

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 25th October, 1945.

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

MR. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of Section "A" of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1945. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

"HANSARD."

Statement by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that after the debate on the Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) last night, when there seemed to be some dissatisfaction about the copy for "Hansard" having been altered, I called for the original transcript and found that no alteration whatever had been made to "Hansard" with the exception of one word, which was simply a correction.

QUESTIONS.

CONDUCT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

As to Instruction by Police.

MR. NORTH asked the Minister for Education:

1, To what extent is instruction in good conduct being given by a police officer in our schools? Are private schools, etc., included?

2, Is the aim to stop vandalism?

3, Did the idea originate with Councillor Vivian of Cottesloe?

4, Has he any reports as to the value of this effort?

The MINISTER replied:

1, A number of lectures have been given at metropolitan schools on various subjects. In these lectures stress is laid on the necessity for the good conduct of pupils in streets, parks, public vehicles, etc. Private schools are included.

2, In addition to other objectives, yes.

3, The department is not aware of the origin of the idea.

4, Yes. Letters of appreciation have been received from head teachers and parents, but sufficient time has not elapsed to assess the real value.

HON. P. COLLIER, M.L.A.

As to Completion of 40 Years' Service.

MR. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Premier: This being the last sitting day of the House prior to Saturday next, which marks the completion of a record period of 40 continuous years of distinguished Parliamentary service in the interests of the people of Western Australia by the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier), is the Premier aware that all members of the Legislative Assembly would appreciate a suitable acknowledgment of the occasion by him as Leader of the House?

The PREMIER replied:

This question would warrant my making a reply in the form of a statement. I hope I have that privilege. Although I had no knowledge of the intention of the member for East Perth to ask this question before the House met, it is with very great pleasure that I express, on behalf of myself and of the Government, and not excluding any member who would wish to comment, my personal appreciation, as well as the appreciation of the people of this State, of the wonderful contribution to public service and public life of the State by the member for Boulder. It was my privilege to be taken as a fledgling Minister in 1935 to the Loan Council by the member for Boulder; and at his hands I enjoyed many considerations and from him I learnt very much which has been of inestimable assistance to me during my period of public life.

I could pay no greater tribute to the service which the hon. member has rendered to the State than by mentioning the obvious weight that his words carried in the Federal

sphere. I noted that when Federal Treasurers were in the Chair they would, after debate of involved financial matters and after all other opinions had been expressed, put the direct question, "What do you think, Mr. Collier?" The service which the member for Boulder has given to this State has been an unselfish service. He has left his mark not only on the Legislature but also on the public life of the State. I am glad, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that the member for East Perth has asked the question, for I think it very timely and opportune that there should be placed on the records of this House the appreciation of Parliament of one of the greatest parliamentarians this State has known.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. N. KEENAN: Mr. Speaker, I join very gladly in what has just been said by the Premier and I endorse everything he has said. The member for Boulder and myself came to this House at the same time. He has been here continuously, whereas I was absent for a great number of years; but, Mr. Speaker, although he and I have always indulged in first-class scrapping in our parliamentary career, we have been the very greatest and best of friends outside the House, and I appreciate his friendship more than I could possibly find words to express. So I join very gladly in what has been said by the Premier in honour of the member for Boulder.

Mr. DONEY: I am very happy indeed to associate myself with the very complimentary remarks that have fallen from the lips of the Premier and of the member for Nedlands on the occasion which has been permitted by the question of the member for East Perth. Everything that the Premier and the member for Nedlands have said I very cordially subscribe to, and I am sure that if the Leader of the Opposition were present he would take precisely the same view. I think the member for Boulder has at least this one distinction—he has, as a matter of fact, very many distinctions—in that he is almost the only member of this House with whom I have never had what we might term a brawl during debate. I do not know whether that is a distinction he would value, but certainly it is one. To me and to many other members—not knowing the ex-Premier as well as some members—his name, indeed, he himself has become somewhat of an institution in Western Aus-

tralia. I mean that Philip Collier is more than a mere Premier. I know the present Premier will not misunderstand me there.

I recall this too, as I hope the ex-Premier can, that on a certain occasion in Narrogin he did me the honour to take me into his confidence during a talk we had while sitting on an old fallen-down York gum tree; it was a conversation the like of which I had not had before with any public man in this State and one which I have always treasured as a particularly happy and interesting memory. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman remembers that; but let me pay him the compliment of saying that I remember it and always will. With those few remarks I feel I can safely associate every member on these benches.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: As one who has had the privilege of a longer association in Ministerial office than has any other member of the House with the present member for Boulder, I would like to add a few words voicing the respect and esteem which must be paid to a man of his outstanding character and capacity. I have attended many Premiers' Conferences since the member for Boulder vacated the office of Premier; and I found that while he has an excellent reputation throughout this State on account of his statesmanship and general lofty qualities, he is regarded in Eastern States circles, to perhaps an even greater extent, as one of the most outstanding men who have ever appeared in the political life of Australia. I remember the stand he adopted, as the Premier mentioned, during the time of the depression, and the remedial steps which had to be taken to right the industrial and economic life of Australia at that period. A good deal of it was experimental at the time, but it is very nice to be able to say that the attitude adopted by Western Australia's representative on that occasion, though it was a bit novel, was proved to be correct a few years later; and the advice he gave and the contributions he made at that time were of outstanding benefit, not only to the people of this State, but to Australia as a whole.

As a Parliament, we owe a debt of gratitude to the member for Boulder, inasmuch as he set a high standard of political conduct in the Chamber. I am pleased to say that when I took over the position from him I endeavoured to follow in his footsteps. As a result of the standard he set, the affairs of this Chamber have been conducted with

more dignity and decorum—and I do not desire to make any invidious comparisons—than has been the case in the Parliaments of other States. There has been a general spirit of good fellowship. We have fought our battles on principle, but we have been prepared when the occasion arose, outside of matters of principle which we came here to defend, to display mutual respect and esteem. Such a condition of affairs can be engendered only provided the Leader of the House sets the example. So the political life of Western Australia is indebted to the member for Boulder for the example he set, for the line of conduct which he took and which has been followed since, and which I know the present Premier is anxious to emulate, if not to excel. Therefore, on that account, and particularly in view of the lengthy association I had with the member for Boulder and, as the years went by, the even greater respect and esteem which I came to have for him and his attitude towards political and public matters generally, I am very pleased to associate myself with the remarks that have been made.

Mr. SHEARN: Since we have not a leader on this bench—may I say that our presumed leader is ill—I would like on my own behalf and on behalf of those associated with me to endorse the commendations that have deservedly fallen from the lips of previous speakers. During the time I have been privileged to be in this Chamber, I have learned of the tremendous value that the member for Boulder has been to the life of this State. I feel sure that however much we may differ from him in his political outlook and expressions of view, we esteem him in the highest degree; and, looking back over the years with the deepest pleasure and happiest recollections, I associate myself and those on this bench with the expressions of goodwill already conveyed to the hon. member.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To me, as to the proverbial young lady, "This is so sudden and unexpected!" However, I appreciate very much the kindly sentiments expressed by the various speakers concerning whatever little services I have been able to render to this Parliament and to the State of Western Australia. Naturally my thoughts go back along the years, and I recall the many members that have passed through this Chamber since 1905—like Bill Adams' army at Waterloo, good men all of them! There are

not many of the old ones left. As the then member for Kalgoorlie has stated, he and I entered this House on the same day.

The Minister for Lands: The member for Nedlands, you mean.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He was then the member for Kalgoorlie, as the member for Guildford-Midland will recall. The member for Guildford-Midland is the only member of the House present who was here in the years previous to 1905. We have seen many men come and go, and I am glad to have had the opportunity and privilege of making their acquaintance. I have not in recent years taken such an active part in affairs and am not so well acquainted with some of the younger and newer men in the Chamber. If my friend, the member for Williams-Narrogin, is one of the men with whom I have not had a verbal brawl, not many of the older members would be able to say as much.

I am happy to feel that whatever disputations we may have had on the floor of the House, we were always able to wander out into the corridor and be good friends afterwards. I think I am not giving away anything not already known when I say that another notable man who entered this House on the same day as I—the 27th October, 1905—was Sir James Mitchell. Throughout long years, we sat on opposite sides of the House, he leading one party and I the other. In all the clashes that were inevitable throughout those years, never once did either of us have occasion to give expression to sentiments that wounded the feelings of the other. That was in marked contrast to the first few years I spent in this House.

I recall well now that the feeling between the parties was very bitter in those earlier days. In the first four or five years I was here, we did not associate at all outside of this Chamber. Along the corridors, one could see a group of members of one party in one alcove, and a group from the other party in another alcove. We silently passed each other along the corridor; and even in the bar we seldom melted to the extent of joining in conversation. There was a very bitter feeling indeed in party politics. It seemed somewhat unnatural to me, although I was rather keen on doing my share of the fighting in the disputes of those days. I think it was largely due to the kindly attitude of Sir James Mitchell, when he became leader of

the party now sitting on the other side of the House, and to myself when I took up a similar position with this party in May, 1917, that all, or at least a great deal, of the personal antagonism was dropped. We agreed in conversation that, while we could carry on strenuous opposition to each other inside the Chamber, we should leave our quarrels here and not carry them into the precincts of the House.

I am glad to observe that that policy has grown with the years. No special praise is due to us today when we say that there is no Parliament in Australia conducted in a more friendly and kindly way than is the Parliament of Western Australia. That has been so for many years past, and long may it continue! I have had the privilege of representing the one constituency for 40 years. So long as the electors of Boulder are satisfied to keep me here, I shall carry on until I reach that stage when I think I might retire from this Chamber and take a seat in another place. But I feel that I have not yet reached that stage. However, one never knows whether the electors of Boulder of the present generation, mostly men and women who were born in the district, will continue to have the same wisdom and perception as their fathers and mothers, and their grandfathers and grandmothers. Mr. Speaker, and friends, I appreciate very deeply the kind sentiments expressed by the members who have spoken which, I am sure, are endorsed by every member of the House.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.53]: I move—

That on Wednesday, the 31st October, and each alternate Wednesday thereafter, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day as on other days.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [4.54]: I had risen not quite realising the nature of the motion but, having taken a glance at it, I see that it is the motion customary at this time, and one to which I think objection is never raised. I shall follow the usual procedure of taking the motion for granted and agreeing to it.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [4.55]: I hope that private members will still have their rights, not only in connection with the motions at present on the notice paper but regarding others that may be introduced. I can realise that the Premier is getting anxious about the closing part of the session because of the heavy legislation coming down. Some of our sittings have been short. I sincerely hope the Premier will give an assurance that consideration will be given to private members' business, and also that any future items of business will receive assistance instead of being slaughtered innocents in the last part of the session.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [4.56]: This motion is customary at about this time of the year. My predecessors have always observed the points raised by the member for Beverley. I went to the trouble of looking back to see not only the approximate time at which the motions were moved but how many private members' motions and items of business appeared on the notice paper. The number of such items ranges from nine to 16 as a rule.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is a pretty wide range.

