpose contemplated. The various reserves are shown on Plan "H." I have a number of plans to be laid on the Table of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [8.29] in moving the second reading said: This is a small and simple Bill designed to enable the Commissioner of Railways to assist farmers to make firebreaks during the period when burning is prohibited. Under Section 9 (1) of the Act, the Governor has power to declare the times of the year during which it is unlawful to set fire to the bush within any district or part of the State mentioned. The times during which burning is unlawful are usually termed "the prohibited period". Under Subsection 3 of the same section, the Governor may allow the Railway Department to burn on any railway reserve during such prohibited periods for

any period not exceeding eight weeks in any one year. Under arrangements between the Railway Department and the Rural Fire Prevention Advisory Committee the former does not apply for permission to burn before the 24th December in any year. In order to reduce the danger of fires from engine sparks—engines do spark, some of them—the Commissioner of Railways is prepared to co-operate with owners or occupiers of land adjoining the railway reserve to assist in burning a break on their land while the railway gangers are burning on the railway reserve.

Mr. McLarty: He does that now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He does it now but not in certain prohibited areas. This has the effect of substantially widening the break and reducing the fire hazard from sparks from railway engines.

Mr. Leslie: So the Railway Commissioner does acknowledge that the engines do spark.

Mr. Mann: And the Government is acknowledging it now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In some circumstances it is not possible at present to give effect to this proposal by the Commissioner of Railways. The owner of the land can only burn during the prohibited period when authority is expressly given under the Act. Under Subsection (2) (B) of Section 10 it would be possible for such land to be burnt with the approval of the local authority up to the 15th day of December or where the prohibited period commences on or after that day, for the first 14 days of the prohibited period. The burn is confined to one chain in width on any grass land between two fire breaks, each not less than six feet wide. This however, does not meet the position in two directions—

1. It is limited to grass lands; and

2. In those districts where the prohibited period commences before the 15th day of December, it would not provide for burning between the 15th and the 24th December.

This proposed amendment to the Act will overcome that difficulty. It will allow the burning with approval of the local authority on any land, and also at any time provided the burning is carried out in co-operation with the railway gangs. The road boards can only give the authority provided the work is carried out in co-operation with the railway gangs that are burn-

ing on the railway reserve. Furthermore, a six foot break must be provided, and other precautions that are laid down in the Act must be complied with. An application was received by the Rural Fires Prevention Advisory Committee from the Narrogin Road Board—this should interest the member for Williams-Narrogin—for an amendment to the Bush Fires Act to enable advantage to be taken of the proposal of the Commissioner for Railways. In this district the prohibited period commences on one side of the railway on the 15th October and on the other side on the 22nd October.

Mr. Mann: That applies in the Great Southern.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill will perhaps get rid of that state of things.

Mr. Mann: It will not do that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is a pessimist. It would, therefore, not be possible to burn in that road board area, and the same would apply to other road boards under Section 10 (2) (b) between the 15th December and the 24th December. The Rural Fires Prevention Advisory Committee, which includes three members of the Road Boards' Association executive, was unanimously of the opinion that such an amendment was desirable. I was also asked through the resolution carried at the annual road board conference to put forward such an amendment. It was felt that this would assist in reducing the fire hazard from railway engines. I should now like to read a circular sent out by the Railway Commissioner to road boards and various places adjoining farmers. The circular is as follows:—

Dear Sir,—

At the approach of the summer season, it is customary each year to appeal to holders of land adjacent to railways to co-operate with the Department in minimising the risk of fire from engine sparks by ploughing firebreaks on their own property parallel to those which the Department provides within the railway reserve.

2. This year's appeal is of a special nature in that one of the major precautions which the Department has been able to take in the past, namely, the use of New South Wales coal in locomotives working in agricultural areas, will necessarily be restricted. The dearth of shipping, and the need for conserving space for more essential commodities have combined to curtail drastically the tonnage of imported

coal which can be brought to the State, and the Railways will have to rely almost entirely upon local supplies.

3. Unfortunately, Collie coal sparks more freely than does New South Wales coal, and general use of the local product must increase the risk of fire along railway routes. The Department, as hitherto, will do its part by regular inspection of and attention to spark arresters, and the ploughing and burning of firebreaks within railway reserves to minimise the spread of fire. The need for special care and for their wholehearted co-operation will also be impressed upon engine crews. These precautions must, however, fail unless owners of land adjoining railways supplement the Department's efforts by preventive measures within their own boundaries.

4. The provision of firebreaks on private property has on many occasions averted fires which might have proved serious, and as a protection to your holding it is suggested that you plough one or more breaks of at least 6 feet wide on your land parallel to the railway boundary or firebreak.

5. On receiving a burning off notice, advantage may be taken of the presence of the gang in your locality to burn off up to your break within the provisions of the Bush Fires Act.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) J. A. ELLIS,
Commissioner of Railways.

The circular was a genuine attempt to assist farmers by utilising the railway men when they are burning off in railway reserves. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—MILK.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th December.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [8.37]: I support the second reading though I regret that the Bill has been brought down so late. The measure has created interest amongst a considerable section of people, but it is controversial. I wish more time had been given to the House in which to deal with it. Nevertheless, I hope the Bill will pass and become an Act. When introducing the measure the Minister said we had had a milk board for the past 13 years. I was a member of this House when the first Bill was introduced. At that time the Minister for Agriculture said he regarded it as experimental legislation and that there was no certainty the Act would

become a permanent one; its life was given a limitation. However, the Minister has since told us that the board has fully justified itself, and by this Bill it is proposed to make the Act a permanent one. I know the producing section of the community will be pleased with that proposal, not only the producing section but other sections which are engaged in the industry generally. This time the Bill is to be given a State-wide application over any areas that the Governor deems should be brought within the scope of the Act, so that those areas may come under the control of the Milk Board. That has been advocated for a long time.

I agree with the Minister when he said that it was just as necessary for districts outside the metropolitan area to have a pure milk supply as it is for those within that area. That difficulty will be overcome by giving the board control over all whole milk supplies. It will be able to control the milk coming into the metropolitan area and passing through it. In times past a great deal of milk was purchased for such places as Kalgoorlie and other distant centres. There was no fixed price for it, and there were occasions when producers had reason to doubt whether all this milk was going to Kalgoorlie or whether some of it was not being sold under the board's price in the metropolitan area. I am pleased that the board is to have control of this milk, for it will then know what is being done with it and it will be much easier for it to maintain the price. The board did give the producing section some security and it created confidence amongst the producers. I repeat the words of the Minister when introducing the Bill—it gave a good quality milk to the consuming public.

I emphasise that as a result of the operations of the board people in the metropolitan area got a much improved article. The position before the board came into existence was chaotic, to say the least; and I do not think it would be long before the conditions again prevailed if it went out of existence. I remember the troubles that occurred in the days before the board came into being when producers were receiving 6d. and 8d. a gallon for their milk, far below the cost of production. Had the board not been in existence there is no

doubt many of the producers would have gone out of production. Some did go out because of the conditions prevailing before the board came into operation.

The Minister referred to the campaign which has recently been carried on through the Press and has militated against the consumption of milk. There is no doubt it has been responsible for a considerable decrease in the consumption of milk in the metropolitan area. I believe the statements have been very much exaggerated. To read some of them a person would think that one had only to drink a glass of milk to be sent straight to Wooroloo. That is absurd! I have lived in a dairying area all my life. People who live in the country are healthy. I know of very few cases of tuberculosis, and seldom, if ever, have I heard of anyone in those districts being treated for the disease, notwithstanding that hundreds of thousands of gallons of milk have been consumed by the people concerned. That applies generally. We have a healthy community, and the percentage of people affected by T.B. through the consumption of milk would be exceedingly small. It would be interesting if one could get the figure. People do not contract tuberculosis only through drinking milk, because there are many avenues through which the disease enters the human system. The people who have been spreading that propaganda would lead the community to believe that milk is the sole source of infection. That is absurd.

If this legislation could eradicate tuberculosis, which is its objective, no objection could be taken to it—certainly not by the producing section. They welcome the proposals outlined in the Bill. I notice from the report of the Milk Board, which was made available recently, that the consumption of milk in 1944 was 6,859,000 gallons, whereas in 1935 it was 4,400,000 gallons, showing a net increase of 2,500,000 gallons during the period I have mentioned. The point I wish to make is that the amount paid into the compensation fund under the present Milk Act—that is, by the producers and the vendors—aggregates £33,700 and that money is to be used immediately for the eradication of tuberculosis.

Mr. Seward: Immediately?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, as soon as this Bill becomes an Act. Apart from that, there is

to be a levy or tax representing a maximum of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per gallon, to be borne by both the producer and the vendor. According to my figures, which I think are right, that means that on 7,000,000 gallons, plus the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d., again the maximum rate, which is to be contributed by the Treasury, a yearly income of £29,468 will be available. I base that on a consumption of 7,000,000 gallons per year and, as the consumption is increasing so rapidly, I think that a reasonable basis. This estimate is based on the maximum tax of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. being imposed.

