

that on properties where eight or more hands are employed already far better accommodation exists than is provided for in the Bill, I appeal to members not to insist on the amendment.

Question put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I appoint the tellers I inform the Committee that I shall vote with the noes.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	13
Noes	14

Majority against .. 1

AYES.

Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. M. Heenan	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornall	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. A. Dymmitt	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. H. L. Roche
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

No. 4. Clause 4, proposed new Section 6, (2), paragraph (ii), page 2:—Delete all words from and including the word "and" in line 31 down to and including the word "compartment" in line 35.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is consequential, but I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

No. 6. Clause 6:—Delete.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is important. No reason exists why the word "tent" should appear in this legislation. The reason for erasing the word is that tents are sometimes used instead of sheds. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What should have been done was to amend Section 7 of the Act, which refers to tent accommodation. That section requires the tent to be in a condition satisfactory to an inspector. All that has been struck out is the stipulation that the tent shall be handed over to the shearer in good order and condition. I

raised the matter very plainly, but no notice was taken of it.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We did not agree to the deletion of the word "tent." It could be retained in Clause 8. I adhere to that view. What is wrong with a tent? What about our surveyors and linesmen and others who travel the country?

The CHAIRMAN: It was clearly pointed out previously that the word "tent" had been struck out in the wrong section.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The principal Act provides for emergency use of tents when other accommodation is not available. The men are keen about this, and I ask the Committee not to insist on the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the Honorary Minister that he let the matter go now and permit a modification to be made.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 29th November, 1944.

	PAGE
Questions: Alunite Works, Chandler, as to employees' cottages	2088
Wharf and storage facilities, as to capital value	2088
Geraldton boat slip, as to estimated earnings, etc.	2088
Soil erosion, as to surveys and preventive measures	2088
Railways, as to Commonwealth assistance	2088
Rayon industry, as to establishment in Western Australia	2089
Metropolitan meat supplies, as to slaughtering at Robb's Jetty	2089
Leave of absence	2089
Bills: Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, report, 3s.	2089
University of Western Australia Act Amendment, report, 3s.	2089
Loan, £975,000, 2s., Com., remaining stages	2089
Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment, Com.	2093
Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, returned	2094
Perth Diocesan Trustees (Special Fund), Council's amendments	2094
Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, 2s., Com.	2110
Motion: Native administration, as to Royal Commission inquiry by Commonwealth	2095
Annual Estimates: Votes and items discussed	2119

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

QUESTIONS (6).**ALUNITE WORKS, CHANDLER.***As to Employees' Cottages.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What was the average cost of erection of the cottages occupied by employees at the Campion Alunite Works at Chandler?

(2) What rents are charged to employees occupying these cottages?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Purchase and cartage from Youanmi, approximately £300; labour for re-erection, approximately £120; total, about £420.

(2) Rental, 10s. per week; water, 2s. 6d. per week; electric light and power, 2s. 6d. per week.

WHARF AND STORAGE FACILITIES.*As to Capital Value.*

Mr. HILL asked the Premier:

What is the approximate capital value of the sheds (excluding railway goods sheds and privately owned sheds), silos, elevators and cranes for the storing and handling of wheat and other cargo at the ports of (a) Geraldton, (b) Fremantle, (c) Bunbury, and (d) Albany?

The PREMIER replied:

The information is not available and could not be obtained without a dissection of the accounts of the harbour authorities concerned which do not show the value of these assets distinct from the other assets.

GERALDTON BOAT SLIP.*As to Estimated Earnings, etc.*

Mr. HILL asked the Premier:

What is the estimated (a) gross earnings, (b) working expenses, (c) amount available for interest and sinking fund payment, for the proposed boat slip at Geraldton?

The PREMIER replied:

The earnings of the old slipway which had fallen into a state of disrepair were, for the past few years, £200 per annum. It is anticipated that after the war there will be a considerable extension of the fishing industry at Geraldton and, as a new slipway had to be built, it is more economic to provide for this extension now. It is expected that in the post-war years the earnings of the new slipway will be sufficient to meet operat-

ing expenses and interest and sinking fund on the capital cost.

SOIL EROSION.*As to Surveys and Preventive Measures.*

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the position regarding soil erosion in this State, according to the latest departmental surveys?

(2) What steps are being taken, or are proposed, for the prevention of soil erosion in this State?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A recent report of the Soil Conservation Committee suggests that soil erosion is increasing in parts of the State, particularly in some of our pastoral areas.

(2) Extensive surveys have been made of the incidence of soil erosion in agricultural and pastoral districts, and control measures are being examined and applied. Legislation is being prepared for the consideration of Parliament in its next session.

RAILWAYS.*As to Commonwealth Assistance.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier:

(1) Did the Commonwealth Government or the Loan Council make a sum of money available to the Western Australian Government for use for railway purposes during the past three years?

(2) If so, what amount was offered, and was it accepted?

(3) If not accepted, what was the reason for not accepting it?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The Commonwealth Government has not made any money available for railway purposes since 1940, when £15,000 was provided to meet the cost of erecting a shell annexe. Full information was given to Parliament at the time the arrangement was made. The Loan Council does not make money available for any specific purpose; it is merely the instrument through which the Governments of Australia arrange to raise loans, except loans for Commonwealth defence purposes. The Loan Programmes of this State have included amounts for railway purposes as follows:—1942-43, £423,766; 1943-44, £376,191; 1944-45, £407,177.

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

RAYON INDUSTRY.

As to Establishment in Western Australia.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Is he aware that an American textile company is officially stated to have taken over a Government munitions factory at Rutherford, N.S.W., for the manufacture of rayon (weaving, dyeing and finishing), and that plans have been made to bring the plant into production as soon as possible?

(2) Will this affect the efforts of the State Government to have the rayon industry established in this State?

(3) Is he aware that it was also stated that sites had been inspected and examined in N.S.W., Victoria, S.A. and Tasmania, for the manufacture of rayon, and that another overseas firm (Canadian), favours the Hunter River valley?

(4) In view of the fact that W.A. is not mentioned in the statement, could he give any information as to whether any sites have been inspected in W.A., and also what steps have been taken to ensure that Western Australia will receive due consideration in the establishment of the rayon industry?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The State Government's efforts are directed towards the manufacture of rayon yarn to supply Australian weavers.

(3) Yes.

(4) Full particulars of a Western Australian location have been supplied to a Canadian firm which has agreed to send its technicians to Western Australia to investigate before a decision is made.

ABATTOIRS, ROBB'S JETTY.

As to Expediting Slaughtering.

Mr. STUBBS (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is it a fact that great delay is caused in getting fat sheep slaughtered at Robb's Jetty?

(2) The statement has been made that the daily kill is only 2,000 instead of 9,000. If that is so, can action, in the interests of the farmers who are suffering great loss by this delay, be taken to expedite the killing?

The MINISTER replied: It is not true to say that farmers are suffering great loss due to the alleged delay. I take it that the

hon. member's questions are prompted by letters that have been sent to several members of this Chamber and of the Upper House from Kojonup and other places. There has been much propaganda and inspired criticism against the Robb's Jetty meatworks, which are without foundation and utterly untrue. It is not true to say that 9,000 sheep have been offering at a daily rate in any week of this year for Robb's Jetty, and have not been able to be treated. As a matter of fact the tally per chain this year is 85.9 sheep per man as against 50.2 last year.

The comparison of sheep slaughtered as at yesterday's date last year and this year is that 1,607 head were killed as at yesterday's date last year and 3,294 this year. No sheep forwarded by farmers for export have been delayed from slaughter immediately on arrival except sheep arriving too late for slaughter on a Saturday. The works could have killed many more sheep during the last month than there were sheep offering, and inspired statements such as have appeared in the Press under trade and financial notes in recent weeks are utterly untrue. I ask members, rather than indulge in generalities—which I know members are anxious to avoid—to ask for specific cases where sheep have been unable to be slaughtered because of the alleged congestion.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. W. D. Johnson (Guildford-Midland) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, Etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, Etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LOAN, £975,000.*Second Reading.*

THE PREMIER [4.41] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to authorise the Government to borrow £975,000 for the financial year 1944-45. The Bill is necessary to provide authority for the Government to borrow money for the purpose of carrying out the various works and services enumerated in the schedule. The items comprising the schedule are those on which previous authorisations have either become exhausted or are insufficient to meet the expenditure proposed in the Loan Estimates and, in addition, there is a new item for war housing, for which £500,000 is provided. The amounts set against each item will be sufficient, with previous authorisations, to enable the work to be carried on during this year and, where necessary, for six months after the close of the financial year. This is the usual practice, and permits of the continuance of works until further Parliamentary authority can be obtained.

Proceeds of loans during the year ended the 30th June last amounted to £457,750, consisting of £67,750 from sales of securities to various trust funds controlled by the Treasury and a loan of £390,000 from the Commonwealth Savings Bank. This sum represents the amount we are entitled to borrow from the Commonwealth Savings Bank under the recent agreement which I explained when introducing the Loan Estimates a few days ago. The rate of interest on this loan from the Commonwealth Savings Bank is fixed by the Savings Bank Transfer Agreement at one per cent. above the rate allowed to depositors.

Mr. Watts: What is that rate?

The PREMIER: For some years it has been 2 per cent. We are getting this money at 3 per cent. Ordinary money borrowed through the Loan Council is $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. for the long-dated term and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the short-dated term. This rate of 3 per cent. is economical for the State, as no flotation expenses are involved. It is, therefore, comparatively cheap money. In addition to loan proceeds of £457,750, there were loan repayments amounting to £256,153, and a further credit to the loan fund of £38,021, being the revenue surplus for the year which was returned as part repayment of advances made from loan to cover deficits incurred in earlier years.

The public debt on the 30th June last stood at £96,478,295, and as the total contributions to the sinking fund by the State and Commonwealth and earnings from investments will amount in all to well over £900,000 during the current year, the borrowing of the amount for which authority is sought by this Bill will make very little difference to our indebtedness. When introducing the Loan Estimates, I outlined the works for which the money will be utilised. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly): There is one item I cannot allow to pass without a little more information and that is the one for £150,000 for additions and improvements to opened railways. In view of the alarming condition of our railways, I think the Government ought to give some explanation as to what this amount is intended to cover. Is it to be used for additions to rolling-stock?

The Premier: Some of it is for rolling-stock.

Mr. SEWARD: I would be glad to have some information on that point. There have been serious complaints in the last day or two about inability, particularly by the railways, to shift wheat that is urgently required elsewhere.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): The amount of the Loan Bill last year was £350,000 and the expenditure from loan funds last year was £377,000. I observe that the Premier anticipates being able to get more work done out of loan money during the current year because the Loan Estimates provide for an expenditure of £1,550,000, of which approximately one-third is to meet the housing programme, and that programme, we appreciate, will not necessarily be fully proceeded with next year or in the ensuing 12 months owing to the limitation of material and labour supplies. I take it from the Premier's remarks that the legislation to be brought down and the purchase of the necessary land for housing will be proceeded with in the next 12 months.

The Premier: Inspections are being made to find suitable land.

Mr. McDONALD: That is one thing we can do in preparation for the housing scheme—make sure that we have the necessary land to proceed with the building of

houses straight away. The acquisition of land, whether compulsory or by negotiation, is something that often extends over a considerable time, and if, with the money now being authorised by this Bill, the Premier will be in a position to set on foot the acquisition of land, the building programme can be started with a minimum of delay as soon as the opportunity occurs. I hope that part of the loan vote which it is intended to appropriate for the purchase of land for the housing programme will be utilised as soon as possible. Otherwise, the loan authorisation of £975,000 takes into account, I presume, the balance of loan funds that the Premier now holds. Although he is budgeting for the expenditure of £1,560,000, that would be partly met from loan credits now in hand and the balance from the £975,000 which is now to be authorised. I support the second reading.

THE PREMIER (in reply): It is not usual to discuss the details of the Loan Bill on its introduction. Ministers will deal with the various works when the Loan Estimates are before the House and will make themselves available to answer any questions with regard to the expenditure of the money. For the information of the member for Pingelly, who asked a question about rollingstock, it is proposed to spend the sum of £22,000 on that item. It is also proposed to expend £10,000 on new work. Most of that amount will be spent on new Diesel cars which it is expected will arrive shortly. They are being imported and have been on order for 18 months or two years.

Mr. Watts: Who will construct the bodies?

THE PREMIER: The bodies will be constructed in Western Australia. The chassis and engines will be imported. As I said, they have been on order for a long time. I heard a rumour that they were on board some ship, but they have not yet arrived. The bodies will be put in hand as quickly as possible.

Mr. Watts: Does the £10,000 include the chassis?

THE PREMIER: That sum does not include the total cost by any means; it is the amount which we expect to spend before the end of June. In reply to the question asked by the member for West

Perth as to the acquisition of land for workers' homes, the Workers' Homes Board is attending to that matter. Several fairly large areas have been inspected during the last week or two which could be used for the purpose. We are not confining ourselves to the metropolitan area. We are acting in close collaboration with the Town Planning Commissioner, who is well informed as to the vacant land in almost all our country towns, as well as in the metropolitan area. He is constantly dealing with applications for the subdivision of land to be used for this, the and the other purpose.

Applications for the allocation of land for industrial purposes come under the Town Planning Act. I do not think there is anybody more competent or more conversant with the land available for building purposes than is the Town Planning Commissioner. He is giving particular attention to the matter during the course of his duties, which carry him into many parts of the country. I do not think we shall be able to expend the whole of the £240,000 set out in the Estimates for the purpose of buying land, but it is well to have the necessary authority because if land is available and can be secured the Government will authorise the purchase of it. We shall then be in a position to carry out the programme of workers' homes, war service homes and other homes that we propose to erect under the housing scheme. I do not think it desirable to rush in and buy single blocks of land when it is possible to secure a large area, such as the area in Charles-street, near Walcott-street, where I think 50 houses have already been erected and where land is available for another 80 or 100 houses. The acquisition of such areas will cheapen the construction of the homes, because the work will be carried out in one locality instead of being spread all over the metropolitan area. Other areas of land are being inspected; so I expect that, while we will not spend all the money available, we will secure a considerable acreage during the forthcoming seven, eight or nine months.

If conditions are favourable, that is, if men and materials are available for the erection of homes, we shall have an addition to the fairly large area which we have already dedicated to workers' homes. The Minister for Lands has made a good deal

of land available to the Workers' Homes Board under the powers he has under the Land Act. Wherever it is possible, suitable arrangements will be made for the erection of homes in country towns and in suburban areas. We are doing all we can in that regard. The officials in charge of these matters at the Workers' Homes Board and the Lands Department, as well as the Town Planning Commissioner—last but not least—will be in a position to carry out the proposed programme when the men and the materials are available.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Principal and interest charged on Revenue:

Mr. NORTH: This clause deals with the payment out of money from Consolidated Revenue and I would ask the Treasurer whether our position is not really better now as regards our national income than it was years ago. I ask the question because there is a certain amount of propaganda—including some coming from yourself, Mr. Chairman—to the effect that charges of this kind are growing on the revenue each year, and it may be that our revenue will in future be mostly applied in meeting interest on debts of this kind and accretions of debt. Has the Premier looked into the question from this point of view: That our national income is increasing? During the depression period it was roughly £800,000,000; today it is £1,200,000,000. Assuming the same ratio, we should now be in a better position to meet these debts than we were during the depression period. I think we should show the taxpayers that our position is really not becoming worse, because the national income has increased so much in the last few years, owing of course to war conditions. I raise the point because I am besieged by letters from various reformers who want Alberta and other methods to be adopted here. I have already asked the Treasurer a question with respect to the Alberta method and he promised to get in touch with the Government there on these matters. I trust he will consider the sending of Mr. Reid, the

Under Treasurer, to Alberta in order to exchange ideas. That would save a great deal of talk in this House and much propaganda. I have done a lot for these various movements, but I think that nationalism has a great deal to do with these increased debts.