The PREMIER: Yes. On two occasions in recent times there have been nine such items, one year there were 14 and one year 16. On this occasion there are five items of private members' business on the notice paper. I assure the House that even on days when Government business takes precedence, private members' business will, if it is necessary and desirable, have consideration. But in any case, before the session is finished, due consideration will be given to the rights and privileges of private members, and I hope that at the end of the session no objection will be raised that their business has been treated scantily.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Medical Act Amendment.
- 2, Town Planning and Development Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.58] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for exemption from the operations of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act of land held by recipients of pensions under the Commonwealth Widows' Pensions Scheme. The concession is also extended to any pensioner who is in receipt of a pension under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act to the extent that it applies to service pensions which are limited to persons who are in a condition of financial distress. The purpose is to provide exemptions from land tax on land held by persons in receipt of widows' pensions under the provisions of the Commonwealth Widows' Pensions Act of 1942-43, and for service pensioners under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act of 1920-1943, also a Commonwealth Act. Members will recall that the present Act provides for the exemption of pensioners from land tax on land held by any invalid or old age pensioner under the Commonwealth Act.

The social legislation of the Commonwealth has, in recent years, been extended to include and provide for pensions for widows, and the Government is of the opinion that this class of pensioner also should be exempted from the incidence of land tax. In taking the opportunity to extend the operations to pensions under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act, the Government is of the opinion that the Act should be extended to make such a provision. Both widows' and service pensions are subject to a means test, and in all respects the test is similar to that applicable to the invalid and old age pensioners. The exemption is already in the Act for those people, in Section 3 of the Pensioners' Rates Exemption Act of 1922-43, and to embrace the two classes of persons dealt with in this Bill the Government is desirous that provision should be made for them in this manner.

In practically every case the exemption will apply to the land of the widow or service pensioner, upon which a home is erected. That is the position in almost all cases. For that reason I feel sure there will be no objection, from any section of the community, to giving to these people this small consideration. The proposal will apply to

land that was held at the 30th June, 1945, and in all subsequent years. There is nothing else in the Bill but a simple provision to provide the exemption for the recipients of those two classes of pensions, in addition to the privilege experienced by the pensioners under the Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act. I do not think further comment is needed and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [5.5] in moving the second reading said: The bulk of the onion crop in Western Australia, which is grown mainly in the metropolitan area, is marketed during the months of January and February. Unfortunately, Western Australian onions cannot be effectively stored. They have poor keeping qualities and, after May, serious loss occurs to growers who attempt to store them. For this reason the growers used to market their crops and endeavour to dispose of them as quickly as possible, with the result that there was always a serious glut of onions on the market at that time, with consequent low prices. Later in the year, when most of the onions had been sold, there was a shortage, with consequent high prices. At the request of the growers a Marketing of Onions Act was introduced in 1938, providing for a poll of growers to be taken. That poll was taken in 1939, and the Act became operative in the 1940 season. The operations of the board set up under that legislation resulted in the rationing of onions on the market, with a consequent increased average price to the producers.

Prior to 1940 it was not unusual for the price of onions to be as low as £4 or £5 per ton during the weeks following immediately after digging, and for the prices then to soar to £40 per ton or more for stored or imported onions later in the year. It is obvious that growers have benefited from the rationing of onions on the market, but that has not been at the expense of the consumers. During the five years that the board has operated the consumer has paid less than 1½d. per lb. more for onions than

in the years 1936 to 1939, before the board came into operation. In the years 1936 to 1939 the price of onions, over the period March to June, was 2.46d. per lb. and during the period September to December, 2.92d. per lb. During the period 1940-41, in which the board had been operating, the price between March and June was 2.72d. per lb., and during the period September to December, 3.63d. per lb. The table I have just quoted shows the price during the period when stored onions are supplied by the board from local production, and the price during September to December when imported onions are on the market.

It is to be remembered that we have just passed through a war period, during which it could be expected that the prices of commodities would be somewhat increased. They have increased, and yet the figures I have quoted show that there has not been a large increase in the price of onions sold during that period. It can be truly said that the increased return the growers have received has certainly not been at the expense of the consumers. It should be noted that, prior to the operation of the board, although the producers received low prices during March, the price to the consumers during that month was not appreciably lower than later in the year. Normally we would expect that if the crop were marketed with a consequent glut and reduced prices, the consumers would enjoy the benefit of those reduced prices. But that has not been so, and the explanation is that the merchants bought the onions that were marketed and took the risk of storage and for that risk they secured increased prices at a time when prices should have been low. They were prompted to adopt that course and, because the onions would not keep, obtained that extra return. The producer prefers to take the risk himself rather than that it should be accepted by the merchants and that the consumers should not get the benefit of the reduced prices which ought to have followed when the glut was on.

The Onion Marketing Board did not operate during 1943 because the Commonwealth Government, through its Service Foodstuffs Office, made contracts direct with certain growers rather than deal with the board. Upon the matter being inquired into, the Service Foodstuffs Office proffered the explanation that it was unaware of the existence of the board and the regulations but

intimated that it much preferred to deal with the board. That has been the position since that year. Those growers that took advantage of selling their onions direct to the Service Foodstuffs Office then attempted to get the Onion Marketing Board to market the balance of their crops after they had supplied the more lucrative contracts with the Army. The board refused to do that, stating that if it was to handle onions it required to handle the whole and not merely a portion of the crop.

A majority of the growers are satisfied with the operations of the board but it has to be admitted that there is a small number, as there will always be in any such scheme, who prefer to sell their crops immediately they are dug rather than risk a small proportion of their output suffering from deterioration, which would result in their being called upon to take a share in the storage costs. In its operations the board has followed a policy of obtaining estimates of the anticipated crop and then notifying growers from time to time as to the proportion of the crop it desires to have marketed. That method operated satisfactorily until last season when two growers complained that they had suffered losses through deterioration because the board had not taken delivery of their onions within a reasonable time.

The Act requires the board to take delivery of all onions within a reasonable time, which means that the board is called upon to find storage accommodation for the stocks, and it has no such storage accommodation. There is also an added difficulty because of the difference in crops. There is a difference in the storability of onions and that in itself makes it extremely difficult for the board to arrange for proper storage. The Solicitor General advises that because the policy followed by the board for five years is not in accordance with the Act members of the board are responsible personally for any losses that may occur. Hence it is proposed to amend the principal Act by means of the Bill which I am now introducing so that we can legalise the practice which has been followed by the board during the period it has been operating.

It is proposed that the section requiring the acquisition of the onion crop by the board shall be deleted and a new section inserted to legalise the present procedure of the board, which is that it will expect growers to make an estimate of their anticipated

crops and then from time to time they will be required to market a proportion of their crops. Safeguards are included against over-estimates and under-estimates on the part of growers. The existing provisions of the Act for the payment of advances to growers will remain but a new amendment is proposed which will authorise the board to deduct from the proceeds of sales an amount not exceeding 12½ per cent. of such proceeds for the purpose of meeting administration expenses.

The Act requires that the total proceeds shall be distributed among the growers, in consequence of which it is impossible to administer the legislation. No funds have been provided to enable the board to function, and it is necessary that it shall have funds in hand with which to commence the next season. It is desirable to provide against contingencies. The Bill, comparatively speaking, is very short and the remaining amendments included in it are consequential upon the two I have outlined. The Onion Marketing Board has suggested that the amendments are necessary in order to ensure its smooth working and to enable it to continue on a proper basis the policy which the existing Act does not really entitle it to follow. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

RESOLUTION—GAOL SITE AND MODERN PRISON REQUIREMENTS.

To Inquire by Joint Committee.

Message from the Council requesting the Assembly's concurrence in the following resolution now considered:—

That a committee of three members of each House of Parliament be appointed to inquire into:—

- (a) The requirements for a modern gaol;
- (b) whether the site selected by the Government, known as the Claremont site, should be used for this purpose;
- (c) if not, to report on and recommend any alternative site.

That the committee may adjourn from time to time, and from place to place; may sit on those days over which the Houses stand adjourned; have power to call for persons, papers, and records; and shall report to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [5.18]: I move—

That the resolution be agreed to.

I do not think that any member of this Chamber has been in gaol because he has been convicted of any criminal offence, but nevertheless I expect that most of us have visited the Fremantle gaol and seen both the inside and the outside of that institution. I believe all members realise the conditions that obtain there. During the war years prison administration was very difficult and the problems that confronted the Gaols Department from time to time were embarrassing. The reason was that we had to move the prisoners from the institution at Fremantle to a place in the hills. We all realise that the Fremantle gaol is a relic of the past and that it should be replaced by a modern institution with more amenities and better conditions generally so that our prison system may be brought more into line with that of other parts of the world and permit of reforms being carried out. The experience gained following the compulsory evacuation of the Fremantle gaol has been of great advantage not only to the Government, but also to the community. It has emphasised the unsuitability of the present building and has amply demonstrated the need for a new one. Having this in mind and having also the experience of Barton's Mill, the Government appreciated the necessity for seeking another site and, after taking expert advice, we obtained the best authorities available to us in Australia to view, with the Minister, the various sites suggested for a main gaol.

Mr. J. Hegney: The committee will only have the same expert advisers.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Probably it will, but seeing that this is a very important matter, we thought it only fair to give the House an opportunity to discuss it. We selected as the site for a main gaol an area of about 225 acres near the Claremont Mental Hospital, but no sooner was the decision made than protests were lodged against its being used for that purpose, notwithstanding that we had taken expert opinion on the matter. Sometimes, of course, such protests are lodged for reasons other than objection to the site on the score of unsuitability.

