

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 17th October, 1946.

Questions: Fisheries, as to Swan River crabs	PAGE 1366
Trotting Association, as to fractions at Cup meeting	1366
Bills: Road Districts Act Amendment, 2n., Com. Report	1366
Supply (No. 2), £2,200,000, 2n., Standing Orders suspension, remaining stages	1373
Totalisator Duty Act Amendment, Com.	1374
Legal Practitioners Act Amendment, 1n.	1376

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

QUESTIONS.

FISHERIES.

As to Swan River Crabs.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Has a proclamation been issued prohibiting the taking of small crabs from the Swan River?

2, If not, will consideration be given to such a proclamation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, No.

2, Yes.

TROTTING ASSOCIATION

As to Fractions at Cup Meeting.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Minister inform the House as to the amount of money taken by way of fractions at the West Australian Trotting Association's meeting on Wednesday, the 9th October, 1946 (Gloucester Cup night)?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Total totalisator fractions, £706 14s. 6d.; payable to Trotting Association, £653 14s. 6d.; W.A. Government, £53; total £706 14s. 6d.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan)
[4.35]: I have no desire to oppose the

second reading of the Bill. Nor have I any desire to oppose the erection of hostels for country children who find it necessary to go into a larger centre to receive their education. But I do feel that this Bill should be regarded by all concerned, both Government and road boards, as purely a permissive one. There is always the possibility of a precedent being established. Should one town decide to build and maintain a hostel, there is a possibility of that being used as evidence to all those desiring similar accommodation, that this procedure has now become State policy. This has been more or less the manner in which, with some deviations, the hospital policy of the State has been developed.

I wonder whether we should not think carefully and hope that if we do pass this Bill it will mean purely the start of an organisation that will undertake the laying down of standards in regard to these hostels. I would much prefer the Bill if it limited the question of hostels to one of building rather than of acquisition of premises for the purpose of turning them into a hostel. There is one thing we sadly need in this State, and that remark was made to me again today by one of our citizens who has reason to realise what the standards are. What we need are standards for all these public institutions in country districts. We need standards in hospitals and in schools and certainly we need them in hostels.

If we are going to adopt this principle of hostels and the principle of various centres to which children from small districts will go for their education and in which they will necessarily have to live, we should have some real plan formulated as to the type of hostel to be built, under whose administration hostels should be placed, and under whose direct control they should be. I do not fancy very much hostels in the same districts as area schools not coming under direct control of the schools. The value of a boarding school is in the discipline that is exerted over the life of the child, the tradition of the school which is built into that child's being and the culture he receives by his association with that traditional institution. None of this can be achieved by a child's living in a boarding-house in a district.

Therefore I hope that the road boards will give very serious consideration to this matter and, if the Bill becomes an Act, that they will meet together and consult with the Minister for Education concerning the laying down of principles under which hostels can be acquired, maintained and controlled. I would rather see the headmaster of the school as headmaster also of the hostel, and the hostel attached to the school, so that the children could receive instruction in the sporting activities of the school and could be taught to take part in life on the sports ground, as well as in the classroom. This is surely what we must aim at. To me, this Bill has no aim at all. It meets only an immediate necessity of board and lodging. I had hoped that when such a Bill was brought before the House, it would have had the sanction of the road boards, which would have given careful consideration to all its implications, and that it would have received the sanction of the Minister for Education, who would thereby have joined with the road boards.

I have no great desire to see the Government called upon always to organise these hostels. I think the local governing bodies could quite well take a hand in that work, but let us for a moment think how far we are going along that road. The last two or three Bills of this sort that have been introduced in this House have indicated a policy of decentralisation of government which is all to the good, but one must view the matter from the angle that American education started in decentralised fashion and has worked towards centralisation. Education in this State started centrally and is only now beginning to move towards decentralisation. Under this Bill, the onus is being placed on the road boards, which may provide hostels.