Mr. Seward: The contributions have been very much lower than that to date.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes; I am quoting on the maximum. In one year, on those figures, there would be available a total of over £63,000. We will take the amounts individually. First, there is the £29,468 contributed as a result of the levy and that would pay for the destruction of 1,473 cows, taking again the maximum compensation provided of £20. Then the £33,700, which we already have, would provide for 1,658 at £20 per head. That provides for a total of 3,158 cows. As I have already said, that would be on the basis of the contribution for the first year, supposing the maximum levy were imposed, plus the £33,700. Then again, if we assume—I have heard these figures given—that there would not be more than 5 per cent. reactors and there are about 20,000 dairy cows, that would represent 1,000 cows and from those reactors we would get a comparatively small percentage that would be actually condemned because of tuberculosis. In the circumstances, I do not think there will be any need to impose the maximum levy of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per gallon, either from the producers' fund or from the vendors' fund.

Some steps should be taken to cease collecting the levy when there is in the fund an amount that the Minister and his advisers consider safe, and the Bill might be amended with that object in view. Naturally, the contribution could be re-imposed at any time the Minister considered it necessary. A suggestion has been made to me that the price to be paid by way of compensation should be according to the market value of the beast destroyed. Personally I think that £20, which is the maximum compensation payable under the Bill, is fair and that, if we were to fix the price according to the

market value, there would be many arguments and producers would have to wait for their money for some considerable time. On the other hand, if we have a definite figure stipulated, finality can be quickly reached and the producer paid.

Mr. Abbott: Irrespective of the type of cow?

Mr. McLARTY: I would say that a higher rate of compensation should be fixed for a valuable bull. It is possible that a dairy farmer might purchase a bull at a high figure and have him condemned. That would be bad luck, but provision could be made to give him a reasonable sum by way of compensation.

Mr. J. Hegney: That would have been all right if adopted in connection with the pig compensation fund.

Mr. McLARTY: Then again, there are in this State some producers who are breeders of high-quality dairy stock, and they are rendering a valuable service to the dairy industry. Not only do they sell milk, but they provide quality stock. In such a case, provision should be made for a higher rate of compensation, and I notice that the Leader of the Opposition has indicated his intention to move in that direction in Committee. I do not intend to say much about pasteurisation, which is to be optional. A consumer is to be able to get pasteurised milk if he so wishes, or he can obtain raw milk. I think it right that the rules should be prescribed regarding the conditions under which milk shall be pasteurised. It is done in England and it is certainly not right that people who pay for pasteurised milk should receive milk that is not pasteurised. In saying that, I do not intend to suggest that firms at present dealing in pasteurised milk are not providing a proper article.

Compensation is to be paid to dairymen who are instructed to cease supplying milk if the disease is found in their herds, in which case the producer can be ordered to cease serving and during the period he is not supplying milk he is to receive compensation. When he replies to the debate, I would like the Minister to give us a clearer indication of the exact meaning of that provision. Is there a special time limit to the period during which a producer can continue supplying milk when ordered to cease doing so, and still draw

compensation? It is satisfactory that the producers are to have the right of appeal to the Minister when ordered to cease supplying milk. There are to be two representatives of the dairymen on the board. At present there are two zones, in one of which there are 100 producers, and in the other 270. When the original Milk Bill was introduced, I discussed this matter with the late Mr. Alec McCallum, and we decided we would move for two zones. At that time there were many more producers in what is now known as the metropolitan zone than there are now. With the passing of time, some dairymen who were in the metropolitan area moved into the agricultural districts, and it is only a matter of time when more will follow suit.

I ask the Minister to give us some information as to how the two zones are to be created. It is difficult to understand at present what is in his mind, because this legislation will have State-wide application, and town districts like Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton, may come under its provisions. Information as to just how producers are to elect their representatives under the new conditions will be of great interest to those concerned. I agree with the proposal to prevent the adulteration of milk and with the powers sought for the restriction of supplies to hospitals and suchlike institutions. A good deal has been said about the manner in which the price of milk is fixed at present, and how that is to apply under the amending legislation. Many producers are of the opinion that the price should be fixed according to costs of production. There is no doubt that costs have a close and intimate bearing upon the production of milk, but I can see considerable difficulty. We know that many factors enter into the costs of production. In Great Britain an investigation was made in this regard, but it was found exceedingly difficult to arrive at what was a fair production cost. The same thing happened in the United States of America.

We know that the chief costs in the production of milk are production charges and payments for fodder and labour, and that dairymen during the last few years have had to face very heavy labour costs. We also have to take into consideration such items as interest, insurance, depreciation, replacement of stock, etc. Again, in this State we are faced with the problem that we have a large

quantity of milk coming from the irrigation areas and a very considerable quantity from what we know as the dry areas. Therefore, one can see difficulties in arriving at a fair basis of the cost of production; nevertheless, I feel that an inquiry should be made into this matter. The producers suggest that a cross-section of the producers should be examined. They do not suggest that we should go to a stud-breeder and ascertain his costs, or that we should go to an inefficient dairyman, but that we should take a fair cross-section. I suggest to the Minister that he give some consideration to this proposal whilst Parliament is in recess and ascertain whether it is practicable.

When we reach the Committee stage I propose to move some amendments. I definitely want to give the board power over transport. I think that is necessary. With regard to inspections, I wish to give the board the right to issue licenses on the recommendation of its own inspectors. I hope there will not be opposition to this amendment, which, if agreed to, will save time and expense. The board employs efficient inspectors. I shall give further reasons why the amendment should be agreed to when we reach the Committee stage. It is desirable to give the board complete power over veterinary surgeons to be employed in the eradication of T.B. and diseases that affect dairy stock. When all is said and done, it is the producers and the vendors—assisted by the Government, of course—who are providing the money to employ these veterinary surgeons, and they should have the right, in the circumstances, to say that such surgeons shall be employed as full-time officers attending to dairy stock. Unless we do this, I can foresee that the veterinary surgeons will be engaged in other work.

We might have an outbreak of disease and these men might be taken away for months on that work; but, if they are under the control and direction of the board, they certainly will be able to do their work of attending to the diseases that affect dairy stock. I would remind the Minister of the fact that the board will not need to employ very many veterinary surgeons. I was reading tonight a report by the British Ministry of Agriculture—I showed it to the Minister—in which it states that one veterinary surgeon was able to inspect thousands of cows in a year; I think the figure was

10,000 cows in three months. I do not know whether that is practicable; it seems to me to be a tremendous number, and I do not want to ask the veterinary surgeons to inspect that number in the time stated. The fact that this expert evidence was given in England, however, where the distances are not so great as they are here, shows what the officers will be able to do. Nevertheless, as I said, I do not think it will be necessary for the board to employ a large number of these officers. That seems to be clearly indicated by the report.

Mr. Seward: We have not any veterinary officers to give to the board.

Mr. McLARTY: The member for Pingelly is right. Veterinary officers are in short supply not only in Western Australia but throughout Australia. Under present conditions the views I put forward could not be given effect to, but I understand that we are to get some veterinary surgeons from England. I hope we do.

The Minister for Agriculture: They will all be wanted by the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. McLARTY: I hope we shall train some of our own young men to take up this work. More men are urgently required.

Hon. N. Keenan: The course is too severe.

Mr. McLARTY: It is a five-year course and very expensive.

Mr. Mann: And the pay is far too small.

Mr. McLARTY: I think so too. However, the Minister for Agriculture realises the seriousness of the shortage of veterinary surgeons and I am sure he will do all he can to remedy it. I also wish to ensure that the representatives of the producers shall be producers, although the Minister in his second reading speech told the House that this would be so. I intend to ask the Minister to agree to an amendment increasing the number required for a quorum from three to four. My object is to ensure that a representative of the producers will always be in attendance at meetings of the board. The producers' representatives will have the longest distances to travel and it will be probably more difficult for them to attend meetings than for the other representatives. It is but fair that at all meetings of the board a producers' representative should be in attendance.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am prepared to agree to that.

Mr. McLARTY: I am very pleased to hear the Minister say so. The Bill provides that the levy for compensation shall be paid on all milk produced. I ask that the Minister agree to the levy being imposed on all milk sold. I think that is but reasonable and I shall move an amendment to that effect.

Hon. N. Keenan: You cannot sell more than you produce.

Mr. McLARTY: The Bill at present provides that the levy shall be on all milk produced; it does not necessarily follow that all milk produced is sold. I feel that the measure, when it becomes an Act, will be of benefit to all sections of the community. Whilst regretting that it has been introduced so late in the session, I hope it becomes law.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [9.10]: In supporting the second reading of this measure, with certain reservations, I desire to add my few words of commendation to those of the Minister when introducing the Bill upon the very good work the Milk Board has performed during the time it has been in existence. I am glad this measure has been introduced, because I think, if it becomes an Act, it will give the board more scope and additional powers—powers which I consider are necessary. The fact that the measure is introduced will be the means of allaying a considerable amount of uneasiness in the public mind as to the quality of milk being supplied. I am not reflecting on the quality of the milk sold, but there has been that uneasiness of mind to which I referred, and so there has been a very strong desire that a measure of this nature should be introduced with a view to affording the necessary protection—if such protection is necessary—to the consumer. I feel that the measure will go a long way towards allaying the uneasiness to which I referred.