The PREMIER: I have not the information by me, but I think that at the beginning of the war the figure of the national income of Australia was a little under £800,000,000 and has since gone to £1,200,000,000. It must be remembered that our loan expenditure and indebtedness are separate from those of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is incurring immense expenditure in prosecuting the war effort, but the position of the State is becoming relatively better and has done so during the past three or four years. Not that that is altogether by design of the State Government, inasmuch as we would have spent more loan money had we had the men and material to carry out necessary works. Regarding net debt per capita, progressively our position has become better to the extent of about £4 per head of the population during the last two years. In 1929 our loan expenditure was about £4,200,000 and the interest rate was from five per cent. to six per cent. Last year our loan expenditure was about £400,000 and the rate of interest was approximately $3\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. A fact that must also be taken into consideration is that our population is increasing; it has gone up by 10,000.

We receive money from various sources—Commonwealth sinking funds contributions, State sinking fund contributions and interest on investments made with the previous sinking fund payments—and our payments into sinking fund for debt reduction will be about £900,000. If we put in £900,000 to redeem the debt and borrow £900,000 and if at the same time our population increased to the extent of 2,000 or 3,000, our net debt per capita would decrease. So we are really progressing in a very favourable direction, but only during the time that men and materials are not available for use in developmental works. However, we are in a much better position than we were 10 or 15 years ago when many items were charged to loan that should have been charged to revenue. We never want again to get to the stage of spending £4,000,000

or £5,000,000, per year of five per cent. money.

A lot of Agricultural Bank interest was debited to loan funds at that time, together with deficits to the extent of £4,000,000 between 1930 and 1933 and consequently our net debt per capita increased very rapidly. That has been overtaken and during the last three years, slowly but surely our net debt per capita has decreased. In some respects that is not perhaps a good sign, because we are not undertaking any developmental work for the benefit of the country; but financially it is a satisfactory feature. Our loans are being converted satisfactorily. One matured in October. It was a loan of approximately £2,000,000 at four per cent. and that was converted, a portion at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and a portion at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. All the time our loan expenditure and interest rates are decreasing, and we are paying more money into the sinking fund. The per capita debt at the end of June, 1944, was £198.

Hon. N. Keenan: Was a census taken?

The PREMIER: No, the last census was taken in 1933. There should have been another in 1943, but it was not taken on account of the war.

Hon. N. Keenan: From what source was your information regarding increased population derived?

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth undertakes a rigid inspection of arrivals and departures and we know the excess of births over deaths. Then those of our people who enlisted in the Armed Forces are still credited with being Western Australians, because those who survive will come back here after the war. There were, of course, a lot of people here from the other States some time ago.

Hon. N. Keenan: Refugees?

The PREMIER: No. We had 40,000 or 50,000 men from the other States about the time when an invasion was feared. They were not taken into consideration as part of the population, but our own men who enlisted are still regarded as belonging to this State. Last year the per capita debt was £201 17s. 1d. and this year at the end of June it was £198 6s. 8d., a decrease of £3 10s. per head. The figure per head now is similar to that in 1935 although we have a much bigger population.

Mr. North: Then Alberta is not the only place that is reducing its debt.

The PREMIER: No. There is a difference of £3 10s. between this year and last year. Clause put and passed.

Clause 5, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Report, etc.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—New sections:

Mr. McDONALD: Do I understand that the amendments I propose to move are acceptable in regard to this clause?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. McDONALD: I referred to this clause last night, and I pointed out that if a pensioner engaged in employment and had an income from that employment which, with his pension, exceeded a certain figure, his pension would be subject to a reduction corresponding to the excess over the figure set out in the Bill. The question was raised as to whether a pensioner engaged in business on his own account and receiving a similar income should be placed on the same basis as the pensioner who accepted employment. In order to ensure that both types of pensioner should be placed on the same basis I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 10A after the word "employment" the following words be inserted:—"or in any occupation or business on his own account."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree with the amendment. The word "employment" is probably not wide enough to cover the cases mentioned by the member for West Perth, and therefore it is desirable to amend the provision so that all pensioners will be placed on the same footing irrespective of whether their additional income is obtained by working for an employer or from any other source.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: In the same proposed new section references are made to widows or female dependants similarly situated to

the pensioner referred to in Subsection (1) and in order to bring about uniformity three consequential amendments are necessary.

On motions by Mr. McDonald, proposed new section 10A further amended in line 8 of Subsection (1) by inserting after the word "employment" the words "occupation or business"; in line 3 of Subsection (2) after the word "employment" by inserting the words "or in any occupation or business on her own account" and in line 6 of Subsection (2) after the word "employment" by inserting the words "occupation or business."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 21:

Mr. McDONALD: During the second reading debate this clause was referred to and the question was raised respecting the security of the fund as to whether there should not be an actuarial adjustment for workers who elected while receiving less than the basic wage to pay half of the usual contribution and later resumed payment of the full amount. I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following words be added:—"In the case of any such worker who subsequently pays or resumes payment of the ordinary contribution the amount of pension or benefit payable to him or his dependants shall be determined by the tribunal after actuarial advice and after having regard to the period during which such worker was paying one-half of the ordinary contribution."

The amendment simply means that should the worker subsequently pay his full contribution, the pension awarded him will be adjusted, having regard to the period during which he paid half the ordinary rates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I support the amendment. If the clause were passed in its present form the tribunal would be prevented from paying more than half the pension that would ordinarily be payable to the worker or his dependants. It is desirable that where a worker reverts to the payment of full contributions he should receive a greater amount than half the pension or benefit that would be otherwise payable.

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

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—PERTH DIOCESAN TRUSTEES (SPECIAL FUND).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; Mr. Needham in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3:—Delete this clause and substitute the following:—

3. The surplus income arising from the special fund remaining in the hands of the Trustees in any year after payment to the Church of England clergyman for the time being stationed at York of the sum of twenty pounds may, at the discretion of the Trustees, be capitalised or paid to the Church of England clergyman for the time being stationed at York.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Originally the Bill contained a clause giving the Perth Diocesan Trustees permission to approach the Supreme Court for an order to dispose of the surplus income after the annuity of £20 had been paid to the rector at York. It was considered that the procedure would be costly and would involve considerable delay. The Council has amended the Bill to give authority to the Perth Diocesan Trustees to dispose of the surplus either by paying the whole amount to the rector or to capitalise the surplus income. I am advised that the trustees are agreeable to the amendment and that the present legatee is also anxious that the procedure suggested should be adopted. In the circumstances I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Preamble (page 3):—Delete all words after the word "empowered" in line 5, down to and including the word "fit" in line 10, and substitute the following words:—"at its discretion to capitalise the surplus income arising from the said capital sum or to pay such surplus income to the Church of England clergyman for the time being stationed at York."

Mr. NEEDHAM: This amendment is consequential upon the one already agreed to. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION.

As to Royal Commission Inquiry by Commonwealth.

Debate resumed from the 22nd November on the following motion by Mr. McDonald:—

Inasmuch as the States of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia have at the request of the Commonwealth Government granted to the Parliament of the Commonwealth the right to make laws for the good government of the people of the aboriginal race in co-operation with those States, this House is of opinion that the Government should immediately request the Commonwealth Government:—

1. To appoint a Royal Commission to examine into and report on the administration and policy pursued in regard to the people of the aboriginal race; and
2. To make recommendations as to the future policy and administration having regard to local and other conditions; and
- (3) In particular to determine what financial support should be made available to the States by the Commonwealth in order to carry out such policy and pursue such administration.

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

That all the words after the word "inasmuch" in line 1 be struck out with a view to inserting the following words:—"as the reforms and improvements necessary for the better education and the moral and physical uplift and care of natives are substantially dependent on the availability of ample money, the Commonwealth Government should, this House considers, make available to the State a sum of not less than £50,000 per annum for three years to supplement the present expenditure by the State and enable necessary reforms and improvements to be put into effect," in lieu.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (on amendment) [5.28]: I do not propose to take up much time of the House except to say that I intend to support the amendment because I believe there is something in the proposal that has been indicated. I do not know that I need do much more than refer to the first conference ever held between representatives of the States of Australia in connection with the control of native affairs.

There was a conference in 1937 which was the outcome of a Premiers' Conference held in Adelaide in 1936. At that conference it was decided that a further conference of Chief Protectors of Aborigines and departments controlling aborigines in the States and in the Northern Territory should be called for the purpose of defining the attitude of the various States and of the Commonwealth towards the native problem. At that conference, amongst other resolutions, this outstanding one was carried:—

That the Commonwealth give financial assistance towards the States most requiring it to assist them in the care, protection and education of natives which, unless extended, will bring discredit upon the whole of Australia.

This resolution is put forward for the following reasons:—

- (1) That the principle adopted by this Conference of the ultimate absorption of the native race into the ordinary community can only be achieved by a considerably extended programme of development and education.
- (2) That the work of the States is already saving to the Commonwealth a very considerable sum by reason of the fact that there is being maintained at the cost of the States a large number of people who would otherwise be in receipt of the invalid or old-age pension or other assistance directly from the Commonwealth for which they are now ineligible.
- (3) That the people of all the States are already contributing the whole cost of the care of natives in the Northern Territory, and it is only equitable that the people of Australia should also assist in other parts of the Commonwealth.
- (4) That following the precedent in other British Dominions it is reasonable that the Commonwealth Government should bear a considerable part of the cost.

So from that time onward there have been many suggestions of what the Commonwealth should do to assist the various States financially in this connection. With that, of course, I agree. I hold that the Commonwealth is in a better position to assist us financially in the various works which are needed to carry out the programme which the Department of Native Affairs of Western Australia has in mind. There is substance in the amendment asking the Commonwealth Government to assist financially in regard to this problem. For that reason I hope the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition will be carried.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth—on amendment): I venture to think that the amendment has been moved under some misapprehension. I have never suggested that the Commonwealth should assume control of native affairs in this State, and there is nothing in the motion to suggest it at all, or to suggest that the Commonwealth should assume control and displace the present administration. I said in the motion that I believed in a substantial measure of autonomy for State administration. I further said that I believed the States were more in touch with their own problems and in a better position to maintain immediate contact with the native populations, than was the Commonwealth. The motion does not involve Commonwealth control at all, any more than the amendment which has been foreshadowed. But I do suggest that the proposed amendment would eliminate what many people consider the most valuable part of the motion. I acknowledge candidly that there are differences of opinion on the native problem.

Even those who have given it much study or have a considerable acquaintance with natives on stations are not entirely at one as to the best means of ensuring the maximum welfare for persons of aboriginal blood; and the valuable part of the motion is that we propose that there should be an examination of the present policy regarding those of the aboriginal race not only in this State but in other States which have the same responsibility, and in the Northern Territory. Such an examination would secure the experience of all the Australian States which have a native responsibility, plus the Northern Territory; and if the examination were conducted by people who are qualified by study and experience, there should be evolved for the first time the basis of a policy regarding the betterment in future of aborigines and of those who have aboriginal blood, a policy which will be a guide to us throughout the whole of Australia as to the best discharge of our responsibilities. The motion suggests what is thought by many people to be required, namely, a re-assurance that our policy in the light of experience and study is, as far as we can make it, a policy framed on the right lines.

In particular I would point to a passage of the report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs in which he says that in the past we have been apt to regard the aboriginal problem as a black problem, and points out

that it is something more than that now; namely a half-caste problem; and that to this half-caste problem the same amount of thought has not yet been brought. The half-caste problem is something which still demands a great deal of study and constructive vision. So that I would very much regret, and so would many other people, to see eliminated from this motion, which I have moved without touching on the past at all and solely on the basis of the Minister's own report, the central aspect of it; that is to say, an examination of the whole problem in the light of the experience of all the States and of the Northern Territory. The motion aims to lay down on the basis of that experience a policy that will guarantee as nearly as possible that in the future we shall approach the subject in the best way that we can evolve. It is proposed by the amendment that the examination of the native problem throughout Australia by a competent tribunal or commission should be eliminated. Then all that is left of the motion is the proposal that financial assistance should be given by the Commonwealth to this State of Western Australia; the motion is not concerned with any other State.

I venture to say that if the motion, as proposed to be amended, was transmitted to the Commonwealth, the first thing the Commonwealth would say would be, "If we are to provide financial assistance for natives in Western Australia, we must provide it also for natives of any other State which has a native responsibility." That would be the obvious and fair thing to do, and under Section 96 of the Commonwealth Constitution, under which the money would be made available by the Commonwealth, it would probably be the constitutionally correct thing to do. If then the Commonwealth were asked to make money available to us, or, as I think it would, were to declare that if it granted our request it would have to make money available to every State having a native responsibility, the first thing the Commonwealth would do would be to examine the position in this State and in the other States affected; because, if the money comes under Section 96, it is granted to States upon such conditions as the Commonwealth may impose.

I believe that the Commonwealth, if it made large sums of money available to this State and possibly to other States, would be certain to satisfy itself as to how the

money was to be spent, and as to the need for this money to be found by the Commonwealth and the objective which it is desired to attain through the expenditure of the money. If the Commonwealth requires to satisfy itself on those points before making the money available, it is certain to get somebody to inquire into the subject.

The Minister for the North-West: That would be obviously due to the request from this House to the Commonwealth to lay down a policy.

Mr. McDONALD: We do not ask the Commonwealth to lay down a policy. We ask for a competent tribunal to examine the position in the Northern Territory and in such States as have a native responsibility, with the idea of formulating a policy which in general terms would be applicable to those of aboriginal blood throughout Australia, but with regard to particular localities and States so as to meet the conditions of such localities or States. There is nothing in the motion to suggest for one moment that the Commonwealth Government should lay down any policy; but it is suggested that by means of the examination throughout Australia recommendations would result as to the best policy to be followed in the future. That is all it amounts to. Under the motion as it now stands, which involves this examination with a view to formulation of a policy, there is no more suggestion of Commonwealth control than there is under the amendment which is proposed to be made.

I have based the motion on what I may call the Minister's own report, the report of his department which I take to be in effect the Minister's own report. I take it that the report would not be tabled for the information of Parliament if the Minister disagreed with what his departmental heads said. In the last report tabled, in September of this year, the Commissioner of Native Affairs says—

Consequently it occurs to me that it might be possible to arrange a compromise with the Commonwealth authorities for the enactments of Western Australia to remain as they are so far as the natives are concerned, but to be financed by Commonwealth money. A much better arrangement would be for the State to co-operate legislatively and financially with the Commonwealth Government on the basis of my evidence to the Select Committee on Social Security in February, 1942, when I advocated a Commonwealth subsidy of £3 for every £2 of net State expenditure, and allow the native

question to go on under the State law as at present.

Surely the Commissioner of Native Affairs agrees with my motion when he suggests that the Commonwealth should co-operate legislatively as well as financially! I do not even suggest in the motion legislation by the Commonwealth. All that the motion suggests is that the Commonwealth should assist by appointing a tribunal or commission of qualified men to examine all the States and the Northern Territory with a view to arriving at a policy which could be recommended to the various States now having the responsibility of the care of aborigines. Then the motion goes on to ask, as does in fact the amendment, that for the carrying-out of the policy so recommended the Commonwealth should make financial assistance available to this State and the other States having aboriginal problems.

