

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 7th November, 1956.

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Ayes.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. J. McL. Thomson
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. C. H. Simpson

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. G. MacKinnon	Hon. H. K. Watson

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

New Clause 38:

The CHAIRMAN: I want members to turn back to Clause 38 because there was a division on the clause and I did not observe the formality of putting the question "That Clause 38 be agreed to."

New Clause 38, as amended, put and passed.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.6 p.m.

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

QUESTIONS.**STATISTICS.**

Lecture Tour by Departmental Officer.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

Will he consider making an officer of the Government Statistician's Department available to make lecture tours of the country districts periodically to explain the reasons for the need of detailed statistics?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:
Yes.

MEDINA CANTEN.

Profit and Liquor Consumption.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

(1) What total profit was made by the State Government canteen at Medina for the year ended the 30th September, 1956?

(2) Was there an increased consumption of liquor during the year ended the 30th September, 1956?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

(1) Trading profit for 12 months ended the 30th September, 1956, was £2,339.

(2) No.

EDUCATION.

(a) Belmont High School.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has provision been made for a library room in the first section of the Belmont high school?

(2) What was the completion date agreed to by the contractor for the first stage of the high school?

(4) What is the date (approximately) when this first stage contract will now be complete?

(4) Is this school being built under the deferred payment scheme?

(5) Is it a fact that the contractor is desirous of completing the whole of high school while plant and equipment are stationed on site?

(6) Have investigations been made to see if such an arrangement can be arrived at, suitable to both contractor and Government, for the early completion of the school?

(7) Is this the first high school to be built in this State by private contract?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No provision has been made in the first stage but is included in the second stage.

(2) The 11th March, 1957.

(3) Approximately the end of this year.

(4) Yes.

(5) The matter has never been discussed.

(6) and (7) No.

(b) Attendance of Claremont Children at High Schools.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What high school will children living in the Claremont electorate, east of Bay View Terrace, have to attend next year—

(a) for a three-year high school period;

(b) for a five-year high school period?

(2) What high school will children living in the Claremont electorate, west of Bay View Terrace, have to attend next year—

(a) for a three-year high school period?

(b) for a five-year high school period?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Children commencing high school next year who have previously attended the following primary schools, will attend Claremont High School:—

Dalkeith,
Nedlands,
East Claremont,
Graylands,
Claremont.

(b) After the third year, these children go to John Curtin High School.

(2) (a) Partly answered by No. (1) (a). Children from Swanbourne will attend John Curtin High School.

(b) John Curtin High School.

(c) Closure of Perth Girls' and Perth Boys' High Schools.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Education:

(1) When is it proposed that Perth Boys' and Perth Girls' Schools shall cease to operate as high schools?

(2) What is proposed as regards the future use of the respective sites and buildings?

(3) Has further consideration been given to retaining the names of these schools either separately, or conjointly, because of the tradition of over 100 years attached thereto, and the association with the early history of Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Perth Boys' and Girdlestone will cease to operate when adequate accommodation is available out of the city. It is not possible at present to say when this will be. Perth Girls' will continue for many years.

(2) Present tentative proposals are that they will be used for technical education.

(3) This will receive careful consideration when the time arrives.

(d) Appropriate Time for Decision.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

Arising out of the answers to my questions, will he advise what he considers to be the appropriate time when a decision will be made regarding the preservation or otherwise of the historic names of Perth Boys' School and Perth Girls' School?

The MINISTER replied:

When the necessity arises, I think.

(e) Perpetuation of School Names.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

I consider that was an unsatisfactory answer to what was meant to be an intelligent and sensible question. The Minister well knows that various schools are being built in the outer areas and the boys and girls who now come to Perth to school are gradually being sent to schools in those outer areas. Is it proposed to transfer the names to other schools or is it proposed to allow them to become extinct?

The MINISTER replied:

Apparently the hon. member is not satisfied with an intelligent answer, because he asks a further question without notice. I told him the matter will be considered when the necessity arises. I repeat that that will be done. There is no necessity to worry about changes now, or as to whether the names will be retained. The matter will be dealt with when the circumstances demand that consideration be given to any change.

Mr. Court: The necessity has arisen already.

The MINISTER: I do not consider it has, so there is a difference of opinion.

(f) Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Further to my question of the 24th October, has the Government completed its consideration of the Public Examinations Board report for amending the present junior and leaving examination system?

(2) If so, with what result?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) See answer to No. (1).

TRAFFIC.*(a) Proposed Car Park.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will the large car park, as planned for the foot of Mill-st and as shown in the plan in "The West Australian" of the

25th October, 1956, be wholly or in part on land that is being reclaimed from the Swan River?

(2) If not wholly, what approximate proportion will be on land now being reclaimed?

(3) If the car park is to be wholly or in part on land being reclaimed, is this not a complete reversal of his stated answer to Mr. Yates, then member for South Perth, that no portion of such land would be used for parking facilities for motor vehicles (1955 Hansard, page 68)?

(4) What has brought about this serious reversal of policy?

(5) What is the area of the car park?

(6) How many cars will it accommodate?

The MINISTER replied:

The plan as published in "The West Australian" is diagrammatic only and not official and does not accurately define the limits and shape of the proposed car park area. Therefore, the questions of the hon. member, being based on an erroneous assumption, are hypothetical. Planning of the area is still in process.

(b) Location of Proposed Car Park.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will the car park planned to be established at the foot of Mill-st. be wholly or in part on land being reclaimed from the Swan River?

The MINISTER replied:

The planning is not yet complete.

(c) Legality of Blinking Trafficators.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the use of a front and rear blinking type of trafficator lawful?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) If not, is consideration being given to authorising their use?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Traffic regulations are now being prepared to permit the lawful use on motor-vehicles of an approved front and rear blinking type of trafficator.

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

NATIVE WELFARE.*Tabling of Ministerial Investigation Report.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

When will he table the report arising from my questions on the 8th, 21st, and 29th August, and on the 17th October, 1956, dealing with inferences of cruelty in the 1955 Native Welfare Department report?

The MINISTER replied:

When, and if, Cabinet determines it is advisable to do so.

HOUSING.

Subletting of Rental Homes.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Under what circumstances can people who hold State rental homes, sublet such homes?

(2) How many cases of such subletting are in operation at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Except in special circumstances, subletting of Commonwealth-State rental homes is not permitted, but when permitted, approval is for periods not exceeding six months. Approved cases are inspected or reviewed at the expiration of the approved period.

(2) A specific record of the number of cases is not kept. However, present approved cases would not exceed six.

ELECTORAL.

Small Assembly Electorates, Area and Enrolments.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Justice:

What is—

(a) the area;

(b) the number of electors on the roll;

for each Legislative Assembly electorate where the area is 25 square miles or less?

The MINISTER replied:

Metropolitan Area.

District.	(a) Area in Sq. Miles.	(b) Enrolment.
Beeloo	23.9	11,010
Claremont	8.9	8,937
Cottesloe	4.1	9,426
East Perth	3.2	8,827
Fremantle	16.8	9,079
Guildford-Midland	20.7	9,646
Leederville	2.8	9,220
Maylands	13.7	9,637
Melville	7.5	10,356
Middle Swan	10.6	10,085
Mt. Hawthorn	15.9	10,321
Mt. Lawley	14.4	10,631
Nedlands	6.8	9,149
North Perth	1.7	8,812
South Perth	5.2	10,048
Subiaco	2.6	9,453
Victoria Park	4.5	9,984
Wembley Beaches	24.7	13,085
West Perth	2.9	8,360

Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Area.

Boulder	7.0	4,401
Bunbury	20.9	5,663
Kalgoorlie	2.0	4,679

DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Developmental Loans to Farmers..

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What rate of interest is to be charged to dairy farmers who are eligible to receive financial assistance under the scheme to assist in the development of dairy farms in the Margaret River and Northcliffe pilot areas?

(2) In view of various conditions and reasons for which loans are to be made available to dairy farmers, is there any difference in the commencement date of the repayment of such advances?

(3) Is the individual settler to be informed of the interest rates and repayment conditions when he is notified that his application for assistance has been approved?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Five and one-quarter per cent. on the bank's ruling rate for rural advances.

(2) Successful applicants are advised that no principal repayments will be required earlier than completion of the planned development. Subject to the enactment of amending legislation now before the House, the advances may then, at the option of the farmer, be consolidated and amortised over a period not exceeding 30 years, repayable in equal half-yearly instalments. Should this method not be elected, the advances would be repayable under normal long term conditions, i.e., in 40 equal half-yearly instalments, plus interest.

(3) Yes.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE IN INDUSTRY.

Introduction of Legislation.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Is it the Government's intention to introduce legislation this session to cover long service leave in all industry?

(2) If not, when can it be anticipated?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter is receiving consideration.

STATE SAW MILLS.

Pemberton Mill and Overall Position of Stocks.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Is it correct that the Pemberton saw-mill is working two shifts?

(2) If so, is this because of current sales demand, or is it because of stockpiling?

(3) If it is because of stockpiling, what is the nature of the timber being taken into stock, and is he satisfied that the Pemberton mill stock position is in manageable proportions, or is it increasing excessively?

(4) What is the overall position in State Saw Mills regarding stocks of timber?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) At the beginning of the year, two log mills and a case mill were operated at the State saw mills at Pemberton with a combined output of 79 loads daily. The largest unit, No. 2 mill, was destroyed by fire on the 11th February this year and the smaller No. 3 log mill was immediately placed on double shift and is still operating two shifts. The case mill was continued on single shift operation. The combined output is 67½ loads daily. There has been some retrenchment at this centre.

(2) Current sales demand is less than combined output of State saw mills operating at all centres and considerable stockpiling is resulting. Stockpiling is a result and not an aim.

(3) Excess production beyond immediate orders is being directed as far as practicable into lines which can be sold when there is an improvement in the building industry and interstate demand. The position at one production centre is not significant, being dependent on managerial decisions on allocation of orders and movement of stock to local yards.

(4) The State saw mills are carrying more stock than is desirable to an extent which is causing serious concern. Attention is drawn to the State Saw Mills Department annual report for the year ended the 30th June, 1956, in relation to trend in questions.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *Tenants of Wellington-st. Property.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

With reference to notices to quit given to several occupants of railway land in Wellington-st., can he advise—

- (1) Whether it is proposed to vest this land in the Perth City Council for parking purposes?
- (2) What was the deadline date for tenants to quit the premises?
- (3) Is any extension of time to be granted to all or some of the tenants?
- (4) How many of the tenants have—

- (a) signified their willingness and ability to get out by the date specified, and
- (b) how many have protested and on what grounds?

- (5) Is it correct that some or all of the tenants had verbal understandings with the railways that it was most unlikely that the sites would be required for many years, apart from the land necessary to widen Wellington-st.?

- (6) Is it correct that it was understood by tenants that the land would not be taken except for railway purposes? If so, can the parking development be classed as railway purposes?

- (7) If the land is to be vested in the Perth City Council, will the final decision as to the deadline date for tenants to quit the area be in the hands of the Government, or the Perth City Council?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) The 31st March, 1957.

(3) It is desired that all tenants will have vacated by the above date but, if practicable, short extensions may be granted.

- (4) (a) None, but some have acknowledged notice and have other arrangements in train.

- (b) Five in writing, a deputation of six purporting to represent all lessees, and a number verbally. Difficulty in obtaining alternative suitable city accommodation.

(5) No lessee has had security of tenure for longer than six months and the insecurity of such tenure has always been impressed upon lessees when any negotiations for lease variations have been under discussion. In respect of questions on the subject, some lessees have been informed that from indications at time of inquiry there appeared no early likelihood of the land being needed for railway or other purposes excepting the widening of Wellington-st., but no assurance of continuity was ever given, as is clearly evidenced by the terms of lease agreements.

(6) A condition in the lease provides that the leases are subject to 3 months or 6 months' notice of termination at any time if required for railway purposes or City of Perth improvements.

- (7) The former.

(b) *Gnowangerup-Ongerup Line, Repairs, etc.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What amount has been spent on repairs and renovations to the Gnowangerup-Ongerup railway in the past three years?

(2) What is the estimated cost per mile now, of constructing a railway similar to the existing Gnowangerup-Ongerup railway?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The Railway Department records of expenditure cover the full section, Tambellup to Ongerup.

Separate details for the sub-section Gnowangerup-Ongerup are not recorded. Expenditure on repairs and renovations on the Tambellup-Ongerup section were:—

1953-54	£16,685
1954-55	£17,639
1955-56	£17,142

(2) £10,800. This class of railway, however, would not permit maximum speed or axle load, and a higher standard is considered necessary. The estimated cost to build a railway in similar country but allowing for 60lb. rails, six inches of ballast and bridges conforming to 15 British units of loading, is £14,500 per mile.

(c) Suspension of Yuna Line Services.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) How many employees will be involved in the suspension of the Yuna railway services?

(2) What tonnage of—

(a) wheat;

(b) super

was carried on this line during the year ended the 31st October, 1956?

(3) What is the anticipated financial saving (over one year) if the Yuna services are suspended?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Fifteen.

(2) Figures to the 31st October, 1956, are not yet available. For the year ended the 30th September, 1956, the totals were:

(a) 14,712 tons.

(b) 620 tons.

(3) £16,000.

(d) Particulars Relating to Great Southern Lines.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Referring to railway lines—

(a) Brookton to Corrigin;

(b) Lake Grace to Hyden;

(c) Katanning to Pingrup,

what was the total revenue on each respectively for the last financial year?

(2) What were the total expenses on each line, in the following categories: traffic operations; permanent way expenditure, and other expenses charged against each line?

(3) (a) What is the railway freight per ton on grain to the port from each of Hyden, Pingrup, and Corrigin via Brookton?

(b) What portion of this amount is credited to sections Hyden to Lake Grace; Pingrup to Katanning; and Corrigin to Brookton, respectively?

(4) If railway services are discontinued on these lines—

(a) when is it proposed to cease rail services in each case;

(b) will the Government arrange a road service at no greater cost to the user in each case, and providing a not less frequent service than each district receives at the present time;

(c) will the Government undertake to maintain any road over which a road service runs, when such road service replaces the existing railway service, in at least as good condition as before such substitution of services?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) £13,700.

(b) £13,400.

(c) £16,900.