The future, I believe, will see considerably greater governmental powers given to municipal bodies and road boards, but, before that happens, I do not think decentralisation should be looked upon as a method by which government expenditure can be diverted in one direction while municipal bodies are left to carry the burden in another direction. If municipal bodies and road boards are to take their share of the cost of education, I wonder whether they should not receive a share of the common purse, because this trend could grow and grow until they were faced with an

expenditure that would weigh heavily, in taxation, upon their ratepayers. This is the first move, or perhaps the second or third, and we have given them power to make bricks. Such bricks will be built into structures of some sort, and the hostels are possibly one of the earliest types of structure to be undertaken by such bodies.

Before long, they may be faced with the building of hostels for expectant mothers, alongside the hospitals. They may find that they are expected to take their share in building preventive medicine centres associated with their hospitals, all of which they may be able to maintain and control, and for all of which they will have to find extra money, in addition to uniform taxation, the main part of which today goes to the Commonwealth Government. So the whole future of municipal control may grow until the entire structure needs revision. This is, therefore, the stage at which I think we might well give the municipalities and road boards the suggested authority, while making it clear that we hope the piecemeal arrangement whereby our hospitals have been built will not be allowed to operate in the case of the hostels.

Hon. A. Thomson: That will be a pious hope.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is exactly what worries me. I realise that what will happen will probably be that some building, totally unsuitable for the purpose, will be acquired and, when the district grows and more rooms are wanted, they will be added on to it, until we have something that just grew, like Topsy, with no real substance as a hostel for the children. I would plead with the road boards, before they take any individual action in this matter, to meet together and lay down standards. Let them see that their hostels conform to the health by-laws in the matter of sleeping accommodation for the inmates, that they take their right place in relationship to the schools and that they are started on the right basis of administration and control.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you not think the suggestion of Mr. Seddon, that a Select Committee should be appointed, is a good one?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am reinforcing his views, and if a Select Committee is mooted I will give it serious consideration, but I do not know that at the moment I

would hold up the Bill for a Select Committee.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Each local governing body would have a Select Committee, I take it. That is what I would favour.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I would further ask you to consider, Mr. President, the place that the schools and hostels are to take in the future life of any community. I believe the move must be towards community centres, and that such community centres will cover all fields of cultural activity. I understand that already, in Tasmania, the parents come to the area schools, holding their meetings there so that they may meet together in the vicinity of their own children—possibly in different halls. However, the whole thing is growing into a community centre. It will be most unfortunate if road boards spend all they can afford for many years to come in acquiring hostels that, within a matter of a few years, will be no longer fit for the purpose.

It may therefore be wise, when planning such hostels, to ask the Town Planning Commissioner to view the sites, to see whether they can be expanded, in the near or even distant future, into what will ultimately be needed for community centres in such areas. I repeat that the hostels should be controlled by the school authorities. I think the correct person to maintain the discipline and hand on the tradition of the school to the children living in the hostel is the headmaster of the school. That would increase the standing of headmasters throughout our country districts so that they would be regarded as are the headmasters of our public schools—men loved by every student who has passed through their hands. That is a tradition that this Bill could start. It is not an ideal, but a practical realism that has existed for centuries past and which could now be given to the children throughout the State, provided that those handling this matter have the vision to do what I have suggested.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [4.48]: I think this is a good measure, and I support it. In some country districts, in my own constituency, a provision of this kind is necessary. The proposal regarding hostels is a measure applying purely to country districts, but I think the metropolitan members who will be called upon to vote on this

Bill will understand that, and that it will command their sympathy. After all, a somewhat similar Bill was quite recently passed by the Council empowering road boards to establish health clinics and kindergartens. It seems to me that the principle embodied in the Bill is really an extension of that which we have already endorsed. Dr. Hislop has rightly said that a hostel provides accommodation only and is not in itself an educational institution. My experience of such projects in the country is that all interested bodies work together in a spirit of co-operation and without placing responsibility upon the shoulders of the headmaster of the local school.

