

**QUESTIONS.****EDUCATION.***As to School Holiday Camps.*

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

1, Is it a fact that the Education Department has arranged for the holding of school holiday camps as part of the school curriculum?

2, If so, at what places are such camps to be held?

3, Is it a fact that children attending such camps will be charged £3 each per week and travelling expenses to and from the place where the camp is held?

4, Is it a rule that children to a specified number attending such camps must be accompanied by two of the mothers of such children who have to do the work of the camp?

5, Is it a fact that these ladies are also charged £3 per week while at the camp plus travelling expenses to and from the camp?

6, What is the maximum number of (a) children, (b) parents, attending such camps?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes. Details of the scheme will be given in the Education Estimates.

2, Albany Quarantine Station and Point Peron.

3, No.

4, No.

5, No.

6, (a) 100 children; (b) no fixed number of parents is invited.

**POLICE.***As to Strength of Force and Recruits.*

Mr. MANN (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

1, Is it a fact that, on Saturday, the 2nd November, 1946, there was only one constable on street duty on the afternoon shift in the city of Perth?

2, Is he aware that, when the police school at present receiving instruction was being taken on, only 27 men were available although 30 were required to complete the class?

3, Is it a fact that the list of applicants was exhausted when the last school was

5, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.

6, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.

7, Supply Bill (No. 2), £2,200,000.

8, Transfer of Land Act Amendment (No. 1).

9, Railway (Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe) Discontinuance.

10, Medical Act Amendment.

**BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.**

1, Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment.

2, Eastern Goldfields Transport Board. Introduced by the Premier.

3, Imprisonment for Betting Abolition. Introduced by Mr. Watts.

**ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.**

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gasecoyne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.*

**Legislative Assembly.**

*Thursday, 14th November, 1946.*

	PAGE
Questions: Education, as to school holiday camps	1964
Police, as to strength of Force and recruits	1964
Mallet bark, as to contracts and prices	1965
Printing of Parliamentary documents, as to overcoming power difficulties	1965
Ministerial Statement, as to printing Parliamentary documents	1966
Bills: City of Perth Scheme for Superannuation (Amendments Authorisation) 1R.	1966
Canning District Sanitary Site, 1R.	1966
Land Act Amendment, 2R., Com.	1966
Country Areas Water Supply, recom.	1970
Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply, recom.	1975
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	1976
Adjournment, special	1991

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2 p.m., and read prayers.

taken on and that serious trouble is being experienced in obtaining suitable recruits and is it considered that this is due to unsatisfactory rates of pay and conditions and if not to what is it due?

4, (a) Will he inform the House whether the Commissioner of Police has an auxiliary force on which he can call in an emergency; (b) if the Commissioner has no such force, does it mean that police would have to work excessive hours to cope with any situation that may arise?

5, Will he give the House some indication as to when the Government intends to implement the recommendation contained in the annual report of the Commissioner of Police that the strength of the force should be considerably increased?

The PREMIER replied:

1, No.

2, Of 44 applicants, only 27 passed the medical examination.

3, No.

4, (a) No; (b) this may be possible.

5, As soon as possible.

### MALLET BARK.

#### *As to Contracts and Prices.*

Mr. SEWARD (without notice) asked the Minister for Labour:

1, Is he aware that certain merchants in Perth entered into contracts with farmers for the purchase of mallet bark at £8 2s. 6d. per ton?

2, That the price was £1 2s. 6d. above the price ruling last year?

3, That such increased price was offered without previous reference to the Deputy Price Fixing Commissioner?

4, That when the matter was brought under the notice of the Deputy Price Fixing Commissioner he declined to permit the increase of £1 2s. 6d. per ton?

5, That despite that fact such action on the part of the Price Fixing Commissioner was not taken until after many farmers concerned had completed their contracts, and had agreed to pay, and in certain cases had paid, an increased price for stripping based on increased selling price?

6, That notwithstanding their contracts these merchants are now repudiating them and offering the farmer £7 per ton?

7, Will he consult the Crown Law Department with a view to taking such action as will compel these merchants to honour their contracts?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Certain merchants in Perth did enter into contracts with farmers to pay £8 2s. 6d. per ton for mallet bark.