(2)

	Traffic.	Permanent Way.	Other.	Total.
	£	£	£	£
(a)	9,977	14,911	21,426	46,314
(b)	11,981	15,123	22,879	49,783
(c)	19,995	26,570	31,948	78,513

Per Ton.

s. d.

(3) (a) Hyden to Albany 52 9

Pingrup to Albany 41 9

Corrigin via Brookton to

North Fremantle 43 1

(b) Hyden-Lake Grace 10 11

Pingrup to Katanning 14 2

Corrigin to Brookton 13 0

(4) (a) This has yet to be determined, but it would not be practicable to close agricultural lines until after the close of the 1956-57 season.

(b) The present proposal is that at the outset goods included in railway classification as "Miscellaneous" will be carried at railway rates but the relative subsidy would be progressively reduced over a period of seven years to enable producers to adapt themselves to the changed conditions.

It is anticipated that where road services replace railways, a frequency of service, better than the present railway frequency, will be provided but the road service will not necessarily follow the same route as the railway.

(c) The total amount of loading involved in any of the above instances would represent an average of not more than six 10-ton truck loads per day. It is anticipated that normal maintenance expenditure would meet the needs in these circumstances.

Where improvements are necessary from time to time, steps will be taken to effect same.

Totals given in Nos. (1) and (2) above are estimated.

NARROWS BRIDGE.

Free or Toll Basis.

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

Can he give the House a definite statement as to whether the Narrows bridge when opened to traffic will be on a free or a toll basis?

The PREMIER replied:

This question has yet to be finally determined.

NAVAL BASE.

Suitability of Albany Harbour.

Mr. HALL asked the Premier:

While he is in Canberra for the Premier's Conference, will he bring to the notice of the responsible Minister—

- (1) the tension now existing in the Middle East;
- (2) the need for a naval base on the western shore of the continent;
- (3) the suitability of Albany as a natural harbour;
- (4) the strategic advantages of Albany's situation?

The PREMIER replied:

The need for a naval base on the west side of Australia has been represented strongly to the Commonwealth Government on more than one occasion. Both Albany and Cockburn Sound have been suggested as suitable sites. Attached are copies of the more recent correspondence on the matter between the State and the Commonwealth Government.

Among other reasons, I would hand in copies of this correspondence because I understand that the Prime Minister did say in the Federal House of Representatives some time ago in reply to a question that he had not received any representation from the present State Government in connection with this matter. This correspondence is dated the 12th June of this year.

SLOT MACHINES.

Direction to Commissioner of Police and Future Action.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Has any direction been given to the Commissioner of Police regarding the removal of "slot machines" from clubs?

(2) Are these machines illegal at the present time?

(3) What action is contemplated by the Government after the 31st December, 1956, if "slot machines" are still in use?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied:

This question was wrongly directed to the Minister for Justice, and subsequently it was passed on to me. The replies are—

(1) No.

(2) and (3) A determination has not yet been finalised.

POPULATION.

Residents in Country, North-West, and Metropolis.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

(1) What was the approximate population in Western Australia in June, 1956?

(2) What number resided in the country (not including the North-West)?

(3) What number resided in the North-West?

(4) What number resided in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

(1) 677,389.

(2) 296,889.

(3) 11,500.

(4) 369,000.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Medical Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Health.
- 2, Public Service.
Introduced by the Premier.
- 3, Hire Purchase Agreements Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mr. Johnson.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Land Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 2, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [4.56]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [4.57]: I appeal to the Minister to give us some information in reply to the questions that were asked of him last night when we debated the necessity of passing legislation of this kind. I hope you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, to make some comparison with a Bill which was passed many years

ago and which caused quite a number of people concerned a good deal of unnecessary work, expense and time. I refer to the Pig Industry Compensation Bill.

That measure was introduced in 1944 by the then Minister for Agriculture and subsequently passed. A provision was included in the Bill that was entirely unnecessary and caused considerable inconvenience and waste of time and money not only to the producers but also to agents and postal authorities. We could not understand why such a clause was included in the Bill; and when I was elected to this House, I moved that the provision be deleted. That was done, and the purpose of the measure as it stands is given effect to without any inconvenience to the people concerned.

The passing of the legislation now before us is absolutely unnecessary. There is no demand for it. We have had proof of that, and the member for Roe will be able to give the Minister some further information he has received today with reference to the measure. There is no demand for the legislation in quite a big area of this State; and if it passes the Bill, this House will do something which will cause inconvenience to the producers.

Not only is it unnecessary, but it will not be possible to police it. In that regard, we were last night given sufficient evidence to convince anybody except the Minister, and I hope he will be able to give the House valid reasons as to why the Bill should be passed. If not, we have nothing to do but to fight it to the last ditch. I am not going to be one who just accepts anything a Minister may bring down and passes it willy-nilly, hoping for the best.

When the Minister was on this side of the Chamber, if he thought his electors or the electors of the State were going to be inconvenienced by measures of any sort that were not necessary and were not likely to be of any advantage, he fought them tooth and nail and called the Ministers everything for introducing them. If we had time to do so, we could demonstrate that by reference to Hansard. Suffice to say that we do not want this legislation. I therefore appeal again to the Minister to withhold the measure for further consideration. I ask him to withdraw it and allow the House to consider necessary amendments, rather than pass a measure which it will be impossible to police. I oppose the third reading.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.1]: We tried very hard last night to get the Minister to give us further reasons for the introduction of the Bill and I hope that even at this late stage he will inform us more fully than he has so far as to the real reasons for its introduction. Even if he did not say so in as many words, the Minister led us to believe that the Farmers' Union supported this request for an amendment of the Brands Act.

The Minister for Agriculture: I never said that.

Mr. PERKINS: Without Hansard in front of us, it is difficult to recollect exactly what the Minister said.

Mr. Nalder: He said he had rung the secretary of the Farmers' Union.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said we had rung the secretary of the Farmers' Union but that he was unable to speak on behalf of his organisation, as the conference does not take place for some time yet, but that he personally felt that there would be no objection to the measure.

Mr. PERKINS: Since last night I have been in touch with the secretary of the meat section of the Farmers' Union and he told me definitely that that section had told the appropriate division of the Department of Agriculture that they did not favour this type of legislation. If the Minister will agree to have another look at the legislation and discuss it with the Farmers' Union, I feel certain that he will find that the meat section of that body, which is the most representative producing body that we have representing the agricultural areas of the State, is opposed to the amendments contained in the Bill.

I gather that the members of that section of the Farmers' Union are just as much opposed as is any member here to the provision requiring firebranding of cattle under six months old, and the provision deleting the portion of the Act which allows earmarking to be substituted for a firebrand. I am convinced that the Minister has misinterpreted the viewpoint of the Farmers' Union if he thinks that it has agreed to these provisions. Members of the executive of the meat section of the Farmers' Union know the agricultural areas of Western Australia very well and appreciate the difficulties of applying such rigid provisions in districts where cattle are in many instances only a sideline. I feel that the Minister should seek that further information before proceeding with the measure and I would like him to explain to the Chamber—which he has so far refused to do—where this request really came from. I say definitely that it did not come from the Farmers' Union.

The Minister for Transport: So what?

Mr. PERKINS: I have heard it said in this House that the Meat and Allied Trades Federation has asked for it, but I see no reason why we should agree to some request from that body unless good reasons can be produced to support it.

The Minister for Agriculture: You think all we should consider are matters brought here by the Farmers' Union?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not think that at all, but the Minister has not explained why it is necessary, for the purposes of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation, to have this legislation.

The Minister for Agriculture: I did.

Mr. PERKINS: All the explanation that the Minister gave was that it was difficult for master butchers to identify animals which were subsequently condemned by the meat inspector.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is right.

Mr. PERKINS: Why cannot the master butchers identify the beasts by the earmarks? It is not suggested that that provision be deleted and it will still be necessary to earmark cattle if the Act is complied with. I strongly suspect that the real reason for the introduction of this Bill is to make things a little easier for the master butchers. Anyone who knows the set-up at the abattoir realises that the skins go to one portion of the works and the heads and ears go down the offal chute, with the result that the skins and earmarks become separated.

Is that the real reason for the introduction of the legislation? If it is, the Minister should tell us so and if that is the best reason he can produce to justify putting producers in a large part of the State to this extra trouble and expense, he will find there will be forthcoming even more opposition to the Bill. I think he could have saved a great deal of argument had he been more frank with the House last night and even at this late stage I hope he will give us some further justification for the measure.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [5.7]: I wish to voice strong opposition to the measure as I believe it will achieve no good purpose. Any small advantage which the Minister may think would be gained by the Meat and Allied Trades Federation through the passing of the Bill would certainly be offset by the disadvantage, inconvenience and expense to which the farming community would be put in carrying out its provisions. The farming community certainly does not want this measure which requires something which is already largely practised, in that the farmer both earmarks and brands his cattle. I see no virtue in making it compulsory for the farmer to both brand and earmark and, therefore the Bill in my view achieves nothing at all.

The Minister for Agriculture: It does away with the need to earmark.

The **SPEAKER:** I suggest the Minister allow the member for Harvey to continue his speech.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The measure does not prevent them from earmarking or, if it does, it is a thousand times worse than I thought it was, because the earmarking of cattle and sheep is a convenient way of marking them and if the Minister has not yet indicated to us that that is one of the provisions of the Bill, I think we have reached a serious state of affairs. When introducing the measure the Minister did not tell us it would wipe out of the Brands

Act the need to earmark cattle. Is he telling us now that the Brands Act is not to be at all concerned with the earmarking of stock?

The Minister for Agriculture: I am not telling you anything. I presented the Bill to the House and you have had plenty of opportunity to examine it.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: What I read into it was that where previously it provided that the owner should brand with the registered brand or earmark, it was now intended to strike out the words "or earmark." The compulsory provision of the Act is that stock must be branded either with a firebrand or earmark and apparently the measure is to strike out the provision for earmarking. I think the Bill is objectionable inasmuch as it requires stock to be branded at the age of six months, and I do not favour the deletion from the Act the provision for earmarking. I oppose the third reading.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [5.12]: I am particularly disappointed at the Minister's attitude towards this amendment and I can give him an assurance that we are not trying to be obstructive in regard to the measure but are adopting an attitude which we believe is not detrimental to the breeding of baby beef in Western Australia. There are two questions which the Minister has not answered. First of all, although I have not the text of the Minister's speech before me, my recollection is that he said the Bill was being introduced at the request of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said that was partly the reason for its introduction.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have heard from outside this Chamber that that is the principal reason why the measure is before us. What sort of a Government have we?

The Minister for Transport: A very good one—first-class!

Mr. ACKLAND: We find it running in double harness with Pat Healy & Co. and now it is running in a unicorn team with Pat Healy & Co., the sausage king and company, and the Labour Party—

The **SPEAKER:** Can the hon. member connect those remarks up with the Bill?

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, the Farmers' Union does not favour the Bill. We have it on good authority that the meat section of that body is opposed to this legislation which the Minister is trying to force through this House. A question I would like the Minister to answer is why, in the export fat lamb industry, it is not necessary to brand or earmark and in many cases the lambs are not even tailed before going to the butcher, in order that they may be without blemish and have the maximum amount of bloom, which is a most important factor in the fat lamb industry.

Mr. Moir: The bloom has long gone off you.

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, but I have renewed my youth, and the hon. member knows it. Exactly the same thing applies in the fat lamb industry as applies in the baby beef industry. Baby beef should go to market before they have reached the age of nine months—somewhere between 6 and 9 months—so that they can be marketed in their prime. They should be marketed without any loss of bloom, and there should not be any hindrance to their growth over that period. It is just as important that they should not be blemished and should not lose their bloom, as it is for fat lambs.

I would like the Minister to give us a reason why it is necessary in the case of cattle which are running with their mothers until the time they are killed—they have to be killed by the time they reach nine months because the mothers who are suckling them have to recuperate before calving again at the end of 12 months—to be firebranded. There is not a scrap of need for this legislation. In my opinion, it has been introduced because of a request from people who, as the member for Roe suggested, do not wish to be put to the trouble of keeping the hides separate at the time of killing. If that is the reason for it, the Minister is doing a great disservice to what is becoming a very important section of the meat trade in Western Australia.

The other questions I will leave out, but I hope he will give an answer to the one I have just asked. I know that he cannot give us an answer, and I think the Minister should have been prepared to listen to people who have had a lifetime of experience in this trade, even if they lost their bloom some time ago! I would not attempt to tell the Minister anything about the timber industry in the South-West; he knows too much about it. Possibly he is an expert on other things too. But the four people who have spoken on this side of the House in opposition to the Bill are experts in fat stock breeding. I think the Minister would have been well advised not to take the attitude of refusing to listen. Last night he would not budge and on two occasions, when motions were moved to report progress, he refused to accept them. When he was asked to report progress himself, he snarled from his seat that he was not prepared to do that.

If he is interested in the development of the State he should have another look at this measure. There is nothing personal in my attitude to this Bill. The Minister does not know, and we do. There are some things of which he has a good knowledge and we do not know anything about. But the Minister knows nothing about the fat stock industry and I hope that this Bill will not pass the third reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply)
(5.18): I will admit straightaway that I have had no experience in the fat stock

industry; nor do I know everything about wheat-farming, potato-growing, dairying and a number of other matters in connection with which, for the time being at least, I represent the Government. But that does not alter the fact that when work has to be done and legislation has to be considered regarding those phases, great care is taken to see that the best advice possible is obtained. I think members opposite will agree that over the last three years in most cases that has been done. There have been many occasions in this House over that period when, due to the experience and greater knowledge of members opposite on these subjects, we have, between us, been able to effect useful amendments to legislation introduced.

I think that is the purpose of a Minister, whether it be the Minister for Housing, Agriculture or anything else. But there was no occasion for some of the offensive remarks that have been passed in this debate. I have been accused of not knowing anything about it and of not having had any practical experience. The time may arrive when the member for Harvey will sit over on this side of the House and, ultimately, become the Minister for Education, for instance. If he does, what a chance I will have of getting my own back!

The Minister for Transport: And God help the kids!

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Great care has been taken to find out through our own departmental officers just what the effect of this Bill will be. We must all acknowledge that the Act in its present form is of little use. It cannot be policed and it was made innocuous by previous amendments to the parent Act which made it optional for a farmer to firebrand or earmark. As a consequence, it is not possible to make any proper inspections and the department certainly cannot undertake prosecutions. I gave those reasons when I introduced the Bill.

