

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 21st November, 1956.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 5.15 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS.

### KENT RIVER MILL.

#### *Sale of Houses.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is it proposed to sell the houses at Kent River mill?

(2) If so, will they be sold privately, by tender or by auction?

(3) Also, if so, is he willing to give ex-employee-tenants of the houses priority in regard to any sale?

(4) If the houses are to be sold, what terms would be available to a purchaser, particularly an ex-employee?

(5) If the houses are to be sold, when will the sale take place, and what notice will be given to existing tenants?

The MINISTER replied:

It will be necessary to hold a full-time employee at Kent River mill for the whole of 1957 in a caretaker capacity and a decision on the future of housing at this centre is unlikely within the next six months or so. In the meantime houses are available at moderate rentals. Ex-employees were offered rental at a nominal figure of 5s. weekly for the six months following the closure of the mill on the 27th July last. Some partly completed houses and huts have been, or will be, disposed of by tender.

## RAILWAYS.

### *(a) Discontinuance of Lines and Alternative Transport.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What additional facilities will be provided at unattended rail sidings for storage and reconsignment of goods transported by rail to proposed terminal points under the Government's scheme to discontinue rail traffic on certain lines?

(2) Is it proposed to have a priority system of transport by road from suggested rail terminal points for such items as wool, wheat, machinery, vegetables, perishables, potatoes, timber, butter, etc.? If so, what are the full details?

(3) Is it intended that the W.A.G.R. road service handle all freight, or will private road transport contractors be permitted to compete?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Where lines are closed, the alternative arrangements for transport will have regard for the provision of suitable facilities for receipt and trans-shipment of goods, although the facilities at proposed terminal points will in most cases be either equal to or superior to those at sidings on the subject lines.

(2) It is not anticipated that there will be any need for a priority system as the aim will be to provide adequate transport to meet the demands of traffic offering.

(3) Where railway road services already operate in or near areas affected by railway closures, it has been recommended that those services be improved or expanded as necessary to meet the demand. In other areas, the proposal is to utilise the services of private road contractors. In either case, heavy and bulky traffic such as wheat, fertiliser, timber and livestock would be conveyed by private operators or by farmers, etc., themselves.

*(b) Cost and Revenue, Naval Base-Kwinana Line.*

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

(1) What was the total cost of the construction of the railway line from Naval Base to Kwinana?

(2) What has been the total revenue to date from this line?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

	£
(1) Costs to date—	
Construction ....	163,413
Land resumption ....	13,627
Total ....	<u>£177,040</u>

(2) From April, 1955, to October, 1956, the total gross revenue was £29,798.

*(c) Losses on Gnowangerup-Ongerup Line.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Transport:

Regarding the question I asked on Tuesday, the 20th November, dealing with the loss on the Gnowangerup-Ongerup line, what portion of each of the annual losses mentioned is attributable to interest and sinking fund charged?

The MINISTER replied:

	1952-53 £	1953-54 £	1954-55 £
Interest ....	5,117	5,288	5,990
Depreciation ....	<u>4,969</u>	<u>4,722</u>	<u>5,483</u>
Totals ....	<u>£10,086</u>	<u>£10,010</u>	<u>£11,473</u>

*(d) Opening of Gates at Crossings.*

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

(1) For what reasons are the Milligan-st. and Pier-st. railway crossing gates closed at all times?

(2) Would he give consideration to the opening of these gates to relieve traffic congestion at peak periods?

(3) Is it possible to open the Lord-st. crossing gates at more frequent intervals?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) On account of interruption caused by the frequent passage of trains and constant shunting movements.

(2) This would not be practicable as railway movements also are intensified at peak periods.

(3) No. Train working makes it impossible to open these gates at more frequent intervals.

**ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL.**

*Cost, Revenue and Expenditure, etc.*

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What was the capital cost of the Royal Perth Hospital, including buildings, plant, equipment, furniture and furnishing, at the 30th June, 1954, 1955, 1956?

(2) How many beds were available at the 30th June, 1954, 1955, 1956?

(3) How many—

(a) permanent medical staff;

(b) nurses and probationers;

(c) office staff;

(d) all other employees

were on the staff at the 30th June, 1954, 1955, 1956?

(4) What were the total salaries paid to—

(a) permanent medical staff;

(b) nurses and probationers;

(c) office staff;

(d) all other employees

for the years ended the 30th June, 1954, 1955, 1956?

(5) What was the total maintenance cost of the hospital for the years ended the 30th June, 1954, 1955, 1956?

(6) What was the revenue received by the hospital for the years ended the 30th June, 1954, 1955, 1956?

(7) (a) Was there a profit or a loss shown by the hospital for the years ended the 30th June, 1954, 1955, 1956?

(b) In either case what were the financial results for the three years mentioned?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The records concerning the hospital date back approximately 100 years and the research required to secure the figures asked for by the hon. member will take some time. It is felt quite possible that some figures relating to older buildings will not be available, but the information will be sought.

(2) Beds available—

The 30th June, 1954 ....	624
The 30th June, 1955 ....	641
The 30th June, 1956 ....	625

	30/6/54.	30/6/55.	30/6/56.
(3) (a) ....	42	44	59
(b) ....	560	637	672
(c) ....	110	135	153
(d) ....	531	619	647

(4) Salaries paid to—

	30/6/54. £	30/6/55. £	30/6/56. £
(a) ....	35,001	37,212	62,051
(b) ....	184,366	207,898	232,414
(c) ....	67,990	84,994	100,893
(d) ....	351,499	363,940	401,888

(5) Total maintenance cost of the hospital—

	£
(a) Year ended the 30th June, 1954 .....	954,913
(b) Year ended the 30th June, 1955 .....	1,092,318
(c) Year ended the 30th June, 1956 .....	1,293,034
(6) The hospital revenue was—	
(a) Year ended the 30th June, 1954:	£
Government subsidy	638,856
Other Revenue	379,179
	<hr/> 1,018,035
(b) Year ended the 30th June, 1955:	£
Government subsidy	688,164
Other Revenue	401,053
	<hr/> 1,089,217
(c) Year ended the 30th June, 1956:	£
Government subsidy	865,327
Other Revenue	424,609
	<hr/> 1,289,936

(7) Answered by No. (6).

#### INDUSTRIAL METHYLATED SPIRITS.

##### *Shortage of Supplies.*

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) Is he aware of the fact that there is a severe shortage of industrial methylated spirits in the State at present?

(2) Can he indicate the reason for this shortage?

(3) Can he advise how quickly the lack of supplies will be overcome?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Methylated spirit is a hazardous cargo. The source of supply is Sydney and vessels calling at any intermediate port do not lift this commodity, therefore regular shipments are difficult to arrange.

(3) The subject has been taken up with the Federal Minister for Supply and Shipping who has requested the Australian Coastal Shipping Commission to arrange early shipment.

#### METROPOLITAN TRAFFIC CONTROL.

##### *Responsibility of Police Department and Cost.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How long has the Police Traffic Branch been responsible for metropolitan and city traffic control?

(2) What has been the cost of this responsibility to the Government for each of the last ten years?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Since 1919.

(2)	Estimated	Actual cost
1945-46 .....	40,000	—
1946-47 .....	—	40,633
1947-48 .....	90,000	—
1948-49 .....	115,000	—
1949-50 .....	—	140,358
1950-51 .....	190,000	—
1951-52 .....	230,000	—
1952-53 .....	260,000	—
1953-54 .....	—	293,612
1954-55 .....	—	331,248

A large part of this expenditure is recovered in various ways. There is commission received from Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust; drivers' licence fees; weigh-bridge fees; cost of the heavy haulage section recovered from the Main Roads Department; sale of plates; fines and costs received by the Crown Law Department; commission from the Metropolitan Traffic Trust and sundry fees.

#### LIQUID FUEL PRICES SELECT COMMITTEE.

##### *Extension of Time.*

On motion by Mr. Cornell, the time for bringing up the report of the select committee was extended for three weeks.

#### NATIVE WELFARE SELECT COMMITTEE.

##### *Extension of Time.*

On motion by Mr. Grayden, the time for bringing up the report of the select committee was extended for two weeks.

#### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Mental Treatment Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Health.
- 2, City of Perth Parking Facilities.  
Introduced by the Minister for Transport.
- 3, Motor Spirits Retail Control.  
Introduced by Mr. Oldfield.

#### BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### BILL—BELMONT BRANCH RAILWAY DISCONTINUANCE AND LAND REVESTMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

## MOTION—NEW LAND SETTLEMENT PROJECTS.

### *Long-Term Finance.*

Debate resumed from the 7th November on the following motion by Mr. Perkins:—

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

**MR. ACKLAND (Moore)** [5.33]: I support this motion, which I believe to be of some importance. I read with a great deal of interest the speeches of both the mover, the member for Roe, and the Minister for Lands. Those speeches were interesting not only on account of the matter contained therein, but also because of the historical background they gave concerning the Agricultural Bank. The member for Roe confined his remarks mostly to the period since 1920. I am of the opinion, however, that the most useful period of the bank was before the first world war, when Sir James Mitchell was Minister for Lands and started the development of the northern and eastern wheat-belt areas. I know that he was also responsible for the dairying industry making some advance in the south-west portion of the State; but as I have very little knowledge of dairying and of what took place under that scheme, I do not intend to say anything about it.

The House was advised by the member for Roe of the difficult period that the farming community—and more particularly those operating under the Agricultural Bank—experienced after the first world war, and later, during the depression years from 1929 to 1933, and up to the commencement of World War II. He spoke of the great difficulties that the primary producers suffered because of the low prices. It did not matter how much business ability a farmer had and how well established he was prior to the depression, he was unable to make any progress at all; and we went through a period when agriculture was in the doldrums and practically no advance was made.

The establishment of the Industries Assistance Board was an urgent necessity, and I believe it was a very great success. Many farmers during that period received a great deal of assistance from the board in the management of their affairs; and when many of them became financially sound, they did not want to leave the board. That shows the confidence they had in it and how well their affairs were managed.

To be a successful farmer one must be just as good a businessman as one is an agriculturist. In the period of which I am speaking, most of those in the northern and eastern agricultural areas had not been

in a position to carry on their development to such a degree that they could embark on stock-carrying activities; but the Industries Assistance Board, and also the associated banks, realised the position and made it possible for many of them to engage in diversified farming rather than have all their eggs in one basket.

As a result of answers to questions during this session, we have had some realisation of just how far the Agricultural Bank has slipped—I think that would be the word. All incentive has gone and the position has quite altered. There are many men who have made a great success of farming and who have been able to assist the State to a marked degree. They were assisted in the early years of the Agricultural Bank. I am one of those men. Had it not been for the help rendered to me and others in a like position we would have had to walk off our properties. But, today, the bank wants security before it will lend money. When Mr. Wise introduced his Bill in 1944, and the Agricultural Bank was divided into two sections—the agency and the banking sections—many of us were of the opinion that it was a move in the right direction. However, we find that the activities of the agency section have nearly ceased. That section came into existence to assist in the development of new properties. I would like to quote an instance of what the Agricultural Bank did for one farmer in the eastern wheatbelt.

**Mr. Perkins:** You mean the Rural & Industries Bank.

**Mr. ACKLAND:** No; the Agricultural Bank. In the early 1900's this man started with £70. That was all the money he had in the world, and he began operations more than 40 miles from a railway. He found that every time he did a bit of clearing of fencing, or sunk a well or a dam, the old Agricultural Bank came along with 100 per cent. advance to the value of the work which was done; and there are thousands of farmers today who were in a like position. They could never have started on the land but for the help they received—and a lot of them are friends of members from the Goldfields area. They were men who started about 1910 or 1911. Because of some dusting or something of that sort, they had contracted in the mining industry, the Agricultural Bank assisted them to make a start. Right through the Mt. Marshall electorate will be found descendants of those men, who not only registered a personal success but also did a great service to Western Australia.

**The Minister for Education:** It is strange to hear you praising a socialistic institution.

**Mr. Bovell:** It was not a socialistic institution.

**Mr. O'Brien:** It was a good scheme for the miners.

Mr. ACKLAND: We would expect a remark like that from the Minister for Education, whatever the discussion might be.

The Minister for Education: It is true, though.

Mr. Bovell: It was established to give encouragement to private enterprise.

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes; the money was made available to private enterprise.

The Minister for Education: By whom?

Mr. ACKLAND: It was not made available by the bank to foster bankrupt institutions to the detriment of people who, by their own efforts, were willing to increase the prosperity of this State. I should like to make some reference to the attitude of the bank today; and in doing so, I do not wish to cast any slur whatever on the officials. They are there to carry out the policy of whatever Government occupies the Treasury bench.

We find that although the McLarty-Watts Government held an inquiry into Chamberlain Industries—an inquiry the results of which were made available to the Hawke Government and which proved that Chamberlain Industries was to all intents and purposes bankrupt—another £900,000 has been made available to that concern and I understand that today its indebtedness to the Government, the greater part of it being guaranteed by the Rural & Industries Bank, is somewhere in the vicinity of £3,000,000 or more.

When the Treasurer last night introduced his Loan Estimates, I think I am right in saying that he told us that over £1,000,000 has been made available from loan funds to the Rural & Industries Bank and that nearly £1,000,000 of it would be to meet the commitments of Chamberlain Industries. I cannot understand such an attitude on the part of the Government. Here we have a report which states that the firm should be able to continue on its own feet and that it should not require more Government assistance and that it would be inadvisable that any more Government money should be made available to it—

The Minister for Works: How is this relevant to the motion?

Mr. ACKLAND: Because it has to do with the Rural & Industries Bank which has no money to help the people who are the subject of the motion. I therefore think it is relevant to the motion.

Mr. Bovell: Of course it is. If that money had been put into the development of agriculture, it would have been of much more benefit to the State.

The Minister for Transport: You had better talk to your private banks.