I have had experience of such matters and I think the parents of the children and their local parents and citizens' association would maintain very close contact with the hostel and its running. It can be safely left to the headmaster of the school to build up the school tradition and see that the children were properly trained along accepted lines. I am not altogether in favour of the idea of imposing standards. To do that might mean in some cases that the road board concerned would not establish a hostel. It might make all the difference between a board being prepared to go ahead with the project and determining not to do so because the responsibility could not be shouldered.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That is the danger, and a very great danger.

Hon. A. Thomson: Absolutely!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: In providing this power for a road board, it must be remembered that boards are constituted by reasonable and competent men who are likely to take into consideration local circumstances that prevail. They would consider whether or not the hostel was wanted and they would review the question of ways and means. If there were an undoubted need and they knew that the public was in sympathy with the movement, I do not think there would be any doubt about a board going ahead with the work. I am in favour of encouraging the community towards self-help. It has been truly said that Heaven helps those that help themselves, and in this instance no doubt the Government would be prepared to assist as well.

In Mullewa, which is the centre I have been mostly associated with, it was recently decided that an ambulance was needed. A movement to that end was initiated and £400 was raised. Then it was ascertained that the local hospital was in difficulties so a public meeting was called and the response at that gathering was a matter of £200. I can give members an even more outstanding example of what the community can do in a spirit of self-help. The Murchison Patriotic Fund over a period of five years raised £8,000 at an expense rate of under one-half of one per cent. That may not convey much to members, but when I tell them that it would require, on a similar basis, the raising of £1,500,000 in five years in the metropolitan area, they will realise the magnitude of the effort. I say this because I think some of the road boards might consider that the expense in connection with an undertaking of that description was such that they could not face the prospect unless they knew that the public were behind them. That the people were, in fact, behind such a movement—I know that is so in some centres—would be quickly ascertained. In such cases seeing that the community generally endorsed the project the local authority would be prepared to accept its share of responsibility.

There is just the point that there may not even be the initiation of public effort towards this end unless those concerned knew in their own minds that there was every prospect of the project being carried out to finality. Some boards can be relied upon to carry out the object of the people's wishes once they are aware of them. The idea of providing hostels appeals greatly in some districts I have in mind where the children are fairly widely separated, too far to justify the establishment of a school locally. In some instances they are so awkwardly situated that a bus service would be of no use.

Many of the country folk in order to have their children educated send them to boarding schools in the city, or in one or other of the larger towns. That means that many of the children are separated from their families at an early age. They receive their schooling away from home and perhaps go on to secondary schools. From there they enter business and the result is that they grow up as strangers to their families. This

is a very big consideration with parents in the country areas. On the other hand if local hostels were provided the parents could have their children home at week-ends and thus maintain constant contact and preserve the family atmosphere.

We want people to go to the country areas and I think that in many instances those concerned are discouraged because of the difficulties with regard to the education of their children. That prevents some people from going outback and helping in the task of opening up the country. In some instances I know that children have to walk quite a long distance in order to catch the school bus and have to leave home at 7 a.m., which means that they are away from home from that early hour until about 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Does that apply every morning or on alternate mornings?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: It applies on school days.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The custom is to run in the opposite directions on alternate days.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: This bus always takes the same route.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That does not apply in many instances.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: These parents tell me that if there were a local hostel it would be a great relief to them and impose less strain upon the children. The prospect of some such provision appeals particularly in view of the bad roads that have to be traversed by the bus in the winter months and in the mother's mind is always the thought of the possibility of an accident. If hostels were provided, parents would be saved a considerable amount of worry. I think the scheme is a good one, and I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [4.58]: I support the Bill and congratulate the Gnowangerup Road Board on its action in inspiring the drafting of the measure. We had the unusual spectacle of the Leader of the Opposition in another place, the Minister for Works and the Minister for Education all supporting the Bill.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must remind the Honorary Minister that he may

not refer to a debate for the current session in another place.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am sorry, Mr. President; I plead guilty. These circumstances prove that there are some very urgent matters that rise above party politics. Mr. Seddon made a very apt remark when he said that the community spirit had never been greater in this State than it is today. That is certainly a fact. The best conditions obtain in any district where the local authority leads that community spirit. For many years past I have had experience in connection with social service organisations and in the West Province we are blessed with local authorities at Fremantle, East Fremantle and North Fremantle that are always anxious to do everything possible to lend support to any movement carried out by people who are rendering honorary services for the community.