2, The price of £8 2s. 6d. was £1 2s. 6d. above the average price ruling last year.

3, The price of £8 2s. 6d. was offered without reference to the Deputy Prices Commissioner.

4, The Deputy Prices Commissioner would not permit the average increase of £1 2s. 6d. per ton.

5, Action to ensure that last year's prices were not exceeded could not have been taken by the Deputy Prices Commissioner until the matter came under his notice.

6 (a) Any contract entered into between the merchant and the stripper to pay higher than the maximum price permitted constitutes a breach of the National Security (Prices) Regulations, is therefore invalid and legally unenforceable. (b) However, in view of all the circumstances, the Deputy Prices Commissioner agreed that, where contracts had been entered into, no objection would be taken to merchants honouring the terms of the contract, provided any loss thus sustained should be borne by them.

7, See answer to No. 6.

### PRINTING OF PARLIAMENTARY DOCUMENTS.

#### *As to Overcoming Power Difficulties.*

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER (without notice) asked the Premier: Would it be possible for typed copies of questions to be supplied to members before the House meets as it is impossible in some parts of the House to hear what is said?

The PREMIER replied: The hon. member may not have been present yesterday when I explained the difficulties associated with printing, and said that if members wished their questions to be answered they should be treated as questions without notice.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.**

*As to Printing Parliamentary Documents.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gaseoyne): This morning I have been able to overcome most of the difficulties associated with the printing of Parliamentary documents and Bills, and possibly of "Hansard," in the very near future.

**BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, City of Perth Scheme for Superannuation (Amendments Authorisation).

Introduced by Mr. Needham.

- 2, Canning District Sanitary Site.

Introduced by Mr. Cross.

**BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

**MR. THORN** (Toodyay) [2.10]: I am very pleased that the Minister has introduced this legislation. In this House recently I asked him some questions regarding the treatment of soldier settlers in respect of Crown land, and he then stated that it was his intention to bring forward a Bill that would provide the soldiers returned from the recent war with rather better conditions regarding Crown lands than those extended to the returned men of the 1914-18 war. On their behalf I am grateful to the Minister for introducing the Bill. I have consulted both the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party regarding it and they are quite satisfied with its provisions. They view them as an improvement and indicative of the Government's desire to extend a helping hand and increased privileges to the returned men. In the circumstances, I shall not detain the House. I could engage in a full discussion of the whole question, but I have traversed the ground on other Bills dealing with soldier land settlement, so I shall not repeat myself. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall [2.12]: I presume it is the Minister's intention to take the Bill into Committee straight away.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

**Mr. LESLIE**: I have no criticism to offer regarding the measure. I commend the Minister for bringing the Bill down. In my opinion it will meet at least one of the requirements for which ex-Service personnel are at present crying out. I have not had an opportunity to do more than casually glance through the Bill, but I notice that in the definition of "discharged member of the Forces" there may be need for some clarification. I think the Minister should consider whether there has not been an omission seeing that no mention is made of the recent war. It refers to the commencing date of the man's full time service in one or other of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth, but does not mention any terminating period. It does not mention the war at all except, of course, that the year 1939 is referred to, I think the definition should include a reference similar to that appearing in like sections of other Acts and set out something about the war in which His Majesty was engaged commencing on the 3rd September, 1939. That would definitely tie this legislation up with the recent war. Possibly this is just an oversight, and I draw the Minister's attention to it.

The Minister for Lands: It is a question of when he was discharged after the recent war.

**Mr. LESLIE**: Yes, there is also the question of the date of his discharge.

The Minister for Lands: That is provided for. It refers to six months afterwards.

**Mr. LESLIE**: I just mention the point for the consideration of the Minister and we can perhaps deal with it during the Committee stage. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [2.14]: There are one or two aspects of this measure that do not appear to me to have received sufficient consideration, although I may be wrong in that respect. I think it right to place my views before the Minister in order that he may give some attention to the points I will raise. Under the Act of 1919 reference is made to the rebate of purchase price in respect of conditional purchase holdings, and one portion of the Bill now before the House deals with that question.