Mr. ACKLAND: We find that during the last two financial years £146,000 has been made available for advances through

the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank and by far the greater proportion of that, I understand, has been repayments which have been re-lent to farmers through the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank. During the year 1953-54 more than £1,000,000 was made available to the bank and of that £600,000 was, in turn, made available to Chamberlain Industries, or more than 60 per cent. of all the money allotted to the bank, so it stands to reason that there is no money available to assist these people who have just as much of the pioneering spirit as had the people who went on the land in the early 1900's.

Hon. L. Thorn: It is not a rural bank at all.

Mr. ACKLAND: In the answers to questions asked in this House and at deputations which both the member for Roe and I have taken to the Minister for Lands, who is in charge of the activities of the Rural & Industries Bank, he has told us that there is no money available to assist these people. We find that the bank has lent to Chamberlains more than £2,500,000, or more than 25 per cent. of the whole of its capital.

In my electorate, in the Badgangarra, Dinner Hill and Hill River area, there are 148 new farms and these men went there with some capital. The Minister says they were told, when they went there, that they would receive no financial assistance from the Government. They may have been too optimistic, but they were certainly adventurous and we find that today, after spending all the money that they had available, 53 of them are likely to have to walk off their properties, having developed them to a certain stage.

They have sunk their life's savings in those properties and have sold their houses in the city and have negotiated any other assets they may have had because the Rural & Industries Bank cannot help them. Now they are told that they have not sufficient assets to make it a banking proposition, but I say the greatest asset this country has or ever will have is not wrapped up in Chamberlain Industries or Wundowie but in the men on the land and what they can produce.

I am not saying that we should not have secondary industries, because, of course, we want them, but the basic asset of any country in the world is its land. I was speaking to some English farmers a little while ago and I mentioned to them that the man who held the title deeds of his land only held the land in trust for the nation. I am a believer in freehold tenure of land, but in the ultimate the land is the asset of the nation and not of the individual, although he is responsible to the nation to do the best he can with the land and to give a good account of his stewardship.

When I mentioned that phase to these English farmers, they said, "We agree with every word you have to say in this matter, but we English farmers have a greater responsibility than that. The land of the United Kingdom is the property of the people of the United Kingdom, basically, and because we have been given such generous treatment by means of subsidies to agriculture, we have another responsibility. We have a responsibility to the taxpayers, as apart from the nation, to do the best we can with that land, because they are taxing themselves in an attempt to make the United Kingdom as nearly self-sufficient as possible in the event of another war."

If any Government, whether Labour or non-Labour, would realise those two principles, and the first in particular, it would give encouragement to these people who are making such an effort. The member for Roe has spoken about the men in his district and what they have done and I expect every other rural member could say the same, but when I led a deputation to the Minister for Lands and we told him of the great amount of work that these people had done in three or four years, and of their present plight, he said that it was not a business proposition.

Apparently it is a business proposition to give £900,000 to an industry which was badly managed, no matter how good its product might have been, and in regard to which the committee of inquiry said that it was not advisable to spend any more Government funds on it and that it should be able to carry on and stand on its own feet! Although we have this company, which, in my opinion, will never repay the money which the Government has lent to it and which will become less and less of an asset unless there is more business acumen infused into it than has been so far, and although every penny spent on the land is an asset to the country, the Government says there is no security for the money which these farmers desire to borrow.

I say emphatically that the Government should have another look at this question because when a man has spent his substance in developing a property and is no longer able to carry on without going out and doing contract work in order to get money for further improvements, I believe the Government would be well justified in affording some assistance. I think they could be given sustenance of perhaps £500 per year to enable them to carry on and a further £500 for materials, fencing, water supplies and so on. The money could very well be spent to advantage under the direction of officials of the R. & I. Bank and it would not by any means represent a loss to the State but would ultimately be very much to the advantage of Western Australia.

Before concluding I wish to have recorded in Hansard the official view of the Country Party in regard to this matter and I will read a small portion of the speech delivered by the Leader of the Country Party at Mt. Barker when he opened the Country Party's campaign in the last election. This gives, in a nutshell, what we who are members of the Country Party believe to be in the interests of the State as regards the Rural & Industries Bank. The Leader of the Country Party said—

The ability of this bank to make advances to industry depends to a great degree on the provision of further capital by the Government out of loan funds. While we know that the call upon loan funds for many essential public works is very great indeed, we are convinced that the operations of the bank have been restricted, particularly in regard to assistance for development of farm lands because of the limited amounts that have been actually available for capital in recent years. This prompted us to seek an investigation into Chamberlain Industries Pty Ltd., because its total indebtedness to this government bank, on government guarantee, was approaching 2½ million pounds, representing 25 per cent. of the whole capital of the bank. In the financial year 1953-54 upwards of a million pounds was made available by the Government to the bank for capital. Out of this sum nearly £600,000 was advanced to the one industry mentioned. The general resources of the bank were obviously severely limited. We are satisfied that the products of Chamberlain Industries Pty. Ltd. are of good quality and suitable for the work for which they were designed. We have no desire to prevent this industry from functioning but, at the same time, we feel that an inquiry was justified. We believe that as a result of the inquiry arranged—in which we have participated—it will be possible for the industry to function without the impact on the bank's resources.

We are aware of many persons with limited capital who have taken up land, and if assisted through what is known as the "agency section" of the bank to develop their properties to the stock carrying position, would be successful, whereas without such assistance they will probably lose what they have already expended. We will therefore endeavour to make funds available to the agency section of the bank to assist in the development of such properties where the capital possessed by the owner, not being less than £1,000, is insufficient to develop the property to the state of development mentioned.

I think that the Government, instead of throwing good money after bad and instead of being so anxious to help Chamberlain Industries, which the report said should be able to stand on its own feet, ought to be prepared to help these settlers. The Treasurer said last night that £261,000 was to be made available to Wundowie and that the great benefit to be derived from that expenditure would be that 100 more men would be employed in the charcoal iron industry. There we have £261,000, let alone this other £900,000 which has already been advanced. How many men would that put on their feet?

Without giving undue consideration to the personal aspect, I believe this State would get far better value for its money if the Rural & Industries Bank adopted a policy different from that which it is following at present. I support the motion.

**MR. BOVELL** (Vasse) [6.11]: I commend the member for Roe for bringing this matter before the House because every representative of rural and agricultural constituencies knows that approaches are made to him on many occasions—sometimes from day to day—by people who want to know if it is possible for them to establish themselves as primary producers. We know that over the years Governments have evolved land development projects, especially war service land settlement schemes. There are people, however, who, although not eligible to come within the war service scheme, are extremely anxious to become primary producers.

Most of the land in the Busselton district has been developed by farmers who have taken up 100 to 150 acres and who received assistance from the Industries Assistance Board, which has been referred to both by the member for Roe and the member for Moore. Those men have supplemented their incomes, in many cases, by working on the waterfront at Busselton and I believe that their contribution towards developing that district has been very great indeed. They have contributed not only to the development of the district but also to the national income of this country.

Some time ago, during this session, the member for Katanning quoted figures relating to the various sections of primary industry and the effect they had on our national income. I do not intend to quote the figures again, but, speaking generally, he proved that primary production was responsible for 85 per cent. of our national income; 3 per cent. came from timber and minerals and 12 per cent. from secondary industry. The increase in the income from secondary industry over what it was in pre-war years up to the present time was only 2 per cent. Therefore, all our industrial activity in postwar years has not contributed very much to our national income by way of an increase.

**Mr. May:** That is because this is a primary producing State in the main.

**Mr. BOVELL:** That is so.

**The Minister for Transport:** And there are other factors as well.

**Mr. BOVELL:** We must encourage those engaged in primary production. Some time ago I approached the member for Roe on behalf of a young man in my district who had taken up a tract of land in the Roe area. He had a wife and a young family and he wanted to engage in rural production. He applied for and was granted some acres of land and with the assistance of some of his wife's relatives who were farming in the vicinity, he endeavoured to develop the property, but he found that without financial assistance it was impossible for him to carry on and he had to give up his venture. As the war has been over for 10 years, he was too young, of course, to apply for a property under the war service land settlement scheme.

That was an instance of a young man who was extremely keen to go on the land. He had been born and bred on a farm because his father had been a farmer in the Yallingup district some years previously. That young man had enough initiative and courage to make a start and although he endeavoured to carry on with the development of his property, as a result of financial stringency it was impossible for him to succeed in his venture, and I understand he had to abandon the farm. Had there been some organisation such as the Industries Assistance Board operating now, it would have given him an opportunity to establish himself over the lean years.

The member for Moore has said that he is one who owes his success as a primary producer to the assistance rendered to him by the Industries Assistance Board which, of course, was part and parcel of the old Agricultural Bank system in those days. Perhaps it is not generally known by members in this Chamber that at the turn of this century, Western Australia did not produce enough wheat for local consumption. Of course, the population in those days was much smaller than it is today.

Such a fact is not often made known, but due to the enthusiasm of Sir James Mitchell, when he became Minister for Lands and Agriculture in 1906 or 1907, he was able to induce people to come from the Goldfields, from the Fremantle waterfront, and from the ranks of the Public Service, to take up land, and the descendants of those people are now the leading citizens and primary producers in the eastern and north-eastern wheatbelt.

**Mr. Lawrence:** In what district was the land taken up?

**Mr. BOVELL:** Some of it was round Kellerberrin, some further north, some round Bencubbin and also Mukinbudin.

Later, when Mr. M. F. Troy was Minister for Lands, a further extension was made into the Beacon and Bonnie Rock area. I happen to be acquainted with that district because just before the war I was manager of a bank there and we had agencies at Cleary, Mollerin and Wialki. Although many of the properties taken up by the settlers proved to be unsuccessful for wheat growing, those who are still there have, with the production of sheep, established themselves as prosperous farmers.

Mr. May: What about the group settlers?

Mr. BOVELL: There were some difficulties that prevented some from carrying on, but those who did persist in their efforts, have contributed to the economy of this country—

Mr. Ackland: Many millions of pounds!

Mr. BOVELL: Yes, many millions of pounds, by remaining on their properties through difficult times. In those days the settlers were served by only one train a week—which service they still have, but unfortunately even that is now in jeopardy. The nearest hotel and the nearest telephone were at Bencubbin. The settlers received two mails a week, one by rail and one overland.

Mr. Lawrence: The settlers in those areas went bankrupt.

Mr. BOVELL: It is due to the foresight of the late Sir James Mitchell in encouraging people to settle in those areas, some of whom came from the electorates represented by the member for South Fremantle, some from the Eastern Goldfields and others from the Public Service—

Mr. May: It does not matter where they came from.

Mr. BOVELL: It does matter. It shows that people in occupations far removed from that of primary production, can enter that industry and make a great success of it. If people such as those, who came from the waterfront at Fremantle and from the Public Service and the Goldfields, are given an opportunity to take up land and develop it as they did in past years, this State would be much better off, and it is with that purpose in view that this motion has been moved by the member for Roe.

Mr. Ackland: The waterside workers would want to have a sit-down strike every now and then.

Mr. May: Here it comes!

Mr. BOVELL: I am not going to enter into that controversy. I have been closely associated with waterside workers practically all my life.

Mr. Lawrence: It's a wonder you have not joined the union.

Mr. BOVELL: I am an honorary member.

Mr. Lawrence: You are not!

Mr. BOVELL: All right. The great majority of the waterside workers are as industrious as the workers in any other section of industry.

The SPEAKER: We are not discussing the waterside workers on this motion.

Mr. BOVELL: No, I realise that, Mr. Speaker. I was merely replying to the interjection of the member for South Fremantle. The original settlers in those areas commenced their farming operations with the growing of wheat, but as they developed their properties, fenced them and located water supplies, they were able to conduct the properties as mixed farms and carry a number of sheep. Without those sheep today, this whole Commonwealth would be in a very precarious position because during the postwar years it has been the wool taken from the sheep's back that has carried our nation's economy.

The Minister for Education: The taxpayers' backs are carrying a fair bit, too.

Mr. BOVELL: Later, schemes were evolved to develop land in the South-West. Here again the late Sir James Mitchell, as Premier, in 1919 visited Great Britain with the object of attracting capital for this purpose. Not only did he desire to attract capital but also people to come to Western Australia to establish themselves on rural properties. We know that many difficulties were faced by the settlers but we also know that had it not been for the foresight of that great statesman of Western Australia, our dairying industry would not have been as far advanced as it is today.

Mr. May: Are some of those group settlement properties between Busselton and Augusta still unoccupied?

Mr. BOVELL: No, they are all occupied and what is more there is a great demand for land in the area south of Busselton through to Augusta. I am not going to dwell too long on the operations of the Industries Assistance Board, except to repeat that it performed a great service to settlers who were trying to develop rural properties in those days. Both the member for Roe and the member for Moore have given prominence to its activities and those of the old Agricultural Bank. Now, however, I want to refer to the Rural & Industries Bank.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. BOVELL: At the tea suspension I was referring to the land settlement scheme in the lower South-West, known as the group settlement scheme; and I was also mentioning the fact that Sir James Mitchell had gone to England in 1919 and had secured capital at a very low rate of interest to cope with some of the unemployment difficulties in Great Britain at that

time and provide an opportunity to people living in Great Britain to come to Australia to engage in farming activities.

This scheme was faced with many difficulties. It was a scheme totally different in principle from that which Sir James Mitchell evolved to develop the wheat and sheep areas of this country, mainly in the eastern and north-eastern districts. The Lands Department controlled the development of this scheme, and settlers were paid sustenance and were also given advances from time to time on the improvements they effected to the properties they were working. Had that scheme not been commenced at that time, the dairying industry today would still be in its embryo stage.

Greater difficulties confronted the settlers when the depression hit Australia and the world in the early 1930's. A number of the original settlers were forced off their properties, but as time progressed the properties were again selected and, as I said in reply to an interjection by the member for Collie, there is now no land formerly selected under the group settlement scheme and developed at that time, available for selection by individuals.