Mr. McLarty: Wherever you proposed to put the new gaol, there would be protests.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. If we suggested establishing it on one of the islands near Esperance, there would be a protest probably on the ground that

it might affect some vested interest. A deputation waited on the Minister and not only protested against the use of the selected site, but also objected to the new gaol being located anywhere in the metropolitan area. At a meeting organised to protest against the adoption of this site and attended by Parliamentarians, a motion was passed requesting the Government to defer action.

Mr. J. Hegney: Who were the Parliamentarians?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know. Upon the request of the deputation being received by the Government, we thought it only reasonable to recommend the appointment of a joint committee to investigate the matter further.

War circumstances led to the transfer of the inmates of the Fremantle gaol to Barton's Mill and demonstrated the necessity for having more than one gaol. We realise that we must not only provide a site for a main gaol, but should also consider the reform of prisoners to a greater extent than has been done in the past. When the prisoners were transferred to Barton's Mill, the military authorities took over the Fremantle gaol and, although they controlled it only temporarily, we experienced great difficulty in carrying on. However, we have learnt the value of introducing an intermediate classification of prisoners, and so the experience we have had will be of advantage in introducing prison reform.

After having transferred the prisoners from the Fremantle gaol to Barton's Mill and experienced many difficulties in consequence, we had eventually to return the worst types to Fremantle to keep them in a place where, in the interests of the civil population, they could not get away. I do not wish to mention names, but members will recall that quite a number of prisoners escaped from Barton's Mill and that it is necessary to have a main gaol to hold such prisoners. The Fremantle gaol, I have been told, was established in 1855, which is 90 years ago, and to do anything with it would be very expensive. Whatever was done, it could not be brought up to the standard of modern gaols in England, the United States of America and even the Eastern States. I have been informed that architecturally the gaol does not lend itself to modernisation. The walls are vermin-infested and are crumbling with age, and the cells are also vermin-infested.

It is possible that the Government will be faced with a major problem in dealing with the criminal population. There is little doubt that the number of prisoners will increase; probably the aftermath of war will create a tendency in that direction. So we were faced with the problem of reconstructing the old building, which has been condemned by authorities, or of selecting a new site and building a new main gaol to hold prisoners who could not be held in the intermediate classification centres. The new gaol need not be of as big dimensions as the old one on account of the reform methods which have been adopted and proved to be very satisfactory. I feel now, because we have had to leave the Fremantle gaol, that that will be a great help in the direction of the modernisation of our methods in the future so far as prisoners in this State are concerned. We should develop such places as Barton's Mill, not necessarily at that very place but in other places. We want establishments of the Pardelup type, for they would have a great effect in regard to reform.

I am told that our methods here are hopelessly out of date compared with methods used in other parts of Australia. There is not much I can say with respect to gaols. I can only emphasise that the Government is very anxious to get the best and most suitable sites, a site where prisoners can make themselves more or less self-supporting not only from the point of view of secondary industries, but that of primary industries so that they may be able to grow their own vegetables and other commodities that are necessary for their own sustenance while in prison. Work will do them good. So far as the main gaol is concerned, only those of very bad character will be kept there. If we have another intermediate gaol and then Pardelup, we shall be able to classify the prisoners in accordance with their character and disposition. I hope the resolution of another place will be endorsed by this House.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 16th October; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Chief Secretary, £22,584:

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise--Gascoyne) [5.35]: In introducing the Estimates for the Chief Secretary's Department there is need for me to make but slight comment. The Chief Secretary's Department covers prisons, Registry and Statistician's Office, War Fund Council, Observatory and Correspondence Despatch Office. The War Fund Council is associated with the head office. The Chief Secretary is the chairman, and the work done is under his immediate supervision. The War Fund Council has involved a considerable amount of work. Altogether, 350 war funds have been approved, involving subsequent disposal of the takings through their operation. The figures disclose that approximately £2,250,000 have been distributed to the various patriotic causes. In connection with the Registry and Statistician's office, figures are compiled and prepared for the various uses of government, and both these departments are under the control of the Chief Secretary. The Prisons Department constitutes one of the functions of control under the Chief Secretary's authority. Some of the problems associated with gaols are well known to members.

Barton's Mill was instituted because of war circumstances rendering Fremantle a place to be used as little as possible, particularly for gaol purposes, when threats of invasion of this country were with us. At Fremantle until recently the major portion of the prison was occupied by the Military authorities, and they stayed there during the whole of our period of anxiety until the conclusion of the war with Japan. The Pardelup Prison Farm is being carried on, and many of its activities are now worked in association with the Department of Agriculture, and quite a lot of useful work is being done in a rural sense by the use of prison labour for that purpose. In regard to the Observatory, it is necessary to make very little comment. The State time service operates from that establishment, and is used for synchronising times in connection with railways, post-offices, lighthouses and the like. Shipping, too, is advised twice daily from the Observatory in connection with times. Tide tables and all those things associated with the observations conducted at the Observatory also emanate from that institution. I think it unnecessary to elaborate on the work of the Chief Secretary's Department, which is confined to the four sections or items that I have mentioned.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.40]: There are a few observations that I think are pertinent on the general discussion of this Vote. One observation to be made deals with the licensing of street collections for charitable and war purposes. It might well be that a better method could be adopted than the present one. I do not know what the experience of others has been, but my experience is that if you go down to Perth on a Friday, unless you blazon your receipt on your coat, you will be asked again and again to subscribe. It is not a pleasant thing to hang these flags up on one's coat and to walk about with quite a considerable length of linen hanging on to one's lapel, and I do not think that one should be subjected to it. It surely is not beyond ingenuity to devise a better plan than that of street cadging. I am quite aware that it has a great financial result, especially when the appeal is made by organisations like the R.S.L., and we might very well agree to one such appeal in a year; but on every Friday—

The Minister for Lands: There are only 50 in a year when collections can be made.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is getting very near to all Fridays.

The Minister for Lands: That is the law.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Almost every Friday, Mr. Chairman, if one is obliged to wander or move about the streets, one suffers this inconvenience of eternal cadging. As I said, surely a better and easier method could be adopted. For instance, I have often thought that if a collecting box were placed at the corner of a street a person could, as he passed, if he felt so inclined, drop a coin into it.

The Minister for Lands: Not under that method.

Hon. N. KEENAN: A person may drop a coin into the box, but to have a female—generally the collectors are females—

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And good ones, too.

The Premier: That is the lure!

Hon. N. KEENAN: And good ones, as the member for Subiaco reminds me, and also sometimes most attractive. Unless a person is lucky, however, he is seldom asked by an attractive member of that sex. If he has no luck, he simply falls a victim to what might be called the old hard faces; and they

are not only for that reason not very pleasant, but one cannot shake them off—it is impossible, as they are old habitués of the game and give a person a very bad time if he does not answer their call. Seriously, Mr. Chairman, can we not adopt some better method than that of raising money for charity and, of course, sometimes for objects other than charity? There may be still some necessary collections for war purposes. I would ask the Minister representing the Chief Secretary to devote his attention to the possibility of discovering a better and more pleasant way of raising money than the present practice.

I desire also to say a few words on prisons, although I do not wish to anticipate the debate initiated by the Minister for Justice. I desire to speak on the prisons as they exist. It is a fact, and a very sad fact, that persons living in the neighbourhood of Barton's Mill have, during the past 12 months, had some exceedingly nasty experiences, owing particularly to the fact that it appears to be the easiest possible thing to walk out of that prison. For some reason or other, some of the prisoners are only put in one door and go out the other. They are out at night, and that would not matter were it not a fact that they are a prey on society when they escape. They must have means to get away; they must have food; they want clothing, and so those living in the neighbourhood are in constant dread of having their premises broken into by the escaping prisoners and their goods and chattels taken away. In addition, there is also the risk, which parents particularly fear, of these escaping criminals meeting their young children and possibly interfering with them.

Is it not possible to make Barton's Mill, if it is to be continued as a prison, a safer place for holding prisoners? Is it not possible that some electrically-charged wires could be put around the precincts of the prison and other steps taken which are taken every day for the purpose of confining prisoners-of-war, and successfully taken? One hears very seldom of prisoners-of-war breaking out of prisons; but at one time it was almost a weekly occurrence at Barton's Mill. This is a matter that undoubtedly should be very carefully guarded against in the future. As for Pardelup, it is doubtful whether it is achieving its object at all. At

one time, as the Minister for Lands will recall, prisoners were sent to Pardelup only on recommendation, principally from the Salvation Army. Officers of the Salvation Army visited the gaol at Fremantle.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The recommendations were from the Prisoners Board, consisting of a Salvation Army official and two others.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The board almost entirely consisted of Salvation Army officers.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No.

Member: The Chairman was Brigadier Inglis.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I know the Salvation Army officers took a very large part in it. The reason they were so effective is that they were visitors to the Fremantle gaol and got to know the prisoners. Consequently they would be in a position to judge accurately whether, if the prisoners were removed from Fremantle and sent to the easier and wider spaces of Pardelup, they would behave. I would prefer that system to continue; but have we gone back to some system under which an official puts a mark opposite a prisoner's name and he thus becomes eligible for removal? Undoubtedly, the old system seemed to be more successful, as we had far fewer escapes then than have taken place in modern times.

I do not think we ought to miss the opportunity to say a few words about the Observatory. The late member for Yilgarn (Mr. Lambert) used always to tell this Committee, on the occasion of the Estimates, what a hopeless useless institution the Observatory was from the State's point of view. The Observatory occupies a very large piece of land, and it is always a matter of considerable doubt whether the Commonwealth was prepared to take over all the land or only part of it, in the days when the member for Geraldton was Premier, for the purpose of an Observatory.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Commonwealth wanted the lot, but we would not agree.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so; there was a dispute as to how much land the Commonwealth was to get. The Observatory is clearly an institution the cost of which should be entirely defrayed by the Commonwealth. It is worth a great deal to the Eastern States, because all weather comes from the west, or at least nearly all weather; and, by warn-

ing the Eastern States, they are able to take all necessary precautions on the advent of stormy weather, and are of course also able to warn shipping.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That part comes under the Commonwealth.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is of great value to the Commonwealth, but of no value at all to us.

Mr. Doney: It is of great value to the country people.