Throughout the measure it is referred to as a rebate of the half-yearly rental or some equivalent term.

The Minister for Lands: The payments are always called "rent," although I do not know why that is so.

Mr. WATTS: There is nothing in the Bill—there is nothing I can discover in the parent Act either—regarding any guarantee that if the soldier settler has paid the rebated half-yearly instalments over the full period of his lease, he shall be regarded as having fully paid up his indebtedness to the Crown and is therefore entitled to the freehold of his property if the improvements are satisfactory. That is the position under the original Land Act if and when the half-yearly instalments have been fully paid throughout the period of the lease. That is one matter that has given me some concern because I cannot see what entitlement he has to the freehold when only half of the amount has been paid on the half-yearly system of rebates. The other point has reference to the clause which provides that—

A lessee who is a discharged member of the forces shall not, in any case, be required to pay any rent or any interest on the cost of survey or interest on the value of improvements on any conditional purchase lease during the first five years of the term thereof.

Is that condition to apply to a discharged member of the Forces who takes over a conditional purchase lease formerly held by a civilian or a non-discharged member of the Armed Forces?

The Minister for Lands: The previous man would already have got that concession.

Mr. WATTS: I do not think he would have. It seems to me that the civilian is under an obligation to pay interest under the various headings mentioned in the clause, including survey fees and so on respecting the block that is transferred to the discharged soldier settler, and under this Bill he then becomes entitled to the half-yearly rebate because he is the holder of the conditional purchase lease.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. WATTS: But the Bill does not say anywhere, so far as I can see, that the man is entitled to a rebate of half the cost of interest on the survey fees and on the improvements. It seems that the transferee or

some civilian is likely to be the one to benefit as against the discharged soldier who takes the transfer.

The Premier: Is that not to be paid in the earlier period?

Mr. WATTS: That may be so. I do not want to be misunderstood in making these points. I have put forward my views so that we shall not in passing legislation agree to provisions respecting which we are not clear. If the Minister can indicate what the position is I shall be delighted, because I do not want to obstruct the passage of the Bill. I am also very glad that the Government has seen fit to introduce legislation to alter the system by which Crown blocks have been disposed of at auction. I think the provisions in the Bill will cope with the position that the Minister dealt with in his introductory speech.

The Minister for Lands: I hope so.

Mr. WATTS: The matters referred to caused considerable concern at the time when they took place.

The Minister for Lands: They caused us concern too.

Mr. WATTS: It was felt that there was absolutely no control over the transactions that were taking place then, and it was most evident that the Crown was obtaining very high prices for land with no-one in control of it at all, whereas ordinary vendors of land were obliged to accept the restricted amounts placed upon their blocks by the sub-Treasury. The clause in the Bill dealing with the matter obviously proposes to put an end to the possibility of speculation in government property through the Lands Department by giving it the right to determine the purpose for which the block is to be used much in the same way, as I understand it, as the old Land Board used to do with regard to conditional purchase leases. While it might have been better from my point of view to make the sales by the Crown subject to the same sort of restrictions as are imposed on private persons through the sub-Treasury, it was very necessary that some steps should be taken to overcome the existing position, and in this measure a genuine attempt is made to do that very thing.

I am somewhat intrigued to see in the Bill the provision for the appointment of a Director of Land Settlement, obviously in

confirmation of the appointment made in favour of Mr. Fyfe some 15 or 18 months ago. I hope the legalisation of that gentleman's appointment will have the effect of speeding-up a little the service he is rendering to the State. I may be over-optimistic in expressing that hope, because it is hardly possible that a mere paragraph in a Bill will assist to attain that end; but unquestionably there is a terrible lag in this business of discharged Servicemen's land settlement, a lag that is incomprehensible to most of us. This lag is gravely discouraging to those men interested in land settlement, and I should not be in the least surprised to learn before very long that the number of applicants has been reduced to one-half, because of the discouragement with which they are meeting and the interminable delays which are facing them.