Mr. May: Unfortunately, the original group settlers did not reap the benefits.

Mr. BOVELL: The dairying industry, I consider, is now firmly established on solid foundations, but there are still difficulties. The Government has evolved a scheme to assist the less developed properties in the lower South-West and has selected Margaret River and Northcliffe as the pilot areas for this scheme. As I have said before, I am whole-heartedly behind the Government in its endeavours to assist dairy farmers whose properties are not up to a sufficient standard of production. The system under which advances are to be made has been expounded in this Chamber by the Minister for Lands during the present session. But had a system been adopted similar to that under the old Industries Assistance Board, it might be preferable to the lines upon which the Government proposes to proceed.

Consideration should be given to the principles on which the Industries Assistance Board operated. I feel that under such a system, assistance to farmers who require further development of their properties could be given as the necessary operations progressed. If the settler wishes to acquire more land, and establish more pasture, he should carry out a certain amount of the work and—as was the case when the Industries Assistance Board operated—a departmental officer could inspect the work and grant him an advance as his work progressed. I repeat that such a scheme might be even more preferable to that which the Government has adopted and which in effect makes advances to the settler on acknowledged banking principles.

The Rural & Industries Bank of Western Australia today has been established, and

is functioning under the terms and conditions on which associated banks operate. The facilities available to settlers under the old Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board, are not today available to the new settlers. In the last few weeks, and in particular in the last few days, we have heard with considerable interest of the great project of land development that is to take place in the Esperance area.

I have referred to a scheme of repatriating returned servicemen; but unless a system is introduced to enable the new settler to develop land, the only way in future by which a person who wished to engage in farming could do so would be either to enter into some arrangement under a Government sponsored scheme or, alternatively, take up land from a company such as the Chase syndicate. He could engage in farming under those conditions. The second method would be open only to people who have the required capital because—although I have not perused the agreement, which was only made available to me before I commenced speaking—any settlers requiring properties from the Chase syndicate would have to buy them and, no doubt, would have to pay a substantial deposit and honour any financial arrangements into which they enter.

But there are many people in this State who are still prepared, willing and anxious to engage in primary production on the basis of their own efforts and initiative. Lots of people view with suspicion Government sponsored land development schemes. They feel, as many soldier-settlers do, that they do not know where they stand. They do not know what their final financial commitments will be, and they are not in a position to assess what will be required of them until the final assessment is made—and with departmental expenditure, overhead and the like, the position is considered by them to be most unsatisfactory.

At the moment we have only two ways of permitting people to engage in primary production. One is through Government sponsored schemes, and the other is through a body such as the Chase syndicate. I understand that in the 90 mile desert in South Australia, the Australian Mutual Provident Society has developed a farming scheme with considerable success. But finance is necessary, and those desiring to participate in these schemes must have a certain amount of capital.

To encourage individuals desirous of acquiring a farm and developing it without departmental direction—those who enter into their own financial commitments with private syndicates—there should be some scheme available. I believe that the motion as moved by the member for Roe, will help those people and enable them to develop their farms in their own way. As they go along, they will know where they stand.

We know the practice adopted in the selection of land. An application is made to the Lands Department, and the area made available for selection is advertised. Anybody can apply, and the Land Board then interviews the applicants and decides who should be given the land made available for selection. If he has no capital the prospective farmer is often denied the opportunity of making application for land that is thrown open for selection.

Mr. Ackland: Is not the object of this motion to assist those already on the land who are short of finance, rather than to start a new scheme?

Mr. BOVELL: In reply to the interjection of the member for Moore I would merely like to quote portion of the motion as moved by the member for Roe. It reads as follows:—

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

The motion, in my opinion, does not restrict finance to those who have already developed land; it includes those who are about to take up land. If the member for Moore reads the motion carefully, he will see it is not restricted to those already possessing land and needing further development.

In conclusion, I would emphasise that, in addition to Government sponsored schemes and to projects launched by private syndicates, there should be a further scheme for land development to enable individual settlers to select land and go ahead gradually with its development. For this purpose, the Government should make funds available. I can think of no better system than that adopted under the old Industries Assistance Board.

The Minister for Works: You have not told us from where to get the funds.

Mr. BOVELL: That is the Government's responsibility. The Government has just got £2,000,000 from the Commonwealth Government to relieve unemployment and an announcement was made last night that it will not relieve unemployment.

The Minister for Works: That has nothing to do with this motion.

Mr. BOVELL: The Governments of the day in 1910, 1916 and 1921 were able to find the money, and it is up to this Government to do the same. If it cannot find the money, let us get over there and we will find it. We need to encourage individual settlers to develop land outside of sponsored schemes, and we do not want to restrict the development of land to people with capital. We want to assist people who have the initiative and drive—but not the capital—to develop a property and engage in primary production. If the Minister for Education is going to make a silly

interjection as he did to the member for Moore and say the Industries Assistance Board was a socialistic enterprise, then I have no desire to hear his interjection. I support the motion.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [7.48]: Very briefly I propose to support this motion because I am convinced there is need for the provision of funds in the terms of the motion and I do not think that very substantial sums would be required. I would not like it to be thought that the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank is not to play the part that was intended when the Rural & Industries Bank Bill was presented to Parliament by the Minister for Lands and Agriculture of that day, to wit, Hon. F. J. S. Wise.

It was undoubtedly intended then that the branch known as the agency section should take over to what extent was possible and desirable, the activities that had previously been conducted by the Industries Assistance Board and certain other instrumentalities associated with the Agricultural Bank. Therefore I feel that every effort should be made and, if necessary, some definite and expressed activity in regard to this matter should take place in order that the requirements of certain people interested and deserving in regard to the development of this State should be met.

I fully sympathise with the cases that have been put forward particularly by the member for Roe. I know, of course, that in recent years and in the majority of cases anyhow, though I do not think in all cases, it has been the policy of the Lands Department to inform persons taking up new land that the expectations of financial assistance from the Crown were not very great, or words to that effect, and in respect of such persons who have been so informed there cannot be said to be any breach of faith in any way, and I am not suggesting there is.

But the situation is that the State has been very enthusiastic in land development on what might be called a community scale and it should, I think, endeavour to make some effort to cope with these people who will, by no manner of means, be such a substantial charge on the financial resources as have been those community efforts.

Another aspect of the matter that interests me is this, that for quite a period—rightly or wrongly it does not matter now, except that I would say that a couple or three years ago the extensions of the practice was the subject of criticism by myself from this seat—there was a method of reserving vast areas of land against selection by individuals on the grounds that they might be wanted for governmental land settlement schemes.

I mentioned, I think, on that occasion that approximately 2,000,000 acres in my own electorate had been held up for that purpose and it was obvious to me then, as I think it must be obvious to everybody now, that it was quite impracticable for the State to develop, within any reasonably foreseeable time, such a substantial area as that in one corner of Western Australia, and so I have been engaged in petitioning the Land Settlement Board and the Minister for Lands to have areas of this land released in order that they might be taken up by individual settlers and for a long, long time those applications were refused.

If these people had been able to get that land at the time they made application for it, instead of, in the majority of cases, having to wait upwards of two years, and in some cases early this year, they would have been able to go to financial institutions with some prospect, having used their own resources, of getting finance in the ordinary way. But the delay was so great before they got the area they wanted or some similar area, that the opportunity for the obtaining of financial assistance in the ordinary way has been lost to them.

I have within my mind's eye now a dozen of such people who are knowledgeable and capable in the farming industry and who have done a vast quantity of work on these properties themselves with their own labour, frequently working part-time elsewhere to supplement their funds because they have exhausted what capital they had, and found themselves without any ordinary avenues from which to raise this money. Even if their cases were, which in a number of instances they are certainly not, normal banking propositions, within the dozen I have in mind, ten at least would make a success of their properties, if they got the limited sum of money which the motion of the member for Roe proposes.

In recent times, I have been in communication with the Rural & Industries Bank over one of these cases—I do not propose to discuss it here because it would be fair neither to the bank nor the applicant seeing that I do not know what the result of the application will be—but this is precisely a case of the kind to which I have just been referring. It is eminently desirable that people such as I have been referring to should not be asked to leave their properties, having exhausted what resources they had, particularly in the circumstances I have mentioned, and be thrown on the world to find an occupation somewhere else when they are eminently fitted to be farmers, because no one will make an effort to find some method of giving them an opportunity to further develop their properties to a stage that they could be expected, in present circumstances, to make a living out of it.

I am not out this evening to criticise anybody and I am not out to ask anybody to do the impossible, but I would like to suggest, as the member for Moore did at the latter part of his remarks, that the Government take another look at this and see if some way cannot be found in support of the cases stated here. To do so would make a very substantial contribution to the development of fairly large areas of the State by people who have the pioneering spirit and have done their very best with their own limited resources, and where they have shown their efforts have been wisely expended, they should be entitled to further sympathetic consideration.

**MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [7.57]:** I think the member for Roe, in introducing this motion, has performed a very useful service because he has quite fairly emphasised the need for finance for developmental purposes and particularly has he applied himself to the problem confronting farmers who are at present at the end of their tether in the development of new properties. I know, from previous conversations with the hon. member, that he has been very concerned about the situation that has confronted settlers in his electorate and I would like to point out that his electorate is not the only one in this State—as he is well aware—where this particular problem crops up.

Only a matter of a week or two ago, in my own electorate I had occasion to tackle the problems of a settler who, unquestionably, is made of the right stuff to make a success of a property, and his particular case illustrates graphically the difference in treatment that is meted out to men who do not come under a Government land settlement scheme. This man has to battle by himself. He came from Victoria because he understood the prospects were better in Western Australia. He took up a property originally held under the war service land settlement scheme but which was subsequently sold because it was felt it was not as good a proposition for a settler as was required under the scheme.

This man was not eligible to participate in the war service land settlement scheme, despite his six years naval service. He was rejected in Victoria on medical grounds. He came over here and put all the capital he had into the property. The proposition under which he has been able to take up the land is that he has to pay for it in five years. Most of us realise that he will not do this. It is amazing to think that a war service land settler would have had far more developmental work done on the place before he went on to it, including the erection of the house plus fences, clearing, pasture, stock and water so that the property would have been handed over to him as a going concern, on quite attractive terms.

By comparison, this man, despite the fact that he is, at least morally, equally entitled to similar treatment, by virtue of his war service, has had nothing done on the place, but he is expected to pay for the whole of it in five years. He has had to work from scratch, and in three years he has managed to put 150 acres under pasture. At present he is stuck for finance in regard to stocking the property and building a cow-shed. He has the feed there to run 30 milking cows, or with better management, perhaps 35, but he has not the money to build a cow-shed or to stock the property.

The Minister for Education: Have any of the private banks been approached?

Mr. HEARMAN: Yes, but because he is indebted to the Government for the purchase of the land, he really has nothing to offer for security. He has an account with the R. & I. Bank and he has been to that institution for assistance, but it cannot help him because the same policies and controls as apply to the ordinary private banks also apply to it. This is obviously a case which merits assistance. The Government has assisted him by making rabbit netting available under the scheme, and the netting has been put up and is well erected—I have seen it. He cannot get stock through lack of money and because, normally, the stock agents are not keen on stocking farms with dairy herds. They will assist a man to stock with beef-cattle or sheep, but they are not keen on dairy herds because the turnover is slow and they do not get their money back quickly enough. That is the position confronting this man who has done everything as it should be done.

He needs further subdivisions, fencing and water. Although the water problems in the South-West are relatively small by comparison with those in other agricultural areas, they nevertheless exist, and to overcome them costs money. To equip a well, let alone dig it, costs money and this man just has not the money to go ahead. He has been working outside the property altogether on timber mills. He gets work anywhere he can, and he is prepared to continue doing so but he does want to be able to look to the day when he will be in a position to make a living off his own property.

This is a classic instance where assistance by the Government is merited. This man's problem is one that is repeated over and over again with every new settler who is not under some Government-sponsored scheme. He just bogs down when he gets almost within striking distance of getting some money back from the property. This settler has not cut any hay, or done anything, but has just wasted the feed because he was not able to utilise it. I hope we will be able to get a stock firm to do something for him. It is bad business, I feel, that in a case like this we have to

sort of cadge assistance. This case can be repeated in literally hundreds of others; it underlines the need for a land settlement policy outside of the larger Government-sponsored schemes and those of the nature of the Chase scheme that we have heard about just recently.

All over the State there are people who want to take up a piece of land and make it into a farm. I feel there is a responsibility on the Government and on Parliament to give them the necessary assistance to do so. It is not good enough to play politics with this and say that if we can get money from the Federal Government we will do something about it. That is what happened with the under-developed dairy farms in the South-West. That was the Government's plea. Of course, the Commonwealth Government did not give the State Government any money. I knew that would be the position, and I said so on the floor of the House. I think the Commonwealth Government had good reasons, because of the manner in which the position was represented to it, at any rate, for not making the money available.

Since then the private banks have made an effort to contribute to the scheme. But that does not help many individuals. The Minister indicated, when speaking to the motion, that he prefers the idea of group schemes. Such schemes only apply in areas where dairy farming is the predominant form of agriculture. In an electorate such as mine they do not apply because I have many diverse forms of agriculture and there would be only the odd dairy farms, separated by other farms. It is not possible to deal with those dairy farms on a group basis, but individually they merit assistance equally with other people who happen to live in an area where little else than dairying is carried on. Quite obviously the group schemes cannot meet the situation that exists in the wide areas of the State.

Yesterday I asked a question directed to finding out the amount of land alienated within reasonable proximity of railway lines in agricultural areas. The reply I received indicated that practically 100 per cent. of the land was alienated, but those of us who know anything about the matter at all are aware that though about 100 per cent. of the land may be alienated, by no means that much of it is developed. Many more farms could be developed in these areas that are reasonably close to railway lines, but they cannot be developed under any group scheme; they must be developed on the basis of assistance to individuals.