Mr. Seward: That is so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is of no value to shipping on this coast, because the stormy weather strikes the coast before the Observatory knows anything about it.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Commonwealth pays for that part of it and maintains it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Why should the Commonwealth have only that section; why not the whole lot? It does not seem to me that there is any justification for dividing the costs and saying that this portion, because it is exceptionally valuable to the Commonwealth, shall be paid for by the Commonwealth; and that the rest, which is not of exceptional value to anybody, is to be paid for by the State. I hope that matter will be taken into consideration and that some final arrangement will be made, first of all as to the amount of land the Commonwealth is going to take and what is to be left at the disposal of the State; and secondly as to the total cost of the Observatory in all its branches being met by the Commonwealth. That is a matter that needs urgent consideration.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [5.51]: I want to emphasise the remarks of the member for Nedlands on two points. The first is in relation to street collections. I suggest that the position has arisen that these are not altogether voluntary collections; because, as the hon. member said, one is pestered if one does not wear a badge, and unless one gives a certain fixed amount one does not get a badge at all.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That is not true.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes, it is!

Mr. McLarty: No, it is not!

The Minister for Lands: Except on Poppy Day, that is not correct.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is correct!

The Minister for Lands: It is not!

Mr. ABBOTT: So far as my personal experience is concerned, it is correct.

The Minister for Lands: You look too aristocratic, that is the trouble!

Mr. ABBOTT: That may be so, and I have no objection to paying; but there are many people who earn their living in this city and who have to frequent the streets because of their occupations, and shillings mean a great deal to them.

Mr. J. Hegney: And they are exploited more than other people.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes; and not only that, but there are badges of varying prices. One is a half-a-crown and another is a shilling.

The Minister for Lands: Do you know of any organisation that does that? Can you give us its name?

Mr. ABBOTT: I cannot remember, but that happened to me personally not so very long ago. The next time it happens, I will give the Minister the information.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Some badges cost more than others.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes; the member for Geraldton has had an experience similar to mine. In other States, collections are taken up on the basis that people give what they feel inclined to give.

Mr. Needham: In the great majority of cases, that happens here.

Mr. ABBOTT: The collections are voluntary here, inasmuch as the collectors are voluntary workers.

Mr. Needham: And the contributions are voluntary.

Mr. ABBOTT: On many occasions I have found it not so.

Mr. Doney: You are quite right, too.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is my personal experience and it is something the Minister may see fit to inquire into. I have the greatest sympathy for the organisations which, during the last few years, have been collecting funds to assist worthy causes; but it has been a little hard on occasions on the city worker who has had to meet these contributions every week. I would also like to support the comments of the member for Nedlands relative to the Observatory. During the last few years, weather observations have become increasingly important because of the need for anticipating climatic conditions and keeping informed on this

matter companies engaged in aviation. That is purely a Federal matter, and steps should be taken so that the whole of the weather observations and other observatory work may be a Federal responsibility.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [5.55]: I am glad that I caught your eye, Mr. Chairman, or that you caught mine—I do not know which is the correct way to put it—because I would like to say something on this matter before other members speak. I do not want members to say unkind things they will afterwards regret.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You want to have the first word instead of the last!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes, I do; because I feel that possibly there is an erroneous idea abroad about street collections. I have often considered that there might be introduced a better method of raising funds than by street collections. In other parts of the world I have seen this object achieved by special stamps being affixed to letters on a particular day, the money from those stamps being given to the organisation they were intended to benefit. For instance, on Mother's Day or Child Welfare Day or Kindergarten Day, letters carry a particular stamp, and the money from the sale of such stamps goes to the organisations concerned. I am sorry the member for Nedlands does not always meet the pretty girls! Most of them are in the men's offices, so what can one do? I think that if men went out and did a little collecting and thus found out how hard it was, they would not say so much about it.

The Premier: I agree.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I know how difficult it is. I have stood at street corners in the morning before eight o'clock until nine o'clock and have collected as much as £12, not on account of my beauty but on account of my putting a box in front of the men and telling them that the money was being collected for under-nourished children. The kind hearts of the men then persuaded them to put their hands in their pockets and contribute to the collection. During the last few years, one organisation alone, concerned with the provision of free milk for children, collected £4,000 on street day appeals. When it is realised that that money has kept 4,000 children in milk, I do not think anybody in this Chamber should object.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That would not be confined to the metropolitan area, would it?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes, the metropolitan-suburban area.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What, £4,000 in one day?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: No, £4,000 during the war years. All the collectors are voluntary workers. It is getting harder to secure their services, because they did so much work during the war years. I would not like the Committee to say any more about this question. With regard to the badges, sometimes a fixed amount is paid, but on rare occasions the contributor is permitted to give what he likes. One often finds people who are beautifully dressed giving one penny or twopence. They sometimes open their bags, which contain heaps of two shilling pieces, and search for a penny. On the other hand, I have known a poor person put a pound in a collection box and do it gladly.

Mr. Thorn: Probably the other person carries his wealth on his back.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If we can find a better method to get money for these organisations, by all means let us use it, but members should not say unkind things about the women doing this work unless they are prepared to go out and do it themselves. I particularly wish to mention the prison at Barton's Mill. I do not know how many members have been there.

The Minister for Lands: Some members have been lucky.

Hon. N. Keenan: Not as guests.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I mean, as visitors. I believe, first of all, that we made a mistake in having a prison at Barton's Mill because I did hear one of our ex-Ministers say that it is built upon a catchment area and will, therefore, sooner or later have to be removed to another place. On the other hand, I feel that Barton's Mill is a most excellent prison. It is wonderfully situated but it has not been made attractive to the warders. It is quite attractive to the prisoners, although some do escape. It is not attractive to the warders and that is the difficulty about Barton's Mill. All the little homes of the warders face the prison, and the school faces the prison. There is no place for the women to shop. The warders' wives have to go, in a kind of bus, over bad roads, to Kalamunda to buy what they require.

The Government could well start a store at Barton's Mill. The prison has its industrial concerns and, although I will not say that all the men there that I spoke to were happy, they did not want to escape. They knew they were there for having done wrong and were willing to remain. But those people might be paid a little more in wages than they receive at present. I think each man there receives about 5s. or less a week. They should get a little more for the work they are doing, even if the extra is kept until they are released. If that were done there would be more contentment. That is all I wish to say, but I would not like to think that the Barton's Mill establishment is to be removed from its present environs. It is a splendid place for the prisoners and it could be made into an almost perfect prison. Some of the little detached rooms and houses in which the prisoners live are beautifully kept with photographs on the walls, and are very tidy. Others are kept in a slovenly manner. The prison has a very good library. I do not know whether it has a picture show, but it could have one. It could be made into an exhibition prison. I trust that members will have regard to what I said on the first subject that I mentioned, and further that the men at Barton's Mill will be paid more money, and that the place will be made more attractive to the warders.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [6.5]: I desire to hark back to the conditions at Pardelup, mentioned by the member for Nedlands. I understood that Pardelup was regarded as some sort of easement allowed to lesser prisoners, following good behaviour at Fremantle or places of that type. But I hardly think that that can be the case now. I certainly cannot agree that Brigadier Inglis and his associates on the board have the selecting of prisoners for Pardelup now because the type sent there is of the very worst.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Oh!

Mr. DONEY: That is so. As distinct from what should be happening I am describing what is happening. As a matter of fact, something like two months ago there was in the Press a reference that would let members know that what I am saying is correct. Some of the very worst and lowest grade of criminals are sent there; criminals of the most bestial type. These fellows roam over the countryside when they escape, and many

escapes have taken place there lately—not during the last six weeks, but prior to that. Naturally such prisoners have spread terror among the women and children there. I want the attention of the appropriate Minister drawn to this matter so that he may determine just how long that condition is to continue. I realise that the prison authorities have not had sufficient accommodation for prisoners, no matter of what type. They have therefore been forced, I have no doubt, to send to Pardelup prisoners who, normally, would not be sent there. But still there should be an end to that sort of thing, and it is necessary that the Chief Secretary should understand that a great deal of dissatisfaction still exists over this matter.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [6.7]: I wish to refer to the Statistician's Office, as I think there is a great opportunity for improvement there. Although that office does wonderful work, I think we could add to it in certain directions. It shows population returns and, for the sake of argument, we could take a town in China with a population of 50,000, and compare it with a town in Western Australia with a population of 50,000. The population is the same, but they are a different sort of people. According to the Statistician, they are just the same, just heads. I think an important reform could be made in such returns if the population was shown, together with the amount of brake horse-power or electrical horse-power available to that population.

In the United States, the amount of brake horse-power for the population is shown, and from that anyone can get an intelligent appraisalment of the district concerned. In the next few years we hope to see many thousands of electrical horse-power available in the South-West, which will alter the whole outlook in that area from the productive point of view. I urge that, in showing the returns of population, the Statistician should do it by districts, instead of merely showing the population for the State, and that he should also show the brake horse-power available in those districts, indicating below the amount per head. Then we could deal with the matter and compare our population and horse-power with those in other countries, according to our technical and productive capacity, instead of merely showing the number of heads.

I would next urge that there should be a return showing the amount of money lost each year through unemployment. At present, if there is a strike, the amount of money lost through that strike is almost certainly shown in the Press a few days afterwards. The public are regaled with the fact of that loss, and the fact that if the workers had not been on strike that money would not have been lost. Yet every year there are thousands of unemployed—though not, of course, during the war—and there is no indication in the returns of what the loss is to the community, if calculated on the basic wage, which would be the only way to do it. If that information was put on the return each time, we would have a far better grip of the situation for our own use in such questions. I think, also, that the basic wage statistics are not sufficient. There is an opportunity to improve the statistics in this State from which the basic wage is calculated. I am fully in accord with what has been said by the member for Nedlands and others on the matter of street collections.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [6.10]: I would not like the Vote to go through without saying a word in defence of the Observatory, from the country point of view. It is possible that the city-dweller does not place much importance on the weather forecast issued each day, but I assure members that it is one of the most important items that we have in the country.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The country people tune in to the wireless to get the weather report.

Mr. SEWARD: That is so, and not only the weather report, but the rainfall report that comes out each day. The amount concerned is £1,494, and I would be sorry to see any discontinuance of the work of the Observatory. The weather information we have been receiving from Mr. Ackeroyd is remarkably accurate.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: He is a Commonwealth man.

Mr. SEWARD: That is the difficulty; we do not know whether we are dealing with Commonwealth or State people. At all events, I compliment Mr. Ackeroyd on the accuracy of the information he has given while holding that position. I hope that that information to the farming community will not be curtailed.