The Bill provides for a tubercular test. That has been said to have caused the public a great deal of concern because of the danger to the public of contracting T.B. To use a colloquialism, that phase of the measure seems to have got the public's wind up. It has caused some anxiety as to whether there were cows affected with T.B., and people were afraid of themselves

and their children contracting that dread disease. Another important matter dealt with by the Bill is that when the board has refused to issue a license, or has cancelled a license, no milk can be sold by the license-holder until his appeal is decided. If he is successful, he must receive compensation. To my mind, that is a wise innovation, because under the old system a danger did exist of impure milk being sold despite the fact that proceedings had been instituted. Under this measure the sale of the milk would be stopped. I have here a document that has been circulated by one of the milk organisations. It is headed "The True Story about our Milk Supply." It contains a very interesting paragraph which I will read to the House—

Upon reference to the W.A. Health Board's Analytical Committee's report for the year ended 31st August, 1945, it is interesting to note that out of the 1386 samples of milk submitted for examination by eighteen local governing bodies in the metropolitan area, only 39 prosecutions were found necessary during the year; i.e. only 2.8 per cent. of the total samples submitted were not of the required standard.

This does not necessarily mean that even this small percentage of under-standard milk was unwholesome for human consumption.

If that statement is correct, and I have no reason to doubt it, it is quite evident that the public has been unnecessarily alarmed as to the nature of the milk with which it has been supplied. Of course, there may have been cases where prosecutions should have been lodged but were not lodged. That might have been because the board did not have the full power to do so. There has been something in the nature of divided control in regard to inspections, but what I have just read is certainly reassuring as to the amount of under-standard milk that has been supplied.

Mr. Watts: The board has no power to prosecute at present.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Minister when introducing the measure indicated that it did not provide for compulsory pasteurisation of milk. There is a vast conflict of opinion as to the merits and demerits of pasteurisation. Perhaps it is because of that clear demarcation between the various authorities as to the value of pasteurisation that the Bill does not provide for compulsion in that regard. I am diffident in offering an opinion on pasteurisa-

tion, but I venture to say that whilst it will not make dirty milk clean, it will make dirty milk safe. If, as some authorities say, pasteurisation reduces the vitamin quality of milk it might be better to risk the loss of that quality rather than risk contracting dread diseases which impure milk can certainly cause.

If a certain number of vitamins are eliminated from milk during the pasteurisation process, the loss can be made good by the consumption of other foods such as vegetables and so on. Perhaps that is the reason that has actuated the Minister in not suggesting that all milk should be pasteurised. I come now to the clause dealing with the constitution of the board. I am not enamoured of the constitution. The Bill provides that the board shall consist of five members, two representing the dairymen, two representing the consumers and one to be nominated by the Government. On other occasions when a measure of this nature has been before the House I have strongly advocated representation of the retail dairymen on the board.

Mr. North: That is the employers.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That was in connection with another Bill. I have also advocated that one of the consumers' representatives should be a woman and I intend, when the measure is in Committee, to move such amendments. On former occasions when the question of a woman being a representative on a board was raised, the then Minister for Agriculture, who is now the Premier, assured the House that it was quite within the province of the Government to appoint a woman to the board.

Mr. Watts: But it did not do so.

Mr. NEEDHAM: No, the Government had no intention of appointing a woman. When we get into Committee I shall introduce an amendment to ensure that a woman is appointed as a representative of the consumers. I have no doubt that the present Minister for Agriculture will support that amendment because when the suggestion was previously before this Chamber he supported the inclusion of a woman member of the board.

Mr. Watts: Like a woman, he is entitled to change his mind.

The Minister for Lands: He was very young then.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I fail to see why a woman should not be appointed to this board.

Mr. Withers: There is nothing to stop a woman being appointed.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am not going to let this Bill pass without trying to have the necessary words specifically included in the measure. We all know what women have done during the past six years. Not only have they borne the same strains and anxieties because of their menfolk in the various battlefields of the world, but they have taken their place in almost every industry, not only in a working, but in an administrative capacity too. They have done every kind of work from using a pen to a pick and shovel, and even to working as puddlers in steel works. They have carried out their jobs admirably as administrators in responsible positions. That being so, I see no reason why they should not be given a chance to become representatives on the Milk Board. Milk is our most important food and women know most about foods.

This Parliament should insist upon a woman becoming a member of the board. In the past I have advocated that retail dairymen should have representation on the board. They are interested in every way. They are taxed by having to pay contributions to its funds. We have often heard the cry that without representation taxation is not democratic. They have paid a large amount to the administration of the compensation fund, and if we want a well-balanced board we should give them representation. I hope that when the Bill is in Committee I shall be successful in moving an amendment to that end. Another suggestion I make, in regard to the composition of the board, is that it should have a technical adviser. The board includes practical men, such as dairymen and retail dairymen but they have no technical knowledge of which I think a board of this nature should be possessed. I suggest that the Minister consider the advisability of including a University graduate, from the Agricultural Department, with a knowledge of bio-chemistry and veterinary science among the members of the board.

I wish to refer to one other matter and that is the clause dealing with inspections. I was under the impression that under the

old regime there was a kind of dual control in connection with the inspections of dairies, etc. I mean by that that there was dual control between the Health Department and the Milk Board. That is why I suggest that there might have been more prosecutions launched if the Milk Board had had full power in this matter. I would like the Minister, when replying to the second reading debate, to inform the House whether this Bill will give the Milk Board full control over inspections. Subject to the reservations that I have indicated, I support the second reading.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest) [9.38]: I am pleased that this Bill has been introduced because it follows on the lines of what was expressed during the last session by the ex-Minister for Agriculture. Not only am I pleased myself, but I have received much correspondence and many expressions from various organisations and producers showing fairly widespread satisfaction with the contents of this measure. These people are practically all in agreement with most of its terms. Many organisations have been good enough to allow us the privilege of attending their meetings and going through, bit by bit, the conditions outlined in the Bill, and showing their widespread views in connection with it. Furthermore, throughout the country, interest has been very widespread as is evident from the communications that I have received, and I suppose that other members have received similar communications. At the meetings of these organisations many amendments were suggested, but thanks to the Minister, who was very free in his confidences with members, numbers of these matters were satisfactorily explained, and I daresay the House will be given a fuller account of these points when the Minister replies.

Like the member for Perth, I feel that the new regulations governing the inspection of herds for T.B. will in great measure assist the industry and help to offset the harm done by adverse criticism, not only in the Press but in other ways. A number of statements appeared in the Press, and no doubt have had a deleterious effect on the consumption of whole milk. I have heard many housewives say they were greatly concerned over the propaganda being put forward almost weekly. The statement of the

Minister on the second reading of the Bill, and also the provisions in the Bill, will do much to offset the harmful effect that has been evident in the past few months. The provisions in the Bill will no doubt make it possible to give to the public a product free from infection and a regular supply of good quality milk. Another provision that the producers have wished for for a long time is that which gives the board permanence, and that will be achieved when the Bill becomes law. Further, the measure is intended now to cover the State. There are many splendid provisions in the measure. The closer co-operation sought between the board and the Agricultural Department and the Health Department should be of great benefit. No doubt there is a lot of work ahead of the officers that are being asked to co-operate with the board.

It will probably be some time before our herds have been cleansed of infection by T.B. One point that will have to be watched is that those herds that have been cleared might be re-infected by stock bought from time to time. The dairyman will require some guarantee that the stock he is buying is free from T.B., and I trust the board will have that point in mind. It has been suggested that as each herd is inspected and cleansed of T.B., there should be a quarantine area established, so that affected cattle cannot come from other parts of the State. It is no use cleansing herds only to have the disease re-introduced. I do not know how that danger is to be overcome, because I do not think the board will be able to control the whole of Western Australia for some considerable time to come. I commend the idea of placing at the disposal of the board the two funds mentioned, that for many years have not been drawn on. There is now a sum of £33,000 odd with which the board can commence its operations.

There has been some talk by individual producers, as mentioned by the member for Murray-Wellington, of the proposed levy of ¼d. per gallon of milk produced being a bit high, but on the other hand I think the serious-minded producer will realise that this is a big job, requiring a considerable amount of money, and that the board should not be stinted for funds. The good that will be done to the industry generally will more than recompense the producer for the ¼d.

per gallon that he is asked to pay into the fund. I understand that it is the intention—though it is not expressed—to do exactly the same with this fund as was done with the milk vendors' fund and the dairymen's compensation fund, inasmuch as when a certain amount of money is reached and cannot be expended in the way laid down, the levy will be reduced. We all know that on the 1st July, 1944, the levy was reduced, in the case of those funds, from one-twentieth of a penny per gallon to one-hundredth of a penny per gallon.