I also mentioned the Meat and Allied Trades Federation, and members will find the reference in my second reading speech. They say that there are occasions when, through not having young stock—that is, baby beef—branded, it is not possible to trace the owners of diseased animals. On some occasions it has been found impossible to identify the carcasses and as a consequence the vendor—even if he is not the chief culprit—should at least bear the cost. The buyer of the beast should not have to pay for it in such circumstances. There have been cases, and the member for Katanning said the other evening—

Mr. I. W. Manning: What diseases would there be?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: —that there had not been many although there had been some. It is known that a cow sick with tuberculosis transfers the

disease to the baby and when it is slaughtered the vendor, if it is unbranded, cannot be traced.

Mr. Ackland: Don't you appreciate that by the time they realise the animal is diseased, the skin has gone and there is only the carcass left? The skin has gone into the stockpile.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The point is that occasions have arisen at the Midland Junction Abattoir when it has not been possible to identify an animal after slaughter. It cannot be identified if there is no brand on it. Even though we admitted that under the present Act farmers can earmark, there are times when it is not possible to identify the animals because there is a lack of permanency with earmarking that is not so with firebranding.

Mr. Perkins: I do not think that is right.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Experience has shown that that is so, and I think practical farmers will agree with that statement. A farmer can earmark sheep or baby beef but because the animal walks through rough scrub, or possibly for some other reason, the earmark can become mutilated in such a way that the mark is not recognisable. When we have an Act of Parliament which says—whether we like it or not—that stock shall be either firebranded or earmarked, surely members will agree that it should be policed! If it cannot be policed, it should be amended to make it workable. It was introduced on behalf of the farmers of the State and to give them some protection. Members opposite might not agree with it; but there are many who are in favour of it.

Some members have said that last night I refused to get up and continue the discussion. I had already explained everything I could in connection with it and, to my way of thinking, the only reason why members wanted me to speak further was so that I could throw further fuel on the fire and give them further opportunity to prolong the debate. Had I done so, the debate would have gone on until all hours of the morning.

By way of interjection I said to the Leader of the Opposition that the matters which had been raised would be considered. We did consider them and I believe that this Bill as it stands is a useful amendment to the existing Act. From the point of view of good farm husbandry, it should be an obligation on farmers to brand their stock at the earliest age possible—as I said last night, at the time of castration because they are yarded then and it would save a good deal of time. I would say that the branding of cattle would be the hallmark of good husbandry.

Some members opposite say that the farmers do not want it. Apparently they do not want to take the trouble to brand or give consideration to the points raised by the member for Gascoyne last night. In my view, he raised some most interesting points and some very strong arguments in favour of this legislation. There are people who suffer as a result of farmers not complying with the requirements of the Brands Act. People all over the State suffer.

Mr. Nalder: Very few.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I know of it from my own experience.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Do you think that that outweighs the disadvantages to the farmers?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it does. When a Minister introduces a Bill, he has to take into consideration every aspect of the situation and not, as in this case, only the desires of the Farmers' Union or the four members who spoke on behalf of the farmers in their districts. They gave no thought to the rest of the community but were merely trying to gain their own selfish ends.

Mr. I. W. Manning: I think you are biased against the farmers. You are, if you persist with this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is justification for the introduction of this legislation. I would like to see it go through—and it will—in its present form so that the Legislative Council can discuss it. I think it should be considered on its merits by both Houses of Parliament and no alteration made to it in this Chamber. If, in their wisdom, members of another place effect some amendment to it which will not destroy the requirement for compulsory firebranding, we could give the matter further consideration. If they make an alteration which will have the effect of extending the period to 12 months instead of six—

Mr. Nalder: It looks as though you want the debate all over again.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:—rather than lose the principle of firebranding, I would not have any great objection to it. But for members to say, as they have done, that they do not believe in any part of the Bill—

Mr. Ackland: In any part of the amendments in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Any part of the parent Act, if the truth is known. I say there is some good in this measure and if it will ease the position to have compulsory branding lifted in the case of baby beef less than six months of age, I would probably agree to it so long as the idea of compulsory branding is accepted instead of ear-marking. The member for Harvey has not caught up

with that point yet. However, the Legislative Council can discuss the measure as it stands, deal with it on its merits and we can look at the position further when the Bill is returned to us.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—HOSPITALS.

Metropolitan and Country Contributions.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.30]: I move—

That this House is of the opinion that, in view of the replies given to questions this session regarding local contributions to the construction or extensions to country hospitals, the policy being adopted by the Government in regard to same is unfair, and should be discontinued.

I am sorry the Minister for Health is not in his seat—

The Minister for Transport: He is not very far away.

The Premier: I saw him in a certain place a moment ago!

Mr. NALDER: —because I had hoped he might be able to listen to what I have to say and give some consideration to the objections contained in my motion. Firstly I think I should read the questions asked by several members on this side of the House on this subject, together with the replies that were received to those questions. I would first like to quote the questions asked by the Leader of the Country Party on the 26th September together with the answers given by the Minister. They are as follows:—

Questions:

- (1) Is the Government now asking country local authorities to make a contribution of one-third or some other fraction of the cost of erection of, or additions to, country hospitals?
- (2) If so, when was it decided to reinstate this system which was abandoned by the previous Government?
- (3) Has it also been decided to ask for a contribution from metropolitan local authorities towards cost of additions to, or erections of, hospitals in the metropolitan area?
- (4) If not why not; and how does he justify the differentiation in these two cases?

Answers:

- (1) and (2) It is still Government policy to provide the whole of the cost of major hospital construction in accordance with priorities and as loan funds become available.

In several country districts hospital boards and local authorities have realised that, because of the shortage of loan funds, there is little likelihood of additions to hospitals in their areas being proceeded with in the near future and have decided to raise money with the hope that local effort will be subsidised on a £ for £ basis by the Lotteries Commission and the Government.

- (3) and (4) No local authority has been advised that it is required to find any money towards the cost of hospital buildings. Where a local authority indicates its interest or enthusiasm to assist in hospital construction the Government will encourage it to do so as far as practicable.

The next set of questions was asked on the 3rd October by the Leader of the Country Party and I will read them together with the answers given. They are as follows:—

Questions:

- (1) Regarding question No. 1 on the 26th September, will he advise the amounts contributed by district boards and local authorities in the country areas towards hospital construction and additions in the last three financial years, showing each district separately?
- (2) In respect of the same districts, what amounts have been contributed towards such works by the Government and the Lotteries Commission?
- (3) Which (if any) local authorities in the metropolitan area have made any such contribution and how much in each case?
- (4) Regarding No. (3), what were the Government and the Lotteries Commission contributions?

Answers:

- (1) No major sums were contributed by hospital boards or local authorities in country areas towards hospital construction and additions during the financial years ended the 30th June, 1954, and 1955.

During the year ended the 30th June, 1956, the following amounts were promised by the districts indicated:—

	£
Wyalkatchem	2,000
Dalwallinu	5,000
Moora	6,000
Boddington	5,000
Pingelly	5,000
Bridgetown	5,000
Pemberton	1,250
Donnybrook	1,000

In some cases the local authorities have agreed to provide part or all of the local contribution, whilst in others the money is being raised by hospital boards' special efforts.

(2) In each case the Lotteries Commission and the Government promised grants on a £ for £ basis with local effort.

(3) Nil.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

I now propose to give the questions asked by the member for Mt. Marshall on the 17th October together with the answers supplied by the Minister. They are as follows:—

(1) What was the capital cost of the South Perth Community Centre Hospital—

(a) buildings;

(b) furnishings and equipment?

(2) How was the finance provided?

There are one or two other questions which are not relevant to the issue and I will not deal with them. The answers given by the Minister were as follows:—

(1) The capital cost of the South Perth Community Centre Hospital was—

	£
(a) Building	106,000
(b) Equipment and furniture	12,000
Total (subject to finalisation) ..	£118,000

(2) Finance was provided by—

	£
Lotteries Commission	45,000
State Government	45,000
Amount raised by citizens of South Perth	22,000
	£112,000

On the 23rd October I asked the Minister a series of questions and I give below the questions I asked together with the replies given me by the Minister—

Questions: (1) How many hospitals or extensions to existing hospitals does the Government intend to build or commence building this financial year?

(2) What towns, or districts in the State, are to have the above facilities?

(3) Of the above towns or districts, how many have been asked to contribute portion of the estimated cost?

(4) What is the sum that each of the above towns or districts have been asked to contribute?

Answers: (1) The hospital building and extension programme for the current financial year cannot be finally determined until the extent of available finance is known.

(2) Answered by No. (1) above.

(3) Voluntary financial contributions are available from the following towns or districts:—

Northampton.
Pingelly.
Boddington.
Bridgetown.
Kojonup.
Moora.
Katanning.
Donnybrook.

At this point I would like you to note, Mr. Speaker, that although only three weeks had elapsed since the member for Stirling had asked his questions, a different list of towns is provided from that given in answer to the hon. member's question of the 3rd October. The answer to the fourth question asked by me was as follows:—

(4) Local contributions vary. When the estimated cost of proposed work is known, district residents are advised. The amounts to be contributed are left to local decision and, in regard to the above, are as follows:—

	£
Northampton	1,566
Pingelly	5,000
Boddington	5,000
Bridgetown	5,000
Kojonup	10,000
Moora	6,000
Katanning	10,000
Donnybrook	1,000

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the total amounts that are to be contributed by those local authorities mentioned in the answer given to the question asked on the 3rd October. The amount promised by those districts was £30,250—that was the sum the local authorities were going to contribute towards the construction and extension of their existing hospital buildings. That was on the 3rd October. Three weeks later, on the 23rd October, several other towns were added to this list and the amount had risen from £30,250 to £43,566.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The game is on.

Mr. NALDER: It seemed as though the Minister for Health found that the local authorities could be baited and were going to contribute towards the capital cost of the extensions to which I have referred. The Minister, however, was extending this principle. Now I understand the people of Narrogin are going to contribute and within another week we find that the amount has risen to £53,566.

The Minister for Health: Don't you think that is very commendable?

Mr. NALDER: Let the Minister argue with the country people as to whether that is commendable or not. How much by way of voluntary contribution is made by people in the metropolitan area towards extensions and renovations of their existing hospital facilities?

Mr. Ackland: The country people only come into it because they know that if they did not, they would not be provided with a hospital.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NALDER: The local contributions have, of course, varied. When the cost of the proposed work is known and the residents of the district are advised of the amounts to be contributed—and according to the information I have, it is left to the local people to decide whether they will contribute to the above amounts—

Hon. A. F. Watts: What happens if they do not?

Mr. NALDER: I do not know, but if we view the matter in the light of answers given to questions relative to the South Perth Community Hospital, I would say that the people in the country can go ahead and have the extensions made to their hospitals and perhaps get off lightly.

The Minister for Health: I think the South Perth example was very commendable.

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister's argument is to be considered along those lines, I would have thought that on that basis the people of South Perth would have contributed one-third of the amount towards their hospital. They have not contributed anywhere near one-third of the amount they should have contributed.

The Minister for Health: We have never asked anyone to contribute.

Mr. NALDER: That is just the point.

Hon. A. F. Watts: That is why it is not fair.

The Minister for Health: Should I refuse?

Mr. NALDER: Several questions were asked of the Minister for Health and he was also asked if he would lay on the Table of the House files dealing with some of the various districts that have been referred to. The member for Mt. Marshall asked that the file dealing with the Wyalkatchem district hospital be laid on the Table of the House and the Minister agreed. He also agreed to lay the files dealing with the Kojonup and Katanning hospitals.

The Minister for Health: I have nothing to hide.

Mr. NALDER: No, but a most remarkable thing was revealed when these files were laid on the Table of the House. There was no communication whatsoever between the Minister's department and the districts concerned. How by any stretch of the imagination of anybody here—or anywhere else—do we know that the districts required extensions to the existing hospitals? Surely there must be some record where these towns and districts in the country areas requested extensions or renovations to the hospitals!

Surely there must have been some evidence somewhere! However, it did not appear on the files and there was no communication from the Health Department to the districts of either Kojonup or Katanning, or any details of the requirements of the districts concerned. It must have been done verbally or by telephone; I do not know. So how are we going to draw conclusions regarding this proposition which we have before us tonight? How have the people in the country impressed their needs upon the Health Department for renovations and extensions to the existing hospitals? Are we to believe that the people of Kojonup and Katanning would want to contribute the sum of £10,000, if it was not necessary?

I now want to turn to priorities. The Minister will probably tell us—as he has stated in answers to some of the questions—that it was practically impossible to meet the needs for extensions and renovations because of the lack of loan funds. I presume in the Health Department, as in other departments there is a priority list, and buildings are carried on according to the priority in which they appear on the list. I presume the Minister will agree that that is the position. Rather a strange answer to a question, which is quite relevant to this subject, appears in Hansard No. 2 of 1950, pages 1524 and 1525. It was a reply given by the then Minister for Health to a question asked by the member for Moore. The question was as follows:—

Will she lay on the Table of the House a return showing—

- (a) The new hospitals for the building of which provision has been made in the Estimates now before Parliament, the estimated cost of each building and the priority in which they will be erected?

That is the relevant part—the estimated cost of each building and the priority in which they will be erected. I underline it and repeat it—the priority in which they will be erected. The question went on—

- (b) those hospitals for which authority had previously been obtained, but which had not so far been completed and the estimated cost of each;
- (c) those hospitals which are to have repair work or enlargements done, the nature of such work, the estimated cost in each case and the priority in which the work is to be carried out;
- (d) a priority list of any other hospitals which it is contemplated building in the future?

The Minister replied as follows:—

Information on these points will be supplied when dealing with the Estimates.

Except in special instances, a rigid priority list is not possible because of many factors, some of which change and must be met by special effort. Completion of plans, availability of tenders and of materials are complicating factors.

It appears that although the Minister indicated that there is a priority list, it apparently does not count for very much. I follow that up by saying that if there is a priority list, that priority list will be drastically affected if the suggestions that appear in the answers to the questions I have before me, are carried out. According to these answers to questions, the Government is prepared to contribute £50,566 towards hospitals, though they have no priority at all on the priority list in the office of the Department of Health.