The crying need that the debate has so far disclosed is for a sound land settlement policy, not on the basis of any particular group, but a continuous policy that can be implemented to assist any individual who desires to go on the land but is not sufficiently affluent to be able to

weather the financial stringencies that are associated with the development of any new farm. In the past something along these lines has been done. Tonight there has been a lot of dissertation on what has happened in the past, but I am concerned about what is going to happen in the future.

I think—I say this without any intention of criticising the present Government alone—that since the war all Governments have been blameworthy for the fact that we have had no clear-cut land settlement policy. This has been brought about by various causes, one of which was the war service land settlement scheme which, to a large extent, met the immediate needs of those seeking land after the war. Furthermore, the high prices received then for agricultural products did not perhaps emphasise the need for extension in agriculture. But our economy needs this extension. Since the war a great deal of industrialisation has taken place in the State so that we now have more people living in the cities than in the country.

In view of the slowness of agricultural development, it is necessary to turn our attention to ways and means of expanding agriculture in the interests of our economy. It is of no use anyone saying that because he is not interested in an agricultural electorate, or in agriculture generally, this matter does not concern him, because if we let agriculture run down, our economy runs down and that affects everyone. There is no question that we have been riding on the wool and the wheat growers' backs for a number of years since the war. Other primary industries have also been money-earners but wheat and wool have been the principal ones.

It is time Parliament reapplied itself to the whole question of land settlement. It is necessary to devise a policy that will assist the individual who is prepared to take up undeveloped country. During the course of the Minister's speech, I heard an interjection from the member for Mt. Marshall who pointed out that if a person has sufficient money it is cheaper for him to buy developed land than to take up undeveloped country and proceed to develop it. This is certainly true of the heavily timbered country in the South-West, and judging by the interjection—I think the hon. member would know what he was talking about—it is true of a good many other areas in the State, too.

This highlights the need for some governmental assistance and it completely refutes the suggestion that the necessary assistance can be arranged through the private banks alone because, obviously, if after having spent the money, the settler is not going to get back as much as it has cost him, the business hardly becomes a normal banking transaction. This has been the experience throughout the years

in Western Australia and it certainly applies in the heavy rainfall and timbered areas of the South-West.

The history of land settlement there since the war indicates that the people who go on to a relatively small area and farm it intensely by producing potatoes, fruit and so on, are the quickest to become self-supporting because they can get a living off a relatively small area. When they get to the stage, at the end of eight or nine years, of having nine or ten acres of apples in bearing—it costs about £200 an acre to get them into bearing—they are in receipt of a living. Although the initial costs are high, they are spread over a period. It has been demonstrated that it is possible to do this. But there are many areas throughout the South-West where that cannot be done because the land is not suitable.

Unquestionably there is need for Government assistance for everyone who is going to take up land and farm it in the sense that he is going to run stock of some description or grow crops in the normal way, and not go in for some form of intense culture—in which category I would place orcharding and other table growing. It is not that I object to any group schemes but I think the emphasis on all land development must be on the individual because farmers, as a community, consist of a lot of individuals. There are no two farmers who have the same problems, and the emphasis with respect to any Government assistance, I should think, would be to assist the individual with the particular problem which confronts him.

Even in one district we strike a variety of problems. One of the drawbacks to the larger schemes—particularly as they apply in my area—is that the problems are so complex and varied that it is not possible to get an overall blueprint. One man may require more land cleared; another more fencing; another assistance in connection with vermin; another may require stock; another water, and so on.

The moment we attempt to blueprint a scheme, we get into all sorts of trouble and half the time money is being spent on items that are not really needed; it could be spent better in some other direction. For this reason, any land settlement policy should be directed at helping the individual to solve his own particular problem, and not to try to sort of fit him into an overall Government blueprint of some group scheme, because he does not fit it; in particular, individual farmers do not meet the requirements.

It is a pity that in speaking on this motion the Minister did not give the House some indication of the Government's policy in connection with these matters. He emphasised the difficulties and he dwelt

on the problems confronting the commissioners of the Rural & Industries Bank, which I think we all concede. I do not think we wish to criticise either the bank or the commissioners, but it is quite clear from the debate that the responsibility rests on the Government to provide money for the agency section of the R. & I. Bank if that agency section is to work effectively.

It is also quite clear that despite the fact that we know the Government has many pressing commitments, it has so far made relatively very little, if any, money available to the Rural & Industries Bank to assist individual farmers with their developmental problems. It is not that I am unaware of the difficulties which confront the Government in finding this money. But after all, this Government has had more money than previous Governments have had to spend, and it seems to me that the Government considers there are other matters which have a higher priority than assisting individual settlers to develop new holdings.

However, I suggest that the Government should go in for a reorientation of its thinking on this matter. As a State, our economy is so intimately connected with the success of agriculture and the expansion and development of agriculture that the Government cannot simply virtually exclude agriculture from its financial thinking and assistance.

I do not mind the Government helping Chamberlain Industries; I am not going to get into an argument as to whether the amount of money advanced in that direction is too much or too little. I have my own ideas about it, and I think the House could probably guess what they are. I do not propose to bog down on the argument. But apparently the Government thought that the money was well spent; also, the Government must think that the money spent at Wundowie was spent on a good cause. That, too, is a debatable point. But if the Government had money to spend on all those things, surely it should have some money to spend on agriculture.

For my part, I believe that the development of agriculture is of greater importance than either of those individual projects, and the money that is being put into them could very gainfully and profitably be used in the assistance of a lot of these men who have put everything into their holdings. They have deprived themselves, their wives and their families of money, and they are hoping, naturally, to make good ultimately; and I think those people are the ones who are the most deserving of assistance.

The Minister for Works: We could have used the money we put into the Bridgetown water scheme.

Mr. HEARMAN: We have heard all this before. What I would like to know is this: How much is the Government really spending on this Bridgetown water scheme, because if it is costing this much it must be

a super scheme, and I cannot understand why it has taken so long to get on with the job. The Government says that it could have used the money for this, that and the other thing.

The Minister for Works: Your Government would not even start it.

Mr. HEARMAN: I know that, but I have my own ideas about it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss the Bridgetown water scheme on this motion.

Mr. HEARMAN: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if I got led off the track; but it emphasises the point that the Government has money that it has been able to spend from loan funds on various projects, and the Minister for Works mentioned one of them. But very little, if any, has been made available for assisting the settlers to whom I have referred and, in my opinion, there is no more worthy cause. These people do deserve some assistance and I believe that there is no investment that would be more lucrative in years to come, and in the interests of the economy of the State generally, than further development of agriculture with particular emphasis on the individual because, after all, the development of a farm is an individual problem. In my opinion, the best farmer of them all, and ultimately the best settler turns out to be the man who wants to go out, take up his bit of land and make a farm out of it.

Although I know that results have in the long range term, been good, the experience in Government-sponsored schemes has been that very few of the original settlers stay on the land. It is the new men that take up those properties who eventually do well out of them. I know that some additional Government assistance and consideration in the form of writing off has been effected; we know that from the history of the group settlement scheme.

There have also been odd cases of that happening under the present war service land settlement scheme, and I do not doubt that the Chase syndicate will strike exactly the same problems when it places individuals on the land. Some will make good and some will not. But the best settler is the chap who takes up his bit of land and makes a farm out of it. Those are the people I feel we should assist and I am sorry that the Minister in his speech on the motion—and it was a lengthy speech too—

The Minister for Education: It was a very clear one.

Mr. HEARMAN: He made it quite clear that the Government could not do anything.

The Minister for Education: It was a clear statement.

Mr. HEARMAN: I think it is a bad statement when the Government says it cannot do anything to help these people.

The Minister for Works: What did your Government do during the six years it was in office?

Mr. HEARMAN: I think that all Governments since the war have been blameworthy in this respect. Does the Minister want me to say any more than that? Is that not fair enough.

The Minister for Works: That is pretty embracing.

Mr. HEARMAN: It is intended to be embracing; it is intended to embrace the Governments with which the Minister for Works has been connected just as much as it is meant to cover any other Government. I think the member for Roe endeavoured to keep the debate on a reasonably high level and to get above this sort of thing. I have endeavoured to do the same and it is unfortunate that the Minister for Works wants to pull it down to a lower level as he has done by his interjections.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why does he want to pull things down?

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not know.

Mr. Court: I think he gave you a run on the rails with the water scheme.

Mr. HEARMAN: I deserved it; he did that because it was thoroughly merited. I have already said that I think all Governments were blameworthy in respect to not making sufficient money available. The Minister's contribution to the debate was quite clear; it was clear that there were so many things upon which the Government had to spend money that it could not find anything to help these individual settlers and, in effect, was eliminating them.

Of course, I realise that the Minister knows only too well that there are problems; his own personal sympathies, I am sure, are for these people and he would do all he could to assist them because he has a lot of these problems in his own electorate—more than I have in mine. But the fact of the matter is that the Minister for Lands, although he made a lengthy speech, and preached the history of land development in Western Australia, did not hold out much hope of help for these people.

I think that indicates a need for a reappraisal of Government policy and Government financing because what a lot of these people want is a little additional assistance after having spent all their own money. I quoted the case of a man who, for the matter of £1,000, will probably be forced to leave his property. If he does, he will lose about three years work and all the money he has put into it and the Government will lose the benefit of his production.

If the Government or Parliament—if that suits the Minister for Works better—is not prepared to help these people, we are more or less saying to them, "We cannot

give you any assistance and we wash our hands of you." That would be merely advising them not to take up land at all and I do not want to see any Government in Western Australia take that attitude because, as so many of us who have had experience on the land know, it is not a normal business proposition from a financial point of view to develop virgin country without assistance, and if we take the attitude that we are not going to assist them, we will not encourage people to develop new land. I think that would be tragic, and in view of the fact that we all recognise the need for some assistance outside the normal banking sphere, quite obviously it behoves the Government and Parliament to assist.

I think the member for Roe is endeavouring to assist by introducing this motion and by trying to devise ways and means of assisting these people. We have to be prepared to make some money available for them. As the member for Roe and the Leader of the Country Party pointed out, it would not require many millions in one year. In many cases it would be only a matter of a few hundred pounds and it would see these chaps round the corner.

The Minister for Works: The corner would want to be pretty close.

Mr. HEARMAN: It is in a number of cases. I think the development of a lot of these farms has been much quicker since the war than it was in the old days. Bulldozers and so on have assisted materially in speeding things up although they have not necessarily brought costs down any lower than they were before the war. It is cheaper to clear with bulldozing than with the old method, but, nevertheless the costs are considerable.

I think the Minister for Works is well aware of that because he was in the South-West in the days when they were developing the group settlement scheme. He knows that clearing in those days was not cheap and the costs have not gone down since then. That is one of the reasons why I believe the best way of developing heavily timbered country is to clear a few acres and get some form of intense culture going. But it is not advisable to do that everywhere in the South-West, let alone in other areas. That only further emphasises the need for some Government-sponsored plan to assist these people who are willing to try to help themselves.

If we could only get a greater proportion of our agricultural areas settled, particularly areas in relatively close proximity to our railway lines we would be making a real contribution to solving to some extent—but by no means thoroughly—our railway problems. That should commend itself to any Government. In conclusion I would like to congratulate the member for Roe for moving this motion in the terms he did. I hope the debate can be continued on the level he established and I feel

there is a crying need for all parties to apply themselves to this question of a sound land settlement policy to meet the requirements of the people most concerned—those willing to settle and help themselves.

I believe development of that nature is inseparable from some form of Government assistance. I believe that the Government will get back the money so expended over the years in the form of agricultural production and it will encourage further private money to come into this State and develop much more land. The State will be much better off if we adopt an effective policy of that nature. We should depart from the idea that land can be successfully developed only by grandiose schemes like war service land settlement, group settlement or the recent proposition agreed to by the Government covering the Esperance area. Those opportunities do not arise every day and we cannot count on them for all time.

Nearly all such large schemes require a big area in one district, and generally there is the need to go to the end of a railway line to get such land. Such a course would involve great public expenditure to provide the facilities and communications. Against that, in the areas already opened up and connected by road and rail, nowhere near the same expenditure is incurred for this purpose.

We have to look more to the individual than to the big schemes to develop the State. We have the least problem with people who have struck the first blow themselves by taking up the land and putting everything they possess into it. If they want a little further assistance, over the generations it has been given. There is need for the Government to adopt such a policy. It is a pity that today the Government has not followed that course. I agree that criticism goes past the present Government, but the fact that it does is no indication that there is no need for such a policy today.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

## **BILL.—CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESAN TRUSTEE AND LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**MR. ROBERTS** (Bunbury) [8.34] in moving the second reading said: Under the provisions of the Church of England Diocesan Trustees and Land Acts, No. 34 of 1918, the Bunbury diocesan trustees are authorised and empowered, with the consent and subject to any statute of synod, to sell, mortgage or lease the land known as Bunbury Building Town Lots No. 221 and No. 298, being the site of the present cathedral of the Church of England in Bunbury. The net moneys raised on the security by the sale of the said land, or any part thereof, shall be applied towards the building of a church in Bunbury and

a minister's residence, or other buildings in connection with such church or residence, but only as the Bunbury diocesan trustees may approve and direct.

The general synod of the Bunbury diocese resolved in 1952, "That this synod authorise the Bunbury diocesan trustees to sell the land on which the pro-cathedral stands on Bunbury lots No. 221 and No. 298, as empowered by the Church of England Diocesan Trustees and Lands Act of 1918 of the Parliament of Western Australia, and also to sell such other lands and buildings within the cathedral parish of Bunbury as may rightly be sold for the purpose of building a cathedral and a chapter house on the Brend Tor site at Bunbury and a rectory for the cathedral parish of Bunbury."