By circulars to members and by conversations the point has been made that the retailer is being asked to contribute towards this fund without necessarily receiving any direct compensation from it, but he will receive a great deal of benefit by virtue of the increased sales that can be visualised when there is available to consumers a supply of clean, wholesome milk. I cannot find anything definite in the Bill to provide that the retailer will be compensated in a direct way. In the old measure there was a provision giving the retailer the right of compensation if his license was revoked. There is one portion of the Bill before us under which it seems possible that a retailer may come to receive compensation for the loss of a license, but I would like the Minister to advise the House on that point. The reason why I have raised that matter is that the Bill specifically says there shall be compensation paid for cattle destroyed, and compensation where a dairyman is instructed to cease the supply and distribution of milk from his dairy because the milk is under suspicion, if successful in his appeal, but it does not state anything definite as to whether compensation will be payable to a retailer.

Everybody welcomes the provision that the Act shall apply in all parts of the State. Through correspondence from Kalgoorlie areas I know that people there are more than willing to participate in this scheme, and from copies of correspondence sent to the Minister I understand that people in those areas have applied to the Minister to be brought under it. For a long while the Kalgoorlie area has been served with milk produced in a district outside that at present constituted. There may be some method to deal with those producers so that immediately the zones are brought in for the distribution of milk those areas

will be brought in at the same time, and will be given the right to participate in the provision of milk for the zones. I refer particularly to the producers where the area finished, outside Brunswick, and to producers at Roelands, Burekup, and other centres.

I understand that milk from these producers has been used to serve the Kalgoorlie district and I think we should protect their interests and bring in automatically the area that is to be served and give the producers a prior right to produce milk for those areas. The Bill itself does not provide for that. There is no guarantee to any particular producer and none as to which districts will be brought in. Some dissatisfaction has been voiced that certain depots have received milk for manufacturing purposes and have sold it as whole milk. I have heard that complaint on many occasions though I have no evidence of any particular offence. It has been said that this has been possible in consequence of a loophole in the Act. I am not satisfied that a similar loophole is not present in this Bill, although I cannot point to it with a view to getting it stopped, but I hope the board has the matter in mind. I have heard the statement that it is known that milk received for manufacturing purposes has been sold as whole milk.

Notice has been given of an amendment to alter the constitution of the board. I have received from producers in the Brunswick area, which covers practically the whole of the milk producers in my electorate, a statement expressing satisfaction with the proposed constitution of the board up to a point. Pleasure is expressed that the producers are to be represented, but today I received a lengthy message requesting me to have the representatives of the producers confined to producers. The position as outlined to me is this: It is proposed to give the retail section specific representation on the board. Under the Act and under the Bill, a retailer-dairyman may be one of the representatives of the producers. With the extension of the milk areas, it is known that the new producers coming forward will in the main be producer-retailers, and this would give the retailer-producers a chance of securing added representation. The producers who have nothing to do with the retail side of the business

are afraid that the provision for this additional retailer could mean giving the retailers three representatives.

The metropolitan area is fast losing its producers. According to the report of the board the number has declined since 1934 from 203 to 101, and there is a chance that it will decline still further. Last year a request was voiced in this Chamber that the constitution of the board should be so arranged as to give representation to the producers in dry areas and irrigation areas. I hope this will be taken into account when the areas from which the producers are to be elected are determined.

Representations have been made regarding the quorum, a point raised by the member for Murray-Wellington. Provision should be made to ensure that a producer-representative is present when a meeting is held. If the quorum were left at three, it could happen that the chairman and two consumer-representatives could form the quorum, as it might be difficult at times for one of the producers' representatives to attend. I know there is provision that if a member of the board is absent from a certain number of meetings, the Minister has power to declare his seat vacant, so I have no fear of a producer staying away to prevent a quorum and thus hold up the business of the board.

Under the Act and the Bill, it is not permissible for a vendor to sell to another vendor without holding a retailers' license in each district. As has been pointed out in the report of the board, these districts are numerous. I should like an amendment to be made to enable a vendor to supply any person issued with a milkman's license. Under the Bill, as under the Act, treatment depots would require to have retailers' licenses in every district. I believe this requirement is not insisted upon at present. Devious means or subterfuges have been employed to circumvent the difficulty. Consequently, I ask the Minister to accept the amendment I have indicated, which would permit of holders of a milk vendor's license being supplied. One subterfuge employed, I understand, has been to say that the milk was secured from a recognised source, whereas it has been obtained from one of the depots.

Another amendment proposed is to substitute the word "board" for the words "inspector of stock." The intention of the Bill is to give the board very wide powers to permit of co-operation between the various departments, and the officers of the Department of Agriculture will be more or less under the control of the board. In fact it is stated they shall be paid by the board when performing duties for the board. Consequently, we can safely say that where the term "chief inspector of stock" is mentioned, it really means that he is working under the control of the board.

The member for Murray-Wellington has given notice of an amendment to alter the provision to require a dairyman to secure a certificate from the local health officer before he may obtain a license. As the Bill stands, it will be mandatory on the board not to issue a license. To put the position plainly, I think this is going to be a matter of impossibility. In my area and even beyond it, there is only one health officer and he is secretary of the local governing body, and I cannot see how he can possibly supply all the certificates and do his own job thoroughly. His present duties are very arduous. I should like an amendment made to the effect that the board may exercise discretion in requiring local inspectors to grant the certificates. I cannot see why provision should be made in the Bill for the board, with the approval of the Public Health Department, to authorise any officer or officers to exercise the functions of a health inspector under the provisions of the Health Act and yet not give them this work to do. I have no desire to take the work out of the hands of local governing authorities, but I do not want to see them given a job that to them will be impracticable. From the time the new legislation comes into operation, there will only be 30 days in which to renew licenses, and for this reason I hope the Minister will approve of the amendment.

Transport is another aspect that needs attention. Some provision has been made for it. For instance, the board is charged with the transport, carriage and conveyance of milk produced in dairy areas. Similar provision appears in the existing Act, but the board, in its report, is critical of this power and indicates that it has not had the requisite authority in regard to

transport. If the board did not have the requisite power before, I fail to see how it will be any better off under a similar provision in this measure. I should like to see it made definite that the board shall have the necessary power in relation to transport and that a license shall be granted to persons for the transport of milk. I cannot see why, when a license is to be granted to a dairyman, milk-vendor or treatment plant, there should not be complete control in the matter of granting or revoking a license to a person transporting the milk. We all know what an important part transport plays in the quality of our milk. Another point I raised last year and brought to the notice of the Minister was the payment of a bonus to the person delivering better-quality milk. Under the provisions of the Bill, the minimum price of milk may be fixed on the butter-fat content, and though that has been provided for in the present legislation and in the Bill before us, it has never been given proper effect.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is the bonus to come from the producers or the consumers?

Mr. HOLMAN: That is a matter for the administration.

The Premier: It is a matter for decision.

Mr. HOLMAN: They are managing to do it in other countries of the world and therefore I do not see why, if we have a board to administer this legislation, it should not be able to devise ways and means in a matter such as that. I am merely offering the suggestion.

The Minister for Agriculture: Somebody would have to pay for it.

Mr. HOLMAN: In an article appearing in an English newspaper, the "News Chronicle," on the 17th June, 1944, appears the following:—

The Government is not only concerned with getting more milk produced, and cleaner milk. The Ministry of Food are considering plans for rewarding dairy farmers on the basis of the quality. This would mean extra payment for high content of butter-milk, among other things. Many countries, including the United States, already do this. Owners of Guernsey and Jersey herds in this country have been able in many cases to get an extra 2d. or 3d. per gallon on account of the quality of their milk, but only if they could find buyers. The scheme now being considered would entitle them to this premium, provided the milk came up to standard.

The reason why I mention that is that we are asking for better-quality milk. Under the Health Act, a certain standard is provided for; I think it is 3.2 per cent. butter-fat and 8.5 per cent. solids, not fat. At the same time, I understand that a lot of milk coming from individual producers all goes into the same container, and the person taking a pride in the building up of his herd does not receive as much as he should. There should be some reward to encourage the building up of herds. I hope the Minister will give consideration to ways by which that could be put into practice. Later I intend to move an amendment dealing with the surplus milk. I think surplus milk should be paid for not only on the butter-fat content but also that there should be an allowance for cartage. That is only a reasonable request from the producer's point of view. At present a certain amount is taken off for services by the plant, and the producer should be allowed something for cartage.