I do not propose to say much more on the amendment except to express my regret that my motion should create any misunderstanding. It was not intended to convey that the Commonwealth Government should assume the responsibility in this matter. I cannot see anything in it that would suggest such a step being taken. I think that from every point of view we would lose much of the value attached to this motion if we failed to give effect to the proposal for a policy recommended by an expert tribunal after the fullest examination into the whole question, a policy which would be our guide and our re-assurance for the future in dealing with the aborigines. Money is a tremendous thing, but everything depends upon how we spend it. I agree that we want Commonwealth money, but I also desire to be assured, as a result of an examination by experts covering the whole of Australia, that if we get the money we are going to spend it to the best advantage of the people we all want to benefit from the use of that money.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands—on amendment): Having only a relatively small knowledge concerning the subject-matter before the House, I will not detain members very long. I cannot, however, cast a silent vote concerning either the amendment or the motion. I find myself in accord with the sentiments expressed by the Leader of

the Opposition when moving his amendment. I also appreciate the sincerity of purpose that actuated the member for West Perth in moving the motion, and the manner in which he did so. I have a full sense of our own responsibility on this question, and I hope I have an equal measure of understanding of the fact that successive Governments have failed to carry out the responsibilities that they owe towards our natives and half-castes. If we require any tangible evidence of that neglect we have only to go back to 1933 when a sum of £27,420 was set aside for this particular cause, whereas in 1943 the amount had increased to £51,660.

I have read the report of Commissioner Moseley, and also the report submitted by the Commissioner of Native Affairs and referred to by the member for West Perth. I cannot see that there is any definite evidence to support the contention that the Government should sign away all our responsibility to some organisation set up under the auspices of the Commonwealth Government. I must say that directly we are met with a problem of any magnitude there seems to be an immediate clamour to farm it out. I am not prepared to admit that the responsibility belongs any more to the Commonwealth Government than it does to us, or that the Commonwealth officials or Government are any more competent to deal with it than are we. I see no necessity for appointing a Commonwealth Royal Commission to examine and report upon the kind of policy that should be pursued for the thorough care and welfare of our aborigines, and to make subsequent recommendations concerning their treatment. Surely that is a responsibility of this Parliament. In the department concerned there are experienced officers who could well advise on this question. The point should be whether we are going to appoint our own Royal Commission or a Select Committee comprising members of this House.

Frankly I think it is time we members had an opportunity to shoulder our own responsibilities, in connection with which we hear so much through ill-informed talk outside the precincts of this Chamber. I suppose that every member in common with myself has been chided with having failed to assume the full responsibilities of our position. Here is an opportunity, despite the lateness of the session, to assume that

responsibility. Why could not a representative Select Committee be appointed from this House, and at the end of the session converted into an honorary Royal Commission? Such a body could be given power to call evidence from such people as Professor Elkin—whose books I have read—and other experts, and their expenses to this State could even be paid to enable them to give evidence. I have talked with many people over the last few years concerning this question. There is a great divergence of opinion as to the various phases connected with the protection and upbringing of our natives and half-castes. I am not presumptuous enough to say which party, church or mission is right or wrong in the views it expresses. No good could come from an endeavour to arrive at such a determination. What we do know is that the Commonwealth Government has not set an illuminating example to any State in the manner in which it has looked after the aborigines in the northern part of Australia.

It is time that this Parliament proved its usefulness. We have had most interesting and competent reports placed before us by experts in this matter. Unless we take the requisite action people may justifiably ask the pertinent question "Of what further use is the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia?" If this House is not competent, through the departmental officers and by means of the expert knowledge that is at its disposal by way of evidence, to deal with the native question, how futile is it for us to expect to deal successfully with the rehabilitation of our own kith and kin, which represents a particularly complex problem! I welcome the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition. It is not often that I agree with him, for as a rule I disagree with him. Here we have an opportunity to prove to the people we represent that we are capable of doing the job that is expected of us. I am not prepared to admit that the Commonwealth Government or any of its officials are better able to adjudicate upon this question than are members of this House or the officials of the State department concerned. Let us assume our rightful responsibilities and after investigation bring down a plan which will represent a forward policy in the treatment of natives and half-castes, one that will give them the justice that has been denied to them up till now. Those people are entitled to our interest.

We should make it possible and practicable for missions in this State to function in the way that is expected of them. As a result of what we do for our natives and half-castes we should be able to exploit that marvellous field of service which they have already given evidence of being able to perform. The knowledge that we gain should be placed at the disposal of the Department of Native Affairs, and the officials in turn should be so equipped that they are able to carry out their part of the job. In the past those officials have been faithfully carrying out their duties, but we have when expecting a pound's worth of services given them only 10s. with which to do it. Since the Commonwealth Government has taken from us practically all our financial resources and we have become a claimant State, it is its responsibility to find sufficient funds to administer to the needs of our native population. This State contains the major number of aborigines compared with the rest of Australia. We should be placed in the position to do justice to them and give them the opportunity which has been denied to them in the past, and to which they are justly entitled, to assume a more important position in the community. I do not propose to be a party to farming out our responsibilities. It is time this House was prepared to do its own job. I support the amendment.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco—on amendment): I am in rather an awkward position for I feel I should support both the amendment and the motion. I therefore hardly know what to do. In any event, the arguments seem to be most illogical. We have just heard that we should not farm out our responsibilities, and yet we are saying to the Commonwealth Government by the amendment that we require money from it in order to carry out this particular work. Is that not farming out our responsibilities?

Mr. Leslie: We want their money but we are prepared to do the work. That is the difference.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: What we are saying to the Commonwealth is, "You shall pay the piper, but the piper must choose the tune." We want the Commonwealth Government to pay out the money, but at the same time we say we must be allowed to do what we want. Is not that farming out our re-

sponsibilities? The member for Maylands has stated that the amount spent on aborigines had almost doubled between the years 1936 and 1943. Where does that take us? It takes us nowhere! Suppose the Commonwealth Government gave us £60,000 or £100,000.

The Minister for the North-West: The amendment proposes that we ask for £150,000.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Suppose we ask for £200,000! What would that matter if we had no policy? It is the plan that matters, the plan that should be evolved after the necessary investigation has been made. We should find out what we have to do, and what best we can do for our native population in order to turn them into decent citizens. That is where I agree with the motion and the amendment. We should have the money, but I also maintain that we must evolve a satisfactory policy. I do not think any amendment to this motion would lead us anywhere at all without a policy. If we received £200,000 we would not know how to spend it. We might be putting the money into the hands of political children, or of people who would not know how to disburse it. What we have to do is to frame a policy. We must have experts to tell us what that policy should be, and we would then perhaps be in a position to implement it. No policy can be implemented without money, and that is where the money would come in. But we must have the policy.

The Minister for the North-West: We have the policy.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I think every member has received hundreds of letters on this question; that must be so if they have received as many as I have. People are telling us they want the Commonwealth Government to hold an investigation. If we are truly democratic and really represent the people, surely when they write to us in this strain and tell us the things they want, we should do something to carry out their wishes. I am not going to vote for the amendment, because I feel that without a policy we will not be able to help the native population in the least. We must first have an investigation. When we have had that we can ask for the money. When we have evolved a policy and have the money we shall know what we are doing and how to do it.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore—on amendment): This is a most interesting debate and after having listened to it I have arrived at the conclusion that it is a storm in the political teacup. I think the Minister will agree that I went to the Moore River settlement not very long ago and made reference to what I had seen there in the course of my remarks on the Address-in-reply debate in this House. I did not think at that time that it was necessary to embellish my statement with the fact that I went with the Minister for Education and the Director of Education who visited the Moore River settlement with a view to actually looking into these self-same problems, which have subsequently as we are told become so serious, and rectifying them. My distress concerning the settlement is covered in the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The bitterest complaint I have is that in my opinion the settlement at Mogumber is not a credit to any white nation. As I said earlier, however, it would appear that we have already started to recognise that by virtue of the fact that the Minister for Education and the Director went to the settlement.

When this motion, suggesting that we should ask for a Royal Commission to be appointed by the Commonwealth, was brought forward my feelings were as those expressed by the member for Maylands. Why is it necessary for us, knowing our shortcomings already—and they can all be rectified locally—to go to the Commonwealth Government and say once more, "Come along you people, we cannot run this State. You are the only ones who can?" It was that attitude, continued for so long, that induced some of us to consider that it was time to vote for the powers asked for by a recent Referendum. I feel that we are letting things go. This motion means one of two things: Either we control our own affairs efficiently, and we can do it, or we admit that we are totally incapable of putting to rights a matter like this native question and so say to the Commonwealth Government, "Come along and take over Western Australia." We admit that we are handicapped, so we say, "You keep right off the grass and let us have money," which by way of interjection the hon. member on my right said is, in actual fact, our own money. There have been meetings throughout the country, and even in my own district.

At Moora recently a general meeting was called to deal with the question of the aboriginal people. I think that all members of this Chamber received the printed circular sent out as a result. The cry there was for more attention to be given by our Minister to the pressing needs of the native and half-caste people, and to do those things which will be of benefit to them. I have lived with natives all my life. I was born in Fiji. I seriously suggest to this House that no legislation will prevent these people from having that sexual intercourse which the missionaries vainly hope to stop. Right throughout the Pacific and right throughout India and the Far East we were quite unable to prevent that particular call of nature when it came to the young natives of those countries. If we waste time on those lines we shall waste time indeed. Our duty is perfectly clear; it is to obtain sufficient money to give these people better education and every possible chance to produce the commodities that they need in their own particular groups wherever they are centred. We must see that they take precautions to ensure that those who are desirable are not allowed to mix freely with those who are apparently not desirable, and in addition we must see that we turn out a product that is a credit to us in a practical sense rather than beat about the bush endeavouring to put forward something that is impossible.

If the Government of the country, be it Labour or any other sort, performs a practical duty of this sort, it will do a real service to the native. If these people are given opportunities of education, it will be found that some of them are able to absorb that education, and they will solve their own problems thereafter. In the Far East there is the general problem of the half-caste. The authorities there have had years more experience of this matter than we have, and they have settled down by giving those people conditions of cleanliness, education and the experience of white people, which has not always been desirable. From that experience and teaching has evolved a race of people who, before this war, lived in those countries under their own guidance and in their own social sections, and who were proud of the position they held in life.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! We had better get back to the aborigines.

MR. BERRY: These people—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member was discussing something outside of Australia altogether.

Mr. BERRY: If I may say so without giving offence to you, Mr. Speaker, it would be a good idea if we imitated some of those other countries. My suggestion is that if, for the native people of Australia, we provide decent living conditions, decent educational conditions and good health it is as much as we can do. The way to do that is not by another inquiry, either Commonwealth or State, but by obtaining sufficient money for the Minister administering this department and if, after finding the money for that hon. gentleman, we still receive the same complaints that we do today then it will be the duty of that Minister to get out and make room for someone else. Knowing the Minister, and knowing Mr. Bray as I do, I do not hesitate to assure members that I think that that position will not arise. I trust, therefore, that we shall forget all this nonsense of asking for more committees and commissions, but will obtain the money suggested which, I repeat, is our own money, and see that the conditions of our natives are made such that they become an economic and State asset.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin): I move—

That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

To the extent that our problem is a financial one the £50,000 annually for three years will solve it, but it is not wholly financial as members know. It depends to a large degree, as the member for Irwin-Moore has been pointing out, on our attitude towards this problem. I dislike intensely—and that is the reason I am opposing the motion of the member for West Perth—the idea of submitting any request to the Commonwealth Government requiring that body to do something which we in Western Australia can do better than it, and certainly a great deal cheaper. It is an extremely poor compliment to pay this State to ask the Commonwealth Government, which has not at any time as far as I can recall demonstrated any real ability in matters like this, to come here and do our work for us. I do not think

that ever before—certainly not within the compass of my memory—have we requested the Commonwealth Government to come here, first having formed a Royal Commission, to inquire into our business. We are agreeing, inferentially anyhow, to abide by the result. That is anathema to me and I hope it will prove to be so to a majority of the members of this House.

There is a mistaken idea, in matters like this, as to the efficacy of the control of the Commonwealth Government. I suppose what prompts many members at this juncture to be so misguided as to imagine that Commonwealth control of this particular problem, that is to say the native problem, is the best is the obvious lack of efficient control at present displayed by the Native Affairs Department during—and we might just as well admit this—the very difficult period through which we are now passing. The disclosures in the Press suggest that the attitude of the State department towards its responsibility in this connection was never slacker than today. No doubt it is slack, but, in all fairness to the department, we must recognise that in a large measure it is owing to staff shortages and must be expected. It is difficult to see that it could be otherwise. But if control were transferred to the Commonwealth Government as sought by the motion, now expunged with the exception of one word—

Mr. McDonald: It is not sought by the motion.

Mr. DONEY: I think that the hon. member must have misunderstood the purport of his own motion, because his first explanation of it was substantially different from that which he afforded us when he re-delivered it, as it were. I do not know that the hon. member's second edition was any more acceptable to me than was his first. I think he managed to prove conclusively that his original motion—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think we had better get back to the amendment.

Mr. DONEY: I think so too. If I may finish my remarks, I think the member for West Perth managed to prove conclusively that his original motion was ill-drawn. If control were transferred to the Commonwealth Government I would ask: What guarantees are there that the staff problems to which I have just been referring—and they are the principal ones with which

we have to contend—can be cured? Or that there would be an all-round improvement? I cannot see that either of those things would ensue. We have no guarantee at all. I think these problems would continue to exist. We surely can see that the Commonwealth Government is not in the habit of working miracles of that type. There is this too—and it is of special interest to the Minister—that if the Commonwealth Government assumed control, it would appoint its own commissioner.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DONEY: I was pointing out the possibility of a Commonwealth Royal Commission, through its recommendations, securing the appointment as Commissioner of Native Affairs of somebody other than Mr. Bray. I do not know of any who want to see Mr. Bray superseded or in any way replaced. We would find it difficult indeed to get a better Commissioner than he is. I remember six or eight years ago the prompt and judicious action taken by him to stamp out a certain dread disease that at the time was rife amongst the natives in the Great Southern part of the State. I favourably remember Mr. Bray on that account. I say without hesitation that he is a good Commissioner. I do not say he is a perfect Commissioner—we could not obtain a perfect man anywhere—but he is amply deserving of the confidence of the public and, what is more, he seems to me to be temperamentally and in general fitted to the needs and responsibilities of his office. But let us not confuse the issue. That is not the only reason.

This is not a vendetta against the department as the Minister would have us believe. It is not a matter of mischief-mongers wanting to put the department on its trial, but it is a matter of sincere and honourable people exercising their undoubted rights and privileges in pointing out certain weaknesses, and maybe wrongdoings, with the object of securing the co-operation of the department and ultimately some improvement. After all, why not? Surely no-one will say it is not the duty of every public-spirited person to endeavour to improve, not so much the department, but what amounts to the same thing, the attitude of the department towards these unfortunate people with whom we are dealing. Surely it is quite wrong to

question their bona fides and pretend they are interfering with the work of the department! I have no doubt that certain of their charges could be justified in part if not wholly, though perhaps sometimes wholly, but it should be recognised that laxity of some kind permitting of these lapses is inevitable in a period like the present. There has been a good deal of correspondence in the Press in respect to the alleged flogging of a young girl.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing about the flogging of a young girl in the amendment, which sets out to ask the Commonwealth for £50,000 for three years, etc.

Mr. DONEY: You might note, Mr. Speaker, that it also refers to the moral and physical uplift of the natives, since that is included in the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Depending on the £50,000 a year for three years.