In this particular instance the circumstances are unusual. It is absolutely impossible for the Government, and will be so for a long period, to catch up with the work involved in carrying out the necessary renovation of existing school buildings and the erection of new ones. We cannot blink our eyes to the fact that it is impossible at this juncture for the Government to spend money on the provision of hostels. As the State progresses and the community spirit of the people develops still further, I am sure that the Government will be able to render financial assistance. I understand that in this instance accommodation has to be provided for 19 scholars. I know the Gnowangerup district and lived in the vicinity for many years. The road board members there are progressive, and in all the circumstances we should have no hesitation in passing the second reading of the Bill.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East—in reply) [5.0]: I do not desire to waste the time of the House by replying to each individual member who has spoken against the Bill, but there are in the principal Act several sections, dealing with the present powers of road boards, to which I desire to draw attention. Section 160 provides—

A board may—

(3) Construct and maintain sea or river jetties, bathing enclosures and bathing houses;

(20) Erect and maintain seats, shelter sheds and other conveniences on roads and public places.

(21) Provide or acquire, establish, conduct, and carry on or subsidise any ferry or passenger transport service by land or water within the district or (with the consent of the local authority of any area outside the district) particularly within the district and partly within such area . . .

(23) Erect, on any land vested in the board or acquired for the purpose, or purchase houses to be leased to and used as homes by, employees of the board, and maintain and make use of such houses and land for the purposes aforesaid as long as the board may deem expedient.

If, when the parent Act had been framed, the idea of providing hostels had been mooted, I am certain it would have been included and the need to amend the Act would not have arisen. I am a great believer in allowing local governing bodies to have as much power as possible, and in this instance a local governing body is prepared to help itself. I therefore ask members to support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. H. Seddon in the Chair; Hon. A. L. Loton in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 199:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I regret that I have not placed any amendment on the notice paper. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of proposed new Subsection (31) the words "or acquire by purchase or otherwise" be struck out.

We should permit the road boards to construct these places, but I think that if we allow them to acquire buildings by purchase they might get the wrong sort because no other types were available. I have no desire to see a delicensed hotel used as a hostel for children in the country districts. There are no playing fields near such buildings, and they are totally unsuitable for the purpose suggested here. One can see the type of place that Sister Kate got. It was not altogether what was required as it was on a main road and quite unsuited for her purposes.

Hon. A. THOMSON: There is considerable justification for the amendment. I am

not opposing the erecting of hostels in the country districts. For years I have objected to the system that has been adopted—it was introduced by Sir Hal Colebatch—that the country districts should find half the cost of their hospital buildings. That does not apply to the metropolitan area. The Government is building the Royal Perth Hospital.

The Honorary Minister: It did not build the Fremantle Hospital.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: No, we built that.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That was because those people took a particular stand. I agree with what Dr. Hislop said in his second reading speech. These hostels should be constructed on sound lines. The suggestion made by you, Mr. Chairman, is a practical one. If we build proper hostels, and that would mean separate buildings for the boys and girls, they will cost a great deal more than will the schools themselves. First-class accommodation, such as is provided in the secondary schools, should be made available if our children are to have proper discipline and character instilled into them. Those considerations are sadly lacking in many of our State schools today, and in saying that I do not cast a reflection on anyone because it is a result of the system. I support the amendment.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: A good deal depends on where governmental responsibility ends in connection with education. The Government is responsible for seeing that well-qualified and trained teachers are available. It also has to provide proper school accommodation and furniture, means of recreation, and medical and dental inspection of the children. No Government has yet been able to do all these things, and I am not inclined to agree that there is any governmental responsibility to provide accommodation for the children. When the high schools were established over 20 years ago an arrangement was made whereby £30 per annum should be paid to the parents of each child who had to live away from home. No doubt that has been varied in accordance with the cost of living variations. There is no reason why these places should not be conducted without loss if they are controlled by a local community with considerable authority. If the Government conducted them we would probably see a big loss. I hope

there will be nothing done to the Bill that will in any way lessen the powers of local authorities to do what they can.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I would be much happier if more time had been given for those likely to be affected to have considered the Bill. There is a lot more to it than appears on the surface. I can quite understand the attitude of the good folk at Gnowangerup because I had to send three children away from home to attend high school and the University. In each case I had great difficulty in getting the right type of home for them. The folk at Gnowangerup feel that something must be done to ensure that their children obtain the necessary education and have some decent homelife when they are out of school.