As mentioned by the member for Murray-Wellington, there has been controversy over the minimum price and the way in which it is arrived at. I will not reiterate his remarks, but the cost of production, as outlined by him, is a serious matter and I hope the Minister will give it consideration. I am sorry, on behalf of the producers, that the vesting in the board of all milk for consumption or use in the areas that will be controlled by this measure was not included in the Bill before us, as this is a matter that the producers have asked for many times, and they have placed their views before the Minister and his officials on many occasions. It seems to have worked well in New South Wales, where all the milk supplied for consumption in the metropolitan area becomes vested in and the property of that board. Under certain clauses of the Bill there may be a possibility for the board further to consider the matter as time goes on and make this provision. I whole-heartedly support the Bill and congratulate the Minister on having brought it forward.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [10.7]: It is clear, in the first place, that under this measure there are three interested parties, the producer, the vendor and the consumer. To a certain extent, their interests may be contentious but, to a larger

extent, their interests are in common, as I shall endeavour to make clear. This Bill purports to make permanent the Act regulating the sale of milk from the time it is taken from the cows to the time when it reaches the consumer. It proposes to make a permanent statute, and all three parties are in agreement in accepting such a proposal. This Act has stood the test of time and experiment and it is therefore a wise measure now to make it permanent, when it has shown that it is of a character advantageous to the public and to the producer. The Bill also purports to, and in parts will, effect the change of making the statute apply to the whole State. That, too, is a matter on which all three parties agree, though I do not know to what extent the provisions that are very proper and applicable to areas specially devoted to dairying would apply on the Goldfields. But I assume that the Act is sufficiently elastic to allow for that.

There are very few parts of the Goldfields, except in Kalgoorlie and the immediately surrounding area, where conditions are not of a most primitive character, and there might be difficulty in applying conditions meant to apply to more closely developed parts of the State. There are other provisions on which the three parties interested in the Bill will agree. One of the principal ones deals with the measures to be taken to ensure the supply of pure milk. That includes the cleaning up of herds suspected of being infected by T.B. If this Bill becomes an Act, it will enable that to be accomplished, with great advantage to all three parties, but there are a few matters on which at least one of the parties can claim that a legitimate grievance is not provided for in the Bill. The vendors contribute a large amount to the compensation fund, the same amount as the producers. Of the £33,000 odd at which the fund now stands, I am told they have contributed almost £19,000, yet they have no representation on the board.

Mr. Cross: They should have representation.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The member for Perth indicated that he intended, in the Committee stage, to make some proposal to give them representation on the board, and I see on the notice paper what his proposal intends to accomplish. I am afraid

there will be difficulty in the matter, in the way in which the member for Perth approaches it, because it may involve the question of whether a private member could move the amendment that stands in his name. That will no doubt be dealt with when we reach the Committee stage. There are means other than that suggested by the member for Perth by which the same object can be achieved. We are so often told to admire Queensland—rather like the admiration of Russia by a certain class in the community—and in Queensland the producer and vendor have equal representation. There is no reason why we should not have that provision here, and no reason why, of the two producer-members of the board, one should not be a vendor.

The Premier: Have you had a letter from your old friend, Mr. Crooks?

Hon. N. KEENAN: What an extraordinarily perceptive mind the Premier possesses! I do not wish to introduce into the debate the possibility of communications being received by anyone. Apart from any communication, surely it is a fair proposition that those who contribute and who in future are going to contribute a large sum—in the past, more than half the amount—should have some representation. If the member for Perth can fashion his amendment that it will be within the Standing Orders, I have no doubt that the Committee will receive it with some appreciation and favour. In Queensland, the producer and consumer have equal representation. It is not a fact that there are some producer-vendors. I believe there was one but, whether it did not suit his business or whether pressure was brought to bear on him, I understand there are now none to be found on the board, and so, if there is no direct representation given to the vendors, they will have no representation at all.

There is another matter to which I would like to draw the attention of the House. By some curious rule, the board at present fixes the maximum price to be charged to consumers and the minimum price to be paid by producers. The result is, I understand, that in some instances the consumer gets his milk at something less than the maximum price fixed but gets it under conditions that are far from satisfactory. It is assisted in that direction by means of the watering can or something else. At

any rate, it is inferior milk. What people want is a fair and proper price fixed by the board, which shall be the price to be paid. Consequently, I think the competition that would exist between the vendors under those circumstances would be as to quality and service and not competition by which one might gain a little more trade through means that are not really beneficial, particularly in the long run—by which I mean resorting to price cutting. That is a matter I hope the Minister will agree to deal with at the Committee stage. There should be a minimum price to be paid to the producers, and then there would be one fixed price that would always be paid on retail sale, nothing more and nothing less. That should be of help to both the vendor and the consumer.

There are only a few other matters referred to by members that I desire to mention, in respect of which I shall lend my support. One is that the board should have complete power over transport. At present, if what has been stated during the debate is correct, the board has very limited power in that respect, and that cannot be regarded for one moment as satisfactory. I trust the Minister will agree to some provision whereby the board will be given the same powers over milk in transport as it has in the other separate stages in its handling. Another matter was referred to by the member for Forrest when he mentioned the treatment plants that are selling milk to vendors and participating in this business. At present if a treatment plant sells milk to a vendor in one district and also to another vendor in a second district, separate licenses have to be taken out for each district in which that milk is sold. Under that arrangement, except for some honourable understanding, the treatment plant owner could actually sell as a vendor and take out a vendor's license in the district. That is not desirable.

The suggestion made that inasmuch as the treatment plant must be free to sell milk to the vendors in some districts, there should be an alteration in the provisions of the treatment plant license which would give that right to the owner of the plant and not for him to sell milk himself as a vendor in such district. These are only small matters. The Bill, as I understand it from those far more competent to judge than I am, is one to

be commended. Among those more competent to judge I include the member for Murray-Wellington who says he has been born and reared on milk and is certainly a credit to that food. He knows his profession from A to Z and he represents, very effectively, the milk producers in this House. From him we have been led to believe that the Bill can be regarded as satisfactory, and I shall not reiterate what he has said in that regard, except to this small degree.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [10.20]: The aim of the Bill is to ensure that consumers, to use the Minister's words, obtain germ-free, good quality milk. Naturally with that objective I must be in complete agreement. The Milk Board has been in operation for a number of years, and it must be admitted that the result of its work has been an improvement in the dairying industry, both from the point of view of the producers and, probably to a much less degree, of the consumers. I think it a pity that goodwill in relation to the sale of milk in the metropolitan area has been capitalised to the extent of something like £300,000. That the board should have permitted such a state of affairs to have arisen is most unfortunate. It is bad enough in the hotel business, but for such a factor to creep into the milk industry, which provides such a vital food product for the people, simply because vested interests have been created to such an extent, seems to be entirely wrong. Therefore I think the sooner the vested interest element is eradicated, the better it will be for the public.

I do not know whether the board in fixing the price of milk takes into consideration the payment of interest in respect of capital represented by goodwill. If it does, it fixes the price on a wrong basis altogether. I hope the goodwill value will not increase at all. It seems rather peculiar that in the metropolitan area retailers are paying 1s. 8d. for their milk whereas milk of a reasonable quality is despatched to Wiluna at 1s. a gallon.

Mr. McLarty: You surely do not favour that!

Mr. ABBOTT: I think there is too much difference altogether. Although the whole milk section represents only a small portion of the dairying industry as a whole, appar-

ently that section is to receive preferential treatment, which is bad. The dairying industry throughout the whole State should be taken as one unit as far as possible, and I certainly think that when we compute the price of whole milk, the ruling price of butter-fats should be taken as one of the principal factors. I know that that is dealt with in the Bill to some extent, but it has been suggested that that aspect has not received serious consideration on the part of the board. In future I hope the position in that regard will be very different. It is ridiculous that one dairy farmer should be doing very well while his neighbour should be battling; all should be placed on the same basis in this State.

The report of the Milk Board states that scientific opinion inclines in favour of the pasteurisation of milk, with the reservation that the process of pasteurisation must be carried out efficiently without any risk of re-contamination. From the figures I have been able to glean, it would seem that not more than 7 per cent. of the cows will react to tuberculosis and of that proportion only 1 per cent. will provide infected milk. That represents a very small proportion of our dairy herds. Then again, it is only bovine tuberculosis that can be contracted as a result of infection from a T.B. cow and not the ordinary form of tuberculosis which is more prevalent. From the time the milk leaves the cow there are infinite opportunities for contamination. The dairyman himself may be suffering from tuberculosis and that applies to the milkman as well. That may infect the milk with a much more vicious form of the disease than could be transmitted to the milk by the cow herself.

There are a great many other diseases with which the milk could be contaminated. The cow's udders might not be clean; she might flick her tail; the milkman's hands might not be clean. Right through the progress of the milk until it reaches the consumer, there are many more opportunities of its being contaminated with tuberculosis and other diseases. Therefore I should think that pasteurisation and clean delivery are factors of greater importance than any scheme to inspect T.B. cows and to destroy them—not that I am not in sympathy with that point of view as well. I am not at all sure that the system of pasteurising milk

and extending assistance to those associated with that activity, should not have been the first phase to have received attention. It seems to me that the inspection and destruction of cattle affected by T.B. are likely to cost about £60,000 a year. If we take $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the 20,000 cows and value those destroyed at £20 a head, it will mean an expenditure of about £22,000. I understand that the cost of inspection will be something like £32,000.