Mr. DONEY: That might be so, but it does not destroy the value of the point I have just made. In any event it is not my intention so to deal with this matter as to put the department on its trial but, since it is a matter of considerable public consequence, I am drawing attention to it in the hope of securing a reply, which I think might easily be given by the Minister, calculated to clean it up. This particular happening, if it did happen—I am not asserting that it did—is one thing that upset the public. I am asking the Minister whether it happened. If it did not, all right. If it did happen, I want to know whether the man who flogged the girl was discharged or was otherwise suitably punished. This was said to have been a young girl suffering from T.B., and I am given to understand, too, as proof of this, that she was awaiting transport to Wooroloo.

The Minister for the North-West: That statement is not true.

Mr. DONEY: I am not alleging it. I am giving the Minister an opportunity, which no doubt he will be glad to seize, of putting the departmental viewpoint to the House and at the same time informing the public. It was claimed, rightly or wrongly, that the girl had been guilty of some sexual offence in respect of a lad described as being younger than herself. Surely we know that these young folk—and older ones too—who thus suffer are over-sexed to an altogether irresponsible degree. I am not sure, but maybe

that particular urge is ineradicable. I am told that it is. If some sympathetic and kindly woman had been called upon to deal with the girl, it would have been different, but for a man—if he did flog this poor, thin wisp of a native kiddie; we know their physical state when suffering from T.B.—to do it and expect by that action to improve her outlook upon life in a moral sense is altogether incomprehensible to me. No man should ever flog a woman, I care not what the circumstances. I admit it is conceivable that the term "flogging" might be too severe to apply to the punishment if it actually was inflicted.

The charge is not one against the Government so much as one against the individual responsible for the flogging. It would amount to a charge against the Government only in the event of the department's condoning the flogging. I take it—and the Minister might enlighten us on the point—that the policy of the department does not permit of flogging. I would not expect the Minister or the Commissioner to condone flogging. Possibly the men employed at Moore River and at Carrolup were not entirely suited for the type of work they were called upon to perform because of a lack of applicants for the work at some earlier date. Everyone realises that this is one of the most difficult departments to control with satisfaction to everyone. I ask the Minister whether, in respect of this alleged flogging, inquiries were made and with what result. Was the man found guilty? If he was, what was done to him? Recalling the tone of some of the Minister's remarks when he was speaking to the question as first launched, I would advise him not to be quite so intolerant of criticism. So long as he does his level best, the House will judge him accordingly. The mistakes made by the department, whilst serious enough in some instances, as has been pointed out, nevertheless are not disproportionate to the magnitude of the task that the department is called upon to perform. I hope the House will agree to the insertion of the words.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (on amendment): I would probably not have done more than record my vote on the amendment had it not been for the invitation presented by the member for Williams-Narrogin to make some explanation of the

charge of flogging alleged to have taken place. To begin with the superintendent or any Government settlement has the right to inflict corporal punishment. It is his duty to make a crime report monthly to the department, relating any crime that has been committed and any action taken by way of corporal punishment or legal punishment in the nearest court. The first intimation that I or the Commissioner of Native Affairs had of this alleged case of flogging was a reference in the Press report of the 2nd November. Unfortunately, the superintendent who was in charge at Carrolup when the girl is alleged to have been flogged has left the service of the department and accepted employment in Queensland. His address was then and still is unknown to the department, except that we have seen letters in the Press signed by Mr. Leeming, Brisbane. We were, therefore, unable to secure Mr. Leeming's version of this episode. Inquiries were then made of the rest of the staff who were employed at Carrolup at the time of the alleged flogging. The staff knew nothing about it at all. The two people I refer to are a Miss Dannatt, a very respectable lady who has held some high positions in Western Australia, and was at the time in charge of the school at Carrolup, and a Miss Hahn, who also has an excellent reputation. These two ladies ought to have known whether this punishment was inflicted or not, and they both denied that they had ever heard any suggestion of this girl being flogged by the superintendent or by his understudy.

The Press referred to this native girl as a T.B. case awaiting admittance to Wooroloo. The girl was examined by Dr. Henzell, who said she was not suffering from T.B. She was later examined by, I think, Dr. Gilbert, of Collie, who also certified that she was free from tuberculosis. That disposes of the fact that she was a T.B. patient awaiting admittance to Wooroloo. I next wish to refer to a letter written by the Rev. Mr. Thorman. I shall read an extract from that letter for the benefit of those members who may have missed the letter in the Press, although I have no intention of reading all the correspondence. I have a great deal of it, and know it by heart. In his letter, Mr. Thorman said—

It was not long after I had been visiting Carrolup that I was approached in this town—

Katanning—and asked if I would bear testimony to the cruelties and mismanagement allegedly taking place at Carrollup. I know at the time I was indignant and angry that such baseless charges were going the rounds. I denied I had any knowledge of such, as I knew every member of the staff, including Mr. and Mrs. Leeming, Miss Dannatt, Miss Hahn, and a young lady in charge of the children's sleeping wards whose name I forget. They were all my flock, and I am sure had things been as painted by another I should have heard of them.

That is not all the evidence I have in my possession in reference to this charge, as to which, on my knowledge of the facts, I have denied that it happened. Many cases of indiscretions have been referred to the Police Court. People who know Mr. Leeming say that they could not imagine him flogging anybody. As I said, Mr. Leeming had the right either to inflict corporal punishment or to lay a charge in the Local Court; and, in proof of what the people said about him, I point out that in preference to inflicting corporal punishment, he took so many cases to the Local Court that one justice at Katanning passed a remark from the Bench to the effect that rather than have these cases sent to Katanning to be tried in the court Mr. Leeming ought to administer corporal punishment on the settlement. The justice added that he was no longer going to act as schoolmaster for the Carrollup settlement.

In the course of time a justice of the peace, accompanied by the clerk of courts at Katanning, paid an unannounced visit to Carrollup, inspected the settlement and congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Leeming on the conditions they found there. Approximately two months afterwards, the resident magistrate at Albany, in company with the sergeant of police and the clerk of courts at Katanning, also paid an unannounced visit to Carrollup and found conditions to his satisfaction. I ask members what am I to do in these circumstances? Am I expected to believe that these things happened when nobody in authority knows anything about them? I am not prepared to believe the word of one person who makes exaggerated statements at least, as well as untruthful statements. What right that person had to say that this girl was a T.B. patient awaiting admittance to Wooroloo, I do not know.

Mr. Doney: Still, there must have been some suspicion that she was suffering from T.B. otherwise there would not have been two medical examinations to determine the point.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That would not justify the person making the statement in the Press that the girl was suffering from T.B. and was awaiting a bed at Wooroloo. That, in itself, is condemnatory of the whole statement that she made, especially in view of the evidence I have in rebuttal.

Mr. DONEY: Do the regulations admit of corporal punishment of girls as well as boys?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes, but it has to be administered by the matron.

Mr. Doney: That, too, is laid down?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes. I hope members will accept an invitation from me during the recess and at their convenience to visit the settlements. The leader of each Party could organise a visit with as many members of his Party as care to go with him. I do not want members to believe that I am trying to justify anything that is not fair and above board. That I would not do. As a matter of fact, I was responsible for the dismissal of one superintendent who had failed in his duty and who is being held up today by a certain section of the community in the vicinity of Bayswater as an authority. He attends public meetings and tells the people of all the ills that take place.

Mr. Watts: A complaint was made that he had flogged a female.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: He tells the public of all the shortcomings of the department. These are dangled before the public through the Press to the discredit of the department. Yet he is the man who was dismissed.

Mr. Thorn: He does that on behalf of the Communists.

Mr. Withers: And others.

Mr. Thorn: Dr. Jolly is in it; he is one of the prime movers.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I am pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Williams-Narrogin about the Commissioner of Native Affairs, because I share his ideas. I do not care whether a person be anthropologist or not, he would not have the local knowledge and the ability to administer this department better than Mr. Bray does. As a matter of fact, the staff as a whole are able and capable, and discharge their duties to the best of their ability. The problems the department is

called upon to solve are not so difficult under ordinary circumstances; but during the war, when materials and manpower are scarce, the department has certainly not been able to carry out the policy laid down by the Government. I again say that there is no proof of the flogging of the woman. Inquiries were made by the department and by the responsible visitors to whom I have referred, the justice of the peace and the resident magistrate, and by the persons accompanying them. These revealed nothing and the dates of their visits approximate the date when this flogging was alleged to have occurred.

Mr. Doney: Was the girl interrogated by the police?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The girl herself had absconded and headed for Collie, like many more of them.

Mr. Doney: She was still within reach of the police.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

*The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I have no more to add. I support the amendment.

HON. E. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn—on amendment): I think we can appreciate the keen work which has produced this concrete motion that we endeavour to get £50,000 per annum from the Commonwealth. It was moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin, inspired by his leader, who did not make a wild guess. He produced evidence from the report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines showing that an additional £50,000 per year was required. Already £50,000 was being spent; but, in order to carry out the policy about which we hear so much, another £50,000 was needed. So I can quite understand the Minister not objecting to the motion. In respect to this question, which has been ventilated so well, I think that the correspondence has about cancelled itself out. As is usual in newspaper controversies, one gets tired of reading the correspondence. I do not know who had the honours; but the Press, in addition to holding the scales equally on both sides of the question, threw in now and again a rather nasty sub-leader. I will not say on which side. With regard to the question of natives, it is surprising the number of experts we have. In fact, the information brought to light by various people who have been associated with the

native question is most refreshing. I was much struck by the speech of the member for Irwin-Moore. I think it is a very valuable contribution from a member who has had experience not only in Australia but in other countries.

It seems to me that in respect of these problems we have to draw upon the past, upon history, and also upon analogous cases. Time was when these natives could employ themselves; they could earn their own livelihood. We have taken away that means; and the wit of the British people who rule this country has not yet discovered how these natives can be profitably employed. I understand that the Moore River Settlement is not appropriate, and I am not sure whether Carrolup is, either. I was on the Moola Bulla station and could see very little difference between the conditions existing there and at any other station. The natives were well looked after. In fact, on all the North-West stations it seemed to me that the natives were living a more or less natural life. I remember they were employed on the De Grey station as stockmen, while their women-folk worked around the station. May I say that a station which employs 20 natives finds that they have a surprising following? There was quite a settlement. I think that is one of the difficulties connected with the employment of natives. So few people are prepared to associate themselves with all the following of members of the native race they might employ. We have heard much about educating these people and giving them a better social standing, but we shall never do any good so far as educating them is concerned unless we can devise some means of providing them with vocational training.

What people of any colour can do any good unless they have some means of obtaining their livelihood? Those means have not been discovered anywhere in Australia, and until they have been discovered the native problem will become more acute. Even money will not solve it. The great Commonwealth Government has plenty of money. I was in Darwin and I remember that the Commonwealth spent £40,000 on the erection of huts. I daresay our Commissioner of Native Affairs would like to have that sum of money, and I think he would make better use of it than the Commonwealth did. It is admitted that the Commonwealth has not been successful in

dealing with this problem; at least it has not been successful in the Northern Territory which it controls, yet it has not been short of money, as we have.

The Minister for Lands: Would the natives sleep in the huts?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I do not think they would. A few of them can be accommodated; but, in the main, the natives of the Northern Territory are living where they desire to live—in the bush. So the problem is not solved by spending £40,000 on huts. That amount would be very useful here if it were used in the construction of buildings. In past years the Government did what has been suggested by the member for West Perth. It appointed a Royal Commissioner—and a very able Commissioner, too. He made a thorough examination and collected most useful evidence. I can remember the difficulty we had in endeavouring to put his recommendations into the form of a Bill, which eventually became an Act of Parliament. It was not an easy thing to do. However, the Native Administration Act represented, as far as possible, a charter in respect of the native problem in this State. It is true that much depends upon administration, and there a great difficulty lies.

I can quite understand the member for Katanning and the member for Williams-Narrogin and other South-West members being very interested in this problem; because, whereas it can be overcome to a certain extent in the North-West, where the natives are living more or less under natural conditions, a difficulty arises in the South-West in regard to the half-cast population. There always will be a difficulty. The half-castes suffer from an inferiority complex and inevitably consort with the lowest type of white. I noticed the remarks of Mrs. Leeming, who, by the way, contributed the most informative article on this subject. With her husband, she was in charge at Carrollup; and I have been informed by those in charge of the Katanning hospital that the settlement at Carrollup was well kept and perfectly clean and that there was nothing wrong with the management. Of course, the difficulty in running a concern such as that is that natives are not adequately employed. Will people never understand that nothing can be done until we devise ways and means of ensuring that the natives shall provide for their own needs which, after all, should

be simple needs? These natives must be given vocational training and the youngsters will have to be educated at a very early age. I found in the North-West that if they were let go until they were four, five or six years of age, not much good could be done with them. They must be trained early; and they can be trained. Not only must they receive scholastic training, however, but I say advisedly that they need vocational training too, with the idea of enabling them to earn their own living.

Until people are put to work they are inclined to get into mischief. I think we have authority for that in very ancient literature. It is true today of any race or nation; and to ask these people in the South-West, who are living more or less on pensions, not to get into trouble is to ask too much of them or of anyone else. I hope it will be possible to find ways and means of putting these people somewhere where they can largely provide their own livelihood. I suppose nobody wants them. I would suggest that they might be put in the prolific South-West, but South-West members are not very much interested, they do not receive such a proposal with open arms. So the natives have to exist under second-rate conditions. I am informed that is so in respect of Moore River and that conditions are not so good at Carrollup, either. It is not first-class country there by any means. I suppose that, as time goes on, we may find out how to put these people properly to work, and that will overcome the difficulty to some extent. It will not be achieved merely by education. That education must be followed up and these people must be made to understand the full meaning and duties of citizenship. The trouble is that we have taken them away from their natural conditions. It must be remembered that they had sufficient character to impose very strict tribal conditions. Furthermore, they knew enough not to over-populate the country. They had strict customs which show they are, to a great extent, capable of emancipating themselves.

Mr. North: They did not cause soil erosion, either!

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: No, they would not cause much soil erosion. I can tell the hon. member what they could not do: They could not do what civilised people

do. They were not able to discover all imaginable means of increasing productivity. They had to depend entirely upon what the country could produce and they limited the population to the available means of support. Since we have taken them away from their natural conditions, we have the responsibility of seeing that they are still able to earn their livelihood and obtain some useful work whereby they can secure sustenance. I am aware that the aborigines are not peculiar in not caring for hard work. That is not exceptional; it is quite common, and not only amongst the natives! I am not going to suggest that they can be made wildly enthusiastic over hard work. That would not be needed; but there should be ways and means of their enjoying a more or less comfortable existence. At the same time they must be taught how to earn their own living and not be kept as they are at present.

Pensions have had a demoralising effect, particularly on half-castes. I say that openly. We do not want to be sloppy over this business. We must not be all the time sympathising with the natives, talking about educating them and expressing frightful concern about their morals. We could express some concern about our own, could we not? As the member for Irwin-Moore very well pointed out, there is nothing peculiar in that regard. The job we have in front of us is to train the native to help himself. This £50,000 will be of assistance. I notice the idea behind this proposal, how it is suggested the money should be spent; it is not a mere guess. It would certainly help very considerably in this State if the amount of money that has been spent in the sustenance and training of natives could be doubled. I give credit to the Leader of the Opposition who inspired this amendment and to the member for Williams-Narrogin for the team work displayed in moving the amendment, which appears to have more merit than all the letters I have seen in the Press and all the conversation I have heard.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan—on amendment): I support the amendment. There is no doubt the Minister will be able to use all the money he gets from the Commonwealth on many reforms that have been suggested over the years. The native problem has come very close to the City of

Perth and for the past two or three years it has been a live one in the electorate I represent. From time to time there has been an inflow of natives, as many as 200 and 300 coming to the district, and I am certain that they have been used for propaganda purposes by many people. That should not be so. It has been urged that these people should be moved contiguous to the city so that they will be involved in our complex civilisation; but we know that is not the solution of the native problem. Some are employed, but most of them have no work at all, and it was urged that a reserve should be established at a short distance from the Bayswater station and that the Government should provide proper housing accommodation with troughs and refrigerators, etc. That, of course, would be very desirable, but where are the resources to provide these amenities, even for our own white people? I have headed many deputations to the Minister, consisting of representatives of local authorities in my electorate. There are about five of these bodies interested. I want to thank the Minister because, so far as Middle Swan is concerned, the native problem has been solved, for the time being at least.