In 1954, synod further resolved, "That this synod extends the authority given at its first session to the diocesan trustees to permit the rectory and/or chapter house to be erected on land near to the Brend Tor cathedral site." Then again in 1956 synod of the diocese resolved, "That this synod extends the authority given at the first and third sessions of the 18th synod to permit the Bunbury diocesan trustees to lease or otherwise deal with Bunbury lots No. 221 and No. 298 as empowered by the Church of England Diocesan Trustees and Lands Act, No. 34 of 1918, and to apply the moneys so obtained towards the provision and/or maintenance of such buildings as are authorised by the said Act, and the endowment of the cathedral, and to seek any necessary amendments to the said Act."

In the 1956 resolution of the third session of the 18th synod, reference is made to the resolution passed in 1954, but that resolution concerned only the rectory and chapter house. The other two resolutions, those passed in 1952 and 1956, make it perfectly clear that synod has approved of the sale or lease of Bunbury town lots No. 221 and No. 298 by the Bunbury diocesan trustees, and that the proceeds raised on the sale of such land are to be applied to the building, maintenance or endowment of a new cathedral and ancillary buildings.

Section 13 (2) of the principal Act reads—

The net moneys raised on the security or by the sale of the said lands or any part thereof shall be applied for or towards the building of a church in Bunbury and a minister's residence and other buildings in connection with such church or residence as the Bunbury diocesan trustees may approve and direct.

It will be seen that provision is not made for the application of the moneys raised by such sale or lease towards maintenance or endowment of the new cathedral. The Bunbury diocesan trustees have approached

me and requested me to seek an amendment to the Act to give effect to the wishes of their general synod.

After consultation with His Lordship, the Bishop of the Church of England in Bunbury, and others, and also the Parliamentary Draftsman, it was agreed to endeavour to add after the word "residence" in Section 13 (2) the words "or for or towards the maintenance and repair of any such building or for or towards the endowment of the cathedral." That would make the subsection read as follows:—

The net moneys raised on the security or by the sale of the said lands or any part thereof shall be applied for or towards the building of a church in Bunbury and a minister's residence and other buildings in connection with such church or residence or for or towards the maintenance and repair of any such building or for or towards the endowment of the cathedral as the Bunbury diocesan trustees may approve and direct.

It may be as well for me to give some background of the actual position in relation to the Church of England cathedral in Bunbury. About the year 1916, what is known as the Brend Tor site was purchased on the corner of Cross and Oakley-sts. for the erection of a new cathedral. I understand that plans are in the course of preparation for that new cathedral. Members may be aware that the site has been levelled by a bulldozer and a rather large retaining wall has been constructed, the actual cost being in the vicinity of £4,500. The existing cathedral site is situated in the main street of Bunbury, at the junction of Stephen and Victoria-sts. As the years go on that site will become increasingly valuable as a building block.

The site of the present cathedral on the corner of Stephen and Victoria-sts. was originally granted to the church for church purposes. The Church of England Diocesan Trustees and Lands Act only allows the diocesan trustees, with the consent and subject to any statute of synod, to sell, mortgage or lease the property concerned. When the new cathedral on the Brend Tor site is built, it is proposed to use the proceeds or income from the rental of the old cathedral site for the maintenance and/or endowment of the new cathedral and buildings attached thereto.

I understand that the Bunbury diocesan trustees do not intend to sell the existing old cathedral site for the present because they consider that future generations in Bunbury should have the opportunity of deriving some benefit from any increase in the value of the land and the capacity of such land to produce income for future church purposes. Their policy apparently is to grant building leases for the erection of shops, etc., along the northern and western boundaries of that block. I understand that tentative plans have been

drawn up in connection with that proposal. They do not want to interfere with the operations of the existing cathedral; and when the new one is built, they will probably retain a certain area of the park lands around the old cathedral for gardens and lawns which, incidentally, are cared for by the municipality of Bunbury.

Two years ago, certain church property in Princess-st., where the rectory was situated, was sold and other land on the corner of Oakley-st. and Cross-st. was purchased; and below the present rectory there is vacant land suitable for the erection of a chapter house or cathedral hall. So it will be seen that the Church of England trustees have now all the land required for a cathedral site, a rectory, a bishop's court, a chapter house and a hall—all within the Brend Tor, Cross-st. and Oakley-st. boundary.

The synod has given its approval to the proposals outlined in the Bill. Without the passage of this legislation, the trustees will not be able to carry out the wishes of synod as to the future requirements of the cathedral site at Bunbury. I submit the Bill to the House and trust that it will be passed without any difficulty. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).**

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE** (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [8.49]: I have had a look at the Bill and commend it. It will be remembered that about three weeks ago I brought down a similar Bill to apply to companies doing exploratory work in isolated places in Western Australia, such as Exmouth Gulf and the Kimberleys. This Bill makes provision for companies in remote areas. Any company which makes application for a canteen licence may, subject to the decision of the Licensing Court, be granted a licence.

That will give people in very hot areas, where there is summer for eight months of the year the same amenities that are enjoyed in the metropolitan area and in big country towns such as Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and Norseman. It is a privilege to which they are entitled, and it will be an incentive for workmen to go to distant places. They will be more contented when they are there and the companies concerned will be better able to retain their services.

I think the member for Gascoyne is to be commended for bringing down the Bill. His action indicates that he has some feeling for those who work in the back country. This measure will help to

bring about that decentralisation which is the policy of members on both sides of the House. It will apply to places like Cockatoo Island. The people there can make application for a canteen licence, the granting of which will enable employees and employers, as well as travellers, to enjoy a nice cool drink.

Mr. May: That would be B.H.P.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. The member for Gascoyne has provided that no licence for a canteen should be granted within 20 miles of a hotel or a town where there are hotel licences in operation. That is a good step, although I do not think that we need fear that the Licensing Court would grant a canteen licence that would affect a hotel.

The hotel business is not nearly as lucrative as it was; and unless there is a reasonable bar trade, it is difficult for the hotelkeepers to balance the ledger. I know that from practical experience. People think that there is a lot of profit in hotels, but there must be a big turnover to meet the costs of running a hotel where employees have a 40-hour week and have to be paid high wages—against which I have nothing, of course. From the point of view of accommodation, a hotel proprietor is lucky if he can balance his accounts.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If the hotel-keeping business is not as lucrative as it was, why are you making increased charges on hotelkeepers?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The increases have only been on a percentage basis and were made to bring the charges here into line with those in the Eastern States and thus avoid penalisation of this State by the Grants Commission. Although the figure has been increased from 6 per cent. to 8½ per cent. the fee is not nearly as high on a percentage basis as the figure in the Eastern States. I do not think there is any argument in that direction. Surely the hotelkeepers will be able to find that extra money. If not, the consumer will have to find it. That is what has happened, in most cases. The Bill is a good one and I commend the hon. member for bringing it down.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [8.55]: I support the Bill. Some 12 or 18 months ago I introduced a similar measure, which passed through this Chamber but, through lack of time, was not acceptable to another place. I commend the member for Gascoyne on introducing the Bill, because it will cater for people in isolated areas. I refer to parts of the Murchison which have been asking for this consideration for quite a long time. It will also help the oil-bearing areas and other isolated places. I hope it will have a speedy passage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

### **BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT** (No. 2).

On motion by the Minister for Works, Bill discharged from the notice paper.

### **BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT** (No. 2).

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [8.58]: I agree with the member for Mt. Lawley about the necessity for some legislation to deal with the unlawful use of motorcars. There must be some deterrent to this sort of thing. A huge number of cars, running into hundreds, and representing hundreds of thousands of pounds, are taken and used illegally. Sometimes this is done mischievously, and at other times it is done deliberately.

Young people, I know, like to have their fling and some get a little over-enthusiastic with regard to motor-vehicles. Had there been such laws in operation when I was a young man, perhaps I would have been before the court for having taken possession of a horse—not a buggy; I wanted a horse to ride. However, young people must be deterred from doing this sort of thing. The penalties contained in the Bill may seem rather severe but I think that that aspect can be left to the discretion of the magistrates. I do not know that the fines provided would be too high because the unlawful use of vehicles sometimes causes a tremendous amount of damage some of which may not be evident at the moment but may catch up with the owner of the vehicle at a later date. Our magistrates have had a great deal of experience of offences of this kind and know how to punish offenders if given the power.

Mr. Nalder: Whatever power they have been using does not appear to be a deterrent.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They have probably not had sufficient power but this measure would provide it. People still commit murders, even where a death penalty is provided for that offence. I believe that quite often young people especially, do not realise the seriousness of what they are doing. During the war our best airmen were youths of between 18 and 21 years as they were full of the spirit of adventure and were prepared to take risks. The Bill will also arouse in the parents of young people a sense of responsibility and that, in turn, may help

to reduce the number of these offences. A provision with which I do not agree is that which reads—

Provided further that the minimum period of six months referred to in this section shall be irreducible in mitigation notwithstanding any Act.

I intend to move an amendment in that regard when the Bill is in Committee.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Is this measure in conflict with the proposal in the other Traffic Bill to deal with the offence of making unlawful use of a motor-vehicle?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As far as I am aware, it is not. I have not gone into the question but have been informed by the member for Mt. Lawley that the two do not conflict.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Both deal with the unlawful possession of a motor-vehicle, and yet there are different types of penalties for the same offence.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The member for Mt. Lawley will probably be able to explain the position when replying. I will now read a legal opinion on the Bill. It is as follows:—

1. Clause 2 of the Bill proposes to amend the Criminal Code by adding after 668 a new section numbered 668A.

2. (1) The first part of the section provides that where a person is convicted of an indictable offence of which the use of a motor-vehicle is an element, or in connection with which the person has used a motor-vehicle, whether as the driver or not, the court is obliged—

(a) if he holds a driving licence under the Traffic Act—to suspend that licence; or

(b) if he does not hold such a licence—to disqualify him from obtaining one,

for a period of not less than six months nor more than three years from the date of his conviction, or, if he is sentenced to a term of imprisonment, from the date of expiry of that term, whichever is the later date.

(2) The suspension or disqualification is to be additional to any punishment inflicted on the person.

(3) The first proviso to the section provides that if the convicted person is under the age of 17 years, the period of disqualification shall commence—

either from the date on which he attains that age;

or, if he is sentenced to a term of detention in an industrial or reformatory school, from the date of expiry of that term, whichever is the later date.

(4) The second proviso to the section provides that the minimum period of six months for which a licence may

be suspended or a person may be disqualified from obtaining a licence on conviction under this section, shall be irreducible in mitigation.

3. The following are some of the main implications of the provisions of this section:—

(a) The conviction must be of an indictable offence. That means that the offence of which the person is convicted must be designated as a crime or misdemeanour, and the provisions would not apply to a simple offence which is triable by a court of summary jurisdiction.

(b) The use of a motor-vehicle must be an element of the offence or a motor-vehicle must be used in connection with (the commission of) the offence, and it is immaterial whether or not the convicted person was the driver of the vehicle.

With regard to (a) and (b) above, two instances of indictable offences of which the use of a motor-vehicle is an element may be found in Sections 291A (1) and 390A of the Code which provide as follows:—

291A. (1) Any person who has in his charge or under his control any vehicle and fails to use reasonable care and take reasonable precautions in the use and management of such vehicle whereby death is caused to another person is guilty of a crime and liable to imprisonment with hard labour for five years.

390A. Any person who unlawfully uses, or takes for the purpose of using, or drives or otherwise assumes control of any vehicle as defined in the Traffic Act, 1919-1931, without the consent of the owner or the person in charge thereof, is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for any term not exceeding three years.

On the other hand, it is possible to conceive of numerous indictable offences in connection with which a person could use a motor-vehicle whether as driver or not. The use of the vehicle in such cases does not necessarily have to be proved, but may be purely incidental to the commission of the offence. It would be quite immaterial whether the use of the vehicle would otherwise have been a lawful use; for instance, where a person uses his own, or a borrowed or hired vehicle in connection with the commission of an indictable offence, the use of the vehicle in itself would constitute no offence, but he would still become liable, on conviction of the indictable offence, to the consequences of suspension and disqualification envisaged by this section.

(c) The section requires the court, if the convicted person holds a licence to drive under the Traffic Act, to suspend that licence for a period of not less than 6 months nor more than 3 years.

With regard to this implication I would offer the following observation. The validity of a driver's licence under the Traffic Act has a maximum duration of 12 months and such a licence could only be suspended for the unexpired period of its validity. That means that the period of suspension could not in any case exceed 12 months while at the same time it might not amount even to 6 months.

4. In this connection perhaps I should invite attention to Clause 24 of the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 3), 1956, as approved by Cabinet, Sub-clause (1) of which re-enacts Section 60 of the Traffic Act which provides for severer penalties on conviction of the offence of the unauthorised use of motor-vehicles and for automatic suspension of licences and disqualification from obtaining licences; while Sub-clause (2) amends Section 390A of the Criminal Code in accordance with the Schedule to that Bill, which also provides for similar suspension of licences and disqualification on a conviction under that section.

My reason for reading that out is that later on, when a better understanding of the Bill is required by members, they will have that legal opinion to guide them. The member for Stirling was probably correct when he suggested that there might be some connection between this measure and the Traffic Act.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I have already satisfied myself in that regard.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [9.15]: I wish to record an opinion on the Bill, which has been sent to me by one of the leading solicitors of this city, who asked for a copy of the measure, as I think it is pertinent and is tied up with the remarks made by the Minister for Justice in the course of presenting a Crown Law opinion. The pertinent paragraphs are as follows:—

As to the new section which it is proposed to insert in the Criminal Code as Section 668A, it seems to me that the same has too extensive an application. In short, it provides for a suspension of the licence of any person who is convicted of an indictable offence of which the use of a motor-vehicle is an element or in connection with which the convicted person has used a motor-vehicle whether as the driver of the motor-vehicle or not.