Mr. McLarty: Where did you get those figures?

Mr. ABBOTT: They came from a very reliable authority, namely, the Government department that is likely to institute this scheme. Incidentally, I am not posing as an expert but am merely quoting what I have been told.

Mr. Cross: Someone has made a mistake!

Mr. ABBOTT: That is possible. However, the cost is likely to be very great because the Government is providing over £15,000 from Consolidated Revenue and another £15,000 from the other peoples' contributions. Therefore a considerable sum is involved. As I say, no provision has been made to assist with the pasteurisation of milk, which I should have thought was a far more important matter warranting attention, particularly as milk is much more likely to be contaminated after it leaves the cow than before. That, apparently, is the opinion of the Sydney Milk Board, because from a report—which I admit is somewhat old—issued by the board, it appears that as from the 30th June, 1938, no raw milk may be distributed in Sydney and Newcastle unless it is produced by cows certified to be free from tuberculosis by the department or unless it has been pasteurised. I would prefer to see this proposed board constituted as the milk board in Sydney is constituted. That is a board of experts, three professional people.

Mr. McLarty: What are they expert in?

Mr. ABBOTT: They are selected for their knowledge and experience, not by biased people. The representatives to be appointed under this Bill must be biased. In the first place, there are the producer-representatives.

Mr. Cross: They ought to know their business.

Mr. ABBOTT: They do. Their business is to get the highest possible price for their milk. It is the consumers' business to get the milk at the lowest possible price.

The Minister for Lands: Whom would you make arbitrator between those two?

Mr. ABBOTT: I would not have an arbitrator at all. I would appoint three experts, trained in the work, who would be able to give a reasonable deal to both sides. There will be only one independent man on this proposed board and he will be virtually a dictator. The consumers will be fighting one way and the producers another. The position will be the same as on the Arbitration Court bench. One rarely sees more than one decision in a hundred in which all the members of the Arbitration Court agree. There will only be one case in a hundred where all the members of this board will agree.

The Minister for Agriculture: The strike you mentioned has not been going on all ready?

Mr. ABBOTT: I think it has.

Mr. McLarty: No.

Mr. ABBOTT: I again say that I consider a board of experts would be better than the board proposed by the Bill. After all, producers would be elected who are actually farmers. How could they give sufficient attention to the duties of the board? If they do, they will not be attending to their farms; if they are attending to their farms, they will not be attending to their board duties. That would seem to be quite clear. However, I am of opinion that the Bill is necessary, and, although it could have been better than it is, it is an improvement on the existing legislation. I support the second reading.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [10.34]: I am sorry this Bill has been brought down so late in the session. It seems to me there is a certain type of Bill which always creates much discussion. However, we are at the stage when this Bill must be carried, otherwise there will be chaos in the industry.

The Premier: Item 12 on the notice paper.—City of Perth Sanitation Bill—coming within that category!

Mr. CROSS: Since it has been constituted, the present board has done an excellent

lent job. When it commenced operations the industry was in a state of chaos. Many producers at Brunswick Junction and at Yarloop were not getting a fair price for their milk; nor were the public being supplied with wholesome milk. Much credit is due to the board for bringing order into the industry. I hope, if the Bill is carried and the board extends its activities to the whole State, that some of the primitive methods prevailing in the outback districts will receive the same sympathetic attention of the board. Some of those conditions are anything but ideal. There are two types of producers—the country and the outer metropolitan. The outer metropolitan producer has been slowly crushed out. He has been in a most difficult position, and I would remind members that he has not been the spoon-fed variety such as is the producer in the country.

Mr. McLarty: Do not talk rubbish.

Mr. CROSS: It is not rubbish. The Government has spent thousands of pounds on irrigation schemes.

Mr. Mann: And the country people are paying for them.

Mr. CROSS: In the metropolitan area the producers did everything for themselves, without Government assistance.

Mr. Mann: A political speech!

Mr. CROSS: That has been one of the greatest factors in forcing the outer metropolitan producers out of the business. If the Milk Board has made one mistake, that mistake has been to force people to buy quotas which were heavily capitalised. A man purchasing such a quota has to pay from £10 to £12 a gallon in order to get into the industry, and he has to pay interest on that money.

Mr. Abbott: Do you not approve of that?

Mr. CROSS: No. I do not know how we can get over it at this stage.

The Minister for Lands: The same thing applies to "The West Australian" newspaper.

Mr. CROSS: I am more interested in the deal the consumers get. One phase of the industry has not been touched upon very much so far. I notice the Bill proposes to give the board power over the transport of milk. It is in the transport of milk that

the greatest change should take place. At present, the milk we get in the metropolitan area is very often nearly a week old.

Mr. Mann: What?

Mr. CROSS: A date cannot be put on milk, either.

Mr. Mann: What about the Minister for Railways?

Mr. CROSS: I do not blame the railways. The Minister for Railways is not in his place, but I think he should take a hand in this matter. What is going on at present? By the time the milk gets to the consumer it is nearly always two days old. I have been in the country and have noted what is done. I have seen producers at Brunswick Junction, and just outside of Brunswick Junction, putting their milk cans on the roadside at 6.30 in the evening, and I have seen trucks pick the milk up the next morning at a quarter to four.

Mr. Mann: What were you doing there at that hour?

Mr. CROSS: Never mind! It would be easy for the member for Beverley—the wizard from Beverley—to do the same thing.

The Minister for Lands: Not on your life! He could not get up as early as that!

Mr. CROSS: That milk is sometimes picked up at 5 o'clock in the morning and is delivered in the city the next morning. That is too long. When I was a lad in England, the railway company provided a passenger train with a milk van on it. It left the terminus at 9 o'clock at night and ran 50 miles, picking up all the milk, in addition to the passengers, at all stations. The train averaged 30 miles an hour and landed the milk into the coolers in the city—Lincoln—about midnight. The milk was delivered the next morning. The Minister for Railways could easily arrange for a fast day train which could leave Brunswick Junction at about 9 o'clock in the morning and bring the milk to Perth at 3 o'clock or even later. If there is no refrigerated coach available, one ought to be supplied. I do not know why the railways could not put a Diesel on the run. I believe in fast transport for milk and perishables.

Mr. Mann: I agree with you on all those points.

The Premier: It would be better to shift the town out into the country.

Mr. CROSS: Never mind about that! If fast transport can be made available in other countries for milk and perishables, it ought to be made available here. Milk is our most important food.

Mr. Abbott: Bring it by road.

Mr. CROSS: It is not brought any faster than by train. If the hon. member doubts that, he can verify it. Milk that is brought by road is often left on the road 10 or 12 hours at a time and then brought into the city. It is put into coolers and later in the day taken out to the suburban depots and delivered the following day, or perhaps three or four days later. I am not too partial to pasteurised milk, so I am pleased that the Bill provides for the consumers to have their own choice. I prefer fresh milk, milk delivered as quickly as possible from the cow. Pasteurised milk is such that you cannot tell it is bad until it is rotten. I propose to support the amendment suggested by the member for Perth. I believe that the retailers, who contribute to the funds of the board, should have representation. The member for North Perth says that the chief arguments on the board would be between the producers and the consumers in fixing the price at which milk may be sold. It seems to me that the effect of any such argument will be to flatten the retailers.

I can well understand retailers wanting a representative on the board, because of all classes in the community the retailers have had the most raw deal in the milk industry in the last few years, and for this reason: In 1939 motor vehicles were used for the transport of milk; 64 octane petrol then cost 1s. 5d. a gallon; now 80 octane petrol costs 2s. 10d. a gallon. Junior labour then cost £3 a week; it is now £6 8s. a week. During the war period, the only way to get milk distributed was to employ junior labourers, who worked 42 hours per week and were paid full rates. The employers were forced to employ them whether they could afford to do so or not. Those retailers using horses for transport now find that the price of feed has increased by 100 per cent. Nearly every other requisite has also increased 100 per cent., yet the retailers are getting only the same price for their milk.

No-one can tell me that the retailers are not entitled to at least one voice on the

board in order to put up their side of the argument. I support the Bill, and I believe that members on this occasion, knowing the agitation that has been proceeding, will agree to giving the retailers at least one representative on the board. Had the Bill been introduced earlier, I would probably have said a great deal more, but I have touched upon the main points. I have no wish to delay the measure. I support the second reading and will strongly support the amendment to increase the number of members of the board to six, giving the retail section a representative on the governing body.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [10.45]: The member for Nedlands has already made most of the points I wished to bring before the notice of the Minister, so the House will be saved time to that extent. There are one or two matters that have not been mentioned so far. I refer to a request made by the retail dairymen that the chairman of the board should be independent of the secretary of the board. He should be able to listen to complaints or requests and therefore I raise that point. Another matter mentioned by the retail dairymen is that the annual report of the Milk Board should be printed and made available to interested organisations, which course is followed in the Eastern States. I have also been approached by another organisation representing those who manufacture ice-cream. That section has a point of view regarding the Bill. In the past they have been able to obtain milk supplies at a price that has enabled them to make ice cream available to the public very cheaply. I hope the Minister will correct me if the statement is not correct, but those people question whether under the Bill as it stands they will not have to pay for milk the same price as is fixed for milk sold for human consumption.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is not ice cream for human consumption?