I congratulate the department on having acted in the interests of the natives. It was not very helpful to allow them to come close to our civilisation where they would have access to "pink-eye," as it is called, and thus be able to get drunk and become involved in theft and other crimes. There is no question that they were definitely a nuisance to many people engaged in primary production in the Middle Swan electorate, and many of the natives had records and were very cheeky indeed. There is no doubt that the Minister and the department have done excellent work on behalf of the natives. There are at least 6,000 natives fully employed throughout the State, which is very good, having regard to the fact that it is difficult to keep them on the job. With regard to the statements and criticisms that have appeared in the Press concerning native settlements, I have not had an opportunity to visit the institution at Moore River, but from inquiries I have made I have ascertained that the fertility of the soil there is absolutely nil and in consequence the natives there cannot engage in agricultural production.

It will be remembered that many years ago the Government of the day, because of complaints made by people in certain parts of the South-West, decided to transfer all the natives to another spot, and Moore River was chosen. In my opinion the place is quite inadequate for such a purpose. No opportunity is available for the young natives to be taught trades or to be tutored in agricultural work. Provision should be made for them just as we establish agricultural schools for our white boys. In my opinion the natives would be far happier if employed on work in the country areas, or perhaps on closer settlements where they could have their own communities. We should endeavour to keep them away from contact with the towns where they cultivate the worst aspects of our civilisation. We know how many of the native women in particular have become contaminated through their proximity to city areas. The Department of Native Affairs is wise in not allowing country natives to come to town. Notwithstanding what is done, I have no doubt that there are some astute, cunning natives who will make their way here. Some of the natives are very capable and well spoken. In fact, one who was on a deputation to the Minister with me spoke English as well as I can.

I hope the department will persist with its endeavour to improve the lot of the native population. The problem is one of the thorniest with which we have to deal. I remember that the member for Pingelly devoted a great deal of attention throughout one session in an endeavour to overcome one of the difficulties in connection with the native problem. We have taken their country and we have a responsibility to them. I trust that with what is intended locally and with assistance from the Commonwealth we may be able to do more for the natives in future. It is noteworthy that many people participate in endeavours to cope with the native problem although they know little about it. I know the Minister and the Commissioner of Native Affairs will do their best to serve the interests of the natives in a spirit of true humanity.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth—on amendment): It occurs to me that the passage of time produces results. I feel that both the motion and the amendment arise somewhat

out of a reaction that is apparent on account of the feeling produced by the defeat of Referendum proposal No. 14, under which power was to be granted to the Commonwealth Parliament to deal with the people of the aboriginal race. There has been a clamour on the part of a section of the people who have raised their voices in the interests of the natives. The feeling has been generated that it is a problem that should be handled by the Commonwealth authorities, with the result that there is a tendency on the part of those who oppose the proposal to be up and doing.

Mr. Seward: You speak for yourself!

Mr. GRAHAM: Because the motion seeks to ask the Commonwealth Government for a grant, I suppose it rather means that no member of the House can do otherwise than support it. At the same time it should be generally acknowledged that a request for a financial grant made by a body that has no authority or responsibility in the matter is not likely to be viewed with great favour, and possibly the motion will not meet with much success.

Mr. Thorn: The Commonwealth would merely be giving us some of our own money back!

Mr. GRAHAM: I should certainly be surprised, although pleased, if the request were granted, because there is a general desire that the lot of the natives should be improved. At the end of the last financial year there was a surplus of approximately £40,000 and therefore only an additional £10,000 would be required—I do not think there would be any great difficulty in finding that amount—to enable the State to provide the requisite £50,000 to give effect to the objectives outlined in the motion.

Mr. Watts: You ask the Premier for it!

Mr. GRAHAM: I know that the Premier and Treasurer, whoever he may be, possibly develops a psychology making the answer to any such request necessarily in the negative. Perhaps that is because of the many requests that are forthcoming. I notice that while a lot of these champions of the rights that should be enjoyed by natives are very free with what they say, nevertheless if any provision is made for the native people in the vicinity of those who clamour the loudest their ardour very quickly cools off. It is all very well to speak in a general abstract way about the right of the native people to enjoy some semblance of life such

as the white people enjoy so that they may have some chance of developing into 100 per cent. citizens, nevertheless when their demands are acceded to in the slightest degree immediately there is a public outcry supported by practically everyone concerned. Previously these very righteous people were clamouring for the aborigines and half-castes to be brought into close proximity with the whites. I agree with those who say that a great deal of the outcry regarding the native population has a very distinct political flavour. I was pleased that the Minister was able to demonstrate with regard to one incident that has achieved somewhat of the nature of a classic in the sphere of criticism, that there was no substance whatever in the somewhat extravagant charges made.

Mr. Doney: Who made the extravagant charges?

Mr. Marshall: What do you want to know for?

Mr. GRAHAM: The member for Williams-Narrogin referred to the matter, although, of course, he did not level the charges himself. Those charges were circularised pretty freely from one end of Western Australia to the other. I feel, too, that because of the colour of the skins of the natives and half-castes their transgressions of the customs of the white race are brought more forcibly before the people than they would be were those sins committed by the whites. There are quite a few coloured people in East Perth where a number of residents are concerned because half a dozen or so of the natives may indulge in conversations that perhaps are not too silent. Naturally the natives have their love affairs and these, in the minds of some of the residents, constitute a scandal. On the other hand, exactly the same sort of conduct is indulged in by white people, not in isolated instances, but by their hundreds in the public parks, streets and elsewhere, and, comparatively speaking, nothing is said about it.

If an aboriginal happens to be a little the worse for liquor, which of course is an offence and in many cases is dangerous, there are many people who, with the best of intentions, raise their voices in horror at the sight and point the finger of scorn at the Department of Native Affairs for its lack of control. On the other hand, in the same locality of East Perth there are hundreds lolling about practically for 24 hours a day and imbibing methylated spirits; and

about them nothing is said. However, I have mentioned the matter to the authorities. In view of the bitter opposition to all the points, including the giving of any control whatsoever to the Commonwealth, I would point out that never at any time was it suggested that our aborigines should be controlled from a distance of 2,000 miles, from Canberra. The intention was that the national Parliament should have power to legislate for these people. A great many of those speaking for the natives were without qualification to do so. Yet now, within the space of a few short months, a feeling has been generated that the Commonwealth should have some responsibility with regard to these people. Even if the unexpected does happen and an annual grant of £50,000 is made for a period of three years—why only three years I do not know—as a general principle the proposal is wrong. We cannot expect to receive such assistance without granting a measure of control to the Commonwealth Government.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed.

MR. MANN (Beverley): I move an amendment—

That the following words be added:—
“and that a Royal Commission should, in the opinion of this House, be appointed by the Government of this State for the purpose of recommending the best method to be adopted for the better education and the moral and physical uplift of the natives of Western Australia, and particularly of the half-caste population.”

The member for East Perth said that he felt this was a mere pious resolution to be sent to the Commonwealth Government, and that it would have very little effect. We hear many pious motions and remarks here as to the marvellous ability of Ministers and of the Commissioner of Native Affairs and so on. For my part I do not wish to cast any reflections on either the Minister or the Commissioner.

The Minister for the North-West: You have become very modest!

Mr. MANN: The problem of the native is our own problem, not that of the Commonwealth. Let us be men enough to face this problem and solve it for ourselves. If the motion is carried, I hope the Government will appoint not a magistrate or a lawyer but a body of two or three men with practical commonsense and possessing a know-

ledge of the native question. Of all the letters and articles I have seen in the Press dealing with the question, the most common-sense expression of opinion is that printed in a recent "West Australian" over the signature of a lady named Jane Birt. That lady understands the native question. I have never been at Carrolup or Moore River; but I have in my electorate, Badjaling, a naked sandhill where natives congregate. The natives, when they finish their shearing contracts, congregate out there; and the greatest curse of the natives and half-caste has been the stupid Federal policy of child endowment.

There is at Beverley a gaming school run by a half-caste, and on Sundays as much as £100 is in the pool, a lot of the money being made up of child endowment. These people have existed for thousands upon thousands of years much as they are now, and they have different moral laws as we understand the subject. The young men and the young women are able to mate at an early age. We white people have not the faintest idea of dealing with them. I know a man named Gidgit who did a term of six years in Fremantle gaol. He issued from that institution a remarkably good tailor, and he can make a good speech. From the Press we learn that a full-blooded Australian native has gained a commission in the Army. I knew two such native soldiers in the last war, having fought by their side. However, the native I am speaking of is an absolute scoundrel. In my young days at school I sat beside a black boy and I have some knowledge of these people. In those days coloured children were allowed in the schools for white children. At present we are not helping the natives one bit to improve themselves. There should be some large open area where they can live and be trained to various trades, and they should be left to police themselves.

I know a native named Kickett who is a perfect stack-builder and one of the most competent farm hands, white or black, to be found in Western Australia. A native settlement has to be founded somewhere, either in the South-West, the Great Southern District, or the wheatbelt; and somebody must take care of these people. Many highly capable men and women can be met with in native camps; however, very few of them have an education. They are not allowed to attend picture shows in coun-

try towns, and they are an ostracised race not wanted by us. Would any man in this Chamber allow a son of his to marry a half-caste? That is the test. The moment a black or a half-caste attempts to associate with white people, there is a feeling of horror. There is no finer race today than the Egyptians. When tending the horses in our lines they used to chant a song beginning, "We are proud that we are black and not half-castes." We ourselves created a situation in which native women were prostituted by men of the lowest order.

If we said to a native that we were going to allow a white girl to marry him, what would result? But it happens that a white man marries a coloured girl. The women accept their responsibility. We have not sunk so low on this side of the House that we would make a political issue of this matter, as stated by some members opposite. In my district the young half-castes have spruced themselves up in the endeavour to copy some of the white people. I do not intend to cast any reflection on blacks in settled areas, but unless Western Australia can increase her population we shall in 50 years' time have in this State a colour question that will prove a very difficult problem indeed, because they average about eight in a family. The other day one came to me for the baby bonus for her sixteenth child, and she will probably have another ten before she finishes. I have seen good and bad classes of these people. Someone once said, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." We should not cast reflections on these unfortunate people who are born with a pigmentation in their skin while we are born white. I hope that the House will pass this amendment.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

BILL—MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th November.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [8.47]: This Bill is designed to overcome certain errors and omissions that have been found as a result of the working of the principal Act. In the few observations I intend to make, I propose to follow the line the Minister took when he selected the main

alterations that the Bill proposes. I first wish to deal with the alteration to the definition of "motor vehicle." The Minister has been good enough to let me have a copy of the minute from the Under Secretary dealing with the question of motor vehicles, and I shall refer to it later as I have mislaid it at the moment.

The Minister for Works: I hope you have not lost it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No. It has been a matter of surprise to find the reason for the new definition in this Bill which will make a trailer or semi-trailer or a caravan, when drawn by a motor vehicle, come within the definition of "motor vehicle." A caravan, trailer or semi-trailer in itself has no self-propelling parts. If it is not drawn by a motor vehicle, it possesses no more risk to the public than an unattended hand-cart or a dray or a caravan without a horse, because caravans are often drawn by horses. But when one of these vehicles is attached to a motor vehicle, it then becomes part and parcel of that motor vehicle, and therefore should be included in the policy issued in respect of the motor vehicle. It is suggested that that is difficult of accomplishment, but I hope the Minister will allow me to point out that it is only a matter of the language of the policy.

If the policy is drawn in a certain form, it will cover not only the portion of the motor vehicle that pulls, but the portion that is pulled, and the whole lot will be covered by the policy. But that was not done. I propose to ask the House to allow me to explain why it was not done. Apparently the premiums committee and the approved insurers came to the conclusion that when a motor vehicle was dragging behind it a trailer, semi-trailer or caravan the risk increased, and for that reason it was unanimously agreed in the first instance that they would charge an extra 5s. over and above the 27s. 6d. in respect of that motor vehicle. It was afterwards found that some persons so charged, one of whom I happen to know, refused to pay because it was alleged, and properly alleged, by those people who refused to pay, that a trailer, semi-trailer or caravan was not a motor vehicle within the meaning of the parent Act and that the only obligation imposed on any owner under that Act was to insure the motor vehicle, and that therefore the 5s. charge was illegal.

Although that is so, and although it is admitted, I believe, by the premiums committee that it is illegal, nevertheless it has been continued and, with the exception of a few who have refused, it has been paid generally.

What is the result of the amendment proposed in this Bill? The first and obvious result is that it will make that 5s. charge lawful, but it will unfortunately go a great deal further, because it will make a trailer, semi-trailer or a caravan in itself a motor vehicle and so liable to constitute a reason why the owner should pay on it the full license fee of 27s. 6d. although at present the only charge made is one of 5s. If the Minister can assure the House that only the 5s. charge will be made and nothing more, and that no attempt will be made, because it is a motor vehicle, to charge in respect of it the rate for a motor vehicle then much of the objection I see will be removed. But even then the position will be that if the user of that trailer is a person using a gas-producer plant, he will have to pay an additional fee of 5s., whereas, if he has his plant fastened on to the back axle of his car, he will pay nothing extra although the position will be exactly the same. He will either have a plant with the generating portion fastened to the back part of the car—generally on some grid sticking out from the rear bumper—or have it mounted on a small trailer which is pulled behind. The latter is done more especially in the country.

It is illogical to say to one man that he must pay 5s. more than the other. Yet that must be the result unless we make some provision that I cannot see any reasonable way of making. If we pass this measure—and I do not entirely oppose it—in this form, it certainly leaves it open to the premiums committee to make that charge, and members can be certain that that committee will make the charge. I wish to say a word about caravans because they come in a separate category. In the memorandum which the Minister was good enough to send to me, it was stated that caravans are used at all times behind motorcars for holiday purposes. But I understand from inquiries I have made that caravans are used for about a month, and no longer, of the whole year. In the summertime—the holiday time—the caravan is taken to some part of the country, and a man and his family live in it during their holiday.

The Minister has told us that the policy to be taken out under this third-party insurance risk must be taken out for 12 months, and that is what is done. The practice of the premiums committee is not to issue a policy under the parent Act except for the whole period of 12 months, although that is not at all within the law because what the parent Act provides is this—as the member for Mt. Hawthorn will remember—that the policy taken out under the third-party risk insurance Act is to be for the same length of time as the car is licensed for under the Traffic Act, and no longer. Consequently, these policies should be issued for three months, six months or 12 months. But in fact the practice of the premiums committee has been to insist on the policy being issued for only one term, namely, the whole 12 months. The result is that the owners of caravans who use them only for a single month in the year might be called upon to pay a policy equivalent to the fee for the whole year, which is 27s. 6d.