Another matter that I think needs reconsideration is that of street collections. That was a war measure, in order to help certain organisations, and collections were allowed to be taken up in that manner for war purposes. I think the time has come for this to be reviewed, as there have been collections taken up for institutions not in any way connected with war purposes. I think the matter should be reviewed and many such collections curtailed. I would refer to collections, say, for the Australian Comforts Fund. I do not think that is a fund for which collections should be taken up on street corners. The welfare of the troops is a national obligation and we should not be dependent on people donating a shilling or two for such purposes. I hope the authority controlling such war collections will reduce them to the minimum.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Registry and Friendly Societies, £17,591—agreed to.

Vote—Prisons, £51,500:

Mr. SEWARD: I notice that the salary of the Deputy Comptroller General ranges from £511 to £705. I do not know whether there is a new occupant of the position or what causes that large increase of almost £200.

The Premier: The point there is that it provides for a full year, as against a part year in the last period.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Observatory, £1,494; Police, £291,000—agreed to.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £99,750:

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the Vote be agreed to.

Mr. SEWARD: Surely the Minister for Justice will introduce his Estimates! It is hardly fair to the Committee to rush the Estimates through without some explanation from the Minister concerned. Has not some arrangement been made for the Minister to introduce the Estimates so as to give the Committee some information?

The PREMIER: As the member for Pingelly must know, I have no desire that these Estimates shall be rushed through. I had hoped that the Minister for Justice would be in his seat. I cannot account for his not

being present. In the circumstances there is no alternative, in fairness to the Committee, but to move—

That the Chairman report progress and ask leave to sit again.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that the report be adopted and leave given to sit again.

Motion put and passed.

As to Procedure.

The Premier: Would I be in order if I asked the House to vote against the motion to adopt the report so that we might continue with the Estimates of the Minister for Justice who is now in the Chamber?

Mr. Speaker: No. Progress has been reported and the Committee has asked for leave to sit again.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: We did not.

The Premier: My point that I put to the Chair is, have we the privilege of continuing with the discussion of the Estimates if the motion for leave to sit again is not carried?

Mr. Speaker: But I have declared it carried.

The Premier: I do not think it was carried because quite a number of "Noes" were called.

Mr. Speaker: If the motion was not carried, the business would be where it was and the Premier could go on with the Estimates.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Premier himself voted against adopting the report.

Mr. Speaker: On further consideration, I am afraid the Premier is debarred from going on.

Mr. Mann: Could not we disagree with Mr. Speaker's ruling?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If the motion were carried that we do now adopt the report and ask leave to sit again, is there any time limit between the carrying of that motion and the time the Committee can sit again?

Mr. Speaker: The motion that was carried did not give permission to the Committee to sit at a later stage of this sitting.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I submit it would be perfectly in order for a motion to be moved that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the

Estimates in Committee. There is no Standing Order to prevent that being done. We asked for leave to sit again. Surely the House can direct its own business!

Mr. Speaker: But the motion that was carried was that progress be reported and leave was asked to sit again—not for leave to sit at a later stage of the sitting.

The Premier: We did not say that.

Mr. Speaker: That is the motion that was carried.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: We reported progress and asked leave to sit again. When the report was presented to the House, you, Mr. Speaker, put the question and the House, as far as I could judge, voted against the motion.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. Mann: That is correct.

The Premier: Yes, I rose to a point of order.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Premier could have asked for a division, but you, Mr. Speaker, ruled that the motion was carried.

Mr. Speaker: If the motion asking leave to sit again were not carried, that would be the end of the Estimates. They could not be brought on again.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: We asked for a division, but you, Mr. Speaker, ruled that the motion was passed.

Mr. Speaker: If a division had been taken and leave to sit again was refused, the Estimates would be off the notice paper altogether.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is not what we desire. The House wished to refuse to adopt the report so that we could get back into Committee and make progress with the Estimates.

The Premier: I rose to ask for an interpretation on the point as to whether if we voted against the motion for leave to sit again, I could move that you, Mr. Speaker, do leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the Estimates. I desire to continue with the business in the circumstances that have arisen, and ask for a ruling regarding the effect of a vote against the motion. Although you, Mr. Speaker, declared the motion carried, I wished to know the effect of dividing the House so that we could continue with the Estimates of the Minister for Justice.

Mr. Speaker: If the motion were not carried, the effect would be that the House refused leave to sit again.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No, to report progress.

Mr. Speaker: If the House refuses leave to sit again that is the end of the Estimates for the current year.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Suppose the Premier rose in his place and moved that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the Estimates in Committee, there is no Standing Order, so far as I know, to prevent that being done. There is no time limit. If the motion had been moved to sit again at a later stage of the sitting, a time would have been stated, but we asked merely for leave to sit again. There is no Standing Order to say that we cannot sit again, in the circumstances I have outlined. It would be perfectly in order, I submit, for the Premier to move that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair for the purpose of continuing with the consideration of the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: I rule that it would not be in order. If the motion moved was for leave to sit again and it was intended to sit at a later stage of the sitting, the Premier would have moved to that effect. If the motion were not carried it would mean the end of the Estimates altogether.

Mr. North: Then I will move to disagree with Mr. Speaker's ruling and ask for a division.

Mr. Mann: You cannot do that!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will send the motion up in writing.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is useless doing that. To disagree with Mr. Speaker's ruling will get us nowhere.

Mr. North: I will not proceed with the matter.

Mr. Speaker: I will call on the next Order of the Day.

[Resumed at a later stage of the sitting.]

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; Mrs. Cardell-Oliver in charge of the Bill.

New Clause:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on a new clause moved by the Minister for Education as follows:—

4. Sections two and three of this Act shall have effect only in relation to licenses granted after the commencement of this Act.

to which an amendment had been moved by Mr. Holman as follows:—

That the following proviso be added:—
“Provided that the licenses already operating shall cease to operate twelve months after the proclamation of the Act.”

The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I hope members will not agree to the proviso. Licenses are granted under the Act for six-monthly periods and nothing should be done to interfere with existing licenses. A number of children have been engaged in street trading, some for a few months, others for one, two or three years and some possibly for nearly four years. The intention is that no child under the age of 15 shall be permitted to engage in street trading, and that age was selected because it is intended to be the compulsory school leaving age. Until that age is enforced, the compulsory school leaving age is 14, and this measure provides that a license shall not be granted to any child under the age of 15. Thus between the ages of 14 and 15, a child would not be compelled to attend school and yet could not get a license for street trading. We should stipulate that children now holding licenses may renew them under the old conditions, but that no new license will be issued to a child under 15. That is a fair proposition. I want to safeguard existing licenses and to make it impossible for any child who does not hold a license to get one until he is 15 years of age.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am surprised at the arguments advanced by the Minister. He should not argue on one clause in one way and on another clause in the opposite way. Following remarks by the member for Geraldton last evening, an amendment was moved and the Minister, in opposing it, said that a lad should get a position elsewhere instead of wasting his time in the streets.

The Minister for Education: I said that the member for Geraldton had put his finger on the weakness in the proposal. That is not opposing his suggestion.

Mr. HOLMAN: I agree with that, but the Minister argued that a lad, instead of wasting his time on street trading, should be seeking some better form of employment. Yet tonight the Minister uses that argument in favour of allowing lads to continue street trading. We have agreed on the principle of keeping lads away from street trading until they reach the age of 15, but it is suggested that while no new licenses should be issued, children already holding licenses should be able to renew them. A lad of 12 remains on the street for a further three years. When all is said and done, the object of the Bill is to keep the lad away from street trading.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: In the future.

Mr. HOLMAN: The amendment is elastic. It will not penalise the lads by taking them off the streets at once, but will give them 12 months' grace. That period is quite sufficient, in my opinion, to prevent any disorganisation in the selling of newspapers. The reason advanced by the Minister in favour of stopping lads from street trading when they attain the age of 15 years is that street trading would be suitable employment for incapacitated servicemen on their discharge from the Services. Are we to wait over 12 months for these ex-servicemen to take up street trading? Does the Minister infer that we have not gone far enough with the Commonwealth Government's policy for rehabilitating servicemen? Incapacitated servicemen will be the first to be discharged from the Services and it is our duty to protect any form of employment we can provide for them. That is another reason why the Committee should agree to the amendment. Summing up the opposition to the amendment, we are agreeing in principle to the Bill, but are doing so with our tongue in our cheek. We shall be saying to a child of 12 years that, although we agree he should not be engaged in street trading, we will allow him to remain in that occupation for another three years. I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

Mr. CROSS: I oppose the amendment. I think it is silly. The member for Forrest proposes to permit a lad of 10 or 11 years of age to sell newspapers, let him continue doing so for 12 months, and then take him off the street.

Mr. Doney: That is quite right.

Mr. CROSS: I questioned one lad today about his age and he replied that he was 11. I asked him what he was earning and he replied £4 3s. per week.

Mr. Holman: You should not tell the Minister that.

Mr. CROSS: The Minister does not know the lad. Some of these lads are earning fairly large amounts by selling newspapers in the streets—as much as £3 or £4 per week—and under the amendment, when they attain the age of 14½ years, they will be denied that avenue of employment and forced to take a job at about £1 per week. I can imagine how a boy would like to do that!

Mr. Holman: Once a lad attains 15 years he does not need a license.

Mr. CROSS: If he attains 14½ years in 12 months' time—

Mr. Holman: As soon as he attains 15 years he does not need a license.

Mr. CROSS: I am referring to a lad who, in 12 months' time, will be 14½. He would then be compelled to cease street trading, and it may so happen that at that time the school leaving age will not have been raised to 15 years. That boy would have to take work at £1 a week or less.

Mr. Holman: He might do better learning a trade.