The people of Northcliffe were in a very difficult position. Of six schools, five were closed because the quota fell below the requisite number. These schools were spaced like the spokes of a wheel and it was practically impossible to get anyone to undertake a bus service for the children, about 20 in all, in the time available on account of the distance to be covered. We had an idea of establishing a hostel much on the lines of that proposed at Gnowangerup. The building that had done duty as a hospital at Northcliffe—the hospital had been closed—consisted of a large common ward, kitchen, outbuildings, etc., and we thought it would meet requirements. We proposed to get the building handed over to the Education Department or to a local committee. The local people, at a well-attended meeting, undertook to carry on the hostel, provided that the Government paid a subsidy of 10s. per child per week and that the children were taken into the town on Monday and collected on Friday to return to their homes for the week-end.

The committee expected to secure a suitable person to conduct the hostel, but was unsuccessful. Then the mother of a family agreed to undertake the duties of matron, but various difficulties arose and, after all our efforts, the proposal fell through. Now there is some makeshift sort of vehicular service in an attempt to fill the bill. Similar difficulties may have to be faced at Gnowangerup. Sound organisation to control such a hostel is essential. I agree with the amendment. To commit a community to taking over a building of any type for the purpose would be a mistake.

The building at Greenbushes was about the least suitable that could have been selected. It is an old two-storied place that served as a hotel in former days, and those responsible for its erection must have had the most weird ideas of sanitation and hygiene. It is situated on the corner of the main street and a cross street, and there is no playground apart from one in the bush a quarter of a mile away. Had that building been used, the whole of the spare time of those children would have been spent on the street. We do not want to make that sort of thing possible. I have no objection to the Gnowangerup Road Board's constructing a hostel if the ratepayers are prepared to finance and manage it as the parents would desire, but some attention must be paid to questions such as the suitability of the building and proximity of playgrounds, as well as surroundings and general atmosphere. Otherwise, the scheme is more likely to be a disaster than a blessing.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Seeing that so many road boards are concerned, this matter might well have been submitted to the Road Board Association for consideration. A little delay would not have mattered and a better Bill might have been produced. The amendment will be a step in the right direction. Already in some instances arrangements have been made for temporary accommodation, and we know that temporary buildings are often continued in use for a long time. At Pinjarra we have a hospital building that never was suitable, but additions have been made from time to time and the building is likely to continue in use for some years. Another £600 is being spent on it, and I regret that so much good money is being wasted on an unsuitable building that must in the not distant future be scrapped. Hostels will be costly to run, and if the ratepayers' money is used to provide them, there should be an assurance that something lasting and suitable will be provided. Considerable responsibility will attach to the conducting of these hostels, and I repeat that the Road Board Association might well have been given an opportunity to consider the proposal.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I cannot accept the amendment, because it would prevent anyone who so desired from making a gift of a building for the purpose.