If the Minister is able to give an assurance, as he told me he thinks he can, that the charge will not exceed 5s., then much of that objection will be removed. The second amendment is one of very great use and one we can certainly support. Under the law as it stands, when the owner of a motor vehicle is applying to have it registered he has to make a statement that he has already under the parent Act a valid policy which is current and will remain current for the full period of the term that he is asking for the license in respect of his motor vehicle. At the same time, he must hand in a certificate from one of the approved assurers to the same effect. Therefore the statement is wholly redundant and the Minister has very properly suggested this amendment to strike it out. The third amendment enables local authorities to accept such other documentary evidence as they may choose for the purpose of satisfying themselves that there is in existence a policy which will cover the third-party risk in respect of the vehicle they are asked to license.

That again is a most desirable amendment, but I would like to point out that it does not in any way meet the difficulty that was promised to be dealt with in some way by the member for Mt. Hawthorn when he was Minister for Works. I refer

to the fact that those who apply for this legal protection are obliged to have a second policy for the ordinary comprehensive policy purposes. It was suggested at the time that there would be no great difficulty in amalgamating the two, but this will not prove so, because if the road boards, as suggested by the present Minister for Works, were to accept a mere third-party comprehensive policy as sufficient evidence, they would be acting wholly illegally. The ordinary comprehensive policy, although it covers the third-party risk, does not cover all the risks which must be taken by the insurer under the Act. The fourth amendment is to provide that an insurance policy issued under the Act will follow the vehicle outside the State. It is true and very unfortunate that seldom are we able to take trips to the Eastern States in our motorcars, though it is done sometimes. This is a very proper amendment. The fifth amendment is one of slight importance though very desirable, because it is the law in the Eastern States and in England. This is for the removal of the exclusion of the spouse or child or relative or servant of the owner from the benefit of the policy and also the removal of the exclusion of the guest passenger, so that in future the policy will cover all those parties instead of, as at present, those parties being excepted.

The present provision relating to the guest passenger, although it is common law apart altogether from any statute, is a particularly harsh one. If, when travelling along a road, a motorist was good enough to give someone a passage and an accident happened, the owner would be liable in an action by his guest passenger for damages. There are many cases on record in which that has been held. It is the common law in England because it is a liability which you incur for the person's safety if you take him on to your premises and a motorcar is regarded as premises. This amendment will merely bring that provision into effect in this State under this Act. Apart from this, the owner would be liable and not the insurance company. This amendment makes the insurer issuing the insurance policy liable. By including these provisions we make our position exactly the same as that which obtains in the Eastern States.

The sixth amendment is an important one and one on which I wish to speak at some length because it may have a considerable effect on the amount of premium that we who have cars will be called upon to pay. The amendment will make it compulsory for any car, in respect of which a policy has been issued, to carry the policy with it until the time for renewal. A person may be driving a car for which a policy has been issued by an approved insurer. The present position is that approved insurers are not compelled to take what is known as bad risks; they are not compelled to take everybody who proposes insurance. If a man proposes to insure and has a bad record in the Traffic Court or for accidents, brought about wholly or partly by his own negligence, the insurer does not accept his proposal. Under this amendment, if it becomes law, it would be possible for a person of that class to purchase a car in the second or third week in July—soon after the new license has come out—and to enjoy the whole benefit of the insurance for practically 12 months. That would really be obtaining cover by subterfuge.

Although this might mean some loss to insurers, the insurers themselves would not be at a loss. The moment they found the business was not paying for the risks accepted, they would add to the premium and make everybody pay. Consequently, everybody who owned a car and was a careful driver would be paying for the bad risk. The only objection that could be offered is this: If a man holds a driver's license, he should not be put off the road by reason of the refusal of insurance under this Act. However, if he does not get a policy of insurance, he is put off the road. Consequently, it may be said that if he is not to be deprived of a driver's license, he should be entitled to become insured. The proper answer to this is that he should be entitled to become insured, but he should be insured at a higher rate. There should be some provision whereby a person of that class with a bad record in the Traffic Court or a bad record for accidents would have to pay a higher rate. Then there would be no necessity for those who are ordinary prudent drivers, who have no record against them, and who wittingly do not break the law, to pay the higher rate. I ask the Minister to give this point consideration.

I am told that regulation 22 provides that motorists who sell a car must give notice, but the great majority of motorists never comply with it for the reason that they do not know of it. Even if they did comply with it, the insurer would have no means of doing anything. All he could do would be to communicate with the new owner, and that would be the end of it. If the amendment be passed, it should be in such a form that there is no possibility of the buyer getting protection unless he is approved by the insurer. That is perhaps the only amendment that contains a decided flaw. Amendment No. 7 provides for the insertion of a new Section 19A. This is a very proper and commendable amendment. It proposes 15 days' extension for the policy of insurance to correspond with the 15 days of grace allowed by the traffic office to people registering their cars. But there is one serious drawback and this is that it will apply only to policies of insurance that expire on the 30th June. It is the practice—though it is not right—to issue these policies from the 1st July to the 30th June, and it is also the practice of the Traffic Department to allow 15 days grace at the end of June; that is, up to the 15th July. But at all other times of the year, when a motorist goes to take out a license for a car, this will not apply. Nevertheless, it is a useful and commendable amendment.

The eighth amendment provides that where an employee is the owner of a motor vehicle and has taken out a policy under this Act, if he uses it in the business of his employer with the knowledge and consent of his employer, the employer is deemed to be protected under the Act. That is absolutely on a par with the provision ordinarily found in third-party comprehensive policies. It is a worthy and proper amendment. The ninth amendment is a provision that any alteration in the law automatically affects insurance under the Act. This is a very desirable and proper amendment.

The tenth amendment is one to Section 24 of the principal Act. This is an amendment to which I would like the Minister to give consideration. Under Section 24 of the Act, if a person is injured as a result of a collision in which motor vehicles are concerned, he is obliged to give notice of intention to claim damages within a month of the accident happening. That does not mean the claim for damages itself; it means the notice

of the claim, which is a very different matter, because a claim has to give particulars of the amount of damage suffered and how the responsibility lies on the owner to compensate the persons injured. Under the Act, the claim may be made at any time, but the notice of intention to claim damages must be made within one month. The Minister quoted reasons to show that the law is too harsh and should be altered. I agree that it is a harsh law and should be altered. But we have to take care in making an alteration that we do not go too far. We want to make it less harsh and easier for the bona fide claimant. We do not want to open the door to a malafide claim. There is nothing that lends itself so much to bogus claims as do motor accidents.

If, as the amendment suggests, notice of intention to make a claim can be served 12 months after the accident, it would be impossible for the owner or the insurer who represents the owner, to get the necessary evidence to meet the claim. Moreover, it may be alleged that something from which the claimant was suffering was the result of the accident and it would be impossible to meet it. Neither the owner nor the insurer would have sufficient notice to take steps to test whether what the man was suffering from was in truth the result of the accident. I am reminded that under the amending measure notice must be given as soon as practicable, but it was pointed out by the Minister, and rightly so, that it might be a very long time after the accident happened before the notice was given, and he even suggested that it might possibly run to the length of a year. The amending clause proposes to strike out the words "within one month after the date of the accident" and insert "as soon as practicable after the happening of the accident out of which such claim for damages arises and the claim for damages has been made within 12 months." So, after all, it will greatly depend upon the meaning attached to the phrase "as soon as practicable."

I am anxious to join the Minister in protecting bona-fide claimants, but I suggest in order to prevent confusion that we rely on Section 24 of the Act and provide that—

If in the opinion of the court any reasonable grounds are established for (a) delay in giving notice; or (b) the want of or any defect or inaccuracy in such notice, this shall not

be a bar to the maintenance of such action unless the court finds on evidence tendered before it that the defendant would be prejudiced by any such matter in a manner that could not be compensated for by a postponement in the trial of the action.

An amendment of that kind would protect a bona fide claim in every case; because the court, having the evidence before it, and the reasons why notice of intention to make the claim was not made within a month, two months or three months, would allow it if the evidence satisfied the court that the delay was bona fide. On the other hand, if the evidence did not so satisfy the court, or if it were shown by some evidence accepted by the court that to allow the claim on that late day would mean that damage would be done to the defendant which could not be compensated for, then the court would have the right to refuse it. But in those circumstances no bona fide claim would be shut out. It has been suggested that it does happen, as the result of an accident, that a person becomes incapable of taking any action. In fact, I myself in the course of my professional career appeared in court for a lady who was injured in an accident in Perth. She had forgotten everything. When she recovered from the accident she suffered a complete blackout of all her past life, and the only evidence that could be adduced was the evidence of other persons. She herself knew nothing of what had happened; she knew nothing at all about the fact that she had been injured, and so she was not in a position to give any evidence at all. It was only because we were able to get into touch, through the Press, with persons who had seen the accident that she was in a position to make a claim.

We do not want any claim to be shut out, and the course I have suggested will, I think, permit of bona fide claims being pursued. In all these respects I am speaking on behalf of the users of cars, not the insurers. Whatever happens in the way of increasing the cost, the insurer will pass the increase on to those who use the cars. Therefore I make this appeal to the Minister for consideration. It is entirely an appeal on behalf of users of cars and not of insurers. The measure is one which some people might treat as of little importance, but that is not the proper way to look at it because there are tens of thousands of people today who are users

of cars, and there will be tens of thousands of people using cars in the future. Almost every person in the United States of America nowadays uses a car. Almost every factory worker there goes to work in a car. If car production is carried on in Australia on a large scale that might happen here. In fact, the ownership of a car is no longer the property of the privileged or the wealthy class, or even of the improvident class; it is very largely the privilege of every one in the community. Almost every family has an old bus which is capable of being used on Sundays to take out the old lady and children. We must take care that we do not impose too heavy a burden on such people. We must take care that because they are using a motorcar, instead of a horse and buggy—if I may paraphrase Dr. Evatt—we are not going to penalise them. This is a Bill which, except for the few matters I have commented on, is one of very great deserts and I have much pleasure in commending it. I hope the matters upon which I have commented will be considered by the Minister.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I think we are indebted to the member for Nedlands for the very clear explanation of his views on this measure, and, indeed, for the meed of commendation which he gave to it at the finish, because the measure deserves all that he said of it. I wish to say that I agree with him in the point of view which he raised as to the definition of a motor vehicle, and the inclusion in that definition of things upon wheels which are sometimes drawn and sometimes hauled and so apparently become motor vehicles in consequence. We have had strange interpretations of traffic license fees, and we might have stranger definitions if the view of the member for Nedlands is correct. I would suggest that, in order to remove all manner of doubt, something should be inserted to make it quite clear that these articles upon wheels, if defined as motor vehicles, should not subject their owners to the extraction from them, by some enthusiastic local authority in search of revenue, of the license fee for an ordinary motor vehicle, thereby leading to interminable disputes.

We must not lose sight of the fact that this Bill, if it becomes an Act, will be closely associated with the Traffic Act. In fact,

for all practical purposes, it will become part and parcel of the Traffic Act, and therefore the interpretation of the one might easily become the interpretation of the other. I do not intend to cover the ground which has been so ably covered by the member for Nedlands; but I would like the Minister to direct his attention to the drafting of the new Section 19C, Subsection (2), because I must admit I find it extremely difficult to comprehend what the phrase means. The provision reads—

Where the owner of a motor vehicle . . . uses the vehicle in connection with or for the purposes of the performance of his service as a servant of the employer of such owner . . .

There seems to be at least one redundant word.

The Minister for Works: I read that provision about 12 times myself.

MR. WATTS: If the Minister can elucidate the mystery, or, alternatively, alter the provision so as to make it clearly understandable by the public, he will be doing a service both to the members of this House and to the public. I find it extremely involved and difficult to understand, if it has any meaning at all. If it has the meaning which I suspect it is intended to have it will be least understood by those who will be obliged to construe this measure when it becomes an Act. I wish also to ask the Minister to give sympathetic consideration to the views of the member for Nedlands upon the provisions of the amendment to Section 24 of the principal Act. It is quite unnecessary for me to attempt to put into words the same or similar thoughts as were expressed by the member for Nedlands, but I do think there will be times when the arbitrary provisions of this proposed amendment will be likely to work some hardship. That is not the intention of this third party insurance risk cover. The intention is to cover every case where injury or death to a person is caused by the use of a motor vehicle.

Therefore I feel sure the Minister would be prepared to make an exception to cover such cases as were mentioned by the member for Nedlands, which I believe could be done by adding a proviso not only to say that the failure to make a claim within the time limited shall not be a bar, if it is found the defendant is prejudiced, but also to allow an extension of time if it is shown that it was beyond the ability of the plaintiff

to make a claim within the time limit, either on account of the injury suffered by the accident or for some other good and sufficient reason. That, I think, might be left to the discretion of the court; but in its present form the provisions are arbitrary and quite likely in the future to undo in some instances to a certain extent the intention of covering everybody who is injured by a motor vehicle, whereas the obvious intention of the measure is to prevent anyone who is injured from being without a measure of redress. With these few observations I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): The member for Nedlands referred to the fact that financial hardship or injustice might be imposed upon the owners of trailers and caravans unless some assurance could be given that the premium rate to be charged for such vehicles would not exceed 5s. per annum. I am not in a position to give the member for Nedlands an absolute assurance in that direction, because under the Act there is an obligation on the premiums advisory committee to investigate the question of premium rates which should be charged, and then to submit a recommendation to the Government, which recommendation is adopted by the Government if it considers it to be fair and equitable.

Hon. N. Keenan: Would that give you the power?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was going to add that as far as the members of the Government are concerned, they would in all probability consider that the existing fee of 5s. which is charged for these vehicles would be fair and reasonable in all the circumstances. So I can say that the probability is that a premium rate not exceeding 5s. would be the premium rate finally adopted and applied to these vehicles. I am not able to express the same opinion or give the same undertaking with respect to vehicles which might come under the term "semi-trailer," because members will have noticed on the roads in recent months, a semi-trailer in the form of a vehicle for carrying passengers which is greater in size than any of the buses which were operated in this State prior to a year or so ago. It might be that in connection with semi-trailer

vehicles of this nature the premium rate to be applied would be in excess of 5s. and might, in fact, be in accordance with the existing premium rate for an ordinary passenger bus.

Reference was made by the member for Nedlands to the question of a composite policy. As at present worded, the Act allows of such a policy being issued by any approved insurer. Up to date no approved insurer has made such a policy available, but I think we might say, with a reasonable degree of confidence, that a composite policy may very well be made available to motorists before the commencement of the next licensing year. I understand that more than one insurance office is giving consideration to the practicability of acting along those lines. It is true that, in regard to making a policy of insurance continue to apply to any change of ownership in connection with a vehicle, a reckless or careless driver might get hold of a motor vehicle and of the insurance policy covering it and might do a lot of damage; and, as a result, there might be very big claims for insurance, with the consequence that premium rates would subsequently have to be increased. But those are possibilities I consider most unlikely to arise.

Insurance companies keep a very close check on what is going on in the motor world. They know the bad drivers just as well as the police know them; and when they find that, in any change of ownership as is contemplated in the Bill, a reckless driver comes into ownership of a vehicle and has the benefit of the insurance policy, they immediately place that policy in the bad risks pool, with the result that the pool carries the risks in that connection. So I think we can say that the risk visualised by the member for Nedlands, although one that might possibly come into existence, will be handled in a safe way by the insurance companies. The Leader of the Opposition made some reference to proposed new Section 19C, especially the first words. I admit the wording takes a good deal of understanding. It is not possible to understand it by reading it once; it might be necessary to read it a dozen times before one obtains a proper understanding of it. But I think that the sense of it is fairly well expressed. If I read it, leaving out certain words, mem-

bers will more clearly understand what it means. This is the substance—

Where the owner of a motor vehicle uses such vehicle in connection with his service as a servant of the employer of such owner, etc.