Mr. CROSS: In my opinion, some lads 14 or 15 years of age would be better off selling papers; it would keep them out of mischief. I recollect going to Victoria Park after last Christmas and seeing some of the damage done by lads from 12 to 15 years of age who might have been selling newspapers. They had done a large amount of damage at the school, practically destroying the library. They were lads who were not selling newspapers. A fair number of lads from Victoria Park go to the city to sell newspapers and I consider they are profitably employed. I have noticed that the average lad who sells newspapers becomes an acute business man in after-life. Let us take an example from Nature. As soon as a bird can fly, its parents toss it out of the nest to earn its own living. I support the Minister's proposal.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I would rather that the Bill pass as it is drawn; nevertheless, I would be willing to accept the amendment of the member for Forrest. My reasons are that there is much misconception about

the parent Act, which distinctly provides that every license shall be granted for a term not exceeding six months, but may be renewed from time to time and may at any time be cancelled by the department. I think the word "may" leaves a large opening for anybody to challenge the issue of a license. I have taken the trouble to interview a number of children and some headmasters, and I have found—

Mr. Cross: Where did you find them?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The member for Canning has had his say. I ascertained that very few children continue at this work for more than six or nine months. They have their license and they have a particular stand. At the end of that time somebody comes along and asks, "Will you sell out?" The children then sell out for £10 or £15, as the case may be. The other one gets the license quite easily; and some of the children have been making, as the member for Canning says, £4 or £5 a week. Nevertheless, they sell out for £10.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Suppose they refuse to sell?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Few of them do.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Are they likely to sell out for £10 a business returning £4 a week?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: They know nothing of the capital value of the stand.

Mr. Cross: They are shrewder than you are!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: What does a child know about the monopoly of a stand? A child knows he may get £4 a week by earning money at the street corner, of which perhaps £3 or more will go to his parents; but, if he knows that he can get £10 from the sale, he will sell out. I interviewed children and headmasters and found that children engaged in street trading today are for the most part two years behind in their standard of education. Only one child out of 14 was up to the standard. The rest were all two years behind and the headmasters were entirely in favour of this Bill and trusted that it would be put into force.

Mr. Smith: You should have stuck to your Bill.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I am willing to compromise by accepting the amendment of the member for Forrest, because I realise

that in a transition stage such as this some means should be given to these children to adjust themselves. I ascertained today that many of them are out of school before three o'clock, selling papers in the afternoon. Why is that, and how? Are we going to allow this to continue? It is awful to think that we who are here to protect the children of this State should allow that sort of thing!

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Committee should accept the position outlined by the Minister. I dare say that every member of this Chamber is anxious to have children taken away from street trading. Some of them are of tender years, and we should like to see a state of affairs whereby there would be no necessity for children of such an age to be so engaged. If the member for Forrest's amendment were accepted, we would still have children of tender years engaged in selling newspapers and other things. There is an economic side to this question. The raising of the school age is going to entail a greater responsibility from the financial point of view on the parents of the children. Economic necessity compels some parents to allow their children to engage in street trading in order to assist the family income.

Mr. Abbott: Not in every case.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I have not said in every case, but I venture to say it is so in a majority of cases.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is not so in the case of any of those I interviewed today.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member has not a monopoly of information in this matter. The majority of children engaged in street trading are doing it because of economic pressure.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Then it is a disgrace to the Government!

Mr. NEEDHAM: And to the Government that preceded the Labour Government.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is a disgrace to any Government.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That is an aspect the hon. member has entirely ignored.

Mr. Fox: Do not rake up something that your Government did 30 years ago.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. NEEDHAM: For years, the party to which the member for Subiaco belongs was in charge of the Treasury and did nothing

about the matter. There has been a lot of talk about a new order, but so far I have seen very little evidence of it. Still, I am living in hopes. Until that new order is implemented, however, and we see the parents of these children in a better position to keep them than they are today—and they cannot go very far on a basic wage of £5 a week for a family of four or five children—no matter how desirous we might be to see these children taken from the street and properly educated and cared for, we must not close our eyes to the incontrovertible fact that stern economic pressure compels the parents to allow their children to engage in this street trading.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Perth has viewed this matter from the economic angle, and I have become suddenly alarmed from the industrial angle. If this Parliament is going to say that it recognises children must earn to help provide a living wage for a family, where are we going to land ourselves with regard to child endowment? Children are endowed until 16 years of age. State relief is provided, and assistance is granted to large families that have a struggle to make ends meet. It is all based on children up to 16 years of age; yet now we are seriously considering the granting of a right to children to earn in order to supplement the family income. That is too dangerous. If this Parliament is going to father a proposition of that kind, how long will it take to penetrate into the Commonwealth Parliament in regard to child endowment? How long will it be before the Employers' Federation and employers generally will recognise that Parliament itself states the basic wage must take into account the earning capacity of members of the family under 16? Surely we are not going to get back to anything of that kind! We must not in any way encourage or recognise the earnings of children. We must resist it so that we will give every child an equal chance. We preach that children should have equal opportunities of education and proper standards of living, yet we admit in this Chamber that there are some who cannot get those standards because of the domestic circumstances of their parents.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will tie this up with the amendment.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will to this extent: that I want, at the earliest possible moment, to end the practice of children earning money in the street.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: That is the object of the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, and I applaud that object. I do not want the Bill to grant any extension of time in connection with the stoppage of a practice that has lately become lucrative. I have stood at the Town Hall corner on many nights, particularly Saturday nights, when the boys have been selling the "Mirror." It is pathetic to see them at that point until a quarter to one in the morning. They get empty fruit cases and put them by the corner of the Town Hall and sit on them. I have stood there listening to their discussions on their earnings and spendings, and their general outlook on life.

Mr. Smith: Youth speaks.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. It makes me sad to know that this is going on after midnight. I recognise with the Minister that we must exercise commonsense. Government policy declares that children shall remain at school until they are 15, and that policy will be enforced as soon as the Government can overcome the difficulties caused by the war, and provide the necessary school accommodation. The Minister said that would be done as early as possible. I hope that we will leave the Bill with the Minister's amendment and not make any further additions.

Mr. GRAHAM: Certain members seem to overlook the fact that we have already agreed that 15 shall be the minimum age. Therefore the economic argument does not come into the picture. We are discussing propositions that seem to cushion the effect of the application of this limitation to boys of 15 years of age, who are now engaged in selling newspapers. On the face of it, it may seem absurd that under the amendment of the member for Forrest if a boy of 12 is now engaged in street trading he will be allowed to trade until he is 13 years of age and no longer. But upon closer examination we find that that is not so because we have the Minister's statement that the selling of papers by these boys interferes with their school work and the study they do after school hours.

We are faced with the position that certain lads of tender years have licenses. In order to be perfectly fair to them the amendment seeks to give them 12 months' notice. They may suffer hardship if they are given notice to terminate their contracts immediately. After all, some may have given £10 or more for their stands. On the other hand, the Minister is apparently prepared to allow boys of 12 to continue to make their education suffer for the next three years. Twelve months is sufficient time. It is hard to believe that these boys will sell their stands for £10 because I am informed that many hundreds of lads of the ages of 12 and 13 are contemplating rushing to secure licenses so that if the Minister's amendment is carried they will be able to continue with their street trading for the next three years. That is undesirable. If the amendment of the member for Forrest is not agreed to, then it is my intention to vote against the amendment proposed by the Minister.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is one very serious weakness in the proposal of the member for Forrest, namely, that it will result in discrimination. A boy of 14 who now has a license will be permitted to trade for a further 12 months when he will become 15 and can then automatically get a license to continue trading. He will suffer no break. But the boy who is one or two months short of the age of 14 could not be re-licensed at the end of 12 months and would, therefore, have to stop street trading. He then loses his stand which the member for Subiaco says is worth £10 or £15, because he cannot sell it as it will not be his to sell. That is where the discrimination comes in. If we took other ages the position would work out similarly.

Any amendment making discrimination between a class or classes is a bad one and that is why I urge that this amendment should be defeated. My proposal interferes with no one. We do not like retrospective legislation. Boys who have already obtained licenses have done so in the belief that if they behave themselves their licenses will be renewed. The fairest thing is to say to the people who are already engaged in the work, "We do not like street trading, but you have started it and we do not propose to take from you something that you already have. You can continue." Apart from that no new licenses should in the future be issued to boys under 15 years of age. At present we allow

boys to leave school at 14. It is Parliament's belief that they should not leave school until they have reached the age of 15. We have passed legislation for that purpose, but we still allow them to leave when they are 14. We are not ready yet to make them continue at school till the age of 15, and we should view this proposal in the same way.

Parliament believes that no child under 15 years of age should be engaged in street trading, and that is a policy for the future. Those who have been engaged in this trading for one, two or three years, and who have licenses, may have them renewed. Regarding the point raised by the member for East Perth, that he had heard there were large numbers of boys going to rush to get licenses, the member for Subiaco gave the answer to that question and pointed out that the Child Welfare Department may issue these licenses at its discretion.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I did not say, "at their discretion."

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The member for Subiaco said, with regard to the issue of licenses, that the important word was "may," and that it had a very wide meaning, implying, of course, that the department had plenty of discretion in the matter and was not obliged to issue the licenses. The department will therefore not be obliged to issue licenses to boys who just rush along to get licenses in order to evade the provisions of the Act.

Mr. Seward: What reason would the department require for refusing to grant a license?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If boys rushed along in large numbers to get licenses it would be obvious that they were doing so for that purpose.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Because Parliament had passed an Act in the interim.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has been suggested that the economic aspect of this matter should be taken into consideration. Members took that into consideration when dealing with the main purpose of the Bill, which was to fix the age at which the measure was to operate. It is true that the children already engaged in street trading will suffer a loss if prevented from continuing, and there will be a diminution of the present family income, but the Government has taken steps to see that the family income of widows

and their children is considerably increased, to obviate the necessity for children to engage at an early age in street trading. Substantial increases were recently made to the allowances from the Child Welfare Department, with this in view. Not only were the actual payments to each family increased substantially on a unit basis, but a much more liberal view was taken of the earnings of members of families, and the allowances made were not reduced by as much as was the case formerly.

We now permit any number of children in a family to earn £1 per week each outside, without affecting the amount payable by the Child Welfare Department, the idea being that the family income should be so increased as to enable the family to improve its standard of living. For the actual payment to be made per unit we now take the Commonwealth pension allowance as a basis, and that is the provision for the individual mother. We supplement the child endowment of 7s. 6d. per child by a further 7s. 6d., so that 15s. per child is provided in addition to the amount available to the mother. That scale is practically the basic wage standard at present, and there is therefore no necessity to have regard for the fact that children will have to go out to work at an early age to supplement the family income in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living. It would be unfair and unwise to approve of an amendment that would result in discrimination. We should permit a cushioning down of the impact of this legislation by permitting those already engaged in street trading to continue. But from that stage onwards no new licenses will be issued. Under the existing law no license is required after 16 years of age, so a boy starting at 12 years of age at street trading, and continuing until he is 16 years of age with a license, can still keep his stand in the city and sell papers without a license when he is 16 or 17 years of age.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: He would not have any education.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He could do that without a license. I cannot imagine the young people to whom the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe referred last night—he said they were getting a very valuable education in buying and selling—willingly selling for £10 a business that was bringing £4 or £5 a week. A mere novice of 24 hours' experience at the game might be so

caught, but these young people are far too shrewd for that. If they sold a stand today for £10 the object would, in my view of the position, be to buy it back for £8 tomorrow.