I am quite unable to understand why the restrictions and inhibitions that have been imposed upon the director and other people concerned in the matter should be allowed to continue. Whether it is a matter of Government policy in this State or purely a matter of Commonwealth policy, or a combination of both, or the result of too much control by persons having little or no knowledge of Western Australian conditions and exercising too much authority under Canberra legislation or regulations, is beyond me; but I do know that the situation today is very little, if any, better than it was 15 months ago when the war came to an end and when my colleague from Toodyay suggested that the impending end of hostilities found the Commonwealth almost unprepared to handle the matter.

The Commonwealth authorities do not seem any more prepared now than they were then, unless the holding of endless discussions in conference, the cutting away of a little red-tape but leaving a big cocoon still surrounding the whole process is making for a greater measure of preparedness. As regards the members of the public vitally concerned in land settlement as a means of earning a living in future years, the whole set-up at present is extremely unattractive, and I have not found anything in the Bill, except the legalisation of the appointment of Mr. Fyfe, which is likely to contribute much towards a solution of the problem. I do hope that a solution will be quickly found because, if it is not, I am afraid those responsible, whoever they may be, should be the subject

of considerable censure by the people of this country. I am very glad to see in the Bill a proposition for the implementing of certain recommendations made by Mr. Fyfe in another capacity a number of years ago, particularly in regard to the reappraisal of pastoral leases and the drought difficulties that have been experienced by pastoralists in the North-West during recent years.

I am concerned to find that apparently there is no power for the reappraisal board to grant relief over a period longer than two years after a drought. I do not consider that two years is a reasonable time, notwithstanding that it may be Mr. Fyfe's recommendation. The effect of a drought such as was experienced in the north-western areas of the State cannot be overcome in two years. If the conversations I have had with pastoralists affected by the drought are any warrant—and I believe they are—it would appear to require more like five years before any real recovery could be made, granted that reasonable seasons were experienced. As I understand this measure, it proposes to carry out what I believe has been the practice heretofore of granting rebates for a period of only two years. I was and am hopeful that the Minister will concede that the board should be granted the same power over a greater period in order that it might afford a more substantial measure of relief where the severity of the drought might warrant such relief being granted. I support the second reading of the measure, which I hope will be passed.

**MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [2.26]:** I support the second reading. I think the Government is acting wisely in making all land settlement part of the activities of the Lands Department and recognised by statute. Of course, we have had the land settlement organisation inside the department for many decades, but the matter has now reached an importance where the legislation relating to our lands should recognise that land settlement is now and is to be a particularly responsible part of the department's activities. The Director of Land Settlement for the moment is mainly occupied with the problem of suitably settling on the land men returned from the recent war who desire to engage in primary production. We have heard on a number of occasions regret expressed at the delay

in the progress of the land settlement proposals; but I take it that the responsibilities of the Director of Land Settlement under this legislation will be much wider than merely the settling of returned soldiers. He will be responsible, I hope, for the settlement of a number of migrants who will come to this State in the not distant future.

The Minister for Lands: He is responsible for that now.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes; but at present the settlement of migrants is more or less a dead-letter. The first duty of the department must be the suitably-placing of returned men but, subject to that obligation, which rests upon the State and the community, there will be need for provision for settlement on the land of migrants who, in the not distant future and we hope for many years to come, will be desirous of taking up land in this State. I mention this to stress the very great importance of the office of Director of Land Settlement. We have seen from the progress or lack of progress of settlement of returned soldiers how this business is retarded by insufficient planning, administrative difficulties and various exchanges administratively which appear to be constantly taking place between the Commonwealth and State Governments. If there is one lesson to be learnt, it is that within the limits of his time and duties, the Director of Land Settlement should at the earliest moment prepare the fullest plans for the settlement of migrants as they arrive in this State.

The position of migration has previously been mentioned by me in this Chamber, and I am by no means satisfied with the progress that has been made. I do not think that in this State, where need of population is so much greater than it is in the other States and where the opportunities to absorb population are much more favorable than those of other States, we should wait all the time for the initiative to come from the Commonwealth Government. It seems to me that in this case we should be prepared to formulate our own policy, which must not run across that of the Commonwealth Government, and have our own objectives very clearly determined, so that we can work with some definite purpose in view and to some plan to be car-

ried through. I hope the Director of Land Settlement will formulate plans for the settlement of migrants and that they will be laid before Parliament at the earliest possible moment, so that members may have an opportunity to know what is proposed.