The inclusion of the words "or in connection with which the convicted person has used a motor-vehicle" would, it seems to me, in certain circumstances lead to the suspension of the licence of a person without real justification.

For instance, if I were to drive my motor-vehicle to your house for the purpose of defaming you when I got there in the presence of certain persons whom I knew would be present, my action might constitute criminal defamation, for which I could be indicted, and as I had used my motor-car in connection with the offence it is arguable that the new Section 668A would apply.

In principle it seems to me that a person should lose his licence only for an offence which makes him a danger to other users of the road and, in my view, the words "or in connection with which the convicted person has used a motor-vehicle whether as the driver of the motor-vehicle or not" should be deleted.

Secondly, I think that in principle the provisions contained in lines 34 to 37 on page 2 of the Bill are objectionable. It may be that cases will arise in which the suspension of the licence, in all the circumstances, would be most inequitable and I do not see why a court should be deprived of the discretion it now has in such a matter. Particularly I think the court's discretion should be retained if the words to which I have referred above, appearing in lines 9 to 12 of the Bill, are not deleted.

I think that deals with the situation very clearly and has some bearing on the opinion quoted by the Minister for Justice. At the appropriate time, I understand that he intends to move an amendment.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, to the last proviso.

Mr. COURT: That would be in keeping with this opinion from an independent legal man. With all due respect to this legal opinion, I think the solicitor in question has quoted an extreme case but I suppose it is his duty to draw the attention of a lay man to a state of affairs that could exist in a court of law. As we know, it is the odd case that causes embarrassment. We pass laws in good faith but it is not until they are contested that defect in the law appears. However, in view of the fact that the Minister has given notice of his intention to delete the last proviso in the Bill, it removes the objection in this opinion.

The Minister for Justice: That is so.

Mr. COURT: Yes, that proviso is contained in the words running from lines 34 to 37 previously referred to by me. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Moir in the Chair; Mr. Oldfield in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 868A added to Code:

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Whilst I do not see eye to eye with the opinion which was read by the member for Nedlands, I must confess that I do not feel so satisfied with the wording of this clause as does the Minister for Justice. It says, "Where a person is convicted of an indictable offence" etc. So far as those words are concerned it is quite all right. The use of a motor-vehicle and the offence itself are tied together. In fact, I think the member for Mt. Lawley in dealing with this question on one occasion referred to people who had stolen safes and removed them in a motor-vehicle and in those circumstances the intention to steal the safe and to carry it away in a motor-vehicle, as a means of stealing it, is quite apparent. However, the Bill goes on to say, "or in connection with which the convicted person has used a motor-vehicle whether as the driver of the motor-vehicle or not."

I think we had better think twice before we proceed to agree that the licence of such people shall be suspended for six months and not more than three years and if they are sentenced to a term of imprisonment for at least six months and not more than three years after they come out of gaol, because, as the member for Nedlands mentioned in the legal opinion he quoted, the penalty of suspension of the licence should be applicable where a person does not drive a vehicle in a safe and proper manner but should not apply in respect to a person who has not driven a vehicle at all and who, in fact, probably took the motor-vehicle not as part and parcel of his offence but merely as a means of transport and, in normal circumstances, quite lawful transport.

For my part, I do not feel disposed to punish the driver of a motor-vehicle or the person who is not the driver of a motor-vehicle equally severely as the circumstances set out in this Bill. I am entirely in agreement with the provision where the use of a motor-vehicle is an element of the offence to transport the article stolen.

The Minister for Justice: Some of these people take the stolen goods away in a taxi.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: They might even do that and I would not be sure whether a taxi-driver would not have his licence taken away from him in such a case.

The Minister for Justice: Would not that be all right?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: He might have gone to a certain place in good faith and with no criminal intent whatsoever.

Mr. Lawrence: Surely he would have some criminal intent if he were carrying a safe.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I would agree in that case, but the taxi-driver might have no criminal intent whatever if he was merely transporting the people concerned in an offence. In such cases, therefore, there would be no option but to cancel his licence for six months. I am merely suggesting that we should take another look at this provision because we are getting too anxious about inflicting penalties holus-bolus on persons who are often innocent.

Mr. OLDFIELD: It appears that the member for Stirling is worrying about an innocent person being convicted under this provision. The clause says, "Where a person is convicted for an indictable offence." In that event a person would have to be convicted for an indictable offence by a judge and jury before this clause would have any effect on him. Any innocent person who was involved in such a case and who is unwittingly an accessory could not be found guilty and therefore this provision would not apply. That opinion has been expressed to me by the draftsman who prepared the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That the words, "Provided further that the minimum period of six months referred to in this section shall be irreducible in mitigation notwithstanding any Act," lines 34 to 37, page 2, be struck out.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

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

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—in reply) [9.27]: I want to thank all members who spoke on this Bill whether they agreed with the proposition contained in it or otherwise. I might mention that the notes which I took down of the points made by members during the course of their speeches are not as intelligible to me now as they were at the time they were made some few weeks ago. However, I do not intend to take very long to make this reply.

At the outset, I would like to make brief comment, following the lines of my notes, on some of the remarks made by the member for Wembley Beaches. On one occasion he said that I had made a

very apologetic speech in regard to some other item that was being debated. I would like to say now that the speech the hon. member made on this Bill was extremely apologetic. He tried, without success I thought, to justify the retreat he made during his speech on the Address-in-reply debate in which he stated his approval of the step that I am taking now.

He also made mention of the fact that shops at holiday resorts should have a choice of trading hours or even that their hours of trading should be changed to suit the people patronising such holiday resorts. Of course, he was completely at variance with his Government's policy on that, because it was only this session that the Government introduced a Bill to amend the Factories and Shops Act which aimed at rigidly regulating trading hours. So his views were in direct contradiction of the stated views of the Government. My Bill makes no attempt to alter the hours, or to make difficult industrial relations. It merely seeks to try to help the public, and endeavours to assist the small corner shopkeeper.

As I have said, the measure does not do it to the extent I would have liked, but I had hoped, by a moderate approach to this problem, to have won support from the Labour side of the House. The Minister for Labour himself said that this Bill seeks to substantially extend the schedule of goods that may be sold in the privileged hours; I grant they are privileged hours. Of course, that is not so at all, and I feel the Minister is either talking with his tongue in his cheek, or he has not read the schedule listed.

The Minister for Labour: The trouble is you do not understand the implication of your own Bill.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not think the Minister is right in saying that. He certainly did not give any justification in his speech for saying that.

The Minister for Labour: Yes, he did.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I have a note of what the Minister said and anyone who read the Minister's speech would be rewarded if he discovered any sound reason for opposing the Bill. To a great extent, the Minister spoke in platitudes.

The Minister for Labour: You speak in latitudes.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister did, however, give two reasons. The first was that this Bill would create unfair trading conditions because the introduction of this very modified schedule would act deleteriously upon the shops that now close at 6 p.m. That, of course, is not so. The small corner shopkeeper does not adversely affect the trading conditions of these grocers shops that close at the normal hour; one has only to study the situation to realise that. The businesses that do affect those that close at 6 o'clock

are the supermarts. It is they and the big wholesale stores that can buy in bulk and undersell the small corner store that affect these people. I hope members will not feel that this schedule will create unfair trading conditions for the shops that close at 6 o'clock.

In my second reading speech I referred to a cutting taken from the "Daily News" of Saturday, the 11th August, in which the retail grocers and storekeepers secretary, Mr. A. C. Kirby said that small grocers would go under in a price war. The whole tenor of Mr. Kirby's remarks proves that the danger to the 6 o'clock closing shops, or to the small store at the corner in a suburban area, comes from the big supermarts or large shops. It would appear therefore that if members do not support this Bill of mine, they will, in effect, be supporting the big stores and supermarts, and this is in direct contradiction to the generally accepted aims of the Labour Party.

It is not drawing a very long bow to reason along those lines. The other reason offered by the Minister was that my Bill would create difficulties with regard to industrial conditions. The list of goods I have here would do no such thing; it would not alter industrial conditions at all in small stores. It would legitimatise certain things which are illegal at present and would overcome those petty illegalities. It would obviate the necessity for people to become petty criminals as it were and it would do away with the necessity for the small storekeeper to engage in petty deceits.

But there is no question at all that it would alter industrial conditions. I feel that the Minister has approached this matter most daintily; rather like a dancer in the minuet. He has verbally waltzed up and around the matter; he has advanced and retired; flirted with the subject a little and retired again. He has not dealt with the subject at all. I do not know whether the Minister has attempted to crack the party whip or not, but I feel that this measure could be approached on completely non-party lines.

I feel sure that the womenfolk of our State would desire that this legislation should become law. My justification for saying so is that the Housewives' Association is certainly keen that the measure be passed. The acid test would be, however, if every member in this Chamber asked his wife what she thought of the Bill. I feel sure the housewives would agree that they should be permitted to buy tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, baby foods, powders, tablets for the relief of pain, salt, and band aids during the hours that these small shops are open. Surely that list is not so revolutionary as to prompt the Minister to crack the party whip on this legislation!

Further, I point out that there is no mention in this list of canned goods, packaged foods or bottled foods. I must say

that I like the remarks made by the member for Pilbara perhaps because they coincide with my own views. He pointed out, and I agree, that while this measure is not one of world shaking importance, it is important in its own sphere. The Minister for Native Welfare said that this Bill would do a great deal of harm. How would it do a great deal of harm? There again the Minister did not show how it would, except that he mentioned one of the points made by the Minister for Labour to the effect that it would deleteriously affect the shops that close at 6 o'clock.

It is not the small corner store that stays open till 11 o'clock that will give offence. The buying of goods at these small shops is only incidental or accidental buying; those cases where something has been forgotten by the housewife in the course of a hard day's work. I would like members to consider the woman's point of view. I am certain that she would like the measure to become law, because I am pretty sure she does not like being a party to these petty illegalities that occur at present.

We can imagine the case of a mother of a family having had a hard day's washing to do finding that she has forgotten to buy some sugar for the morrow. She sends young Johnnie down to purchase the sugar for the breakfast weeties and the whole transaction has to be done in a most underhand fashion. The shopkeeper tries to help the mother out in this matter, but at the same time it is necessary for him to look around the corner to see there is no inspector around before selling the required amount of sugar. I hope the House will view this legislation as a non-party measure. It is all too infrequently that we have an opportunity of voting on such a measure, and I hope members will give it a second reading.

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

Ayes	.....	19
Noes	.....	16
Majority for	.....	3

#### Ayes.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Evans	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Mann	Mr. Toms
Mr. I. Manning	Mr. Watts
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Hutchinson
Sir Ross McLarty	

#### Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Molr
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hall	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Heal	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Johnson	
Mr. Lawrence	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### In Committee.

Mr. Molr in the Chair; Mr. Ross Hutchinson in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Eighth Schedule added:

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

That after the item "candles" in the Eighth Schedule, page 3, the following items be added:—

"Salt."

"Band-aids."

As promised in my second reading speech I said I would, as a result of a request made to me by the Housewives' Association, take action to have these items added.

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

Ayes	.....	18
Noes	.....	16
Majority for	.....	2

#### Ayes.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Toms
Mr. Mann	Mr. Watts
Mr. I. Manning	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. W. Manning	
Sir Ross McLarty	

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Evans	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. May

(Teller.)

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

### BILL—BANK HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Second Reading.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [9.57] in moving the second reading said: The Bill now before the House consists of 23 lines, of which 20 are formal and three operative. The three operative lines order the insertion of "each and every Saturday" in the Schedule of an Act, being No. 9 of the 48th of the reign of the late Queen Victoria, which is the parent Act. The effect will be to make all Saturdays bank holidays in Western Australia. In other words, it will give to the banking industry the benefits of a five-day working week by closing the banks on that day.

Nearly every industry known to the Arbitration Court operates on a five-day week, though many, noticeably transport, work on more than five days but on a five-day week roster, so that all employees

obtain two full days recreation each week. Bank officers have been wanting this reform too, for the past few years and that is what this Bill seeks to give them.

Mr. Roberts: Shop assistants don't.

Mr. JOHNSON: Shop assistants want it as the hon. member probably knows.

Mr. Roberts: I am not sure of that.

The SPEAKER: Order! Let the member for Leederville state his case.

Mr. Nalder: He has not got one.

Mr. JOHNSON: The history of the search for the five-day week for banks is a long one. The grant of the 40 hour week, by the Federal Arbitration Court in 1947 was expected by bank clerks and many others to operate as a five-day week; when it started to operate on the 1st January, 1948, however, most industries adopted the five-day week principle but the banks did not.

The annual general meeting of the Bank Officials' Association of W.A. (Union of Workers) that year passed a resolution instructing the incoming committee to co-operate with any other organisation interested in the eventual achievement of the five-day week. Motions in the same tenor followed at the general meetings for the years 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1956. In 1955 there was no such motion because there was a Bill before Parliament at that time which, it will be remembered, was defeated by 14 votes to 12 in another place on the 22nd November last. Members who were here will remember that there were very large attendances in the galleries of the respective Chambers while the debate was in progress and will realise therefrom that the issue was a very live one at the time.

Mr. Nalder: The organisation has broken down.

Mr. JOHNSON: Wait and see.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member addresses the Speaker he will not be in difficulty with interjections.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am in no difficulty about them. Bills to achieve this object have been before this House in 1952, 1955, and again tonight. Following the narrow defeat of last year's Bill, I took note of the several speakers in both Houses who suggested a select committee, and on the opening day of this session moved for such a select committee. The committee was duly appointed, met and heard evidence, all of which is upon the Table of this House with the exception of that related to the armoured car escort service which we were asked to keep confidential just in case some criminal might use the details therein to organise a holdup.

The committee's report has been printed and is available to all members. I trust that all will read both the report and the evidence before voting. I think

that anyone who weighs the evidence cannot find otherwise than that banks are not very much needed on Saturday, and everyone who now uses them could quite easily make other arrangements. The major point at issue is, how great is the inconvenience and how does it balance with the reasonable desires of the bankers?