Mr. Graham: Will the Minister now give some comments as Minister for Education?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: From the educational angle the position is as explained by the member for Subiaco, and that is why I moved, when this Bill came before the House, to extend the age, at which the measure was to operate, from 14 years to 15 years, in order to make it coincident with what the compulsory school leaving age will be. That does not alter my view that it is unwise to show discrimination, and that an amendment that permits the continuance of trading for 12 months, and then cuts it off, gives an advantage to a certain group of children, because of their age, which is not a fair proposition at all. Let those with existing licenses continue, but grant no new licenses beyond the age of 15, so that when this measure becomes an Act any boy or girl of 15 years of age cannot get a license under any condition. Those who already have licenses will continue with them. When they reach 15 years of age and no longer require licenses they can continue trading, if they wish to do so. If the trading is to cease immediately we will not be able to effect the transition as easily as the member for Forrest suggests, when he says that returned men will immediately take up the stands. Demobilisation is a gradual process and will extend much beyond 12 months.

Mr. Holman: With regard to these men?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, because they will not be discharged except in accordance with the points system, and as the Medical Board is prepared to release them. Those discharges will be distributed over the full period. It would not be fair to the returned men to throw open all these positions in the first 12 months and make them available to the first lot of men discharged, leaving no vacancies for those discharged later on. A gradual process, causing these vacancies to be filled at about the same rate as they will occur, will be far better. I sincerely hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment moved by the member for Forrest, but will support my amendment.

Mr. ABBOTT: So far as I could understand his argument, the Minister put forward only one point that should carry any weight. Apart from that, he seemed to approve entirely of the amendment moved by the member for Forrest. The one argument of weight that the Minister advanced was his suggestion that there would be discrimination. On that point I think his argument was entirely fallacious. All affected will be able to enjoy the privilege for exactly the same time, namely, one year, so there will be no discrimination.

The Minister for Education: They will not enjoy it for the same time.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes, they will if the amendment is agreed to. Up to the age of 14 there will be no break in street trading and the lads will be able to continue when they are over age. Everyone will enjoy at least one year's trading and in those circumstances I cannot see where any discrimination enters into the question. At any rate, any such discrimination would be in accordance with the Act. When the member for Subiaco introduced the Bill it provided for children up to the age of 14 years so as to correspond with the school leaving age. The Minister himself moved an amendment to increase that age to 15 years. The Minister also mentioned the economic factor and indicated that the argument in that respect had no force at all. After all, the only basis for the Minister's argument was that it might inflict on some a sort of commercial injustice. He suggested that some lads might be deprived of the value that attaches to their licenses to indulge in street trading. I do not know that we should be influenced by any such consideration. We should not allow children under 15 years of age to be influenced by reason of the economic value attaching to such licenses, especially as it might prove very much to their disadvantage in later years. I support the amendment. I would have been satisfied with the original age of 14 years until the school leaving age was raised to 15 years.

The Minister for Education: Which amendment do you support?

Mr. ABBOTT: The amendment moved by the member for Forrest. The Minister has not furnished any valid argument for continuing existing licenses for a period longer than 12 months.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister in his wisdom has pointed out what he considers the weakness of my arguments and has suggested discriminations with regard to the rights of boys to retain their street trading stands. That brings up the financial aspect to the exclusion of the objective of the Bill. To penalise the children's school education we are asked to look at the problem through financial glasses. It is suggested that my amendment will discriminate in doing what the Minister told the Committee last night was so necessary. When the Minister was advocating the application of the measure to lads up to 15 years of age instead of 14 years of age, he told us of his experience in the Perth Boys' School where lads, in order to engage in street trading, had to leave school every afternoon and thus missed some of their schooling. He told us that that went on week in, week out and he remarked that that lost time could never be regained. Now we are to brush aside the Minister's earlier argument because a percentage of the children might be penalised with regard to the retention of their stands!

We do not penalise the rest of the children in allowing them to maintain their standard of education. Are we to have newspaper stands for children or a better standard of education? If I listened to the arguments of the Minister, I would certainly vote for the better standard of education. If there is any weakness in my argument with respect to discrimination, it is a beneficial discrimination seeing that it is for the benefit of the kiddies. If we say that the children are to be allowed to carry on it will tend to create a permanency for them. In fact, it looks to me like a three-year plan of permanency for street trading for children. Rather than that, my amendment will provide a cushion in the breaking down of that aspect. The member for Perth made reference to economic pressure. We all know about that phase, but surely we have enough faith in the State Government and the Commonwealth Government to believe that that economic pressure will not continue for three years. I have sufficient faith in them to believe that economic pressure will not be brought to bear on those children.

The argument about the ex-servicemen was not advanced by me. It was the Minister who said that the stands would be wanted for them. To say that demobilisation would

necessitate the children being kept on the streets for three years so that ex-servicemen could then come in is to stretch the point too far. The member for Canning characterised my argument as silly, but so long as that is not the opinion of other members, I shall be satisfied. I entered into this discussion to assist the Minister for Education to retain the standard of education for the children. I have not complained of the behaviour of the newsboys. I know that those boys have been taught to be thrifty and some of them have savings bank accounts that would amaze many people. I ask that they be given an opportunity to continue their education. A few nights ago we were told that legislation was designed to bring the greatest good to the greatest number but that it must penalise somebody. That must be the effect of this measure, but it will tend to the greatest good for the children. My amendment will permit of the principle of the Bill being preserved.

Mr. WITHERS: I appreciate the value of the Bill in its original form. None of us should be proud to support child labour for selling newspapers in the streets. I would like to see all the children off the streets. The argument of the member for Forrest is illogical. He is prepared to allow a child of 13½ to remain on the streets until he is 14½, but at that age he should be put off the streets on account of his education. The amendment of the Minister is definite. If a child of 13 is allowed to continue until 14 and the school leaving age of 15 is introduced, it would be illogical to allow the child to continue on the streets until he is 15 years of age. I am surprised that the member for Subiaco did not accept the amendment, which represents evolutionary action to break down the existing system.

Mr. Holman: Do you believe in the principle of the Bill that children should not be on the streets?

Mr. WITHERS: I would not have them on the streets at all. This is a step in the right direction and I hope that eventually children will be kept off the streets entirely.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I appeal to the manhood of members not to accept the amendment allowing children to be on the streets until they reach 15 years of age. The member for Guildford-Midland made a most appealing speech and I thought he was on the right lines, but he ended most illogically by supporting the Minister's proposal. If

we believe that children should not be allowed to engage in street trading, how can one logically support the Minister's proposal?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister's proposal was 15, and your Bill stipulated 14 years of age.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I accepted the Minister's amendment to increase the age to 15 and would have provided for that age originally, but refrained from doing so because we had not implemented the Act making the school leaving age 15. The most important years of a child's life are between the ages of 12 and 14, and now we are asked to allow them to be on the streets during that period. They can stay there until they are 15 years. If there is any discrimination it is by the Minister in allowing the children to remain on the streets. I hope members will use their commonsense and vote for the amendment of the member for Forrest. There must be a transition stage and I consider the member for Forrest has been very modest in fixing the period at one year.

Amendment put and negatived.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.

As to Resumption of Committee of Supply Stage.

The Premier: Mr. Speaker, in connection with the matter of reporting progress and asking for leave to sit again when the Estimates were adjourned earlier in the sitting, since the Standing Orders are silent on the point as to whether we may resume, can you advise the House whether it is now competent for me to move that you do now leave the Chair for the purpose of further considering the Estimates in Committee?

Mr. Speaker: I point out to the Premier that where our Standing Orders are silent, we refer to the practice of the Commons in the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On looking up "May," I find that it is possible to do as the Premier desires, although it is very seldom done. "May," 11th edition, at page 493, says—

... and in the Commons, the committee direct the chairman to report progress and ask leave to sit again. On the chairman's report, the house has occasionally thereupon resolved itself again into the committee.

I am prepared to accept a motion that the House go into Committee of Supply on the Estimates.

The Premier: Mr. Speaker, I move—

That you do now leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the Annual Estimates in Committee.

Motion put and passed.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £99,750 (continued):

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [8.55]: I submit the Estimates for the Crown Law Offices, Electoral, Land Titles, Stipendiary Magistracy, Supreme Court, Public Trust Office and Licensing. Usually these Estimates are not very interesting because they involve so many figures which, unless followed very closely, are not of as much value to members as they would be later when they appear in "Hansard" and are read by members, if such should be the case. The revenue expected to be derived from all sources, namely, probate, law courts, departmental, land titles, Crown Law, and Public Trust Office is estimated at £362,000, as compared with the actual revenue of £381,015 received for 1944-45. The estimate is £19,015 less than the revenue received for the previous financial year. The following statement shows the expected increases and decreases under the respective headings, when compared with the collections for that year:—

	Collections, 1944-45.	Estimate, 1945-46.	Increase. £	Decrease. £
Probate	275,477	250,000	....	25,477
Law Courts	60,341	65,000	4,659	....
Departmental—				
Crown Law	8,011	7,000	....	1,011
Land Titles	24,185	27,000	2,865	....
Public Trust Office	13,051	13,000	....	51
	<u>£381,015</u>	<u>£362,000</u>	<u>£7,524</u>	<u>£26,539</u>
Net decrease—£19,015.				