The Minister for Lands: As a matter of fact, a Bill is being drafted.

Mr. McDONALD: I am glad to hear it. What I would like to say further is that, while unforeseen industrial difficulties at present may delay the work of Parliament in this session, at the earliest moment the Minister should initiate a discussion on that Bill or on proposals which he can lay on the Table of the House as to the settlement and absorption of migrants not only on the land, but in all the other industries in which there may be an opportunity for new people to take up their lives in this State. The need for doing that at the earliest possible moment has been borne in on every member of this House by the unfortunate delays that have taken place in settling returned men, who in so many cases have been waiting for months to make a start in their new life on the land. I had intended to say, and do say, that the provisions for increased concessions to holders of pastoral leases are certainly a step in the right direction; but I also feel there is not sufficient elasticity in the Bill now before Parliament.

The effects of drought or unfavourable weather conditions in the North-West are so severe and are felt for so many years that the mere concession of rent for a year or two is not going to make a very great contribution to the return to solvency of the people who are engaged in pastoral operations in our northern areas. So I would welcome any amendment by the Minister to increase the period over which he will be able to grant relief to pastoralists who are in a difficult position owing to the effect of droughts. After all, it will be one of the minor contributions towards the rehabilitation of those men, and it is not necessary for me to stress what members—particularly North-West members—know full well, that there are many pastoralists in those areas who are going to have the greatest difficulty not merely in getting back to a solvent state, but even in remaining on their holdings.

The Minister for Lands: We have remitted thousands of pounds of rents already.

Mr. McDONALD: I would like to see the fullest power to make concessions to the pastoralists in those areas. The other provisions of the Bill I need not refer to in detail. The power to grant concessions to returned men with respect to rents and extensions of the terms of their leases to correspond with the period they served with the Forces, appears to be a highly desirable and proper recognition of the services which they have rendered to their country. Another desirable provision is the giving of greater power to the department to deal with the marginal areas, as this will assist in the restoration of those districts to a position where the farmers can remain on their holdings with some prospect of getting a decent living from their activities. The arrangements by which the old system of auctioning town blocks—which of late has resulted in such startling results—are well worth while. The Bill is one which I think will improve our land legislation and I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—New section. Minister may defer rent payable by lessee who has served with H.M. Forces:

Mr. LESLIE: I move an amendment—

That in line 9 of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 139B, after the word "date," the words "during the war in which His Majesty was engaged and which commenced on the third day of September, 1939," be inserted.

As the new section stands, it would mean that any person who had resided for 12 months in Australia prior to 1939 would be eligible; notwithstanding that he may not have served with the Forces during the war just ended, if it has ended.

The Minister for Lands: Has it?

Mr. LESLIE: My amendment would bring the provision into line with the definitions in the War Service Land Settlement

Agreement Act and the State Housing Bill now before Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: I am not objecting to the amendment.

Mr. LESLIE: Then I am content to let the matter rest.

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

Clause 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

### **BILL—COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY.**

#### *Recommittal.*

On motion by the Minister for Works, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 5, 20, 30, 41, 66, 72 and 92.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of the definition of "district," after the figures "1919-1943," the words "and includes any land (including privately owned subdivided land) which the Governor may declare by proclamation to be deemed to be included in a district for the purposes of this Act" be inserted.

I pointed out during the discussion at the Committee stage that if the definition were permitted to remain as it was, there would be difficulty in some cases in determining whether portions of certain townsites actually outside of the official townsites were to be regarded, for water rating purposes, as town or farm. I considered that the language should be made a great deal more specific. The matter has since been referred to the Crown Solicitor, who considered that a clarification along the lines suggested by me should be made and supplied the amendment which I have submitted to the Committee.

The Minister for Works: I support the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of "townsite," after the figures "1919-1943," the words "and includes any land (including privately owned subdivided land) which the Governor may declare by proclamation to be deemed to be included in a townsite for purposes of this Act" be inserted.