For those who desire to inform themselves solely from debate, I will outline the main matters. This, however, will be only a summary and greater detail can be supplied, if needed, when the reply is given to the second reading. I wish to make a few comments on the proceedings of the select committee as it is important that members should be able to judge whether the committee was loaded, and if so, in what manner. Firstly: Every member in the House knew of the appointment and could have been present to hear the evidence. Secondly: I took it upon myself to write to every member of the other place and to ask him or her to let me know if they wished to be heard, or wished that any person or organisation be heard; or even if they had any questions that they wished to have asked of the witnesses. Under Standing Orders I believe all these members could have been present and heard the evidence.

Thirdly: I discussed with all members of the committee the list of persons whom I thought should have been asked. Invitations were issued by our secretary to those we agreed upon. The minority members were given every chance to call whom they liked and I, as chairman, never overrode them as to whom should be called. Fourthly: No restriction was placed on any member of the committee as to the questions he should ask. Full freedom was encouraged. Fifthly: As required by Standing Orders I wrote a draft report. It took a long time to get typed, and when it was considered I discovered that the member for Narrogin was not prepared to accept even my precis of the evidence. I still have a copy of that draft report if any member would like to see it privately. Following this disappointment, I completely retyped a fresh report which was circulated amongst the members and discussed in accordance with Standing Orders, and subsequently brought before the House.

I am extremely disappointed that the report was not unanimous, but the member for Narrogin, in particular, was not willing to recognise that all the selection of witnesses was in his hands; the country witnesses were completely organised without myself or any Labour member even knowing who they would be until they were before the committee. As far as is possible, under Standing Orders the committee was loaded in favour of retail traders who were given every facility to press their case, and for that reason the evidence should be viewed with a certain degree of reserve.

Bank officers gave evidence in great detail. One thing covered was the jurisdiction of the arbitration courts, both Federal and State, to grant the five-day week for banks. Extracts from judgments in both courts were submitted and I quote from the end of Mr. Justice Neville's statement in our court—

Well, we are all of a clear opinion on this point. I do not think there is any doubt that this court has jurisdiction to fix the hours of employees in banks, even although under the Commonwealth it is, if not legally, practically necessary for banks to be kept open on Saturday mornings, and it might be, as Mr. Adams suggests, legally necessary for them to do so, but where, as here, it seems certain that any award made by this court of a 5-day week would only result in extra overtime being paid in that the employers would be forced to keep their businesses open despite the court award. We are all agreed that the court, even although technically it may have jurisdiction, would not, except in very exceptional circumstances, make any such order.

Conciliation Commissioner Portus, in the Federal jurisdiction, said plainly—

It appears to me that if a five-day week is to be prescribed for the banking industry, it should be prescribed by Parliament as Tasmania has done by closing banks on Saturdays.

The employers, the associated banks in Western Australia, do not disagree with this contention. Bankers can have a five-day week only if Parliament says so; arbitration courts do not have the jurisdiction.

When the same Bill was before this House last year, the member for Toodyay doubted whether this would apply to the Commonwealth Bank. He was afraid that that bank might obtain an unwarranted advantage because of this State legislation. I have never shared his doubts, neither have the members of the associated banks or, for that matter, the Commonwealth Bank itself. There is no doubt that the Commonwealth Bank is bound by the Bills of Exchange Act, which is a Commonwealth Act and in which reference is made to a "bank holiday," which is a day contained in the schedule of our Bank Holidays Act or the regulations thereunder.

Bank officers stated that less than 20 per cent. of the staff's aggregate time was spent in contact with the public. This appears to be a remarkably small figure but it is actually generous when one remembers that banks are open to the public for only 27½ of the 40 hours that the staff work, and many of the staff never contact the public at all. Actually, not one witness complained of the possibility of being denied any bank service if banks closed on Saturday, save only those passing over the counter, which group of transactions was

referred to by the associated banks' witness as "the shop window," "only a small part" and similar slighting terms.

In considering why there is no complaint about other sections, regard must be had to those industries that are not operating on Saturdays, many of them directly related to banking and a source of irritation that bankers feel in having to work when their opposite numbers are in the garden at home. These industries include Commonwealth Government departments, State Government departments—these include those departments necessary to complete any importing or exporting transactions and to register dealings in land and securities—nearly all the wholesale trade, all manufacturing and clerical sections—accounts branches—of bodies like the State Electricity Commission, the W.A. Government Railways, wool brokers, oil companies, accountants and insurance offices. Actually the only business that can be completed in banks on Saturday are counter transactions, and therefore the select committee spent nearly the whole of its time considering this point only.

It would be only fair to state that the objection made by the two dissenting members to the report was based on the wrongful assumption that because most of the time and evidence was spent on this aspect, it was of prime importance. The opposite is true. On all other aspects of banking there is what amounts to complete agreement, namely, that banks are not needed on Saturdays. I asked members to bear this point in mind when weighing the evidence on that aspect. The manner in which the public, generally, are unaware of the services available through the banks, the use of cheque crossings for safety, the use of the post for making deposits days earlier in many cases, was obvious.

In giving weight to the evidence of the several witnesses, it is essential that we should remember that every witness can be expected to lean towards what he considers his own interest and that, therefore, no evidence can be accepted without some reserve unless it is confirmed by someone with the opposing interest. Even statistics can be misinterpreted if there is not full understanding of the background thereto. Things unsaid are often as informative as those said.

In this regard it is of interest to record that several groups that were notified of the hearings did not take the opportunity to attend. These include the Farmers' Union, the Shop Assistants' Union and the Country Women's Association. It can be inferred that none of these organisations felt that it would be heavily disadvantaged by the proposal. Certainly the Shop

Assistants' Union did not feel that any intolerable burden would be placed on its members—the employers of its members were, in contradistinction, very vocal.

The outstanding example of uninformed prejudice was the chairman of the Associated Chamber of Commerce, Mr. R. Goyne Miller, whose evidence had to be totally disregarded by the committee because of his lack of knowledge of the subject and the contradictory nature of his remarks.

Mr. I. W. Manning: That is a bit severe.

Mr. JOHNSON: If I were outside the Chamber, I would not use such polite language about it. While admitting that his own staff worked 37½ hours in five days, he agreed that he had staff difficulties but still opposed the granting of a five-day week of 40 hours to bankers who, he regarded, as poor types but still all-important to business. His statement about "order" cheques deserves publicity to show how uninformed it is possible for a man to be—even one in a position of some prominence. This man is alleged to be a qualified accountant, skilled in business and banking. He said, "We always made out our cheques as 'order' cheques, and used to strike out the word 'bearer.'" The banks, however, have encouraged us not to do that in order to reduce their liability."

Mr. Court: The banks did make that approach to industry.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is so.

Mr. Court: Why are you saying he is wrong in stating it?

Mr. JOHNSON: The point I bring forward and which I would like the member for Nedlands to note is contained in the words, "In order to reduce their liability." That was not the reason. The reason is given here. In reply to the question, "The endorsement on a cheque has no protective value," Mr. Netterfield—chairman of the Associated Banks and manager of the Bank of New South Wales in this State—replied—

No. So long as the endorsement purports to be that of the payee of the cheque it is passed by us. They have their full protection in the "not negotiable" crossing. That is why we have tried to guide them along that way, because they are getting full protection and saving an immense amount of work and delays in returning cheques for correct endorsement and what have you.

In simple words, a cheque made payable to order can be endorsed by anybody; it has no protective value. It does not matter who endorses it as long as the endorsement is in the same form as appears on the front of the cheque. It has no protective value, but it does mean a lot of work to the banks. If a man wants to protect his

cheque, he crosses it, "not negotiable." That is the full protection because any holder can recover from a previous holder and no one can acquire a better title to a not negotiable cheque than the person from whom he got it. In other words, if a not negotiable cheque goes through the hands of an improper holder, the amount is recoverable.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is the position if a cheque is only crossed, as many of them are?

Mr. JOHNSON: Such a cheque has only to go through a bank account. The recovery is not as secure. It does provide the security that it cannot be negotiated over the bank counter and is, therefore, traceable. But for protection a cheque should be crossed, "not negotiable." I am surprised that accountants, at least, are not fully aware of this. The banks have done their best to make the position clear to people, but for a man like the president of the Chamber of Commerce to have a completely wrong conception of a simple thing like this, indicates that he is poorly informed on a matter that is of importance to business.

Nearly all the evidence collected by the committee, including the country evidence, was given by retail traders. The Chamber of Manufactures gave its evidence with regard to only those of its members who are retailers as well as manufacturers. Their evidence regarding young couples who shopped on Saturday mornings for furniture for their respective homes was, I thought, the strongest given, but remembering that I went through that period myself, when both my fiancée and I were working the same hours as the furniture shops, I had to regard the plea as over-emphasised. There is always window-shopping as a preliminary, lunch hours, holidays and even "sickies."

Mr. Court: You are not seriously advocating that last method?

Mr. JOHNSON: There are many ways of doing business.

Mr. Court: It is not a very good principle for you, as a member of Parliament, to advocate that. It is not a very honourable way.

Mr. JOHNSON: There are many things that are not ideal. Good employers make time available; bad employers do not and, if they do not, people will take advantage of sick leave provisions.

Mr. Roberts: What about the employer who stands by a man who is sick for a considerable period?

Mr. JOHNSON: What has that to do with this argument?

Mr. Roberts: You are talking about "sickies."

Mr. JOHNSON: I am saying that there are many ways of dealing with the problem other than Saturday mornings. Do not try to lead me astray by drawing red herrings across the trail.

Mr. Roberts: I am not drawing red herrings across the trail. It is a plain statement of fact.

Mr. JOHNSON: It might be, but it is completely irrelevant.

Mr. Roberts: Whose, your statement or mine?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yours. It has nothing to do with the subject under discussion.

Mr. Ackland: Mr. Speaker—

The Minister for Works: Bad luck!

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Moore was going to say something?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. JOHNSON: And anyhow, Mr. Ffear, their efficient secretary—that is, of the Chamber of Manufactures—admitted that closing the banks would not cause the shops to close too. The officials of the retail organisations admitted that business could continue, and would continue, despite the closure of the banks on Saturdays. The fact that last year Christmas Eve fell on a Saturday, on which retail trade continued, was forgotten by all but one of the retail witnesses until questions were asked about it. That was a very busy Saturday, and so was New Year's Eve, the next Saturday, which was, like the previous one, a bank holiday. There is no doubt that the retail trade can continue without the banks on Saturdays.

Another matter dealt with in the debate last year was the proposal that banks could stagger their staff and work a 5-day week rostered over the six days. Associated Bank witnesses, as well as bank officer witnesses, gave strong and detailed reasons why this could not be done. If any member desires further detail on this, I refer him to the transcript of evidence given before the Federal Court and available in the records of that body. The evidence given was quite convincing that, if the banks are open, all or nearly all of the staff are required, and it is only in the largest offices that rostering is a practical proposition.

In his evidence, Mr. Netterfield said that in his bank, the Bank of New South Wales, rostering of Saturday mornings was forbidden although I know that in some branches of other banks a little does take place by mutual arrangement between the staff. This, however, is not general and applies only to a limited number of areas. For all practical purposes, it can be regarded as proven that a skeleton staff on Saturdays is impracticable. A reduction of staff of the order of

one in about seven or eight can be done in certain circumstances. But a skeleton staff, giving a reasonable degree of Saturdays off, is completely impracticable, and one Saturday off in, say, every two months, cannot be regarded as of any real value.

One matter on which there was considerable evidence and to which the member for Harvey agreed the other day although it is in the report to which he disagreed was the effect of the weekly pay-day on the heavy trade at week-ends. The idea of earlier paydays was discussed with almost every witness and there was agreement that, if pay-day was earlier in the week, trade would be more evenly spread throughout the retail section during the week. Most of the retail witnesses considered this a desirable objective but none had taken steps to achieve it. Of those who gave evidence, bank officers seemed to be the only group who had seriously considered it.

The committee has recommended, as members will see from the recommendations in the report, that steps be taken to implement this reform as it would be of undoubted value to many. The opinion was expressed that it might cause less of the waste that now occurs when pay remains in the wage-earners' pockets burning a hole while there are no banks, including the savings banks, to receive it. The fact that savings bank agencies are more frequent than petrol stations, and open almost as long, is overlooked in this argument, but there is value in the more even flow of trade that would follow. One of the results would be to relieve the pressure that now follows the spending on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings, which is the week-end rush for which shops say they need bank help.

When on the last occasion a similar Bill was before another place, great play was made of the fact that one of the results of passing the measure would have been that if banks were closed on Saturday it would have entailed a reduction of the 40-hour week. Actually, this could result if no amendment were made to the relative award. The last annual general meeting of the association passed a resolution authorising the officers of the union to take steps to adjust the matter so as to preserve the 40-hour week. I understand an exchange of letters has taken place between employers and employees agreeing to this if the Bill is passed.

This measure does not attempt to secure a reduction of hours by any back-door method. That is something which is within the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court and will be left entirely to that body. It must be remembered, however, that the five-day week is not within the jurisdiction of that court. The delay period suggested by the report will give time for the adjustment to be effected and to ensure that they are effected before the Act is proclaimed.

Much play was made by retailers to the effect that farmers needed the banks open on Saturday morning because that was the principal day on which farmers visited the country towns. This, however, is not supported by evidence adduced by banks in the rural areas. In only one of the towns from which statistics were taken—and it must be remembered that the individual towns were selected by the banks which gave evidence against the proposal—did Saturday show as one of the busiest days. That was at Dalwallinu where there was also a receiving house conducted on the same day; I believe the transactions of that receiving house were included in the total shown.