That is, in the service of the employer of the owner of the motor vehicle. I admit it could be made much clearer.

Mr. Doney: Who can conceive it would be the employer of the owner?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I were the owner of a vehicle, the member for Williams-Narrogin might be my employer.

Mr. Doney: Where does the "servant" come in?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I am the owner of a vehicle and I am working for the hon. member, I am the owner of the vehicle, and I am his servant, using that vehicle in his service. That is what is explained here, though I think it could be more clearly expressed.

Hon. N. Keenan: I think the language used is identical with that used in the ordinary commercial policy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It might be. It could be made clearer, but it covers the point, even if it covers it with a few more words than some people might think necessary. Maybe it is abundantly safe. If it is, I do not think we should meddle with it and make it less so. I listened with interest to the remarks of the member for Nedlands and the Leader of the Opposition regarding the period of time any person should have to lodge notice of his intention to make a claim. While something might be said for the points they raised, I am strongly inclined to think the amendment in the Bill is preferable, and I propose to stick to the Bill as worded.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—New sections. Policy of insurance to continue notwithstanding change of ownership of vehicles:

Mr. McDONALD: Paragraph (a) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 19A states that a policy—

shall not be cancelled or otherwise terminate solely by reason of a change of ownership of

the vehicle in relation to which the policy was issued.

By Section 19 of the parent Act the insurer has a right to terminate a policy at 14 days' notice. This right would relate—in most cases, if not in all—to a condition contained in the policy itself which would give rise to a right on the part of the insurer to terminate the policy. I am not suggesting what the condition might be; I have not examined a policy for some time. It might conceivably be drunkenness or something of that kind. It appears to me that this paragraph (a) might be capable of being read to restrict the right of an insurer to cancel or terminate a policy by reason of the change of ownership, and I suggest that the Minister might give consideration to inserting words to make the paragraph read—

shall not be deemed to be cancelled or otherwise deemed to terminate solely by reason of a change of ownership.

That would safeguard under Section 19 any proper right of the insurer to terminate the policy if there was a condition in the policy, for proper reason, justifying the insurer in terminating the insurance in relation to a change of ownership. My attention has been drawn to this particular reading by a legal practitioner. I think the Minister might consult his law advisers on that matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall do that. I move an amendment—

That a subsection be added to proposed new Section 19B as follows:—

"(2) Nothing in Subsection (1) of this section shall operate or be deemed or construed to operate so as to render any policy of insurance aforesaid liable to payment of further stamp duty in consequence of the currency of such policy being extended by the operation of this section."

This Bill proposes to extend the life of insurance policies for a period of 15 days beyond the expiry date set out in each policy. That is to coincide with the 15 days' grace allowed by the licensing authorities. Under the Stamp Act the policy would lose its legality if it were not stamped at the beginning of July. To overcome any such difficulty this amendment provides that notwithstanding what might be contained in any other Act the extension of any insurance policy for this period of 15 days should not

in any way cause the policy to be rendered illegal.

Mr. McDONALD: I think this amendment is desirable. The only question is that it is substantially an amendment to the Stamp Act. Those who consult the Stamp Act for the purpose of finding out the position may possibly form an opinion without realising that that Act has been amended by a section in the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act. I do not know whether the Minister would consider a complementary amendment to the Stamp Act so that the law relating to stamps will be contained in the Act relating to stamps.

The Minister for Works: Not this session.

Mr. McDONALD: This is a burning question in the legal fraternity, and for very good reasons too, quite apart from the general public. The law on a subject should be contained in the Act relating to that subject. The Guardianship of Infants Act amended the law relating to two or three different matters which were the subject of other Acts. That is very confusing. Mistakes might occur if the Land Act were amended by an amendment of the Bankruptcy Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There might be something in the hon. member's contention if a long period were being dealt with. Under this amendment the period is only 15 days. We can take it for granted that there will not be confusion amongst the legal fraternity, and even if there is I am sure there will not be amongst the motor-owning fraternity. If any lawyer wrongly advises a motor owner upon the legality of his insurance in connection with the 15 days' grace I am sure he will find out what is the position from elsewhere without any cost.

Hon. N. KEENAN: These policies are all for a year by the practice of the premiums' committee, not by the provisions of the Act. They run from the 1st July to the 30th June. The motorist will get no advantage from this so-called period of grace because he will have to pay for it. The approved insurer would send a notice in June stating that the insurance ends at the end of June and that the motor owner must re-insure. If he does he pays 27s. 6d., and if he takes the 15 days' grace he pays the 27s. 6d. also. It is not worth talking about.

Mr. McDONALD: May I mention the Emperor Caligula? He hit on the happy expedient of trying to trap the wealthy people

into some breach of the law and then fining them immense sums of money to the great advantage of the Treasury. He achieved his objective very simply. He wrote his laws, which he was able to make on his own account without any instruction of Parliament, in very small handwriting and put them at the top of very tall pillars. The general public could not read them without the aid of a ladder, and so passed them by. They were heavily fined and the Emperor was successful. I do not compare the Minister with the Emperor, nor am I suggesting any serious legal danger regarding this amendment, but I am anxious to preserve the principle that amendments to the Stamp Act should be in the Stamp Act and that amendments to the Land Act should be in the Land Act.

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

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 24.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 before the word "Section" the figure "(1)" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That a subclause be added as follows:—

"(2) Subsection (1) of this section shall have effect and shall be deemed to have had effect and to have been in operation as from and including the date of the commencement of the principal Act."

This clause aims to increase the period during which notice of intention to make a claim may be made. The present limit is one month. The Bill seeks to make the period, during which notice of intention to lodge a claim is given, as soon as practicable after the occurrence of the accident, and to provide that the claim itself must be lodged within 12 months of the date of the accident. Normally this proposed amendment would not operate retrospectively, so that any person involved in an accident that occurred between the 1st July of this year and say a month ago, in connection with which no notice of intention to lodge a claim has been made, would obtain no assistance under this measure. I have had brought to my notice two cases of severe accidents where neither of the persons concerned was able, because of the

severity of his injuries, to lodge notice of intention to make a claim within a period of one month. In one case the insurance company took advantage of the provision in the Act and refused to take any notice of a claim. In the other case the insurance company has not yet made up its mind whether it will or will not take notice of a claim and make some settlement.

The facts of the two cases are set out in writing, and, if any member would like to see them for his own information, I will make the papers available. It is desirable to make this amendment retrospective to the 1st July of this year, no matter how much we may dislike retrospective legislation. In both the cases referred to, the two persons suffered severe head injuries and were incapable for at least a month after the accident of knowing much about what had happened, let alone taking legal action. A great majority of the people do not know much about what is contained in Acts of Parliament that have been on the statute-book for years, and that position is still more applicable to a new Act such as the one this Bill seeks to amend. In an endeavour to protect and assist any person who has suffered from an accident of the nature I have described, and has not lodged notice of intention to make a claim, members should accept the amendment.

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

Clause 9, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1944-45.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 16th November; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £201,730 (partly considered):

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [9.56]: The Minister's report on his department covers activities over an amazingly wide area, very much wider, I suppose, than has previously been embodied in any report by any Minister in any one year. The Minister conveyed the impression of being in adequate touch with all the projects on which he reported. Nevertheless, it struck me that these activities were really too diverse and far-reaching, and involved such huge outlays as to be beyond the complete

comprehension and effective control of one Minister.

Mr. Withers: Too good to be true?

Mr. DONEY: No, but perhaps there should be an eighth member on the front bench, if the hon. member agrees to take my remark that way. I am not questioning the competency of the Minister for the part; far from it, but I point out that the work of the department is growing rapidly heavier as the weeks pass by. Members have only to think of the present water supply needs as created by the greatest drought in the State within living memory; the public works routine jobs, operations at Wundowie and Chandler; the work for the Army, Navy and Air Force, for the British Government, the United States Government, the Dutch Government and the Commonwealth Government, and jobs like shipbuilding, as well as the compilation of the State's list of post-war works. The only relief I can imagine that can safely be anticipated would come from a lessening of certain constructional work for the Services. I think that, with the exception of public works routine operations, all these new jobs will require specialised knowledge on the part of the responsible Minister. It would appear, therefore, as if the Minister's part will become inevitably more laborious and that effective oversight will be too much for one man.

The Premier happens not to be in his seat; otherwise it would have been noticed that I have been directing my remarks particularly to that gentleman. Dealing with post-war works, the Minister had a good deal to say that was most unpalatable, certainly to me and I dare say it had the same effect on other members who listened as keenly as I did to what the Minister had to say. Nor, for that matter, was the Minister himself at all happy in what he had to impart. Not that I blame him; certainly I do not. On that occasion he was just the unfortunate mouthpiece of the Commonwealth Government which, as I see it, is defaulting on its obligations to the people of this State and for that matter of all the States. For the past three years the Commonwealth Government has been leading the States to understand that upon the cessation of hostilities the rural centres in particular and the whole of Australia generally would start on intensive building and general planning for such industries as

seemed to befit production and conditions in the several local centres concerned. The idea was, of course, that the Commonwealth Government would finance or assist in financing in selected circumstances.

Although the local government bodies were asked to submit, and of course submitted, their plans to a central body in each State, at the same time the individual States were to draw up their own more ambitious plans, the assumption being that the sum total of the Government and semi-Government financial needs would be submitted to the Commonwealth Treasurer for what was hoped would be his favourable consideration. Somehow a nut seems to have got loose somewhere, and matters are not working out according to plan—much to everybody's uneasiness and discontent. The Minister apparently had the task handed to him of providing a soft place for the Commonwealth Treasurer to fall upon. Members may recall that the Minister used some very assuaging words. He told the Committee that there was an idea at one stage that the State Governments would be able to develop proposals and place them before the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance, and by that means formulate what might be called a long-term policy of development.

The Minister therefore does not blame the Commonwealth Government; rather does he seek to give the impression that we all of us inadvertently misunderstood the Commonwealth Government's intentions. He continued that for quite a long time and he himself entertained the same idea as did the others in regard to what the Commonwealth Government intended. Then he proceeded to disclose that for the first two years after the war the Commonwealth Government would not grant any financial help in regard to any proposals from the State Governments, the Commonwealth Government's stated reason being that already the State Governments would have sufficient to do in attending to the heavy accumulations of essential and urgent State works delayed owing to the war, and that the States must finance those works themselves. That same principle, the Minister went on to explain, must be regarded as applying to local government authorities also. It may be imagined that all those who understood the purport of the Minister's information were perturbed, I suppose to the extent of being even

angry, at this startling change in the attitude of the Commonwealth Government with regard to post-war planning in all the States. No sound grounds were advanced by the Minister to explain that change. Grounds were advanced, but the Minister himself would admit privately that they were not sound grounds by any means. The Minister has asked us to agree that there is an accumulation of urgent work, to which matter I have referred. We do agree. There obviously will be that accumulation, but the point is that this has been obvious all along. For that matter it had been obvious to the Commonwealth Government.

This cannot possibly therefore be any new-found view on Mr. Chifley's part. So we say to the Commonwealth Government, "You have told us the official reason for this amazing change. Now tell us just exactly what is the real reason." Meantime I suppose we feel as though the Commonwealth Government has sold us for a great deal less than our true value. At the moment my principal concern is for the one thing that matters most, the one thing that in my opinion is basic to all others; that is to say, the effect that these disclosures have upon this State's water schemes and particularly upon the big reticulation scheme based on Wellington Dam, on the active pursuance of which the central Great Southern is so vitally dependent. The present proposal is to raise the retaining wall of the Wellington Dam from 75 feet to 135 feet, and thus to increase the conservation in that dam from 7,500,000 gallons to 38,000,000 gallons, and thereafter to reticulate the water to the towns along the Great Southern railway and to centres east and west of the railway, particularly of course to the east.

With respect to the plan to which I have referred, that and the Mundaring plan will be put in hand early. That much at least seems to be assured, and I am informed that it is so. But both schemes will stop apparently when they are only half-way towards completion. As for the other plans, the industrial plans, those have received a heavy blow indeed. Not yet, however, are we in possession of all the facts, and so we cannot finally judge, but it looks as though the State has been duped in a first-class fashion and must mark time for the next two years and possibly more. Therefore, all the hopeful talk there has been

about decentralisation and about country towns coming into their own is now shown to have been largely mere talk. What we have to understand—and there is no other interpretation of the Minister's words than this—is that there can be no financial aid from the Commonwealth Government for two years after the war; and, of course, there is no one here who, in the circumstances I am outlining, can have any idea how long two years will take to pass by—very considerably more than 24 months, say. It is a bitter pill to swallow. I submit to the Committee what a big senseless joke the whole business appears to be developing into. It is with much regret that I have to voice an opinion of this kind in this Chamber. The State Government and country towns apparently must wait until competitors have scooped the cream from the old and the new markets. Not until then, that is, at the end of two years following the conclusion of the war, when we have been handicapped by the major changes which we anticipate, will the Commonwealth Government permit us to commence competitive operations.

The Minister for Works: What do you mean by competitive operations?

Mr. DONEY: I mean, to engage in the type of industry which clearly would bring us into competition with similar industries in other countries, say, the islands to the north of Australia, or for that matter the overflow in the way of goods from the Old Country, the United States and European countries. So we are, as I am saying, disappointed and, for that matter, angry. I have no doubt in my own mind that the Minister is angry, too. I do not see how he could possibly be otherwise, for he very plainly has now to set about a reconstruction of that long list of public works to which he has given so many laborious hours.

The Minister for Works: All the reconstruction you are talking about has been completed.

Mr. DONEY: So far as the work on paper is concerned, I take it. That must be what the Minister is referring to; but I take it that to a large extent the work will have to be reconstructed.

The Minister for Works: It is well forward.

Mr. DONEY: But the rather easy path which the Minister intended to follow can-

not now be followed. I am not blaming the Minister. There will be this long period of marking time to which I referred a moment ago. I wish it were otherwise. My own town of Narrogin and similar centres throughout Australia have all very hopefully submitted their lists to the properly constituted authorities, and now they have to hold their enthusiasm in check for a couple of years or so. By that time there will be coming in from competitive sources the very goods that we had anticipated being able to produce in our own State.

I can see Mr. Chifley's conclusions in regard to this matter causing very considerable heartburning throughout Australia. We agree with the Minister that a big amount of repair and structural work, especially in the railways and in the building trade, will absorb many men, but surely not in such large numbers as will interfere to any extent with necessary and profitable progress in other directions. Railway work, for instance, will be largely, after all, for technicians and tradesmen previously occupied in that type of work. So, too, although not perhaps to the same extent, will the building trade be affected. Water supplies—a subject in which I regret to say I am deeply involved and have been for many years—are in a class of their own. Those members who have had experience of water difficulties in the Great Southern district and in other parts of the State will always place water supply as the No. 1 priority in any list of works to be undertaken by a Government.

Mr. Watts: It is No. 1 priority.

Mr. DONEY: I have tried to express to the Minister my appreciation of that fact.

Mr. Watts: But it is the wrong one.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister, fortunately, is amenable to persuasion. I cannot help thinking that of all our needs none can possibly be of the same urgency as is water. Water is basic to all other activities; it cannot be otherwise. Industry must follow water; industry cannot with any safety precede water. Yet, even in regard to water supply plans there are now to be weaknesses unless the Commonwealth Government can be persuaded to change its mind on this unfortunate matter.

Mr. North: There might be another Government in those days.