Pretty much the same explanation attaches to this amendment as applied to the previous one.

Mr. WATTS: I am not sure that the same wording should be used in this amendment as was employed in the amendment. It seems to me that it would be wise to exclude purely agricultural land in the definition of "townsite." We know what gave rise to the proposed insertion of these words—namely, that country towns have, in certain cases, not been built on the actual townsite area originally set aside for that purpose but on land that has been subdivided or otherwise made available by private persons for the erection of such townsite thereon which has finally become the established township. I think we should insert something to demonstrate that the type of land included in the townsite is land intended for residential or commercial purposes and is not purely of an agricultural nature.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the idea behind the amendment. Whenever the Governor issued a proclamation it would be so framed as to meet the point submitted by the Leader of the Opposition. If the hon. member cares to tighten up the amendment by including some additional words, I will have no objection.

Mr. Watts: The right wording does not occur to me at the moment.

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

Clause 20—Power of Minister in relation to construction of waterworks.

Mr. McLARTY: I move an amendment—

That the following further proviso be added:—"And provided that no Local Authority shall be liable for the cost of maintenance of waterworks constructed on, through, over, under or adjacent to any road controlled by such Local Authority and, subject to liability for payment of rates and charges as in this Act provided, no owner or occupier of land shall be liable for the maintenance or cost of maintenance of waterworks constructed on, through, over, under or adjacent to such land."

This amendment is slightly different from the one that I previously proposed, but it is acceptable to the Minister and meets the requirements which I desire to cover. The idea is to clarify the position of the local authorities and landholders in regard to their responsibility for maintenance and

construction of certain works that may be carried out as a result of the measure.

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

Clause 30—Request for supply to rated land:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When this clause was being discussed in Committee the member for Williams-Narrogin moved for the deletion of Subclause (2). He was supported by the Leader of the Opposition and others, and I intimated that I was 49 per cent. convinced that the amendment was right. I undertook to have further inquiries made to ascertain whether I could be pushed beyond the 50 per cent. mark, and I have been. I am, therefore, prepared to have Subclause (2) deleted and, if the member for Williams-Narrogin will move in that direction, I will agree to the amendment.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (2) be struck out.

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

Clause 41—Duty to keep fittings in repair:

Mr. DONEY: On behalf of the member for York I move an amendment—

That all the words after "keep" in line 2 be struck out and the following words: "all pipes and all fittings within or attached to his land and connected to the Minister's service or communication pipe or meter in good repair so as to prevent effectually the water from running to waste" inserted in lieu.

The member for York submitted an argument which appealed somewhat to the Minister, but he wanted time to think the matter over. I hope that the hon. gentleman is now favourably disposed towards the amendment.

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

Clause 66—Amount of rate:

Mr. WATTS: I need not reiterate the arguments which gave rise to the amendment in the Committee stage, because they have been stated three or four times by me and other members. When the proposal was put forward a few days ago to add a new paragraph to Clause 66 the Minister ex-



pressed the view that he was prepared to consider the right of persons, desirous of being excluded from the scheme because they already had adequate supplies for their own purposes provided at their own expense, being included in the Bill by way of right of petition, etc. to the Minister. I stated that if the amendment then before the Committee were defeated I would endeavour to devise something better.

The difference between the proposal I now submit and the previous one is that the petition must be signed by 50 per cent. of the owners of ratable land in any ward whereas previously there had to be 20 per cent. only. If they state that the majority of the owners do not desire to be supplied with water because they have ample supplies on their holdings the Minister can satisfy himself as to the truth of such statement by any means he cares to use. In the previous amendment I provided that the Minister should exclude these people altogether from the scheme, but in the amendment I now propose the Minister is to have discretion to decide not to supply such people with water, either permanently or for such period of years as he may determine. The major difference between the two proposals is that relating to the discretion of the Minister which, I take to be the principal difficulty arising in the Minister's mind towards the original proposal. In these circumstances I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added to Sub-clause (2) as follows:—“(c) Where not less than fifty per cent. of the owners of ratable land in any ward of any Road District (not being a townsite) petition the Minister in writing asking that the holdings comprised in such ward shall not be ratable under this Act, and stating that the majority of the owners in such ward do not desire to be supplied with water on the ground that they have supplies of water previously provided upon their own holdings at their own expense sufficient for all their purposes the Minister by such means as he may prescribe shall satisfy himself as to the truth of such statements, and upon his being satisfied he may at his discretion decide not to supply the holdings in such ward with water either permanently or for such period of years as he may determine (with power at the like discretion to extend such period from time to time) and thereupon such holdings shall not be supplied with water nor be ratable under this Act either permanently or for such period or periods as the decision of the Minister may require.”