With regard to the estimate of probate duty, £250,000, last year the revenue received under this heading was £275,477. The estimate for the Law Courts is £65,000. It is estimated that collections under this heading will show an increase of approximately £4,659 over those for the previous year, the increase expected being mainly in Police Court fines and Supreme Court fees. The estimate for Departmental, Crown Law, is £7,000. A

reduction under this heading of approximately £1,011 is anticipated, and from the following statement it will be noticed that over 50 per cent. of the contemplated decrease is attributed to commissions which will be received from the Commonwealth Savings Bank branches serviced by State officers. The decrease under this item is brought about by the fact that the Commonwealth Bank branches at York and Wagin are now staffed by their own officers:—

Departmental—Crown Law.	Collections. 1944-45. £	Estimate. 1945-46. £
Public Trust Escheats	2,344	2,005
Local Court Escheats	621	500
Bankruptcy Escheats	72	50
Legal Costs Escheats ..	487	530
Legal Services Escheats	1,013	1,000
Commissions from Commonwealth Savings Banks	1,328	800
Bankruptcy Services	619	620
Refund of fines from Commonwealth for liquor prosecutions	380	400
Unclaimed Moneys, Supreme Court	151	....
Miscellaneous	996	1,100
	<u>£8,011</u>	<u>£7,000</u>

The estimate for the Lands Title Office is £27,000, which is £2,865 in excess of last year's collections, and compares favourably with pre-war figures. With the noticeably increased activity in real estate business there should be no difficulty in obtaining the revenue expected. The estimate of the Public Trust Office is £13,000. The revenue from this office is derived from commissions received from the estates administered; and since the creation of this office in 1942, there has been a steady increase in the business handled. However, this year it is not expected that the revenue earned will exceed the amount collected for the last financial year. The estimate of the Crown Law offices is £99,750. For salaries, an amount of £86,000 is provided as against an expenditure last year of £84,707. The amount estimated shows an increase of £1,293 on last year's expenditure. The additional amount is required to meet statutory increases due to a number of officers during the year. For law books, £150 is provided, last year's expenditure being £124. This amount is required for the purchase of law books for the Crown Law library, and the amount does not vary to any great extent each year. The "Incidentals" estimate is £3,600, as against an expenditure last year of £3,800. The esti-

mated expenditure is apportioned as follows:—

	£
Postages	700
Telephones	900
Travelling	1,350
Water, Fuel, etc.	270
Stationery, Stores, etc.	150
Miscellaneous	230
	<hr/>
	£3,600

For general elections, the sum of £3,500 is provided, last year's expenditure being £1,067. In addition to the normal incidental expenditure for the Electoral Department, provision is also made for the cost of a Legislative Council biennial election which will be held in this financial year, and also for the costs incidental to the Greenough by-election. With regard to inquests, £1,800 is allowed as against an expenditure last year of £1,916. In the past, the expenditure under this item has not varied to any great extent and the amount estimated should again be sufficient to meet all requirements. On law books, £200 is expected to be expended; the figure was the same last year. This amount is paid annually, and the department receives quarterly 100 copies of the W.A. Law Reports. The sum of £3,000 is provided under the item "Witnesses and Jurors." Last year the expenditure was £2,775. This is an item the expenditure of which is contingent entirely on the activities of the various courts. The bulk of the expenditure is associated with the Criminal Court and the number and nature of the cases before this court practically control the expenditure under this heading.

It is anticipated that the expenditure on circuit courts will be £150, as against £171 last year. The amount under this heading is required to provide for the cost of any expenses which might be incurred by a Supreme Court judge travelling on circuit and to cover the travelling expenses incurred by the Crown Prosecutor and his clerk when travelling to attend Courts of Session throughout the State. Under the heading of "Awards and Law Costs," £250 is provided, the expenditure last year being £369. The bulk of the amount under this heading is utilised for the payment of outside counsel briefed to conduct prosecutions on behalf of the Crown. For the defence of destitute persons, £100 is provided, as against an expenditure of £74 last year.

This provision is to meet any legal costs incurred under the Poor Persons Legal Assistance Act, and in the past few years this amount has been sufficient to meet the requirements. The expenditure last year on Native Courts was £183; this year the estimate is £200. This is another item where the expenditure is governed by the number of cases brought before the court; and it can only be estimated on the basis of the previous year's expenditure. Under the heading of "Public Trust Office—Incidentals," an amount of £800 is provided, the expenditure last year being £949. The amount asked for under this heading is to meet the incidental expenses necessary for the administration of the Public Trust Office and is apportioned as follows:—

	£
Postages and Telephones	300
Travelling	50
Stationery and Stores	50
Miscellaneous	40
Advertising	300
Ten money	10
Commissions to Agents	50
	<hr/>
	£800

I come now to "Licensing." From liquor licenses, the estimated revenue is £89,250; last year's revenue was £86,266. The revenue under this heading is derived from minimum annual fees and five per cent. and six per cent. additional fees as prescribed under Sections 72, 73 and 201 of the Licensing Act. The collections have shown a slight upward trend over the past two years, and it is anticipated that there will be a further small increase in the collections this year. However, there is nothing to indicate that the liquor trade will show any increased activity which will have the effect of substantially increasing the collection for the year. Other licenses are estimated to yield £750 as against £738 last year. This revenue comes from fees for billiard tables and employment brokers' licenses and does not vary to any extent from year to year. On the expenditure side, an amount of £2,530 is estimated, last year's expenditure being £2,528. This item covers the salaries payable to the members of the Licensing Court and one typist. For contingencies, there is allowed £170 as against an expenditure of £150 last year. This item is required mainly to meet the cost of travelling by members of the Licensing Court and includes the amount necessary to recoup the

Railway Department for rail fares incurred in this travelling.

I propose now to give details of estimated receipts under the heading of "Miscellaneous Services." The figures are as follows:—

	Receipts, 1944-45. £	Estimate, 1945-46. £
<i>Payable by Commonwealth—</i>		
High Court, services of State officers	120	120
Taxation Department, services at Land Titles Office	200	200
Pensions Department	25	25
Commonwealth Bank, proportion paid for cleaning Boulder office	55	55
<i>Payable by State Departments—</i>		
Workers' Homes Board, Commissions on collections	118	120
Water Supply, services of Clerk of Courts, Narrogin	25	25
Chief Secretary's Department, one-third salary of Messenger, Bunbury	32	30
Railways, service of clerk to Minister	25	....
Collections—Crown Law—		
Sale of confiscated goods	32	50
Telephone Recoups from officers	178	175
Miscellaneous	186	300
	£996	£1,100

Hon. N. Keenan: Under what heading are these items in the estimates?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Those details are at the very end. In past years I have not worried very much about those figures because most of them are in the report. The estimates are very similar each year. The increases and decreases usually balance out. Because the estimates of the departments administered by the Minister for Justice are so similar each year there is not very much to be said in regard to them.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [9.10]: The Minister has given us a mass of figures that are all contained in the statement before us. I expected some detailed review of the activities of his department. I would like to have some information on the operations of the Public Trustee's Office which was established a little while ago with the object of assisting the poorer section of the community. It was to make more readily available to those people the legal facilities necessary to wind up estates.

The Minister for Justice: For any section of the community.

MR. SEWARD: Yes, but particularly in connection with the smaller estates. When anyone has come to me with a small estate my advice has been to go to the Public Trustee.

MR. ABBOTT: He is more expensive than anyone else.

MR. SEWARD: Unless the Public Trustee wakes up and does some work I shall not do that in the future.

The Minister for Justice: That is not a fair statement, because the Public Trustee has done a good job. He is enthusiastic and helps the public wherever possible.

MR. SEWARD: I gave the Minister the opportunity to tell us how he has done that.

The Minister for Justice: The Public Trustee has—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. SEWARD: I directed a constituent of mine to go to the Public Trustee with about as simple a matter as possible. In this case the man's wife died intestate and a block of land was registered in her name. The whole property was mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank. I went to the bank and said, "All that has to be done is to get this block of land, which is your security, transferred into the name of the father or the son." The bank could not do that because it would be defrauding the probate. There was no probate. The Public Trustee has been dealing with this matter for 15 months now and has not finished with it yet!

The Minister for Justice: There must be some difficulty about it.

MR. SEWARD: Difficulty, my foot! An official of the Lands Department came and valued the property over 12 months ago. He told the husband of the deceased woman that the matter would be fixed up in a few weeks.

The Minister for Justice: Give me the name of the person involved and I will look into it.

MR. SEWARD: I shall, with pleasure. We should step up this department; there should not be such delays over small transactions.

The Minister for Justice: The officers of that department are anxious to do their best.

MR. SEWARD: I wish to mention the matter of the stipendiary magistrates. In the years gone by when travelling facilities were difficult and our magistrates could not be here, there and everywhere we adopted the practice of appointing justices of the peace. The time has now arrived when the Government might well review that practice and terminate the appointment of these honorary justices. Appointments of some really young boys are being recommended. Those people are not fitted to occupy the position, or to sit on a court bench because they very

often become the mouthpiece of the local policeman. With better travelling facilities we might well consider doing away with our honorary justices and letting the stipendiary or resident magistrates carry out those duties together with their other work.

The Minister for Justice: The honorary justices have done a wonderful job.

Mr. SEWARD: That is so, and in many cases the men appointed are qualified to hold the position. But latterly I can see deterioration.

The Minister for Justice: Can you give me specific instances?

Mr. SEWARD: I know of two or three cases that were sent to Perth and the decisions altered. I would like to hear something from the Minister on the recent appointment to the Licensing Court. I notice that two members retired and one has been reappointed. I do not know the age of the man who has been reappointed and made chairman, but I think he is pretty well up in years.

The Minister for Justice: He is under 70.

Mr. SEWARD: I hope he is! I think it is generally recognised that when a man reaches the age of 65 he should retire.

The Minister for Justice: The retiring age of the Judiciary is 70 years.

Mr. SEWARD: The Licensing Court has previously come up for criticism here. When the two members of that court retired, it was an opportunity to appoint a new court altogether. Matters in that sphere want straightening up a bit. During the war years some of the hotels closed and generally did as they liked. At some hotels it was impossible to get served because of the crowd there, and at others people could get only a small amount of liquid refreshment. We have our Licensing Act and we should see that it is observed. The hotels are here to provide the travelling public and the public generally with whatever refreshments are required, whether liquid refreshments or meals. Frequently hotels will not serve meals. If they experience difficulty in getting staff then that should be taken into consideration and assistance made available to them, but the travelling public should be able to get

service throughout the State from the hotels. I will not mention the State hotels now because they come under different Estimates.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.17 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 30th October, 1945.

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Section "A," 1945.

THE PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General, in pursuance of Section 53 of the Audit Act, 1904, for presentation to the Legislative Council, a copy of the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts of the State of Western Australia for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1945, together with Section "A" of the report thereon. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Soil Conservation.
Returned to the Assembly with an amendment.
- 2, Closer Settlement Act Amendment.
- 3, Administration Act Amendment (No. 2).
Passed.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion of Hon. A. Thomson, Bill re-committed for the further consideration of Clause 2.