Mr. Lawrence: You are trying to be parochial.

Mr. NALDER: I am not being parochial. Let the member for South Fremantle have something to say when the time comes and try to help the Minister in this regard. Let him explain why there is so much unfairness.

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Katanning is making a speech!

Mr. NALDER: I would like to go back a little and traverse some of the ground leading up to the present position. I have not had time to find out when this idea of a third contribution by local authorities or districts for extensions and renovations to hospitals originated, but I think it goes back to somewhere in the 1920's. I know from my own personal observation that a certain country hospital contributed quite a sum of money, but I do not know whether it was one third or a half.

This scheme was started, I believe, in the late 20's, somewhere around 1927 or 1928, by the then Labour Government. I have a very vivid recollection of the policy speech by the Leader of the Country Party in 1947 when he stated that if returned to office, he would discontinue, or make an effort to discontinue, the idea of local authorities contributing toward their hospitalisation in the various country districts. It was discontinued in 1948 by the Watts-McLarty Government.

The Premier: Does the hon. member mean the McLarty-Watts Government?

Mr. NALDER: If the Premier knows what I mean, it is quite okay with me. In 1948 it was discontinued and the country people enjoyed perfect equality so far as their hospital needs and requirements were concerned. It went on until 1956 of this year of grace when the present Government apparently thought—

The Minister for Health: It did not "sought" at all.

Mr. NALDER: I did not say "sought"; I said "thought". The Government apparently thought it would be a grand idea to increase the amount of money that it has available for extensions and renovations of hospitals, because that is just what it means. I say it is totally unfair to expect people in the country to contribute twice.

The Minister for Health: I deny that. We had never asked the country people; it is voluntary.

Mr. NALDER: I am amazed at the Minister for Health. For the 10 years I have been a member of this House every member of the Opposition has given the Minister full marks for the fair and level-headed way he approaches any subject.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I think he has changed, don't you?

Mr. NALDER: In this regard, the Minister is endeavouring to bring about a condition which existed years ago, and one which the previous Government thought should be discontinued. I think it is a very retrograde step on the part of the Minister and is unfair to the country people—the people he represents. I have not heard of the people in the towns of Norseman or Esperance contributing one-third.

Mr. Lawrence: What more rights have the country people than those in the city?

Mr. Ackland: They do not want any more rights.

The Minister for Health: The town of Norseman makes a big contribution.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NALDER: I have a very interesting question here asked by the then member for Kanowna, the present Minister for Health, which appears on page 946 of the 1948 Hansard. The member for Kanowna then asked a question regarding equipment for Esperance. He complained about the lack of equipment and said he did not see why the people there should subsidise or make any effort themselves to buy equipment for the Esperance hospital or pay for extensions to the building. I do not know what the details of the equipment were; the information is not here.

However, the people of Esperance were not prepared to make a special effort to help in the way all local authorities and hospital boards are now doing in the country areas. I do not care what country district it is, whether it be in the south part of the State or any other part, there are people who work and spend their energies and time in order to contribute towards the purchasing of equipment for the local hospitals. It is commendable indeed.

Mr. Heal: It is done in the metropolitan area.

Mr. NALDER: Then I give full marks to the metropolitan people. That work is highly commendable. These people are endeavouring to assist not only the staffs of the country hospitals but the inmates, because they are trying to make their stay in the hospital much more to their liking.

There is another point to this matter. When we look at the towns and the various country districts that have been asked to make their contributions towards hospital extensions and so on, it appears, peculiarly enough, that those towns are in the electorates of Country Party members, mainly, and of some Liberal members.

The Minister for Health: That is not fair because there is no discrimination.

Mr. NALDER: Let the Minister prove it! For the information of members, I shall mention these towns once more.

The Minister for Education: They may be Labour seats tomorrow.

Mr. NALDER: That is so.

The Premier: If "The West Australian" has its way, they will be Liberal Party seats.

Mr. NALDER: The towns to which I refer are Wyalkatchem, Dalwallinu, Pemberton, Moora, Boddington, Pingelly, Bridgetown, Donnybrook, Katanning, Kojonup and now Narrogin.

The Minister for Education: Pemberton is in a Labour electorate.

Mr. NALDER: That is so. It may be a coincidence that the remainder of these towns are in non-Labour electorates. Let the Minister tell us why the people in these country districts are being asked to contribute these sums of money. On the surface it appears to be very unfair indeed. The people in these districts are being asked to contribute twice to the construction and renovation of the hospital buildings because they do it in the first place as taxpayers, and then as residents of the district they are asked to contribute again. In the two particular cases—I refer to the town of Kojonup in my electorate and to the town of Katanning—they are asked to contribute £10,000.

The Premier: Who asked them?

Mr. NALDER: If they are to have the buildings erected, they will have to contribute.

The Premier: Who asked them?

Mr. NALDER: There is nothing on the file to say who asked them.

The Premier: You say they were asked, so you must know.

Mr. NALDER: There must have been some communication somewhere or other.

The Premier: Who asked them?

Mr. NALDER: I do not know, and that is why I have asked the Minister.

The Premier: Surely the hon. member would have consulted with the local people to find out.

Mr. NALDER: The local people never approached me. I do not know whether any other members were approached.

The Premier: Didn't you seek to ascertain from the local people who asked them to contribute?

Mr. Ackland: The department asked the people of Dalwallinu to contribute.

Mr. NALDER: I did not ask the particular question that the Premier has asked me.

The Minister for Lands: You have no right to be introducing a motion like this.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the hon. member speak in support of his motion.

Mr. NALDER: I do not know whether the Premier has found out who asked the local authorities, but I cannot find out who asked them.

The Premier: You allege they were asked. It is up to you to prove your allegation.

Mr. NALDER: I did not allege that, although I admit I said they were asked. Someone must have approached them.

The Minister for Education: Who told you they were asked?

Mr. Ackland: The Medical Department asked the people of Dalwallinu.

Mr. NALDER: The files do not show who asked them. Perhaps the Minister might be able to give us some information on the point.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The net result is that they are going to pay, and that is the most important part.

Mr. Ackland: They will not get a hospital unless they do.

Mr. NALDER: That is the point. I think I am quite justified in bringing the matter before the House. I believe that the action of the Government through the Minister is totally unfair to the people in the country districts.

Another matter is that of decentralisation. The Minister for Health, on many occasions when he sat in opposition on this side of the House, spoke about decentralisation, and I give him full marks for what he had to say because he tried to impress upon members and the public of Western Australia that the interests of the State and the Commonwealth would be best served through decentralisation; by having our industries and population established in as many parts of the State as possible. He referred to superphosphate works, and I guarantee that he is very pleased about the result, in this regard, that might occur in the near future.

The Minister for Health: I am definitely still of the same opinion.

Mr. NALDER: He did many other things for his district. There is a lot of land development going on there now. We speak about decentralisation from the very house-tops. Every member agrees that we do not want all the population in one place. Events in the world, even today, prove that we do not want all our population centralised, but how are we to encourage people to go into the country if we do not make available for them the facilities to which they are justly entitled? Included in those facilities are hospitals which the Government should make available to the people who live in the outback.

The Minister for Health: Quite right.

Mr. NALDER: So I come back to the point once more and say that the Government, in this regard, has shown what I consider to be an unfair attitude in asking the country people to contribute towards one of these facilities which, I believe, that they, as residents of a district and as electors of Parliament—

The Premier: Which Minister asked them to contribute? You say the Government asked them to contribute.

Mr. NALDER: Through the Minister for Health, I would say. That is the subject matter of the motion, and I am trying to keep to it. I am not trying to diverge in any shape or form. The Premier is trying to side-step the issue a bit.

The Premier: No.

Mr. NALDER: The Premier knows what I mean. If I say something and he likes to pick me up on it and tries to trick me, I give him full marks.

The Premier: I am trying to get the hon. member to stop side-stepping.

Mr. NALDER: I am not side-stepping anything.

The Premier: Which Minister asked these people to contribute?

The Minister for Health: I definitely deny that I did.

Mr. NALDER: The Minister for Health might be able to answer that question, because I cannot find out. The files that are tabled in the House generally give some information, but these files do not give us the answer to the Premier's question.

The Minister for Education: You are only cooking up something.

Mr. NALDER: I looked into the files put on the Table, but this information was not available.

The Minister for Health: The files were placed on the Table, and nothing was removed from them. I would not tolerate that.

Mr. NALDER: I did not suggest that; if I did, I did not mean to. There must have been some communication somewhere or other.

Mr. Cornell: It would be verbal.

Mr. NALDER: The member for Mt. Marshall has interjected, and it was in his district, apparently, that the first approach was made in some way, but I do not know how, because I cannot find out.

The Minister for Health: I say I did not make it.

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister follows that out he will say that there is no truth in this and he will answer the questions that have been put to him by saying, "No." He gave us the information that these people are prepared to contribute.

The Minister for Health: Do you think I should refuse them when they make a voluntary contribution?

Mr. NALDER: The Minister should see that the facilities are made available to the districts where there is a need for them.

Mr. Ackland: The Minister knows that people were approached.

The Minister for Health: I absolutely deny that as far as I am concerned.

Mr. NALDER: It will be interesting to hear what other members have to say. They might throw still further light on it. We know that quite a number of towns have been affected—Pingelly and Boddington in the electorate of the member for Narragin; Moora in the electorate of the member for Moore; and Bridgetown and Donnybrook in the district represented by the member for Blackwood. It will be interesting to find out the views of these members.

The Minister for Health: Voluntarily.

Mr. NALDER: It is a voluntary effort. The people have agreed. I do not mean, by what I am saying tonight, to prejudice the case of any district and I hope the Minister will not take this motion that way.

The Minister for Health: I am not doubting your integrity.

Mr. NALDER: I point out the unfair treatment being meted out to the country people in this fashion. Those who live in the country have many disabilities to face up to.

Mr. Oldfield: They are getting water at our expense.

Mr. Potter: That is a fact; and also cheap rail freights and now we are paying for their hospitals.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Subiaco to keep order.

Mr. NALDER: I wonder how members and the public of the metropolitan area would fare if there were no country people or country districts.

Mr. Heal: That goes vice versa, too.

Mr. NALDER: We are getting a little away from the motion.

The Premier: The hon. member is.

Mr. NALDER: I agree, and I want to get back to the point which is that the country people are being asked to contribute unfairly towards the expenses and renovations of their hospitals.

The Minister for Health: They have never been asked by the Government to contribute.

Mr. NALDER: The Minister can tell us just how this has occurred. He will be able to give us the dates and so on from when this matter first started to snowball because Wyalkatchem seems to be the first one on the list. He might also be able to let us know how the news was distributed from there to Donnybrook, and how Donnybrook got in touch with Moora.

Mr. Heal: Just a rumour, I suppose.

Mr. Bovell: It is evident that it is Government policy.

Mr. NALDER: It is remarkable how these rumours spread.

The Minister for Lands: I would not be surprised if this one came from the Meat and Allied Trades Federation.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. NALDER: Before the tea suspension I was discussing the question of the unfair treatment that has been meted out to country people in regard to contributions that are made by ratepayers and country residents towards hospital extensions and renovations. Another aspect that could be referred to during this debate, which would assist in bringing the matter before the Minister and the members of this House, is the amount of money that has been voluntarily subscribed by the ratepayers in country districts.

During the debate that has ensued on the Local Government Bill, much reference has been made to what ratepayers contribute. There is no doubt that they are called upon to subscribe to many organisations that go towards making up the life of a country community. I have only to refer to the St. John Ambulance Association, which is a most important part of the hospital services. The people in the various country districts first of all subscribe towards the purchase of the ambulance, the building erected to house the vehicle and the organisation that maintains it; not only in respect of the actual running of it when dealing with emergency or sickness cases, but also in ensuring its attendance at various sports meetings.

That is another sphere in which country people perform voluntary services for the welfare of the residents of the district as a whole. I could mention many other organisations, members of which contribute their time and money to help the

people of their district in many forms. I need not continue in order to convince members that the Government should be responsible for rendering assistance to these worthy people. The hospitals that are mentioned in this motion should be made available to those people who require them. They are not required under any special arrangement. The provision of such services constitutes one of their rights in the same way as the people in the metropolitan area are entitled to adequate and up-to-date hospital services. If the Government fails in its duty in this regard, it is unworthy of the trust that has been placed in it by the electors in the country areas.

The Minister for Health: Would you say that I should absolutely refuse any of the voluntary contributions made by the people in the country or in the city?

Hon. A. F. Watts: If they were purely voluntary, the answer might be "No," but they are not purely voluntary.

Mr. NALDER: That is a constant interjection made not only by the Minister but also by the Premier during my introduction of this motion. I would like to know from the Minister or any other member who rises to speak on this motion, how this information has been conveyed from the people concerned to the Health Department or vice versa. I have not been able, to date, to obtain this information but I hope the Minister or some other member on the Government side of the House will be able to supply information on the point about which interjections were made.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

MOTION—NEW LAND SETTLEMENT PROJECTS.

Long-Term Finance.

Debate resumed from the 24th October on the following motion by Mr. Perkins:—

That in the opinion of this House there is urgent need for long term finance to be made available for settlers developing new land, particularly for fencing and provision of suitable water supplies on such land, to make possible the depasturing of stock.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [7.38]: I look upon this motion by the member for Roe more in the nature of its presenting an opportunity to discuss a subject that is extremely close to the hon. member's heart and in regard to which he has given the House some information on a number of occasions. In fact, the last time he spoke on this subject was on the debate on the Address-in-reply this year and the speech he made then was almost identical with that made to introduce this motion.

As a motion I think it could have applied just as easily and as sensibly to almost any other Government department because his motion commences—

That in the opinion of this House there is urgent need for long term finance to be made available for settlers . . .

and so on. With the Government's financial position as it is, I think it can be easily realised how we could all agree on a proposal that long term finance is required for not only the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank but also for any Government department that is handling the affairs of government today.

So I do not know whether the hon. member, at the close of the debate, intends to press for a decision on this motion or not. Its chief value lies in the fact—as I stated at the outset—that it gives him and other members an opportunity to express their views on the need for financial assistance for various forms of agriculture.