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** When the other amendment, referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, was previously before the Committee, the arguments against it were put forward by me and the Committee decided to reject the amendment. It is true that this amendment differs somewhat from that one, but in principle it is much the same. If members study it closely they will find that its operation would involve officers of the department and the Minister in an almost endless task in trying to establish whether the statements in the petition were true, or sufficiently true to justify the Minister in either granting or rejecting such petition. As appears on the notice paper, I propose to move an amendment to the other water supply measure, which will give landholders the opportunity of petitioning to be left out of the scheme altogether, provided their petitions are sent in early enough to enable their cases to be considered and decided before the scheme is taken through their particular localities. I think that will be a more satisfactory amendment and will work more effectively in practice. I therefore ask the Committee to vote against this amendment.

**MR. WATTS:** I am rather surprised that the Minister has raised the objection that under this amendment so much investigation would have to be done by officers of the department, as I feel he has already let himself in for investigations of an almost similar character in relation to the preceding paragraph of Clause 66, which enables him, on being satisfied that the home-provided water supplies are adequate for all purposes, to grant the settler a reduction of rates. It therefore did not seem to me to impose any further obligations on departmental officers than did the Minister's own clause.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** That will be much easier than this would be.

**MR. WATTS:** I am simply expressing my opinion that it would not make twopenny-worth of difference as to the two types of investigation. I was under the impression that the main objection was that my earlier amendment made it virtually mandatory for the Minister to do what the petitioners wanted, whereas this one does nothing of the kind. I therefore ask the Committee to give this amendment a more favourable reception than was accorded to the last one.

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

Ayes .. .. .	13
Noes .. .. .	23

Majority against .. 10

AYES.

Mr. Brand  
Mr. Hill  
Mr. Leslie  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. North

Mr. Seward  
Mr. Shearer  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Willmott  
Mr. Doney (Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Cross  
Mr. Fox  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. J. Hegney  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Hoar  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Marshall  
Mr. Needham

Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Owen  
Mr. Pantou  
Mr. Read  
Mr. Smith  
Mr. Stynants  
Mr. Telfer  
Mr. Triat  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Wilson (Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE. No.  
Mr. Stubbs Mr. Millington

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 72—Payment for water supplied by measure:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 before the word "payment" the figure "(1)" be inserted and that new subclauses be inserted as follows:—

(2) Without the consent of the Minister no person shall directly or indirectly—

(a) dispose of water to another person, or

(b) acquire water from another person

whether or not for payment or reward or promise thereof.

Provided that this subsection shall not apply to any person, board or authority authorised to dispose of or acquire water pursuant to any Act or agreement with the Minister.

Penalty—One hundred pounds or imprisonment with or without hard labour or both.

(3) An offence under this section shall be tried and determined summarily by a stipendiary magistrate.

This amendment aims to prevent the illegal sale or disposal of water. It is true that provision is made in Clause 92 for action to be taken under regulations to prosecute any person who illegally uses water, the maxi-

mum penalty being £20. This penalty is considered to be not nearly sufficient in cases where water is illegally used. It is thought that in the case of the comprehensive water supply scheme we shall have strongly to safeguard the water supply system, especially along or near its boundaries, to prevent water being illegally used by people over the boundary, because if that were to happen it would not be possible to maintain for those on the boundary and just inside it a water supply anywhere nearly adequate to their needs. Although the penalties set out in the amendment may appear to be severe, I think it will be admitted that we must have heavy penalties in order to prevent people from illegally using water from the scheme, thus ensuring that those on the scheme and who are rated will at all times have a reasonable chance of adequately obtaining their needs from the scheme.