Mr. NORTH: I do not know what ice cream is made of; I do not pretend to know. One member of this House, acting on the suggestion made to him, mashed some potatoes very fine and found it made very good ice-cream indeed! With that pointer in mind, I emphasise that I do not know what ice-cream is made of. If it is

made out of milk, then if they have to pay the price that is fixed for milk sold for human consumption, the firms concerned in the manufacture of ice-cream are afraid that they will not be able to produce it as cheaply as formerly. The Minister is anxious to have one price for milk throughout the State, and, while I agree with the member for Nedlands that there should be no competition in price as between the different retailers for the various milk rounds, I agree that quality and service could be improved if prices were not the controlling factor. I can see the point of view of those concerned in the manufacturing industry and trust that the Minister will give some consideration to that phase.

There is another point that I stress as a member of the general public. I do so because of the alarming statements that have appeared recently in the Press and elsewhere regarding the quality of milk sold. Why should not the board be given the power, if it so desires, to establish a small experimental plot in the Harvey district for the cultivation of soya beans with a view to supplying soya bean milk and cream, which could be sold to people who fear the possibility of contracting tuberculosis from raw milk?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [10.50]: In moving the adjournment of the debate I merely wished to give members an opportunity to go home, because I certainly shall take up a little time. There has been so much eulogy of the Bill that I fear members will be disappointed in what I am going to say. As far as the consumers are concerned the Bill might well be described as one of shattered hopes, while from the Government standpoint it might be regarded as a Bill of lost opportunities. The Minister must know that it will tend to increase the price of milk. It will allow the Government to spend the money that has accumulated in the milk fund in order to pay dairymen in connection with the clearing up of infected herds. The effect of this is to make those who have clean herds pay for those who have not. It purports to perpetuate a board similar to one which proved to be ineffective. Not-

withstanding all the very eulogistic references that have been made to it, the Bill will encourage the creation of monopolies and leave loopholes for corruption.

Monopolies may not be altogether wrong from some standpoints, if under the controlling eye of a good Government. But with legislation in regard to the creation of monopolies in foodstuffs, particularly in reference to one of such great importance as milk, because it is such a valuable factor in the people's food supplies, it is of doubtful worth. In my opinion any value that there is in this Bill depends almost entirely upon the administration by the board. Generally speaking I am against boards, especially as instituted in this State. They are not democratic. They tend to create monopolies. The Fascist Government of Italy was founded upon boards similar to those that we are creating today, and we condemned that government as undemocratic. Notwithstanding that fact, we are following in Italy's footsteps as fast as we can.

Much as I detest boards, I consider the Milk Board most important because of the effect it has on the supply of milk for the sick and the children, from which point of view it is of vital importance to the nation. In those circumstances, control is necessary, whether it be governmental, municipal or board control. After so much controversy and criticism regarding dirty milk, bad milk and T.B. infected milk, much of which I believe to have been exaggerated, the time is opportune for the Government to see that milk depots are brought under municipal or governmental control, so that the fear of contaminated milk, which has been so much before the public recently, may be removed.

Municipal plants for receiving, treating, pasteurising, canning and otherwise dealing with the milk supply would be of benefit to producer, vendor and consumer alike. By municipal depots, decentralisation of supervision would take place and it would be under an independent control, which has been suggested tonight in another way. Neither producer nor vendor would be concerned. Monopolies would be impossible and the municipality would be responsible to its people for clean and wholesome milk. At present if under-standard or dirty milk is discovered by a municipal inspector, the

vendor of such milk may be fined, but he may not be responsible. He may disclaim responsibility and the finding of the real culprit is difficult indeed. I have known cases where a municipal inspector has taken from vendors samples of under-standard and dirty milk but has not been able to discover where the milk came from. Owing to want of co-operation between departments and the impossibility of acting immediately to discover the source from which the milk came, it has been difficult to get the culprit. Municipal depots would prevent that, because it would be known from what source the milk came. The health inspector in each district where there was a municipal depot would have first-hand knowledge.

If this Bill becomes an Act, there will continue to be a few large depots with pasteurisation plants. Some will be vendors of milk, and some will not. They are to be licensed by the board and that will be often to the detriment of certain other dairymen in the same district who could quite well establish their own plants. But these men have to go a few miles to get even their own milk from the depot which has the controlling interest. Further, these depots have in the past been responsible for the holding up of milk supplies, either through breakdowns of plant, labour difficulties, bottle shortages or the alleged shortage of milk. Under municipal control, those hold-ups would not have occurred, because, had there been a shortage in one district, they could have taken their milk from another municipality. Not only that, but there would have been sufficient depots in the area to have seen that the people had sufficient milk. The present depots where pasteurisation takes place give no guarantee of the delivery of clean milk to the small vendor, and it is the small vendor who is responsible when dirty milk is discovered on his premises or is sold by him.

An American officer who supervised the milk supply for the American Forces when they were here informed me that he was horrified at the slackness of supervision in a few large plants that we have in this State. He told me it was necessary for him to send a man almost daily to supervise the ordinary routine of their pasteurisation of milk for American consumption. In my opinion, the Milk Board has been incapable of preventing the frequent stoppages in the supply of

milk through alleged shortages. It has been incapable of securing milk from country districts within a reasonable time. Milk deliveries to the metropolitan area from the country have taken, as the member for Canning said, not a week, but from 50 to 70 hours.

Mr. Cross: You cannot blame the Milk Board for that.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: That is, from the time when it comes from the cow to when it is delivered to the home! I wish the member for Canning had seen the method of transporting milk in 1,000-gallon tanks.

Mr. Cross: That puts the rubbish in with the good milk.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: This problem has been solved years ago in other States and countries where the milk has been under either municipal or Governmental control. I can see nothing in this Bill to compel quick transport. The Minister said that the board in the past guaranteed to consumers a regular supply of good-quality milk. That sounded funny to one who for years has been trying, but has been unable to get a regular supply of clean milk for thousands of school-children, who are good, daily customers, with no bad debts; children on whom we depend for the future development and defence of our country. Children are the first cut off from supplies when there is an alleged shortage. The board was always deeply concerned but has been unable to help. Thousands of children have been cut off from supplies for some time now. While our children have been deprived of milk supplies during the last few years, some 2,000 free milk centres have been started in Ceylon, and another 2,500 are in process of being formed, and in those centres Australian milk is used. For so long have some of our own children been without milk that many of them have lost the taste for it. It is no wonder that our consumption of milk per head of population is the lowest in any civilised country in the world.

Mr. Smith: In what areas have they lost the taste for milk?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Everywhere! Members will find lots of children now who have not tasted milk for years, and consequently do not want it. Inquiries now being made by the Free Milk Council give out-

standing figures showing that the consumption of milk in schools has decreased by nearly two-thirds during the last few years. At one school I visited yesterday, where the children used to take 200 bottles per day, they now take no milk at all. At another school, where they used to take from 300 to 400 bottles per day they now take 80. That demonstrates the neglect of the board and the Government to see that children are supplied with a product that is overwhelmingly plentiful. I attribute the declining milk consumption in schools to the inability of the board to ensure continuity of supplies, and also to the propaganda that has taken place on dirty milk and milk infected with T.B. It may surprise some members to know that in Australia, including Western Australia, there have been agents for pasteurisation plants about for some months. I think a great deal of the propaganda on dirty milk has been encouraged by those agents who have sold or wished to sell pasteurisation plants.

Mr. Cross: It has been exaggerated.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I remember when there was an alleged shortage of milk before the war, on the part of one firm that was a licensed supplier in a certain area where its agents supplied many schools, covering thousands of children who were in the habit of drinking milk daily. Those children were cut off. I appealed to the board, but could not get much help. I appealed to the Minister and to the Premier, and the Premier suggested that I should get milk in bulk from other districts and serve it to the children. To do this was not practicable because it was unhygienic, and it would have been impossible to get the teachers to distribute it. In fact, I had to buy a thousand bottles of milk per day and deliver them. I had to do this because many of the children who received the milk had parents who received less than the basic wage; they could not afford the milk in their homes and they needed it. When they were receiving milk at school before supplies were cut off, a man almost across the road was a vendor who was not permitted to supply the shortage because he was licensed for another area. I trust that under this Bill, should any licensed firm be short of milk, a licensed firm from an adjacent district would have the right to enter and sell in that district and thus prevent a hold-up.