The hon. member's remarks were very true, namely, that Western Australia has an extremely sound agricultural future inasmuch as quite a good deal of our overseas balances—which are so much a vital part of our internal economy—have been created by the sale of wheat, wool, beef and so on. Bearing in mind that we have hardly touched, in an agricultural sense, the potentialities of this State in regard to commodities other than those I have mentioned, I would say that, provided the marketing opportunities continue to exist, Western Australia should have no qualms whatsoever about further increasing her agricultural development.

There is no doubt that if we look back on the history of the State we will have to agree that we have achieved the progress we have made in an extremely hard sort of way. For instance, we are not favoured to any great degree by Nature itself and, in fact, the reverse is the case. We have no large watersheds, no great rivers, no mountain range, and practically no favourable features to regulate our climate such as are enjoyed by many other countries. So from the very earliest days of settlement, the settlers have had to do everything the hard way. In consequence, we have had to think up ideas of our own over many scores of years in order to make our agricultural progress fit in with what Nature has provided and endeavour to do it in such a way as to compete in the world's markets with other countries which are also interested in agriculture.

I repeat that the early years must have been very hard indeed for our pioneers. There was almost a complete lack of agricultural science and knowledge which is playing such a large part in the successful occupation and development of many of our light lands today. Eventually there came a time, which was inevitable in a State such as this, when Government

financial assistance became a necessity. No longer could we expect people, on their own initiative and with their limited resources, to engage in large-scale agricultural development in a State such as ours and the tendency was then to concentrate on the better rainfall areas and the more dependable soils rather than to take risks in other parts of the State, which only in latter years have come to be regarded as being of agricultural value.

Therefore, in the early years of our development, the old Agricultural Bank, as we knew it, was established for the purpose of assisting those engaged in agriculture and to open up those parts of the State which could not be developed by individuals successfully. To say that the original Agricultural Bank did a wonderful job would be an understatement, because many farmers who are established successfully would not be in their present position were it not for the assistance rendered by the State bank in those days. As a populace we had to suffer from large scale write-offs arising from the financial risks taken in order to throw open large sections of the State.

Mr. Nalder: Those losses were infinitesimal compared with the overall benefits.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I agree. From the banking point of view, what was necessary in those days need not apply at present because the old Agricultural Bank lost £6,000,000 in one section in write-offs. The taxpayers had to meet this. That write-off was in addition to considerable writing down by the Lands Department for group settlements. It should be pointed out that that was not in regard to light lands but to the dependable areas of the State.

If we had to face those losses to develop the State in those days, how much greater is the financial risk today in undertaking development of light lands, unless there is a system such as the one operating at present? The old system was largely based on the individual needs of a single-unit farmer, but no Government, irrespective of its political colour, can undertake the risk of settlement on that basis today because the risk of losses is so tremendous in the lighter lands, which cost up to £15 to put an acre under pasture. The whole system of land settlement and development has changed remarkably from what happened before.

No matter what is the Government of the day, it is not easy to find money for settlement in a private capacity unless there is adequate security. Although almost every avenue has been exhausted by succeeding Governments to find some system by which to develop land, not one Government has found a penny since the establishment of the Rural & Industries Bank for developmental work. Can anyone say that the Agricultural Bank did not do a good job? That would not be in accordance with facts.

Towards the latter part of its life, in the 1940's, there was a distinct change in the outlook regarding agricultural development. The greater part of the work of the Agricultural Bank was done prior to the 1930's. After that there was a gradual but considerable tapering off of Government assistance through this channel, and that continued in the 1930's until the 1940's. The following figure will be of interest to everyone. The total loans approved for farming development for 13 years from 1932 to 1945 inclusive amounted to only £317,000. During the last six years of that period only £20,000 was made available for assistance to settlers.

It became pretty evident in the early 1940's that a different system had to be set up. It was no longer possible for the Government of the day or for any succeeding Government to undertake financial assistance unless there was a very good reason for believing that loans would be recouped within a reasonable time. Whatever has happened in the past and whatever was the cost, has been well worth while because we could not have achieved our eminence in some directions had it not been for this earlier system. In the 1940's, therefore, the bank, which was only a debt-collecting agency, was converted into something which would be able to compete with private banks, and at the same time to have a section made available to the Government for allocating special money for developmental work or for any other purposes.

We have to recognise the fact that the Agricultural Bank in the earlier days carried all the burdens of establishing the settlers. In hardly any case would any section of the private banking institutions be found undertaking such a risk. From their point of view, it was never a business proposition, and they invariably waited until development to some extent had taken place and after the Government had written off a large sum of money, before they came into the picture and considered that the development was a reasonable banking proposition.

The Government in the 1933-34 period felt that the settler should not be denied the right of continuing business with a State instrumentality which had befriended him over the years. In the old days that was completely impracticable. As a result, the Rural & Industries Bank, with two sections, as we now know it, came into being. That bank has had a remarkable record. Its achievements are wonderful. Bearing in mind the overall importance of the rapid development of this State, it has proved to be a great influence on the people who derive their living from the land.

There are distinct limitations incorporated in the charter of the bank which should not be overlooked. The commissioners cannot do anything they like. In every way they are controlled by an Act of

Parliament which lays down the things they may do. Therefore, when criticism is levelled at the bank from time to time, we must not lose sight of the fact that its charter limits investments of this nature to financial assistance up to 70 per cent. of the sale value of the security. The charter states—

The commissioners shall, through the Government Agency department of the bank, perform and exercise such duties, functions, powers and authorities including the administration of property and assets as are conferred upon the bank by this Act in respect of those transfer activities which by reason of this Act are required to be administered by the bank through the Government Agency department or as may hereafter be delegated to the bank.

The transfer activities referred to are the activities under the Industries Assistance Act of 1915-40 and the Wire and Wire Netting Act of 1926.

In addition to this, the bank carries such Agricultural Bank advances as were considered insufficiently secure to be transferred to the rural department. At the time when the change occurred, the old Agricultural Bank's clients were not abandoned to their fate. They were taken over by the agency section of the new bank and given assistance to the point where they were able to develop a 30 per cent. equity in their own property, at which time they became liable to be transferred to the rural section.

Mr. Cornell: Did not the overall value of land help to build up that equity?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It did. By the same token, it made it easier for the clients of the bank to obtain credit. The market value of land plus improvements were taken into account. It should not be thought that the commissioners have an open hand and complete freedom in every way to lend money wherever they desire. The taking over by the agency section of the Agricultural Bank's clients made it possible for farms, as I mentioned earlier, to be rehabilitated, that is, those which in 1945 were considered to be unsound farming properties.

Such advances over the last four years totalled £362,632, which is more than the total amount approved of by the Agricultural Bank over the last 13 years of its existence. But this is the point, and the member for Roe made some reference to it also: All these new advances have been made by the bank from the repayment of earlier loans. It is just a matter of circulation of money. As I said, no Government since the establishment of this bank has found any money for developmental work through the agency section.

Mr. Ackland: What did the bank use the repaid capital for?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: For all general banking purposes. The commissioners felt that the capital repaid should be advanced for farming purposes, but such advances are governed by similar restrictions as apply to the private banks. They restrict the advances to the limits contained in the charter.

Mr. Ackland: What did they do with money that had been repaid to the bank? The Government has made a great deal of money available to it but the money was not used for agricultural purposes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: For other purposes. The agency section can be used by the Government of the day for investing money in any direction it considers best. That section of the bank is used for this specific purpose. In moving the motion, the member for Roe stated that Chamberlain's Industries were assisted. According to the policy of the Government, so the bank is able to make money available; but when it does, the money passes through the bank.

In the early postwar period we found that, generally speaking, the safe areas of the State had been more or less secured, though there is plenty of work still to be done in many directions. With the earlier assistance given by the Agricultural Bank, plus the assistance in recent years as long as it was a sound banking proposition, plus the assistance of private institutions, generally speaking, the safer agricultural areas have been well and firmly established.

Whilst all this was happening, particularly since the end of the last war, we had to recognise and acknowledge a re-assessment of priorities so far as Government expenditure was concerned which, irrespective of what we personally think, interfered with the opportunity of the State bank to undertake any agricultural work in the way some of us would like. For instance, from 1933 to 1956 the population of this State has increased by 54.2 per cent. from 439,000 to 677,000, mainly in the metropolitan area. The Government of the day has only a certain amount of money. Some of it is revenue; a great deal of it is loan.

This concentration and rapid increase of population over the whole State has brought about a very heavy demand for schools and hospitals, transport, and public works of all kinds, and there is consequently less money for new land development other than that which applies to war service land settlement. And this has been occurring rapidly each year. It has been noticeable to an increasing extent, not only in the metropolitan area, but also in country areas which the earlier developmental system and policy brought into being and which have now attained some prominence. Those places need more schools, water supplies, hospitals and general services.

So it does not matter what the intention of the hon. member may be so far as this motion is concerned, it would be quite impracticable to expect any Government today to find new money for agricultural development, particularly on new land, where the risks are tremendous. It would be impossible for a Government to do that without robbing some other departmental operation which is also considered to be vitally necessary. We cannot stretch money further than it will go.

At the same time as we have seen this development take place—the slow but sure movement in agriculture in safe areas—and at the same time as we have had opportunities one way or another of giving some assistance in this direction, we have had a wonderful improvement and development in agricultural science. Today this State is spending something like £1,000,000 a year in this direction. Previous Governments have also spent tremendous sums in furthering the interests of agriculture in so far as they have been able to combat pests and diseases and overcome many of the problems of the farmers before they actually arose.

This great development in agricultural thought and science has brought into the picture of land development a type of land which previously was considered to be absolutely worthless. But with the knowledge that is now obtainable, we find that we can, on a great deal of this land—but not all of it—develop our industries safely but at very great cost; and the question arises as to what any Government could do financially to assist in this direction, because there has been a boom in light land. There is no question about that. The Lands Department estimates that of the lands alienated since the end of the last war, in 1945, 70 per cent. could be classified as light land.

Previous Governments, as well as this one, have recognised the danger of encouraging people without money to go on to this class of country, and have told them so in no uncertain terms. This did not start just with the present Government. Circulars were being sent out in 1952—I have a copy of one here—by the previous Government clearly showing the would-be settler that it was his responsibility and no one else's to provide the money for the initial phases of development plus carry-on in order not to be a burden on the Government of the day.

During the last three years, when any land has been made available under my signature, there has been a similar type of statement; and when any farmers have come to see me by way of deputation—which they have done from time to time—introduced by various members, and all asking for money, I have told them exactly the same story—that when land

is advertised, it is advertised on the certain understanding that those taking it up cannot turn to the Government for financial aid if they get into difficulties. That is a situation which has developed over the years; and the only way in which the Government could assist in the development of a class of country like that would be to do it on a group basis and not an individual basis.

Mr. Perkins: Is it any cheaper on a group basis than an individual basis?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Our experience shows that it most certainly is.

Mr. Perkins: Could you give us any figures? I would be very interested to have them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot give them to the hon. member tonight. I have not gone that closely in to the matter, except to be able definitely to state that it is our experience that where there is a group of people with similar problems, who require almost identical work to be done—whether it be clearing, ploughing or windrowing—the fact that they are all close together means that the money that is available for expenditure goes much further than if it were split up all over the State.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Machinery pools would help in that direction.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. So it is true to say that the settler today must have resources of his own from which he can build some sort of equity. From the point of view of the bank, the alternative is to advance money with the certainty of facing substantial losses at some time in the not too distant future.

Mr. Perkins: There is no reason for substantial losses.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is not any reason, because it should not be allowed to occur in the first place. But there is ground for believing that substantial losses would be incurred if we followed the hon. member's recommendation with regard to financing fencing and water supplies. I cannot possibly agree with that part of his motion which includes the need for finance for fencing and water supplies, because the experience of the department has been absolutely the reverse.

We have one group of settlers now, many of whom took up their blocks on the distinct understanding that they could finance their own development. Yet they have since received advances for fencing, seed, super and water supplies, and are now calling on the Government for subsistence and carry-on. The point that has to be recognised is that any assistance for carry-on cannot be capitalised. The old Agricultural Bank's experiences, as well as the records of the Rural & Industries Bank,

reveal that if this money is provided by the Government, it must eventually be written off to give the settler some equity in his property.

The argument for group assistance is very sensible and real, and that is why this Government has been able, to a limited extent, to commence an assistance scheme for the dairying areas and why there is a group of farmers in Esperance today. Because of the peculiarity of their requirements, which are all identical, we have been able to assist them to some extent. But to think that any Government in these days of high cost of development can pass money to a private individual because he has faith in himself, but perhaps very little knowledge of the land he is endeavouring to occupy, without receiving some security, is not a fair thing, because the State bank should not, and cannot at this stage at any rate, be placed in any different position from that of the private institutions; and the private banks simply will not look at that sort of business at all.

I have been doing a bit of reading, and I often have a look at monthly summaries of Australian conditions. I have here one that was prepared by the National Bank and it is dated the 12th October last. In this we find a definite downward movement in primary production investment through the whole Commonwealth as a result of the present Federal Government's financial policy—a policy of restriction.

That has occurred over the last eight or nine months, and we find that in primary production—and these are the classified advances of major trading banks and not any one particular group—the change that took place in the 12 months prior to June, 1955, showed an increase on the previous year for primary production assistance of £28.6 million. But for the 12 months prior to June of this year, which is an almost identical period, from which we expect repercussions of the Commonwealth financial policy, there has been a slipping back of £8,000,000. There is £8,000,000 less being spent in this financial year by the trading banks on agricultural production than in the previous year.

We will not argue whether the policy of the Commonwealth Government is right or wrong; but the effect is that farmers who required and received last year £8,000,000 more than they were able to obtain this year have just as great a need for money for fencing and water supplies and general development as they had last year. But, on account of a man-made policy, they are unable to get this amount of money.

There has been a noticeable tendency in recent months for those people who would normally go to their own banking institution to go now to the Government in the hope of obtaining assistance. That

is not fair, unless there is a business proposition, one which can stand up to all the requirements of banking practice. We cannot have it both ways. If there is only a certain amount of money available, it must be spent on a priority basis. I have already indicated just how, with the present tight budgets, all Governments must face their obligations and this must extend to the provision of services in the manner I have described in relation to water supplies, hospitals and schools and so on.

I can well understand the eagerness of people who have seen others succeeding on light land—people like Mr. Smart, for instance—and I can well understand how they would be inspired to have a go, too. But unless a man had sufficient capital, in addition to his carry-on to help him forward in developmental work for at least three years, it would be foolish in these days for him to think of going on the land.