Hon. H. Tuckey: You have one in mind, have you not?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Surely members of a road board can be trusted to ensure that a suitable building is obtained!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I regret that Mr. Loton will not accept the amendment, because it would prove a satisfactory safeguard. If he will not accept it, the Bill should be further amended by providing that any building, before being acquired by a road board, should be approved by the Commissioner of Public Health, the Chief Architect or his deputy, and the Minister for Education. If they declared the building to be suitable, there could be no objection to its being purchased or accepted as a gift. We know what has happened in other instances where buildings have been taken over. Some road boards have been inclined to take over buildings for conversion for use as hospitals and the authorities have had to declare the buildings unsuitable for the purpose. The authorities I have mentioned should be empowered to declare that a building proposed to be used as a hostel is not suitable.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I hope the amendment will not be accepted. If it be passed, what we desire to achieve, namely, provision of accommodation so that children may obtain better education, would be retarded, if not destroyed. A building has been offered to the road board and the board has authority to borrow money to put the place into good order and condition. If we prevent the board from utilising that building, it will have to wait for years to get material to erect a place. I think I am right in saying that the Bill had the approval of the Minister for Education in another place and that no objection was raised to it by the Minister for Health. Surely we can rely on the people of the district whose children will be provided for in this hostel to see that the local road board makes suitable provision for them.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the amendment is agreed to, we might as well not pass the Bill. I doubt very much whether within the next five to ten years any road board will get a permit to build a hostel.

Members: Ten years!

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. I have studied the position very closely.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The Rockingham Road Board is building an office, I under-

stand. Surely that is of less importance than a hostel for children.

Hon. G. FRASER: We will not enter upon that argument. In my opinion, it will take ten years to catch up with the lag in housing.

Hon. A. Thomson: Surely additional school accommodation will be provided during that period.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. Other buildings besides houses are being erected which are more urgently needed than hostels. I am convinced that no hostels will be built in this State within the next ten years.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I think that is a red herring of very large size.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is no red herring.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I have no desire to prevent the road board in question from acquiring this hostel; but my desire is to see that such buildings are suitably constructed under proper control. Perhaps the Committee could pass the amendment and Mr. Loton might move to report progress. I might then, in conjunction with him, frame an amendment with respect to the purchase or gift of hostels.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not think the proviso suggested by Dr. Hislop is necessary. If the words proposed to be deleted are struck out, the word "construct" will remain. Leave that word in and insert the proviso later on.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: I do not mind.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I oppose the amendment. These buildings would be constructed in accordance with the building by-laws and would have to be passed by the health authorities. In any event, before the road board allowed such a building to be used for a hostel, surely the medical officer and the Country Women's Association, or some such body, would see that it was suitable for the purpose.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Would the sponsor of the Bill agree to report progress if I withdraw the amendment, so as to enable me to frame a proviso dealing with the purchase or gift of a property of this nature?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am not prepared to accede to that request. The Bill has been under discussion for over a week and mem-

bers have had ample opportunity to consider it and also to read the debate on it in another place.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I am disappointed at Mr. Loton's attitude. I think the request made by Dr. Hislop is reasonable, and that his suggested proviso is a good one. The boards themselves require protection, because sometimes pressure is brought to bear on them to do things which otherwise they would not do. I am not saying that the particular building in question is unsuitable. I hope the Committee will not rush the matter.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £2,200,000.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.38] in moving the second reading said: This is the second Supply Bill brought forward this session, and it seeks further Supply pending the passing of the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. In the previous Bill submitted Supply was granted as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	2,200,000
General Loan Fund	200,000
Advance to Treasurer	300,000
	<hr/>
	£2,700,000

Under the authority granted by that Bill the expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the first three months of this financial year has been £2,405,853. The present Bill asks for additional Supply amounting to:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	1,800,000
General Loan Fund	400,000
	<hr/>
	£2,200,000

It is anticipated that this amount will provide the necessary finance until the Appropriation Bill is passed. The expendi-

ture for the first three months of this financial year has been:—

	£
Special Acts	1,166,890
Governmental	1,134,203
Public Utilities	1,271,650
	<hr/>
	£3,572,743

Interest and sinking fund included in the expenditure under Special Acts amounted to £998,079. The revenue collected during the first three months of the financial year totalled £3,353,637, and included:—

	£
Taxation	902,481
Territorial	133,462
Law Courts	17,329
Departmental	397,262
Mint	14,772
Commonwealth	355,859
Public Utilities	1,529,251
State Trading Concerns	3,221
	<hr/>
	£3,353,637

This resulted in a deficit for the three months of £219,106. The arrears of taxation due to the State by the Commonwealth as at the 30th September, 1946, amounted to £582,681, made up as follows:—

	£
Income Tax	460,213
Gold Mining Profits Tax	8,000
Financial Emergency Tax	53,168
Hospital Fund Contribution	61,300
	<hr/>
	£582,681

That is a brief explanation of the measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Standing Orders Suspension.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.47]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to be passed through its remaining stages at this sitting.