In every other town, Saturday was not the busiest day, being in most cases only half or less of the Friday total of business. All the farmer witnesses stated that they came to town more than once a week, most weeks, for other than banking purposes. Mr. H. R. Golding, a farmer of Waterloo, near Bunbury, and proprietor of the "South-West Times"—the newspaper in that district—gave evidence to the effect that farmers would not miss the banks on Saturdays, and added that this followed inquiries made by him from his neighbours.

This gentleman's evidence must be particularly highly regarded as he is considered to be a leader in his district and has proved his ability as a businessman and a newspaper man. I would particularly request members to read his evidence, as well as that given by other farmers who were interviewed at Bunbury and Donnybrook. It must be remembered that these witnesses were selected by the members for the two districts, neither of whom can be regarded as personal supporters of mine, or of the reform I propose.

I could not but be impressed by the lack of appreciation of country witnesses of the facility provided of having paid into their accounts the proceeds of the produce they sold. This should be done in every case where there is an overdraft as it ensures the saving of at least one day's interest. I think some of them were concerned more with the avoidance of taxation, and I got the impression that not every sale was made in the name of the farmer concerned; if that were not the case, it is difficult to understand their not taking advantage of this convenience and the attendant saving.

Surely nobody would think that there is the slightest possibility of bank clerks misappropriating the funds, because they would travel either within the bank from head office, or by warrant or transfer or non-negotiable cheque, in which case the complete safety of the funds is ensured. Statistics show that two-thirds of the business of the banks is conducted in the metropolitan area, and that two-thirds of the bank staffs is there, and much the same proportion of customers.

Mr. Roberts: Is that right?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. Roberts: It seems rather high to me.

Mr. JOHNSON: I said there were a lot of things which the hon. member would not understand, and this is one of them. It becomes necessary to consider the weight of the convenience of the people affected by the proposed reform. The farming community is always given special consideration because of the special conditions under which that community lives, works and produces. But the evidence shows that firstly they come into the country towns on days other than Saturdays, and often more than once a week during the busy times of the year. The evidence also shows that they could have their proceeds paid direct to their accounts at the banks if they desired; it further shows that they do not use the banks for the encashment of their own cheques at present, half as much as they do the shops. It would seem that in the country, as in the metropolitan area, the principal group affected are the retailers and, to some extent, their customers.

Considerable concern was expressed at the possibility that wage-earners would be deprived of the chance to make use of savings bank facilities. This could be regarded as no longer applicable. The Commonwealth Bank has numerous savings bank agencies already established, and the four other savings banks are making strenuous efforts to match them. As Mr. Netterfield said, "Everyone will have the convenience of making withdrawals at their front door." We have only to look in the paper each day to realise the rapid growth of these agencies; this would also be evident to us if we investigated the set-up in our own suburb or country town.

Nearly every chemist, newsagent and many other types of small and large shops carry the agency of one or other of the various savings banks. These agencies are open for business as long as the particular shop is open; so this provides a great enlargement of the savings bank facility. Whether people will use these agencies to any great extent remains to be seen, but there is no doubt of their availability and, accordingly, no concern need be felt on that account.

It must be remembered that the official attitude of trade unions as expressed by Mr. Chamberlain is the 40-hour five-day week and no group of workers in an organised form can be expected to do other than agree to the proposal. These are the groups to which witnesses referred when they spoke about the need for savings bank facilities. Bank officer witnesses said that the reform would be of financial advantage to their employers; the employers agreed that it would not affect their profit to any noticeable degree, but were not concerned with that angle.

They did admit that they were paying quite a lot of overtime, and they also agreed that there is a certain period used each morning and evening in preparing for the day's work, getting books from strong-rooms, cash from safes and generally getting started. They put this period as quarter of an hour per day. From personal observation I should say it probably averages longer. The number of hours used up on this unproductive activity on a Saturday is at least 800 hours.

There are 3,200 members employed in the banking industry, and if we reduce that to the numbers of hours, taking the time as 15 minutes for each member of the staff, we would get 800 hours per Saturday. I feel sure it would be more. There are 50 odd Saturdays in the year, so 40,000 hours are involved annually. At the average overtime rate of £1 an hour, a sum of £40,000 could be saved by the employers. That is shown in the evidence. I imagine that the direct saving of that amount of overtime is considerable, and as I said earlier I think that this item is greater and no less. Then there is the time saving in doing the week's work in five as opposed to six "runs." This is a technicality well known to routine workers in most industries.

Even the little matter of cleaning and lighting and heating costs is worthy of consideration. I feel sure that the banks would find that there was a real, if not large, saving in the proposition. There was a lot of evidence as to the effect of the six-day week on the standard of bank staff recruitment. Both bank officers and bank witnesses dealt with the matter at length. It cannot be regarded as proven that the six-day week has a direct effect on staff; but it is certain that the bank staff is not completely happy from either the bank or staff view.

Staff is harder to get and to keep than previously. The old waiting list to get into a bank has disappeared. The Eastern States staff experts have certainly considered the possibility that the six-day week is a contributing factor, but as the staff turnover is as high in Tasmania where there is a five-day week, they have not ascribed great weight to it, and neither do I. But it would be completely illogical not to imagine that at least some potential bank recruits do not apply because they find equal opportunity in other work like Government insurance, oil companies or similar five-day week jobs.

Mr. I. W. Manning: We had no strong evidence to that effect.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is what I am saying. The only matter requiring further consideration is the claim that banks and retail trade should close together. This could be regarded as an idealistic solution, but it is contrary to the position in both Tasmania and New Zealand, where

the shops closed first and banks followed years after, and to portions of U.S.A. where banks are working five days and shops six-and-a-half.

As all retail witnesses state that their members can continue without banks if necessary, and as they have proved it on last Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, the matter can be considered separately. Not one witness claimed that any business would become impossible without the banks on Saturday. The only trade affected is retail and that is not, despite their advocates' assertions, the most important sector of industry.

Mr. Roberts: What about the worker wanting to change a £5 note on Saturday?

Mr. JOHNSON: He goes to the shops. The inconvenience to this group is not a major one, but is capable of being overcome by good management.

The Minister for Works: Where are the workers with £5 and £10 notes to change?

Mr. Roberts: Many workers have notes of that denomination to change.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Don't make the workers out to be as poverty stricken as that.

The SPEAKER: The member for Leeder-ville may proceed.

Mr. JOHNSON: In New Zealand, where the shops are open on Friday night, retail shops do not, according to Mr. Netterfield, have the convenience which is available here of night-safes, but get along quite well. In the provision of safety for deposits and change when required, as well as cash for pays, the witness from the armoured car escort service made it clear that his organisation could provide any service required within the metropolitan area, in which two-thirds of banking takes place. His charges are very small for the service given and actually the banks make much use of it themselves.

Mr. I. W. Manning: It is not correct to say that the armoured escort operate in the area where two-thirds of the banking is done.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is mighty close to accurate because it operates as far as Armadale and Fremantle. If the member for Bunbury takes such an interest, I recommend that he reads all the evidence.

Mr. Roberts: I have read all of it.

Mr. JOHNSON: Obviously the hon. member does not understand it. Any metropolitan trader having doubt as to the safety of his takings at any time could be advised to take advantage of this service, which is available to anyone at any time, Saturday or Sunday included. Racecourse takings, bookmakers' cash, football takings, and theatre receipts are some of the types of transactions that are handled by this service now.

Mr. I. W. Manning: If you tell the banks that, they will open on Sundays.

Mr. JOHNSON: Once again the hon. member should read the evidence because Mr. Netterfield said he did not mind the growth of the armoured escort service because it made use of the banks. It is not taking away business which the banks are concerned about. It is running a service which the banks also render.

Mr. I. W. Manning: It certainly is doing the business which the banks did previously.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is doing a different type of business. It delivers cash to the customers. The banks have never delivered cash except over the counter. This service will deliver cash to the customer's counter or strongroom in any quantity desired. Anyone desiring a similar service from the banks will have to provide his own escort. The armoured service does make a charge for this work. There is no doubt that this service can do all the work that is required to be done by the banks in that area. It might cost the traders a small charge. The banks are not worried about the service.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You said that two persons came over from the Eastern States. What was their view about banks remaining open on Saturdays on the mainland States? Why have they not closed on Saturdays?

Mr. JOHNSON: I do not quite follow what the hon. member meant in regard to New South Wales and so on.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They still remain open and do not close on Saturday.

Mr. JOHNSON: For the very sound reason that no one has moved in the Parliaments of those States to amend the Bank Holidays Act.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They have had Labour Governments.

Mr. I. W. Manning: The Premier of Queensland is opposed to it.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am of the opinion that a move would have been made in most States had there been a bank officer in the Parliament. If I had not been a member of this Parliament, it would not have been introduced here. I think that is the reason.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It cannot be the reason.

The Minister for Works: It could be.

Mr. Court: Is not the Queensland Government opposed to it?

Mr. Bovell: This Government might be.

Mr. Lawrence: Surely we are a Government of our own.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: This is not a Government Bill.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think the Leader of the Opposition would regard it this way. If I remember rightly when he was a private member, he introduced a couple of small private Bills in relation to the milk industry, of which he has a knowledge which is not available to everybody else in the Chamber. This Bill is introduced by me solely because of the background from which I came; not only because the union members want it but because I know it can be done without hurting anybody. I think that is the sole reason.

If bank officers got together in sufficient numbers to elect one of their number to the Parliament in their State—which seems impossible because they are a small group; 3,000 in the whole of Western Australia spread over every electorate with the possible exception of Kimberley—something might have been done in the other States, but one cannot imagine their being sufficiently powerful in any State to elect one of their own members. I think that is the reason for no legislation having been introduced in any other State.

Mr. Roberts: Are you of the opinion that the armoured car service could give a service to retailers in Perth if the banks closed on Saturday morning.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. The witness said they could expand and handle the whole lot.

Mr. Roberts: They do not operate in the country.

Mr. JOHNSON: No. I will get back to my conclusion. The most recent case in which the matter of a five-day week has been considered by the State Arbitration Court is the bakers case on which reserved decision was given as recently as the 19th November, 1956. I quote from portions of the judgment by Mr. Justice Neville:—

For my part, I am prepared to agree that, in principal these workers should, like the majority of their fellows in other industries, be permitted to work their 40 hours per week in five days.

I certainly do not think the public interest requires that freshly baked bread should be available on six days a week. It may be that a great majority of the public desires such fresh bread, but it does not necessarily follow that if such a desire be not satisfied, public convenience will be so greatly disturbed as to justify the refusal of what is otherwise conceded to be an equitable claim by these workers.

If it were only a matter of public interest, I would not hesitate to grant the union's claim.

He then went on to deal with the mechanisation of bakeries:—

If, as the union claims, this process of mechanisation is inevitable, and that even under the six-day week the small bakery will soon disappear, then the main objection that I see to the granting of a five-day week will also soon be removed. At the present time I think the injustice and hardship that would result to the small bakery if the application were granted outweighs the injustice to the operative bakers that results from its rejection. I may add that the submission made on behalf of the respondents that a five-day week would result in a fall in consumption of bread should, in my opinion, be entirely disregarded. However, for the reason I have indicated, I think that in this instance the claim by the union for a five-day week should be refused.

The dissentient from that judgment was the employees' representative, Mr. T. G. Davies. Mr. Christian concurred. Mr. Davies said:—

I am now completely convinced that as in all other States of the Commonwealth, with the exception of Queensland, the five-day week could operate in Western Australia without hurt to the public interest."

How parallel are the two cases! They both deal with dough!

Hon. A. F. Watts: It is the only parallel; they both deal with the five-day week.

Mr. Bovell: Banking dough never has time to go stale.

Mr. JOHNSON: There is no doubt that the public interest can be served on Saturday without banks, although possibly some slight inconvenience will be caused. The proportion who require banks on Saturdays is obviously smaller than the number preferring fresh bread, and the reform will not disturb public convenience so greatly as to justify the refusal of what is otherwise conceded to be an equitable claim by these workers, and there are no small bankers to consider.

That judgment, indicating so clearly what is the tenor of thinking in our own Arbitration Court as recently as four days ago, indicates what would be the result if this claim were to go before the court and the court had jurisdiction. In this case, the court has no jurisdiction, and we are the only people who have. We have to consider not only the public desire and convenience, but the equitable claims of the workers. The relative disturbance of public convenience and interest has been shown quite clearly to be small and it is admitted by the retail witnesses, that

business would not be stopped. I am doubtful if there would be very much inconvenience—

Mr. I. W. Manning: Very much inconvenience!

Mr. JOHNSON: There would be some inconvenience.

Mr. Roberts: They would carry on the functions of a bank on Saturday morning.

Mr. JOHNSON: The little piece of service rendered by a retail business would be as relative to banking as the cleaning of a windscreen would be to buying a tank of petrol.

Mr. Roberts: What about the primary producer or the old-age pensioner who wants to change a cheque on Saturday morning? That is part of banking.

Mr. JOHNSON: Pensioners do not cash cheques on Saturdays.

Mr. Roberts: I could soon give you a list of them.

Mr. JOHNSON: The changing of cheques is something that is at present restricted to 1½ hours on Saturdays and to the period between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on the other days of the week. This activity, as I have said, is very restricted, and it is not a principal part of banking. The principal part of banking is the loaning of money, the transferring of it from place to place, the financing of import and export business, and such like. Banking is not changing cheques. That is just a service; as Mr. Netterfield put it—the bank's shop window.

Mr. Court: You cannot imagine a bank without it.

Mr. JOHNSON: The fact that the member for Nedlands has no imagination is not important.

Mr. Court: Can you imagine a bank without a teller, and without changing cheques?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes, I can, and if the hon. member looks at the evidence he will find that one witness said that it is theoretically possible for the whole of banking to be done by post without the bank being open to the public.

Mr. Court: The bank would not last very long.

Mr. Roberts: It would be like carrying on here without talking.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is hard to imagine the member for Bunbury talking without making inane interjections. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. I. W. Manning, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.*