Mr. Cornell: He would buy an established farm. That would be the easiest thing to do.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That would cost him a lot of money.

Mr. Cornell: Not as much as developing a new holding.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: My personal view is that the cost of developing some of this so-called light land is greater than the market value of it.

Mr. Cornell: Agreed! That is why it is cheaper to buy an established farm.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member thinks that is true, it is not fair to ask the Government to come in on a basis like that which is proposed, even if it could—which there is no chance of its doing at present. This desire of people to take up so-called light land without very much regard for the heavy cost of bringing it to the stage of pasture but which has precipitated a movement towards land development that cannot fit into our present financial structure, is impossible in a Government sense. Unless the settler has sufficient with which to carry on, he would be well advised, and is, in fact, advised in all the circulars we send out, not to touch it at all until he is in a sounder position.

The picture I have painted may seem black but it is realistic. When moving the motion, the hon. member said he wanted to give an opportunity for a clear-cut statement, and I am making my statement as clear-cut as I can. The Government will continue to warn applicants against the risk of taking up land without sufficient money, bearing in mind its responsibility in regard to the safety of advances according to the requirements of the Rural & Industries Bank Act and the great number of priorities which must be

observed in regard to loan funds, the high capital cost of developing light land generally and the great deal of capital that would be required to be found by the Government if it took the responsibility of assisting the development of such light lands at too early a date.

However, the Government has been able to assist groups of people who because of their close proximity to one another and association of problems, have come within the category I mentioned earlier. I would point out that it is a choice of whether the Government is entitled to use the limited money available in assisting individual farmers in scattered areas or whether it should concentrate—as it has wherever possible—on assisting groups of people.

I will be happy to see the day when the limits set out in every circular we distribute to people interested in land can be liberalised, but first things must come first. The main duty of the Government today is to cater for our ever-increasing population by means of the services I have mentioned. I know the present Government—and I think any other Government—would do everything possible to assist the praiseworthy settler and what I have said about the groups does not entirely isolate the claims of the individual, because each case is treated on its merits and where a man has by his own endeavour shown that he is able to produce something for himself the bank is not unsympathetic if assistance can be rendered.

The value of the motion lies not in what can be done about it but in the opportunity for members to get the information which we have in this regard. I am certain that practical farmers sitting opposite will appreciate at least some of what I have said, because my remarks have been based on the realities of the present day, and I am glad to have had an opportunity to speak to the motion.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [8.5]: I thank the Minister for the comments he has made, but I wish to present some points on slightly different lines. I realise the difficulty of financing agricultural development at the present time, but the Minister has been thinking more of the development of large areas of land from the virgin state and spending, as the war service land settlement people have done, perhaps £20,000 or £25,000 on each property.

That was not what I had in mind because we realise that a scheme such as that would take a great deal of negotiating at present, but I feel there is urgent need for something to be done on a much smaller scale. There are a lot of properties where the owners have developed the land to a certain point and now need perhaps £500 or £1,000 to place them in a position where they can produce. I do not envisage a scheme such as the Minister has in mind

but am thinking of those people who are in difficulties as regards obtaining advances from the associated banks owing to the present restrictions.

The Minister mentioned the development of agricultural science. This has enabled many properties to be subdivided and portions of them sold. That is happening frequently in what the Minister called the safer areas and I am speaking of settled parts where the Government has invested money in roads, railways and so on. The Minister mentioned that advances can be made through the Rural & Industries Bank but that they must follow normal banking practice. That is the difficulty in the cases I have in mind.

I feel that there should be some smaller scheme which could make advances available more along the lines of the old Agricultural Bank. Certainly there would be some risks but if the cases were dealt with individually on their merits, I do not think the risks would be great. The Minister said that unless people have sufficient finance to establish themselves, they should not take up these properties. That is quite sound but many have started only to find that, with the way money goes these days, they have reached a certain point and are unable to complete the job. I have in mind a fund of perhaps £50,000 to finance those who have brought their properties to a certain stage where perhaps £500 or £1,000 would enable them to get a return from their land.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: But £50,000 would not take you far.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I do not suggest that we should try to do everything at once but will give some instances of what I have in mind. There is one young man who took up 624 acres of virgin land a few years ago. He is working and has cleared and under pasture 270 acres. His property has reached a point where he could expect some return except that he lacks the finance to complete it to a stage where he can place stock on it. He can secure no assistance at present and yet it would take only a few hundred pounds to enable him to get some return from the property.

Another young man has some earth-moving equipment and has been working and has developed his property. He has dams and pasture, but no fences. He can secure stock from the stock firms but cannot get money for fencing and so his land remains out of production. Another man has developed his property and established his pastures but has only one dam and has not sufficient money to put down another. He would require only about £400 for a second dam which, with the pastures he has, would enable him to increase his stock and make the farm payable.

I have seen these properties and know the circumstances and I say most of these men could get along with between £400 and

£1,000, which is all that would be required to enable them to increase their production. Assistance in such cases as that would not involve the State in huge expenditure. We should try to assist these people because if they cannot pay their way, they will have to leave their properties and it is preferable that they should be able to go into production.

Of course, I know it would be a matter of treating each case on its merits, but something should be done to keep this land in production. One of our greatest responsibilities is to bring the land at present served by transport into the greatest possible production. As has been said, agricultural science is enabling us to use this land and it must be developed. Thus, I think a scheme such as I have outlined would be well worth while. I realise that bigger schemes would need a great deal of thought and planning and would cost huge sums of money, but if we could start with the small man who needs only a little extra assistance, we would be advancing the production of the State.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, debate adjourned.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).

Second Reading.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [8.30] in moving the second reading said: Earlier in this session the Minister for Justice introduced an amendment to the principal Act consisting of four clauses; it made provision for a section covering canteen licences. These licences were to be issued in remote areas where no other licence was in operation. In my opinion, it was unfortunate that the Minister did not broaden the section sufficiently to cover any company which is likely to operate in and help develop the outback areas of the State. The amendment on that occasion covered only those companies which are mining, exploring, or prospecting for oil. In my opinion, it did not even cover a company which might produce oil.

As members realise, it is hard to get labour in the outback unless some of the amenities which are to be found in the closer settled areas are offered. With this idea in view, I seek to have the section in the principal Act extended to cover other companies which may in the future go out into the outback areas and help develop them. Companies exploring for oil are not the only ones likely to open up these remote areas of the State. There is much untouched wealth in the way of minerals and even agriculture which could be developed.

The section covering canteens could, in the past, if my amendment were agreed to, have applied to such places as Cockatoo Island and Wittenoom Gorge. The two companies operating in those areas

have now formed clubs to overcome the difficulty of supplying their employees with the amenities which a canteen licence would give them. It would have been far easier for those companies which have a floating population of employees to provide amenities under canteen licences.

Before it closed down the whaling station at Pt. Cloates would have been a company which could have been serviced by a canteen licence, if the Act had been amended sooner. Also I understand a new mine is being developed at Mt. Ida and this, too, could come within that category. Where companies are operating in areas far removed from hotels or other licensed facilities, I think they should be given the benefit of canteen licences and that will be the case if my amendment is agreed to. Looking to the future, if the Ord River dam project is proceeded with, and the authorities there are permitted a canteen licence, the necessary labour is more likely to be obtained.

In my opinion it is necessary to broaden the section of the Act concerned because the companies which are operating in these remote parts have in the past overcome the Licensing Act in a way which, although not outside the law, does not quite conform to it. If we enable these people to obtain canteen licences, they will be brought within the law and the business will be conducted in a proper way.

If the Bill is agreed to the position will be completely covered by one of the sub-sections of Section 44E which says that the court may grant a licence provided it considers that such licence is necessary and desirable. From that it will be seen that the position is adequately covered and no irresponsible person or company could get a licence without applying through the proper channels.

The second part of the Act which I seek to amend also relates to canteens. This is a matter I raised during the second reading debate on the Licensing Act Amendment Bill (No. 1). I said that I felt that some limitation should be placed on the issuing of licences to ensure that no licence for a canteen should be issued if the canteen would operate within 20 miles of an existing licence. In my opinion, this is a necessary restriction because in the outback parts of the State the present licensees who are rendering a necessary service by way of accommodation and meals require every assistance and encouragement to maintain the high standard which is required of them.

If a company were able to obtain a canteen licence and set up a canteen in close proximity to any existing licensed premises, it would take away a good deal of the revenue from the hotel or wayside house concerned. It might even take some of the existing trade because many of the local residents would, in all probability, be employed by the company concerned

and would thus have the privilege of enjoying the amenities offered by a canteen licence.

We are always trying to get the people who are running hotels in the North-West and other remote parts to improve their accommodation. But if we take away from them that extra bit of revenue which might be gained by the operations of oil companies, mining companies or any other concerns by the setting up of canteens, we would handicap those licensees and prevent them from maintaining or improving their present standard. One could imagine what would happen if a canteen licence were to be issued to a company operating in close proximity to such hotels as are situated at Gascoyne Junction, Shark Bay, Onslow, or any of those remote small towns. Those licensees have been battling throughout the years. They are giving a good service and are doing everything possible to improve it. If we could give them a little more incentive, I feel sure they would give a better service in the provision of accommodation and meals. I commend the Bill to the House and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [8.40] in moving the second reading said: At the outset I want to make it quite clear that I am definitely in favour of orderly marketing, and in introducing this Bill I do not wish in any way to upset the methods of orderly marketing which are at present in operation. Orderly marketing can be carried out only where the producers supply sufficient of their commodities to meet the State's requirements throughout the year and where there is sufficient for export. This would mean that there would be no imports.

In orderly marketing, the principle is to give an even and payable price throughout the year to the producer; also, to offer the commodity to the public at a reasonable price, taking into consideration the cost of production. As members know, during the war the price of vegetables and fruit came under price fixing. When this was eventually lifted, the planters at Carnarvon continued to try to keep orderly marketing inasmuch as they set a fixed maximum price for their produce at the Perth markets. This proved to be a payable proposition until imports started to come in from the Eastern States. There was not sufficient of the Carnarvon product to meet the State's requirements, and this allowed the Eastern States people to come in and sell their product on the local market at a slightly higher price, thus enabling the retailer to capitalise on the position.

At the time the fixed price for Carnarvon bananas was 1s. per lb. and the Eastern States product was as high as 1s. 3d. and 1s. 4d. per lb. What happened was this: The retailer sold the Carnarvon banana at a price below that for the Eastern States product; in other words, they were selling below a price of 1s. 3d. and 1s. 4d. But they were actually paying 1s. per lb. to the producer. So members can see that orderly marketing is of no advantage if the imported product can be brought in and upset the whole balance. It is the producer who loses and not the consumers.

The object of the Onion Marketing Board was to regulate the planting of onions throughout the South-West and metropolitan areas and to ease on to the markets supplies as they became harvested. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this can only take place in this State for seven months of the year because the main crops at present are harvested only between November and March of each year.

Mr. Jamieson: There have been onions about for weeks now.

Mr. NORTON: If the member for Canning will listen to my arguments, he can put forward objections he may have to the Bill later.

Mr. Jamieson: The member for Canning is not in the Chamber.

Mr. NORTON: I meant to refer to the member for Beeloo. There are three main crops. The first is the early brown which comes in about the end of November to mid-January; the second is the mid-season crop which comes in late in January, and the third, the late crop, is harvested in March and keeps until the end of May, if they happen to be good keepers.

It is from then on that the imports from the Eastern States, New Zealand and Egypt come in. There are few districts which produce an earlier crop than what is known as the early brown which comes in in November. The districts that grow the earlier onions produce mostly a white onion and these come from Kalgoorlie, York and a few from the metropolitan area. Carnarvon is now starting to produce a brown onion which will come in earlier than those. These districts so far have usually put the first white onions on the market in October and the brown onions come in towards mid-November. But the first brown onions that come in are not ripe or mature and they are still classed more or less in the same category as white onions. They are in no way good keepers.

To give members some idea of the amount of onions imported it is sufficient to say that about £80,000 worth come into the State each year during the off period. It will be interesting to note the different prices that have prevailed

over the past seven years up to 1955 both for the local and the imported market. I give the following comparative figures—

Year	Imported Tons	Imported Price £	Wholesale Board Price	
			£	s. d.
1948-49	1,510	29	20	15 0
1949-50	2,525	35	23	0 0
1950-51	723	91 to 113	31	5 0
1951-52	1,304	60	40	2 6
1952-53	2,084	50	41	15 0
1953-54	1,350	68	42	0 0
1954-55	1,590	78 to 90	42	0 0

It will be seen from these figures that the board could not control the price of onions in the off-season, but they do demand a commission from the growers who are able to market the onions during that period. As the Act stands at present, the board issues a proclamation each year acquiring all the onions; this makes them the complete property of the board before they are delivered to the resellers. The board in issuing that proclamation does so to enable the supply to become a continuous order. In other words, it issues the proclamation in September of each year and once that is done under the Act, the grower, while he still retains possession of the onions, becomes the bailee and is responsible for the safe keeping and storage of the onions while they are on his property.

Unless the grower comes within a certain category mentioned in Section 11 (d) he commits an offence if he sells his onions in any way to any person other than a person authorised in writing by the board. The Act sets out certain exemptions which can take effect. As far as I can find out, no exact exemptions are made. In other words, the board allows the producers of early onions to send their onions on to the market floors for sale by auction to the various resellers without authority. But at the same time it demands that the auctioneers deduct 5 per cent. of the net proceeds from the sale of the onions which is paid to the board, which body, as far as I can see, does nothing towards the control or orderly marketing of those onions.

The Minister for Agriculture: How many onions come from the Carnarvon area?

Mr. NORTON: Very few at present, but they will be developing the industry shortly.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is the Minister going to do about the board? Is he going to accede to the finding of the Royal Commission and abolish it?

The Minister for Agriculture: I cannot answer that.

Mr. NORTON: On top of that the agents take 8½ per cent. as auctioneer's commission. This means that the grower is paying 13½ per cent. in commission, which is a terrific percentage to pay over. He has other expenses in placing his product on the market; particularly if the

onions have to be sent from Carnarvon where a further freight charge of £14 6s. is necessary. So if we take the average price obtained last year, we find that the commission paid by each grower will be £11 4s. a ton. On top of that, if he had been a Carnarvon grower he would have had pay another £14 6s. a ton. Accordingly, out of the £84 a ton the grower would have lost £25 10s., which is very nearly one-third of the total return for his onions.