Question put.

The **PRESIDENT**: There being more than 16 members present and no dissentient voice, I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. H. Seddon in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Chief Secretary gave some interesting figures yesterday from which it looked as though there was no need for the amendments I have on the notice paper. But there is another side to the picture. We need to foster sport in the country districts. Two of the main sports in country districts are racing and trotting, but very few of the clubs have made anything like a success of their operations. Take the Quairading district. A meeting was held on the 6th March last and a profit of £61 16s. 5d. was made. It must be remembered, however, that there was a subsidy from the Trotting Association of £74 19s. A person would be very optimistic indeed to imagine that these country clubs will get subsidies every year.

Anyone who has looked into the matter will realise that racing, which has been so progressive over the last few years, is gradually dying off and will continue to decline in the future. I am referring to the financial aspect. The fractions at the meeting which I have mentioned amounted to £7 13s. The profit from the tote was £28 14s. Twenty-five per cent. of the tote profit is represented by fractions. Generally at these meetings in country districts, the average entrance fee to the public is 4s. and if the charge were raised I am afraid that country people would not attend.

Another point is that the people are gradually becoming tote-minded, so there will be an increase in totalisator receipts. Turning to Narrogin, we find that in November, 1944, there was a profit of £48. The fractions amounted to £12 19s., and there

was a subsidy of £25. It will be seen that there is nothing available to the club to enable it to improve its grounds and to make progress. Notwithstanding the fact that the Chief Secretary said the Bill would not mean any interference, it must play an important part. At another meeting the subsidy was £150 and the profit £198. That was in January. The fractions were £29 15s.

At the February meeting there was a profit of £21 18s. 11d. There was a subsidy of £25 and fractions totalling £19. At the March meeting there was a loss of £22 notwithstanding that the tote fractions were £18. Apparently there was no subsidy on that occasion and a loss resulted. The Chief Secretary referred to the Golden Mile and it seemed as though that club was sound; but the accounts disclose that only two out of 20 meetings showed a profit, that is, after taking into consideration the tote fractions. The net loss over the period amounted to £1,083. This result was arrived at after taking into consideration tote fractions amounting to £693. If we deduct the revenue from the fractions, the total loss would have been £1,776. So fractions play an important part.

A meeting held at Kalgoorlie on the 5th October resulted in a loss of £80. The fractions represented £29 2s. 3d. The gate charges there are 4s. 6d. for men and 2s. 3d. for ladies. The average charges at country meetings are 4s. and 2s. respectively. With regard to Katanning the surplus for a whole year was £141 17s. That included subsidies and fractions. These fractions were as follows:—November meeting, £13 9s. 7d.; December, £9 15s. 1d.; February, £13 18s. 4d.; and March, £9 5s. The total is £44 8s. So without the fractions and the subsidy there would have been a heavy loss at Katanning, which is one of the best country trotting centres. The Chief Secretary mentioned Corrigin yesterday. That club presents a gloomy picture. It has a subsidy of £75. Although I have not the figures for the fractions they would be small, probably amounting to £3 or £4. The profit on the meeting held on the 16th March, 1946, was £45 10s. 4d., and without the subsidy the loss would have been £29 9s. 8d. Subsidies will not be paid for all time and the fractions, even in small amounts, are very important.

Three meetings were held at Williams in the 1945-46 season. Though the admini-

sion charges were 4s. 6d. and 2s. 6d., there was a loss of £11, notwithstanding that the subsidy was £74 19s., and fractions amounted to £12. The subsidy helped that club considerably. At Bridgetown four meetings were held during the 1945-46 season. Though sometimes in the country the tote works out at less than 5s., they always pay 5s. The total profit in this case looks alluring, at £233 14s. 3d. for the four meetings, but the subsidy received was £272 10s.; which was much more than the profit.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What was their share of fractions?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It amounted to £3 13s.