Mr. DONEY: I cannot see any Government, even the present one, being too keen on office in two years' time and cleaning up the accumulation of bad things that will certainly be in existence then. Still, it might be a great deal better than we think. I was saying that even in regard to water supplies a weakness is now apparent. As I read the Minister's remarks, the jobs at Wellington and Mundaring are to be taken halfway and left there, necessarily so, because in that particular stage funds that will be available from our own Treasury will be exhausted. The retaining walls are to be raised at Wellington and Mundaring. Water will be present there in absolutely huge quantities, such as two years ago we would never have visualized, but we shall not be able to use it, because, as I just pointed out and now repeat, we shall be waiting on the Commonwealth Government for financial help as from that stage. It may be conceivable that I am not correctly interpreting the information given to the Committee nearly three weeks ago by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: You certainly have been off the track in regard to the last two or three items.

Mr. DONEY: If I have been off the track in regard to the two years' lag so far as financial aid is concerned, I am very glad indeed that the Minister can tell me that I have been making a mistake. I fervently hope I have, because it is certainly a huge crude ill-formed sort of plan to launch upon a trusting people like the Australians.

Mr. Watts: The practice at Kalgoorlie is not the practice at Narrogin, whether you are off the track or not.

Mr. DONEY: That is so; but there is a chance the Minister may adopt our view on the priority question. Priority at the moment favours Mundaring and not Wellington. Still, if I did hear him aright, I would ask the Minister whether he will not agree to discuss later with me and other members proposals for the complete job at Wellington—that is structural, reticulation, headworks and everything else right down to the laying on of the water to those who require it. I do not need, at this juncture, again to tell the Minister or the House of the plight of those along the Great Southern and eastwards therefrom. Both man and beast are suffering severely, and the worst in that regard is yet to

come. Many towns have no water at all; I might name a list of them. There are one or two that have a little water, but that little is unlikely to last for more than a month. Brookton, Wickiepin, Corrigin, Dumbleyung, Lake Grace—all those places are either without water or have so little that there might just as well be none.

Other towns have extremely little—less in all those cases than ever before. I therefore content myself with saying that we have suffered extreme water shortages at Narrogin and in that section of the Great Southern for the last 25 years, long before I went down there. I naturally put the question, on behalf of the people: When is this thing to stop? Surely it will come to an end some time! I want to know whether the Treasurer will not let his mind rest on the vital need for a change in the Government attitude towards my part of the State. I would like the Premier to submit to the Federal Treasurer a plea for money to enable the quickest possible implementation of the Wellington scheme. Ordinary fair play and, for that matter, economic commonsense as well—both those considerations demand such action to be taken without delay.

I submit to the Minister for Works and to the Premier and to the front bench generally that successive Governments—whether of the particular colour of my friends opposite or Nationalist or Country Party or composite Governments—have all been, for years past, what I might term east-west Governments. We want a Government that looks north and south, that looks north-east and north-west and south-east and south-west, too. In time our economic undoing might be due to gluing our eyes only and all the time to that stretch of country running in a thin line as it were, from Fremantle, through the metropolitan area and on to the Golden Mile taking in, of course, the country between the Golden Mile and the metropolitan area—that narrow strip on either side.

Mr. Watts: Always marching towards the rising sun!

Mr. DONEY: Yes. I do not regard this in a joking way. All water supply matters are too serious to be regarded other than in a serious manner. All the water supply schemes in the past have been concerned with the needs of the metropolitan area and the Golden Mile. I do not know of any

scheme of any consequence away from that particular strip of country.

The Minister for Works: The member for Murray-Wellington could tell you of one.

Mr. DONEY: I must have been regarding the territory over which the hon. member governs—for want of a better word—as being on the outer fringe of the metropolitan area. I ask the Minister: What can he do in this matter? I believe he will be sympathetic towards the idea of hooking, as it were, this Wellington-Great Southern water scheme out of the general waiting list and giving it special attention. Any Government with the interests of the State at heart—and all Governments I suppose claim to have that—should surely see the reason for letting all sections and all parts of the State move forward, as it were, on an even front. We in the country districts do not like seeing that strip of country. I have been referring to right away out in the van of progress and the country districts slogging along higgledy-piggledy in the rear. I have something here which I wish to read to the House. It is a cutting from “The West Australian” headed “Water Supplies. Federal Conservation Scheme.” It is dated Canberra, November the 13th, and reads—

The Minister for Commerce (Mr. Scully) said tonight that he estimated that £25,000,000 would be needed for water conservation and irrigation schemes for the eastern areas of Australia. The New South Wales Government was working out a huge water conservation scheme as a post-war work and—

I hope the Minister is listening to this particular line—

—he felt confident that the Commonwealth Government would assist it and similar plans which other States would put up. Any form of post-war rural development was worthless unless it was preceded by a proper water conservation scheme for inland areas of Australia.

I would point out that this appeared two or three days before the date on which the Minister made his announcement—the one I referred to as affecting financial aid from the Commonwealth Government—in this House, and I cannot see the one dovetailing into the other too well. When Mr. Scully intimated the willingness of the Commonwealth Government to provide £25,000,000 for this work and said that more was to be added to the total he must at that time have been in possession of the

very information regarding advances that the Minister passed on to this House. The deduction I want to draw is that if this leniency on the part of Mr. Chifley is possible in the case of New South Wales, equally should it be possible in the case of this and any other State.

My colleague has reminded me on two or three occasions that the scheme having the Mundaring dam as its base has been given a priority by the Minister. Perhaps it is not exactly a priority, but if there is to be any such thing the priority will be given to the Mundaring scheme. It may be possible for the two schemes to be commenced and carried on concurrently. If, nevertheless, the manpower position is such that men can be found for only one scheme, so that the other must wait awhile, the No. 1 priority would go to Mundaring. I point out to the Minister that Mundaring surely cannot have the same urgent claim to priority as we have. It is well known that when the Canning dam was opened, about 1939, the metropolitan area, and, of course, the Goldfields, were supplied from Mundaring with assistance from Churchman's Brook and other relatively minor sources.

At that time those services were ample for the needs of the metropolitan area and the Goldfields. It was rarely indeed that there were any shortages such as to affect the supplies to householders. Since then those districts have been given the benefit of twice the amount of water that they had prior to the Canning scheme and now, strange to say, at a period like this, despite these supplies, which we would never expect to overtake except by a miracle in the next 50 years, this is regarded as being the No. 1 priority over and above the Great Southern which is in a worse position than ever and its future is in danger. That is no exaggeration. I think they are strong enough grounds to require the Minister to reconsider this matter. Priority should be given to the Wellington scheme. I leave the matter at that. This would normally be a contribution to the Loan Estimates, but it seemed desirable to deal with it under the Revenue Estimates because the Minister followed that course himself. Personally I am glad he did.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington): The activities of the Works Department are regarded by us as an indication of what progress the State is making, but of course

the fact that we are still at war greatly curtails the activities of this department. Nevertheless it was interesting to hear the Minister introduce his Estimates and to hear him tell us about the works his department carried out for the Defence Department. There is no doubt that there is going to be a keen demand for public works when we reach the post-war period. Whether it be the present Minister or some future Minister I think that he will have a record number of requests made to him. Probably every district throughout the State will be appealing to the Minister to put some particular works in hand. The Minister told us that consideration had been given by his department to post-war planning. As a member of the Parliamentary Post-war Reconstruction Committee I know that a great deal of consideration has been given by the department administered by the Minister to post-war planning.

I hope that early in the new year the Minister will call the Post-war Reconstruction Committee together. As a member of that committee I found it most interesting and that the Minister was anxious to give us all the information that he possibly could. We had to treat it as confidential until he made a public announcement. I regret that we have lost as a member of that committee the valuable services of the former member for Greenough, Mr. Patrick. I am looking forward to some other member replacing him. I am sure that whoever does will be of value to the committee. The Minister told us that we would not obtain any assistance from the Commonwealth Government for two years in the post-war period. I was naturally sorry to hear that, yet I can understand it. We all realise that the Commonwealth Government will have tremendous responsibilities in connection with post-war reconstruction and it will have a heavy call upon its finances and upon manpower as well. I did hope that the pronouncement of the Minister would not result in the holding up the public works programme that has been indicated to us. We should have a priority list tabled so that every member of this House can see what is proposed to be done in the post-war period.

The Minister did indicate a large number of works proposed to be carried out. It would be a good plan to have a list of those works in order of their priority. I know that even if we have a priority list certain

circumstances will arise which will mean an alteration in regard to it. There might be an acute shortage of water supplies in some district, a willy-willy in another and so it goes on. Such works would take priority, but ordinarily I do not think there would be any difficulty in drawing up a priority list.

The Minister for Lands: There would be a hurricane of protest against the Murray-Wellington district having too many priorities.

Mr. McLARTY: I do not think so. Anyhow I am prepared to run that risk. The member for Williams-Narrogin referred to water conservation. This would be, and I am sure it will, one of the most important works in the post-war period. Right throughout Australia this work will be given priority. I do not often go to the pictures, but I went the other night and saw a picture of the Riverina in New South Wales undergoing the worst drought it has ever experienced. It was most unpleasant even to sit and look at it, but it did indicate to me—it was a sort of propaganda picture—the need for water in our dry areas, and what conservation of water would mean in the way of prevention of losses of stock, losses of earnings and the misery which drought brings. I feel that the Government is justified to the limit in going ahead with water conservation wherever possible. The Minister referred to the fact that the capacity of the Wellington and Mundaring Reservoirs is to be greatly increased. I do not think there will be any opposition to those proposals, but I ask him whether the contemplated early post-war work on those reservoirs will have any effect on work at the Stirling Reservoir; that is, the catchment which supplies the irrigation water in the Harvey area. The irrigationists in that area are particularly anxious that this undertaking should be put in hand as early as possible. In view of the other works which the Minister contemplates, I trust that this urgent and necessary work at the Stirling Reservoir will not suffer. Perhaps the Minister will be able to give some information about the Stirling Dam proposals when he replies.

Reference has been made to town water supplies, and the member for Williams-Narrogin gave a list of the towns in the Great Southern that are short of water. I would remind the hon. member that the

towns in the Great Southern are not the only ones where there is a shortage of water. Even in the South-West, where we have the heaviest rainfall, a number of towns are short of water and the people have considerable difficulty on that account.

Mr. Leslie: And in the wheatbelt we have no water at all.

Mr. McLARTY: The hon. member will have an opportunity later to speak about that. In Pinjarra, we have a river flowing through the centre, and the town water supply is taken from it, but unfortunately the water has become not too much to the liking of the people. Owing to the salt content, it is not fit for human consumption or for domestic purposes generally. Despite the fact that the local authority has gone to considerable cost to put in that scheme, the indications are that it will become of less value as time goes on. I am hoping that something can be done to give us a water scheme to serve Pinjarra. It should not be a difficult matter to store water in the hills and supply it by gravitation. Provision has been made to supply the town of Waroona with water, and I hope this will be done as soon as circumstances permit. It is a growing town and the need for water there has become acute.

I draw the Minister's attention to the Dandalup River and ask whether he has any information regarding that stream. In reply to a question a week or two ago, he stated that practically all the streams on this side of North Dandalup were reserved for future metropolitan requirements. The Dandalup, however, is a good river, and I believe that a considerable quantity of water could be conserved there and that probably that portion of the country could be irrigated. I was interested to read in the "Hansard" of the Victorian Parliament of the 23rd September, 1944, a statement by the Premier of that State when introducing his Estimates. When dealing with public works he said—

The Government has decided to assist farmers in obtaining permanent water supplies either from underground or by the provision of suitable storages on their properties. This assistance would take the form of advances repayable over a period of years at a low rate of interest. The sum of £5,000 will be expended for experimental bores in areas where it is believed suitable underground waters exist in order to test the possibility of irrigation development from this source.

If it is possible for the Victorian Government to do something to help the farmers to get permanent water supplies on their holdings, I suggest to the Minister that our Government should give consideration to a similar proposal. I notice also that in Victoria attention is being given to sewerage works. In order to enable country municipalities to carry out important post-war work, the Victorian Government is subsidising the local authorities on a pound-for-pound basis. There again, if the Victorian Government can subsidise its local authorities, I think the Western Australian Government might also give consideration to such a proposal. Sewerage is a work that could be very profitably carried out in many country towns. It would be a work from which the Government would get its money back, and if it was necessary to provide employment at some future date, the money could well be spent in this direction.

I suggest, also, that the schools having a large number of children in attendance should be sewered in the near future. The present sanitary conditions at country schools—I am not well acquainted with the position in the city—are very undesirable from a health point of view. The provision of a sewerage system at all schools eventually but the immediate provision of such facilities for schools having a large number of children in attendance is highly desirable. If the Minister for Education had his way, he would see that such work was carried out. The Minister, when introducing his Estimates, referred to the proposal to erect a power house at South Fremantle. He said that if a favourable report was received by the Government regarding the construction of a power-house in the South-West, the provision of a power-house at South Fremantle would not delay the South-West power scheme by one second. I have no reason to doubt the Minister's sincerity. I am quite sure that what he told us, he believed to be the case. Again, I think he is right when he said that a power house is needed at South Fremantle to meet the requirements of the metropolitan area and surrounding districts. But I am wondering whether the financial position is likely to hold up the South-West power scheme, or whether the Government will be able to finance both schemes simultaneously. That was the only doubt in my

mind. I take it the Minister knows that the machinery for both works will be available at the same time, as well as the general equipment.

The Minister for Works: I did not say both schemes would be carried out at the same time.

Mr. McLARTY: No; but the Minister said that one scheme would not delay the other at all. I hope that the South-West power scheme will soon be put into operation as a post-war work.

The Minister for Mines: Has the departmental committee reported yet?

Mr. McLARTY: No; but the Minister expects a report early in the new year, and from what he said I thought he was optimistic in regard to what the report would be. The Minister also told us that a few local governing bodies had not yet submitted their programmes of post-war works. I do not know the names of those local governing bodies, but I do submit to the Minister that the people of those districts should not be penalised because post-war programmes have not been submitted to the Government. And at this stage I would suggest to the Minister that those particular local governing bodies should be asked, if they have a post-war programme, to submit it immediately. I certainly think it is a very lax local governing body which up to this stage has done nothing at all in regard to its post-war programme. The last thing I want to touch on is our roads. I think the Minister said the Main Roads Board has a reserve of £1,600,000.

The Minister for Works: No. I said it had £1,600,000 approximately to spend in the two years after the war.

Mr. McLARTY: The local governing bodies have also reserves amounting to a great sum of money. Construction of roads will give employment, and there again I think a priority should be drawn up. Personally I think the more, within reason, this country is crossed by roads, the better. There is a tremendous amount of road work required throughout the settled portions of the State. Anyhow, I just repeat in conclusion that I think there should be a priority drawn up in regard to roads, so that we may know where new roads are going to be constructed and what is going

to be done with our main and feeder roads generally.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.54 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 30th November, 1944.

	PAGE
Question: Service personnel, as to legislation for preference	2126
Bills: Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment (No. 2), 1R.	2126
Metropolitan Milk Act Amendment, 2R.	2126
Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment, 1R.	2126
Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, 1R.	2126
Loan £975,000, 2R.	2126
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, 2R.	2134
Western Australian Turf Club (Property) Private, 2R.	2138

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

QUESTION—SERVICE PERSONNEL.

As to Legislation for Preference.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: As legislation regarding preference in employment for returned service personnel is already in force in Victoria and New South Wales, and has been introduced in the Queensland Parliament, does the Government intend this session to bring down a measure for preference in employment for returned service personnel in Western Australia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The whole matter is under consideration.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by the Chief Secretary and read a first time.

BILL—METROPOLITAN MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [4.37]: I propose to support the second reading of the Bill, but there are a few remarks I would like to make regarding the whole milk industry and I take it that this is an opportune time to do so. When the organisation and control of the