I feel that in the interests of the State and the Commonwealth every encouragement should be given to growers of onions to produce more onions in the out of season period in order to help maintain a stable trade balance both in the Eastern States and overseas. This could also be done by improving the keeping quality of the onions and producing more out of season onions in certain districts. This would mean an average saving of £80,000 a year to the State.

Carnarvon is not the only place that is asking for this legislation. I have here a letter from the Market Gardeners' Association of Western Australia, which is the largest association of market gardeners in this State. It covers the growers throughout the State from Carnarvon to Kalgoorlie and York and in the metropolitan area it controls some 284 growers. So that the House may know the exact feelings of these people who are the main producers of onions, I will read the letter. It is as follows:—

At the executive meeting of the above association held on Friday last, I reported on our telephone conversation of last week, concerning the harvesting and marketing of onions during the season when onions are in short supply and difficult for gardeners to produce.

Between the period mentioned, namely, 31st July to the 15th November, York and Kalgoorlie growers supply a large proportion of the onions which reach the metropolitan markets. Growers in those districts as well as those in the metropolitan districts, able to grow limited quantities, have always shown strong resentment to having had to pay two commission charges. They feel the five per cent. deducted on behalf of the Onion Marketing Board is most unjust because the board renders no service.

Your endeavour to have all onions harvested and marketed from the 31st July to the 15th November, exempted from the Onion Marketing Act, has the full support of our members.

It will be seen that this is generally desired by the onion growers. They ask that the onions should be exempted by the board provided they are harvested

between the 31st July and the 15th November. I commend the Bill to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

MR. RODOREDA (Pilbara) [8.59]: I would like to make a few brief comments on this Bill. It seems to me that it is not a measure which is of world-shaking importance, and it would not matter a great deal if it were passed or not. The only condemnation of the Bill I have heard was from the Minister for Labour, and he did not seem to be too spirited in his condemnation of it.

The Minister for Labour: Oh yes, he was.

Mr. RODOREDA: I would like to hear some more of the disadvantages of the Bill before I vote against it; at least on the second reading. The Minister, if I heard him rightly, made two points, one being that it would be harmful to industrial conditions and I forget the other one.

The Minister for Labour: Unfair trading with the mixed businesses.

Mr. RODOREDA: I fail to see how it could possibly harm industrial conditions. I doubt whether in fact anything we could do in this House would harm industrial conditions as all rates and conditions are fixed by the Arbitration Court and whether we allow a few small shops to sell a few more articles or not could not affect the industrial conditions of shop assistants. It is outside their ken altogether.

So far as I can see, the Bill does not introduce any new principle. It merely extends the range of goods which are now being sold and apparently this range of goods has met with Parliament's approval for long number of years. I doubt whether the extension of that list to include some of the items contained in the present Bill could have any harmful effect upon anyone. So far as the suburban grocer is concerned, I would say their main competitor and the one who does them the greatest harm is the self-service store. These self-service stores are being established in a big way in most of the suburbs and undoubtedly they are the reason for the decline in the suburban grocer's business, and that will have a tendency to grow.

I do not think a great deal of harm can be done by legalising something which now occurs all the time and which is at present illegal, namely, the selling of prohibited goods during the hours that the

shops to which we refer are open. We know we can go into any shop, whether known or not, and ask for these prohibited articles and have them sold to us. I suppose very few of the general public know which articles are prohibited. I think it is anomalous to have a law whereby citizens can buy sweets, icecream and lolly-water, yet they are unable to buy cigarettes. I think we should have a good look at this list if the second reading is agreed to, and if it is not agreed to, some consideration should be given to the present list of articles which are allowed to be sold.

After perusing the Act, I find that the small shops which remain open after trading hours, are not now allowed to sell Aspros, or tablets used for the relief of pain and they are included in the Bill which is before us. Surely there would be no harm in allowing people to buy goods of this nature! They constitute a very small item and people inevitably run out of them. I doubt whether the volume of extra trade which would occur under this Bill could have any deleterious effect in the way of unfair trading, but the Minister fears that the suburban grocers who close at 5.30 or 6 p.m., will be affected. It is a fact that most of the lines mentioned in the Bill are being sold now. We know that, and we should not shut our eyes to the fact that a great majority of people whose businesses are open into the night break the law almost every day.

Mr. May: Every night.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: Yes, and the person who buys the goods is also breaking the law, I suppose. We cannot stop it so why not recognise the fact and get things on a commonsense basis once and for all?

If the Minister is opposed to the list of items, it could be amended in Committee. But if the Minister's objection is worth anything, these shops should not be allowed to sell one single item other than, say, the vegetables, milk or confectionery which would be part of their general business. That is the logical approach to it, and I would be more inclined to favour that than to let the shops continue to dispose of a few items illegally rather than not extend the list in a very small way.

We have to consider that there is a tremendous demand for after-hours trade, not only in regard to beach resorts, but by the ordinary average person in the suburbs. I would say that in some of the newer suburbs people have to go up to a couple of miles to buy their groceries and then they have to lug them back home somehow or other because of the fact that, in the main, grocers do not deliver. Therefore, if there is a handy shop within half a mile, they go there for the articles they need in a hurry.

By opposing this Bill we are mainly looking after the interests of the big trader; the person who builds the big self-service store and such places as Boans and Foy's. I think that we should look after the battler in the suburbs who undoubtedly is having a rough time now, and the tendency is for him to meet with further competition. Irrespective of what we do here, he will undoubtedly continue to sell whatever he has in stock to whoever wants to buy it and risk being caught by the factories and shops inspector. I would like to hear more in opposition to this Bill before deciding how I will vote.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE (Hon. J. J. Brady—Guildford-Midland) [9.10]: I believe that to pass this Bill in the form as moved by the member for Cottesloe will do a great deal of harm to the people he is trying to assist. He is going to do a great deal of harm to established businesses in various parts of the suburbs, both to the people who own the businesses and the people who are working under industrial awards or agreements. A few years ago prior to the starting of supermarkets which have taken quite a lot of trade away from the ordinary grocer established in the suburbs, it became quite evident that the mixed businesses and the Fourth Schedule shops were also taking away quite a lot of trade by virtue of the fact that they remain open to 8 o'clock at night and on Sunday morning.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I think you will find that is not borne out by the facts.

The SPEAKER: Order! Let the Minister make his speech. Standing Orders are against any member preventing another from making a speech.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: I have observed this position very closely down the years. In about 1948 I was asked by a mixed business proprietor at Guildford if I could intercede with the Minister for Labour, who at that time was the member for Toodyay, Hon. L. Thorn, in regard to the fact that this person had been prosecuted for trading after hours. I asked him why he did not go down and see the Minister for Labour himself—or the Minister for Shops and Factories—and he said it was no good his seeing the Minister because he was responsible for the inspectors doing their job.

This person said he understood that storekeepers had asked the Minister to take action in order to protect their businesses. That was the position, and it is growing. The storekeeper who closes at 5 o'clock and who has built up a vested interest in a business over a period of about 20 years, can see the business going before his eyes to neighbouring shops that trade day and night. It is of no use for the member for Cottesloe to waggle his head.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I am not allowed to talk.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: One can go into any of the suburbs and find half-a-dozen small shops open until 8 o'clock at night and on Sunday and they sell groceries and other commodities. They are encroaching on the preserves of the grocer who has been established for years.

Mr. Perkins: Don't you have a more serious objection to the chain store and supermarket?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is making a speech.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: The chain stores and supermarkets have only been making their presence felt over the last 12 or 18 months. I have illustrated the fact by quoting the incident in regard to the man at Guildford who was about to be prosecuted in 1948 or 1949. The inspectors were asked to do the job not by the small shopkeepers but by the normal hardware and grocery businesses in the town. They are the people who made the representations to the Minister at that time because they started to feel pressure from the small storekeepers even then. It is getting worse every day.

Anybody who knows anything about a storekeeper's trade will know that about one-third of the goods sold are disposed of at less than the cost of handling. A storekeeper needs a margin of about 10 or 11 per cent. to run his business. If any member cares to check a list of groceries when he goes home tonight against the wholesale prices, he will realise that profits on retail prices are not more than 5 or 8 per cent. for about one-third of the grocery lines.

It means that in order to make up that 3 per cent. to cover his loss, he has to make it up over the other two-thirds of the lines he sells. If shops are allowed to open until 11 o'clock at night, how is that man going to survive? I think this is very serious, because I know of one shop which ten years ago employed 20 people, today employs only 10. These small storekeepers are facing competition from chain stores and supermarkets and now the intention is to provide another inroad whereby we will have only two classes of storekeepers.

One is going to be the poor devil who will, together with his wife, be sweated until 11 o'clock at night to make the basic wage or less. The member for Cottesloe will find that the very people he is trying to help will be the first ones to come to him in a few years time for relief, just as the petrol people have done by asking for 7 or 8 o'clock closing so that they can have a break. During the war the people were glad to get their petrol on 5½ days of the week, and it became a natural habit for them to do so. But today the service stations are open until 11 and 12 o'clock at night, and even on Sundays.

If we encourage people to buy groceries at 10 or 11 p.m., after coming out of picture shows, they will develop the habit, and all these recognised stores in the suburbs and country towns will go overboard. I can think of half a dozen such businesses in the towns represented by members who have spoken in favour of the measure that will suffer immediately; and not only that, every worker in those shops now enjoying a 40-hour week will be out of a job. At this stage of our civilisation, I do not think we should encourage this sort of thing.

I have heard people who have come from America—prominent men in employing organisations—say that in America the stores were open all day and all night, and they seemed to think that we were approaching that position. They do not know what they are talking about. Trade is not here for such practices, in the first instance. This measure could be the thin edge of the wedge and I do not want to give any encouragement to the Bill. I hope it will be lost.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. J. J. Brady—Guildford-Midland) [9.17]: The fact that an indiscretion committed by one policeman was brought to the notice of the member for Stirling may have been justification for him to bring the Bill forward; but having sat in the House with the hon. member for approximately eight years, I feel that he did not give this the usual considered attention that he devotes to the questions that he deals with here.

After the member for Stirling has heard my protestations, I feel that he will agree that if we want to continue to have an efficient Police Force, it is preferable for the section in the Act to remain as it is at present rather than to eliminate it. This section gives a policeman the right to ask for the name and address of a person whether he has committed a crime or whether it is thought that he is about to commit a crime.

Also, I consider the suggestion that a policeman should carry a written authority from the commissioner or the deputy commissioner should be dropped because here again the hon. member, had he gone thoroughly into the matter, would agree that a great deal of good has been achieved and that the Police Force is efficient because of the fact that its members have this right. In recent times the Police Department has issued this instruction to the members of the force—

Attention is drawn to the need for considerable discretion in the exercise of powers of demanding "name and

address" under Section 50 of the Police Act. Where the offence which the person in question has committed (or is suspected to have committed) is a "simple offence" as defined in the Criminal Code, the powers of arrest under the above section should not be exercised except under the most exceptional circumstances.

In the case of simple offences, the fact that it is an offence to refuse name and address, and the consequence of a refusal should be fully explained to the person before an arrest is justified.

When any person is arrested in future for refusing name and address, a report is to be submitted setting out the reasons why such arrest was necessary and justified.

Any unreasonable exercise of the power of arrest under this section will be regarded as an offence against Police Regulation 97 (Item 6).

That instruction was issued by the Commissioner of Police in the "Gazette" dated the 15th February, 1956. Since the issue of that instruction, no reports of any abuse of Section 50 have been received. In the opinion of the commissioner, or the acting commissioner, Mr. O'Brien, it would be disastrous and detrimental to the force if the provision were amended along the lines suggested by the member for Stirling. After I have read the reasoned approach to this question by the commissioner, so that the hon. member will know how difficult it is to police the Act as it should be policed, I feel that he will agree that all the arguments are in favour of the commissioner.

One section of the force acts, in the main, in plain clothes—the members of the Criminal Investigation Branch. Quite often these officers have to ask people their names and addresses because they may be doing a number of things. The officers may have no intention of arresting them there and then; they may have no feeling that they are actually about to commit a crime, but it is necessary that the officers should have certain information. They must have the information for the reason that the people they wish to interrogate sometimes associate with criminals from other States; at other times they are people who are suspected. But the officers have no concrete evidence on which to arrest them.

It is well for the department to know who the people are that the officers suspect. Sometimes these people are persons who answer to the descriptions of wanted persons—wanted on a warrant or wanted for questioning. There may be no necessity to arrest them, but they may be able to give valuable information on matters that the police can act upon if they have the information.

The fact that criminals are frequently working around Australia is well known. With modern transport—motorcars and aeroplanes—they can be here today, in New South Wales at 2 o'clock tomorrow, and on to Darwin the same night. So it is necessary, in order that we may have an efficient force, that the C.I.B. officers should have the right to ask a person for his name and address. Sometimes they have to get the names and addresses of people who see an offence committed or who are witnesses to an accident. The person whose name and address is taken may not be one who is to be charged. He may not have had anything to do with the matter that the police officers have in hand, but they can call upon him as a witness.

Years ago the policeman was regarded, especially by growing children, as a bogey man. Unfortunately, it was the common practice for some people to frighten their children by saying, "Here comes a policeman," with the result that people came to believe that the policeman was someone bad in the community; someone not to be trusted, and to be looked upon with suspicion. In the last two months, however, I have seen two prominent journals—they are printed in the Eastern States I believe—both of which had on the front or the back page a photo of a policeman together with this statement—"The friend of every honest man in town." If we can look on the policeman in that way, the old suspicion that we have for him will go overboard.

The very fact that we have this section in the Act probably makes the instructors at the police school careful to advise the policeman that he must not abuse this right; that he must have regard for what it will mean if he does abuse it; and he must realise how it will help him in the prosecution of his duties. Well known criminals are opposed to seeing the provision retained in the Act. They would like to see it abolished because it would give them a freer hand.