Hon. W. J. Mann: In any case they would lose only half the fractions.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Struggling clubs outside the metropolitan area should not have that burden imposed on them. We should encourage residents of country districts to go in for sport, and members have much to say about what should be done to provide amenities in the country. Trotting is one amenity that should be provided and encouraged. The amendment that I have on the notice paper would exempt clubs outside the metropolitan area. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out and a new paragraph added as follows:—

(b) by inserting in line two of Sub-section (2) after the word "club" the words "outside the metropolitan area" and by adding at the end of the said sub-section the words "and no fractional part of sixpence shall be paid by any racing club within the metropolitan area by way of such dividend."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I oppose the amendment on principle. In this matter the Government is actuated by a desire to give winning investors on the tote, either in the country or the metropolitan area, a better return for their money. I thought the figures I quoted would indicate that the amount involved in the case of country clubs generally would be very small. I do not think we can consider the position of any individual club. If we are to consider any particular club we should examine the whole of its circumstances rather than the question of fractions only. In view of the sound financial position of the W.A.T.A., and the fact that, as Mr. Baxter points out, country people are be-

coming totalisator-minded, and therefore the totalisator receipts may be expected to increase, I think if anything is necessary to compensate country clubs for what they may lose under the provisions of this Bill the Trotting Association should increase the subsidy by the amount required.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What if it will not do that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is the association's responsibility. With trotting on its present scale the association is making large profits. One of its objects is to encourage trotting in the country, and it is doing a good job in that direction. Mr. Baxter pointed out that the Bridgetown club received a subsidy of £272. If that is so it would not hurt the association to increase the amount by another £5 or £10 in order to cover what might be lost in fractions. This Bill proposes to reduce the fractions by approximately 50 per cent. It will not interfere with the six per cent. which is the ordinary revenue of clubs in this State from the totalisator. As I pointed out earlier, in other States of the Commonwealth the fractions go into revenue, while in this State 92½ per cent. goes to the clubs and 7½ per cent. to the Government. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I hope members will support the amendment. This piece of legislation could not have been framed in more appropriate terms if it had been designed to make it difficult or impossible for country clubs to carry on. If the Bill is passed in its present form it will make it more difficult for the parent body to subsidise country clubs, and, in addition, will accentuate the difficulties of those clubs, owing to the loss of the fractions. The country clubs are being carried on by people working in an honorary capacity, and this Bill, if passed, will only make it more difficult for those people to provide the sport the people want. The public generally are content to allow things to remain as they are.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have been trying to fit the amendment into the original Act and into the amending Bill, but it seems rather complicated. The amending Bill seeks to substitute "6d." for "1s." but Mr. Baxter's amendment seeks to strike out the paragraph that makes that altera-

tion, and to insert a new paragraph. I do not think the paragraph suggested to be inserted would meet the situation. There would probably be a lot of argument as to what it meant. I think he could overcome the difficulty by allowing the clause to be passed and moving a subsequent amendment later on, setting out that the provision should not apply outside a radius of 20 miles, for instance, of the metropolitan area.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think there is something in what Mr. Fraser has suggested. We should report progress and examine this matter further.

Progress reported.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 17th October, 1946.

	PAGE
Questions: Gaol site, as to report of Joint Parliamentary Committee	1376
School-leaving age, as to estimated increase in attendances	1377
Water supplies, as to larger pipes for Summerville	1377
Bills: Marketing of Potatoes (No. 2), 1s.	1377
Legal Practitioners Act Amendment, 3s.	1377
Factories and Shops Act Amendment (No. 8), 3s.	1377
Country Areas Water Supply, 2s.	1378
Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply, 2s.	1384
Supply (No. 2), £2,200,000, returned	1397

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

QUESTIONS.

GAOL SITE.

As to Report of Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

1, Has the inquiry into the proposed new gaol site yet been completed?