The Bill will not prevent the waste of milk. During the alleged shortage there was a colossal waste. I was speaking to the officer of an English vessel in Fremantle, and he informed me that there were 80 men on his ship. They received 40 gallons of milk per day and more than half of it was thrown into the sea. The crew of that vessel would have been quite willing to have had a smaller quantity so that the children here could have received more.

Mr. Cross: That showed bad management on the ship.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I think the member for North Perth hit the nail on the head when he said that there were interested parties on the board. Of course there are. The men on the board are definitely interested. At one time we could have sold more milk than we were producing. The board knew the position and the Government knew the position and neither raised a finger to help.

Mr. McLarty: That is not so.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I say definitely that whatever any man in this Chamber may know about milk, he does not know more than I do. I contradict the statement of the member for Murray-Wellington. I have been on dairy farms and have seen countless gallons of milk being thrown away.

The Minister for Works: How do you know there were countless gallons?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Because I could not count them. This milk was being thrown away while shortages were prevailing. The reason was that the producers were outside of the zone licensed to sell milk to the metropolitan area. They could not get a license to sell in the metropolitan area because they could not maintain a quota over the whole of the year. Will this Bill alter that? I would like the Minister to answer my question. Men in a licensed area give the surplus milk during the glut season to pigs or throw it away rather than sell it, and this notwithstanding that they have a quota to sell. When they have sold their quota, if they wish to send the surplus to a depot, they receive so little for it that it does not pay them for cartage. No wonder Dr. Underwood stated the other day that the average Australian family drinks only one-half the quantity of milk necessary to maintain a high standard of health.

The Minister for Lands: Perhaps they make it up in beer.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Would these colossal mistakes and injustices have occurred if women had been on the board?

Mr. McLarty: I should like an opportunity to reply to you.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Thank God, the hon. member will not have it! The major interest of women would have been for the State's betterment, not for their own profit. I heard the remark passed in the House the other night when the Marketing of Eggs Bill was under discussion, "Put a bloody woman on the board!"

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That is not Parliamentary language.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I am merely stating that I heard the remark made in the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot help that. It is not Parliamentary language.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Having heard the remark made, I thought I would bring it up.

The Minister for Lands: You must have a nice crowd over there.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: This occurred the other night when we were discussing the question of putting a woman on the board. I am acquainted with women who know as much about the production, sale and distribution of milk as does any man in this Chamber.

The Minister for Works: Give it to them!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I shall not ask again to have a woman put on the board. I am convinced that a number of male members are suffering—

The Minister for Lands: Now be careful!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: —from a superiority complex, and that until they get rid of it, they will be prejudiced and unjust. Reference has been made to the loading of the board. Members will say that that is impossible because, of the five members, two are to be representatives of the consumers, two representatives of the trade, and the other an independent chairman. If the chairman is to be the secretary also, I cannot see how he could be an independent chairman. Although, as the

member for North Perth said, there may be disputes among the members of the board, I consider that the interested parties will always win, and the chairman will be interested. In Victoria a few years ago, I learnt that there were only three members on the board. They were not producers or retailers and were not interested in milk in any way.

Mr. Abbott: Just administrators?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: That is so. Transport of milk in Melbourne many years ago was by quick motor vehicles. I did not find that the three members of the board in Melbourne decreased the price of milk; the price of milk was increased and the deliveries went down to one a day, while the costs at the depots went up. It cost about 6d. a gallon or more to treat the milk, whereas here the cost is a little under 3d., although I am open to correction in making that statement. Nevertheless, when the board starts functioning, what happened in Melbourne will happen here; the longer the board continues to function the higher will be the price of milk and costs will increase. The Minister declares that the board is democratic because two members are to be elected by the trade and the three members whom the Minister will appoint are presumed to be non-interested parties, but I cannot see how the Minister can guarantee that statement.

I consider that the method of election of members of the board at present is the antithesis of democracy. One of the representatives should be a medical man. I would prefer to see a board of seven members, that is, two extra members. The additional members who I think would be useful to the board and to the public are experts. One is from the State Nutritional Committee, which is comprised of experts, medical men and representatives from the children's clinics and the Free Milk and Nutritional Council. The State Nutritional Committee works in conjunction with a similar committee at Canberra, Dr. Underwood being the liaison officer. A representative from that committee would quite probably be a medical man or woman. The second member who would be useful as a representative would be from the Free Milk and Nutritional Council. This body has played a practical part in the nutritional work of the State.

The Free Milk and Nutritional Council does considerable research work through the schools and it has the confidence of headmasters and teachers. It is one of the largest individual buyers of milk in the metropolitan area. It provides free milk for those children in the metropolitan area whose parents receive less than the basic wage, and also elsewhere in the State. Such a representative would represent no fewer than 30,000 children in the metropolitan area alone, either receiving free milk or paying for milk. That representative would not necessarily be a woman; because, thank God, we have some men on the council who do not mind working with women. They stand behind the women very courageously and help whenever their aid is needed. Neither of these two extra members would be producers or vendors, but they could assist in propaganda for the sale of milk and encourage the milk-drinking habit in children throughout the State, thereby improving their physique. That, in my opinion, would be of untold value to the nation. I shall vote for the second reading, because I cannot do anything else.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Milk Board constituted:

Mr. McLARTY: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be added as follows:—“(6). The election of the present members of the Board is hereby validated and, notwithstanding anything contained in this or the preceding section, the present members of the Board shall hold office until a new Board is elected under this Act.”

The board, as at present constituted, consists of consumer-representatives and producer-representatives; but there must be an election now, if it is not overdue, for the producer-representatives. Some time will elapse before the Bill becomes an Act, and I wish to ensure that the board will continue and that the producer-representatives will remain on it. In view of the fact that the producer-representatives must be elected, I think the amendment necessary.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: As the member for Murray-Wellington says, the continuance of the producer-representatives on the board is not provided for and if the amendment will do what he says it will, I have no objection to it. If it will not, I still have no objection to it and therefore I propose to accept the amendment.

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

Clause 11—Constitution of board:

Mr. NEEDHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the word “five” be struck out and the word “six” inserted in lieu.

If this amendment is carried, I intend to move to insert a new subclause to provide that one member shall be elected by the Metropolitan Retail Dairywomen's Industrial Union of Employers. The reason for the amendment is to provide that the retail dairywomen shall be represented on the board.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot accept this amendment. Clause 17 provides that the fund for the carrying out of the provisions of the Act shall include, among other contributions, moneys to be appropriated by Parliament. For that reason this Bill was recommended by a Message from the Lieutenant-Governor. As the amendment might, at some future date, impose an added burden on the Government funds, I must rule it out of order.

Amendment ruled out.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Chairman. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) after the word “members” the words “one of whom shall be a woman” be inserted.

I gave the reason for this amendment when speaking on the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: From time to time this Chamber has declared against a specific direction to the effect that a member of a board shall be a woman. This clause contains sufficient power for five members of the board to be women. There is no exclusion of women in the clause. There is no necessity to give a specific direction in this way. I oppose the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	..	20
					—
Majority against	..	..	..	..	4
					—

AYES.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Brand
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hill
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Leslie
Mr. McDonald

Mr. Needham
Mr. Read
Mr. Seward
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Telfer
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Cross
Mr. Fox
Mr. Hawke
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Holman
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Marshall
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Nulsen

Mr. Pantou
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Smith
Mr. Styants
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triant
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Wise
Mr. Withers
Mr. Willson

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) after the words "members" the words "one of whom shall be a member of the Health Inspectors' Association of Australia (Western Australian Branch)" be inserted.

I think that to a considerable extent we are approaching this question of milk distribution from a wrong angle. We are not taking sufficient advantage of the scientific knowledge possessed by persons who are skilled and trained in matters appertaining to public health, including the question of pure milk. I am of the opinion that the producers should have stronger representation on the board than is provided for in the Bill, but I do not propose to raise that point now. I do say, however, that there can be no better representative of the consumers than a person who, by training and experience is equipped to understand the peculiar difficulties associated with the supply of pure milk to the public, and to realise how essential sustained effort is in order to ensure that that supply shall be kept pure. Laymen, without casting any reflection on them, cannot be expected—any more than can the average member of this House—to appreciate the several and difficult problems that exist in ensuring a supply of pure milk to the community.

There is nothing in the food line of more importance than milk at present. Members of the association, the name of which I have included in this amendment, are all qualified by examination as health inspectors, and in the course of their normal duties they are constantly handling milk samples and are dealing with bacteriological and other examinations of milk. I suggest that if one of them were appointed by the Government to represent the consumers he would be in a position materially to assist the board in the assurance to the public of a supply of pure milk, and would be able to establish in the public mind a greater confidence in the assurance of that supply than people are likely to have if the membership of the board is confined to persons with no specialised knowledge of milk and the problems associated with its distribution and guarantee as to quality. I contend there is ample justification for some amendment such as this.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.38 p.m.