I do not want to over-emphasise this aspect but I do feel that people like myself, the Commissioner of Police, and his officers are probably more mindful of the law-breaking that goes on every day of the week in all parts of the community than are most of the law-abiding and honest citizens who, most times, are unsuspecting of the criminal activities that are going on almost alongside of them. The police and the C.I.B. know about these occurrences, and they endeavour to short-circuit what could be offences.

In the first ten months of 1956, only one person was charged for refusing to give his name and that person, I understand, was allowed many opportunities to give his name before he was arrested. Some five people gave false names and addresses,

and here are the circumstances: One person was unlawfully on premises; another was considered to be loitering; another was loitering near children; another was riding a stolen motorcycle; another was a well-known Eastern States criminal. Another person, who was charged with not giving his name and address, was one who was acting violently in the street at 2 a.m.

In addition to the ordinary policeman in uniform who has the right to ask for the name and address of a person without even suspecting that a person has committed a crime or is about to commit a crime, there are in the Police Department the members of another branch who use this authority with great advantage to the community—I refer to the police-women. They go about their work so quietly and unassumingly that many people forget that in the department there are policewomen. These officers find that this provision is most useful to them.

When trying to locate missing people they are able, by virtue of this power, to ask a person his name and address. Very often they are only given the description of a person who is missing. Only this morning I received a letter from a Mr. Jack Moore who used to be a well-known identity in this State as a result of his association with the Flour Millers' Union. He is now residing in England. In his letter he stated that there was a woman he knew who wanted to find out the whereabouts of her brother who came to this State many years ago. All the police have to guide them in their search for this man is a description and, therefore, in their endeavours to find out where he is residing, it is obviously necessary for them to ask several people their names and addresses.

Another feature of this situation is that very often the names and addresses of teenagers are sought by policewomen who then approach the parents and advise them to exercise a little more control over their daughter or their son, as the case may be, in their own interests. The policewomen also travel around the suburbs and the country centres, especially in the vicinity of hotels, where they often find children waiting outside for their parents who are inside the premises drinking for hours at a time. The policewomen frequently find it necessary to approach the mother in the hotel and to make sure that they are speaking to the right person, they are forced, on some occasions, to ask several people their names and addresses.

Having regard to all these factors, therefore, I am sure that members will appreciate that this section is a most convenient one for the police to have in the Act. I am sure, too, that members will realise that seldom is it abused by members of the Police Force. I cannot think

of any man who has told me that he has had his name and address taken by a police officer merely to exercise or show his authority. No doubt there are, on occasions, some members of the public who feel that a constable has abused his power by demanding their names and addresses but on further reflection it will be generally realised that the police officer had good reason for requesting the information.

Again, sometimes members of the liquor branch of the Police Force have to enter licensed premises or private hotels to find out the names and addresses of persons whom they have suspected of having committed a breach of the Licensing Act. In some of the suburban hotels these officers frequently find people drinking on the premises after hours. These people often put forward the explanation that they are on the hotel register. If the police find that their names do not appear on the register they must, of course, take the necessary action against them and to do that names and addresses must be obtained.

Hon. A. F. Watts: They could be suspected of committing an offence and could be charged.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: They may not wish to convey the impression that they suspect them of committing an offence and so proceed to go about their duties in an unassuming way without alarming anybody. Not very long ago a young man whom I know entered a hotel in my electorate wearing shorts and sandals and, unfortunately, he does not look his age. A policeman approached him and asked him for his name and address and as he gave it the policeman remarked, "You seem to be frightened and you convey the impression that you are not over 21 years of age." The young man replied "I am over 21."

Although he resented the policeman's approach I think he realised that the officer was acting in his own interests because if the constable had not questioned him and the local sergeant of police had found the young man in the hotel the constable would have been in trouble for not asking this young man whether he was over 21 years of age.

Similar incidents occur when police officers are inspecting sly grog shops. It may be that the people who are present in them at the time tender the excuse that they are living there as boarders and therefore the officers carrying out the inspections would be forced to ask them their names and addresses so that they could check their identity. As members know, reports appear in the Press frequently regarding people who are charged with the selling of illicit liquor.

From the cases I have outlined, members will realise that the police officers have to administer many Acts, including

the Traffic Act, Firearms and Guns Act, Licensing Act, Brands Act, and so on. In order that all these statutes may be administered in a proper manner, it is necessary that members of the Police Force should have authority to institute any inquiries that they deem fit. Under the Traffic Act, more than any other, many people have to be approached by policemen for their names and addresses especially when they are witnesses of a traffic accident because it is in the interests of all parties concerned. Such people could, in no way, be suspected of committing a crime and yet the fact that they tender their names and addresses to the police officers might prove to be of great assistance to the department.

I will now deal with the aspect of a police constable having to have an authority card, signed by the commissioner or the acting commissioner, on his person in the event of anyone asking him to produce it to prove his identity as a police officer. Here again the department feels that this would be a retrograde step and would impede the activities of the department.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Do all members of the force go on duty in plain clothes?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I understand that there is only a section of them who perform their duty in plain clothes.

Hon. A. F. Watts: That is the only section of the force that would be required to be issued with an authority from the commissioner.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: If the hon. member will be patient, I will draw his attention to one or two features which he apparently has overlooked. Firstly, however, I will reply to his interjection. Let us assume that there is a constable at home off duty doing some gardening and a fracas occurs in the house at the corner nearest to him. Although that constable is off duty, he is supposed to intervene to ensure that law and order is preserved. But if he has been issued with an authority in writing from the commissioner, which is in his tunic pocket in his bedroom, he will be placed in a very awkward position because he would not be able to take immediate steps to prevent any further trouble unless he was armed with that authority.

That would be the position if the member for Stirling had his way. If that constable acted on his own initiative without the written authority that had been issued to him, he would be personally responsible. Members know what happened to a policeman only a short time ago even though he had a certain amount of authority on his side. Therefore, a police officer who is on duty for 24 hours a day would be in a position of extreme difficulty in an emergency if he tried to interfere in any melee or fracas without having a written authority on his person.

I understand that in British communities it is one of the recognised principles in English law that the presumption is recognised that persons acting as public officers or in public capacity have been properly appointed. Cockles Cases and Statutes on Evidence, 4th Edition, page 33, notes of the case *Berryman and Wise*, KB 1791 4TR 366; 2RR 413 contains the following note:

The presumption which has a very wide application is said to be based on principles of public policy and upon the idea that the person is not likely to be in a position to act as a public officer unless he really were such.

In the eyes of the member for Stirling that opinion, in modern times, might not have any great significance. However, even if detectives in plain clothes are issued with a written authority from the Commissioner of Police, what is to prevent any person typing out an authority that is similarly worded to show that he is a police officer, should he desire to engage on any nefarious act?

Some few years ago I was present at a public hall when a man created a disturbance. Also present was a young policeman in plain clothes who had just completed his training. He said to this person who was making a nuisance of himself, "I wish you would behave yourself." To which he received the reply, "Who are you?" The policeman then said, "You happen to be talking to a policeman," and the man whom he was addressing said, "How do I know you are a policeman?" upon which the policeman pulled out an authority card which he had on him and showed it to this man.

Therefore, it would appear that the department tries to protect its officers by making available to them some kind of authority which can be shown to any member of the public if it is requested. In fact, I understand the police officers are warned that if any person doubts their authority, they should try to convince such person in a reasonable way. In the case of the plainclothes men, they are issued with a written authority from the commissioner, but a person might still doubt its authenticity.

As I have already said, anybody could type out a written authority purporting to be signed by the Commissioner of Police. On the other hand, if a police officer were requested to prove that he was a member of the force, I am sure he would probably have other papers on his person to prove his identity and any member of the public would then be very foolish to argue that he did not have the necessary authority to exercise his duty. I will therefore rest my case there. In my opinion, the public would suffer more harm than they would benefit if this part of the clause were agreed to.

I am sure the member for Stirling, like every other member of this House, will admit that we have a fairly efficient

Police Force, and generally speaking, the members of the public are of the same opinion. I would hesitate, therefore, to do anything that might lessen that efficiency. In these days of modern transport and with the prevalence of fly-by-night criminals, it would be unwise to accept the amendments proposed by the member for Stirling. This section in the Act has stood the test of time.

The other evening the member for Stirling said that the Act had been in force since 1895 and, in view of the fact that very few amendments have been brought forward over the years, this would indicate that the department and the public are reasonably satisfied that this provision should remain in the Act. Also, in view of the fact that the possibility may arise that people with criminal tendencies may be encouraged to cultivate further such tendencies if this provision is not in existence, I oppose the Bill.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling)—in reply [9.45]: I am very surprised at the outburst of the Minister in respect of this measure because I do not think that under any circumstances he has justified the accusations he made. I do not think he has made a study of the matter which he ought to have made; therefore, I return to him his soft impeachment of me when he said that I had not given the Bill my usual consideration. I can assure him that I did that very thing. Nor am I prepared to agree that the matter has been brought to my notice because of the indiscretion of the one person to whom he referred, because I have been very dissatisfied with this section in the Act for quite a number of years.

I admit this much: It was not until I read the judgment of Mr. Justice Fullagar in the law journal with which the Minister was good enough to supply me, that I formed any conclusion as to how the particular section should be amended. I would like to repeat what I said when introducing the second reading, perhaps a little more completely in this instance. I have always had the impression that the Western Australian Police Force was very efficient, if not the best in the whole of Australia. Its work in the detection of major crimes has been, in my opinion, second to none. I stand second to nobody in expressing that belief. In so far as its general efficiency is concerned, I have had no cause whatever to complain because I think its efficiency has been well developed in a great majority of cases.

For my part, I am not one of those who believe that two swallows make a summer; that is, because there are a couple of cases to which exception can be taken, the whole force should be damned. Of course, in every walk of life there are one or two

people not suited for the sphere in which they are employed. It is only human nature that that should occur. So one does not criticise the Police Force because there are one or two individuals in it whose conduct we do not agree with. In my opinion, substantially the Police Force of this State is probably better than that in any other State. I do not think that anything is going to be lost; I think something will be gained by this amendment to the legislation. It is a very wise principle that it is better for a number of guilty persons to escape than for one innocent person to be convicted.

While this may not have complete application to the Minister's comments, I would submit that it has some relationship to the remarks he made because his argument is that it is right and proper for a police officer to have the authority to intercept any individual who may, as I said during the second reading, have committed no offence, or who showed no signs of committing an offence, and to demand from that individual his name and address.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What do you think of the motorcar incident?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not think it makes the slightest difference because in such cases there is certain to be some kind of offence that is being committed. I want to deal with the cases to which the Minister made special reference. The first concerned a person charged with refusing to give his name. He refused his name when acting apparently in a wild manner in the street at 2 a.m. Under my Bill he could still have been asked his name and if he refused to furnish it, he could have been arrested.

The Minister then cited five other cases of which I was only able to take a note of four as I have not the ability of the Hansard reporters. One concerned a person charged with being unlawfully on premises; obviously he committed an offence. This person gave a false name. Another concerned loitering and that is an offence. One other concerned loitering with intent, which is also an offence. The fourth case related to the driving of a stolen motorcar, which was also an offence. In all the cases raised by the Minister in regard to this question, the persons concerned all had committed, or very obviously were about to commit, an offence, and therefore they could reasonably be suspected of committing an offence.

The Minister for Police: That shows the police do not abuse their powers.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That may be so. I do not think I have suggested they do. Except in so far as I quoted from the remarks of Mr. Justice Fullagar who did use that word in his judgment, it was not my remark, nor do I assert it now. I do

not know; it was a remark made by the learned judge. I think he said it could lead to an abuse. I also think it can lead to an abuse.

The Minister for Police: His difficulty was that he did not know the W.A. Police Force as you and I know it.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The learned judge has had experience with the Police Force in other countries and no doubt in other States of Australia, and furthermore he no doubt has a knowledge of the law on this subject. My belief in the matter is that it is reasonable to require a police officer to show reasonable cause to suspect that an offence was, or is about to be committed before he is entitled to interfere, even momentarily, with the liberty of any person. That is fundamental in our system. I could very much hope that the member for Fremantle was present because for many years he has been preaching this doctrine in these very words. It is my view that we should be extremely careful not to minimise the right of a peaceful citizen in the slightest degree.

Turning to the question of identity card, it is true that it may be more desirable to have it, but it must be produced on remand. That would make no difficulty as far as I am concerned. The Minister did make that point, which I fully appreciate. Perhaps it would be unreasonable to require a police officer to produce it every time, whether or not he was asked for it. I want to make it clear that, with that exception, the provision in the Bill applies only to officers in plain clothes. There is no means of determining a police officer out of uniform. They look just like ordinary citizens. I think we are entitled to be assured that a man who seeks to carry out the duties of a police officer can establish the fact that he is one.

The Minister referred to the forging of the commissioner's authority. That may be so. There have been forgeries of £5 notes and other documents; but because these are forgeries, we do not cease using or issuing them. A police officer in plain clothes is surely under some obligation to satisfy a person, whoever he may be, that he is a member of the Police Force because it would not be the first time that people had impersonated police officers, as they have impersonated other and less important persons. There does not seem to be any need to question the desirability of giving plain-clothes officers the opportunity to produce a written authority signed by the commissioner. The very few cases, if there are any at all, in which such a document may be forged, do not seem to me to need the concern of myself or anybody else.

Mr. Lawrence: Have you seen a female police officer in uniform?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I cannot say I have. I take the Minister's word that they operate mostly in plain clothes. As a consequence, it makes it more necessary that they should at least on demand be able to produce some authority to indicate that they are police officers, because in the absence of any demand, nobody can discern whether or not they are police officers. Their simple say-so does not establish that fact.

Mr. Lawrence: But they do.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Maybe the hon. member is right. The Minister said that the public does not suspect the extent of crime that takes place. I am afraid that we suspect there is more crime than actually takes place. I have no desire or intention of any kind to make things easier for the criminal, but I am particularly anxious to preserve the right of the citizen who is doing no wrong and who is doing nothing contrary to the law; he is entitled to the privilege of free movement in the community. While I do not suggest to any degree that activity by the Police Force has improperly abrogated that right to any extent, nevertheless I think the law should be such that it cannot be done.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	25
Majority against	9

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Watts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Wild
Mr. I. Manning	Mr. Hutchinson

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Brady	Mr. W. Manning
Mr. Evans	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. May
Mr. Lapham	

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 10.1 p.m.

Thursday, 8th November, 1956.