Mr. DONEY: This quite innocuous clause has suddenly developed into something rather astoundingly dangerous. I do not know quite what to read into it. A casual glance at the clause together with the amendment prompts my inquiry as to just exactly what type of misdemeanour the Minister has in mind that could possibly require so harsh a penalty as a fine of £100 or imprisonment with or without hard labour, or both. I daresay I am forgetting some of the debate that must have ensued regarding this particular matter. I hope the Minister will supply some more lengthy reason to indicate why what he proposes is necessary.

Mr. McDONALD: I have not had time to study the amendment, not that it requires very much in that respect. I think it should receive more consideration before it becomes law. It says that without the consent of the Minister no person shall directly or indirectly dispose of water to another person or acquire water from another person. An offence is committed whether or not there is any payment or reward in respect to the transaction. The offence is complete even though it should be a gift of water. I am not very sure where that ends. Who is the person that cannot give water to any other person? Presumably he is the person who is rated and, I assume, is the landowner or occupier. No exception is made respecting any contribution he may make for domestic or hospitality purposes.

Mr. Doney: Or for starving stock.

Mr. McDONALD: Or in case of an emergency.

Mr. Needham: Water would be very cold hospitality!

Mr. McDONALD: The member for Perth may think so, but I have been in country districts on various occasions when even a glass of water would have been extremely acceptable—with nothing else in it at all. The Minister who may be 200 or 300 miles away cannot be referred to for his consent in a case of emergency. While it may be argued that the law would be administered with commonsense and discretion, we should not frame our legislation on the principle that those responsible for its administration are capable of waiving or ignoring the terms of the Act should there be mitigating circumstances in the breach that has been committed. I would like the Minister to consider this phase and whether the terms of the amendment are not too sweeping. I would like him to consider further whether there could not be provision for exceptions such as that the clause shall not apply in a case where the water has been supplied for domestic or hospitality purposes or in case of an emergency. Exceptions must occur in connection with the receipt of water to meet which the action involved should not be regarded as an offence where, I am sure, the Minister himself intends there shall be no offence or culpability.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only purpose behind the amendment is to protect the users of water from the scheme—those legally entitled to use the water.

Mr. McDonald: I am all in favour of that objective and I think some such provision is absolutely necessary.

Mr. Watts: But the Minister is not achieving his objective by his amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those rated under the scheme will be, in effect, those that will pay for it and help it to be carried on. They are entitled to the very best the scheme is capable of providing. If we are not to enact stringent provisions against the illegal use of water, then, especially along the boundary lines of the scheme, such illegal use of water may very well take place. If it does, the people who will suffer most will be those rated under the scheme in the localities

concerned, because of adequate water supplies not being available to them. It will be found that the water they should be obtaining is illegally passing to others that have no right at all to water from the scheme.

The purpose of the penalties, which certainly appear to be severe, is to prevent breaches taking place. The penalties are high to prevent water being disposed of illegally. If the maximum penalty were only £20, as it would be if we allowed these matters to be covered by regulations, then there might be sufficiently strong temptation confronting some people illegally to dispose of water. If members think some reduction should be made in the proposed penalties, that could be considered. If they think there should be some exemptions to ensure that prosecutions will not be taken against settlers who may make water available in small quantities for beneficial and humanitarian purposes, that might also be attempted. To draft an amendment to meet such circumstances would not be easy.

Mr. Watts: I have a proposition that might suit you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No prosecution would be instituted for illegally disposing of water if it were done to save human life or to save the lives of stock driven in from dry areas.

Mr. WATTS: To prevent hasty and ill-advised prosecutions, I suggest that the Minister agree to an amendment that no prosecution shall be commenced without his written authority. I point out that no period has been set as the term of imprisonment and I should not like an indeterminate sentence to be imposed upon a person convicted of such an offence. I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "imprisonment" in proposed new Subclause (2) the words "for three months."

The Minister for Works: I agree to that.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move—

That the amendment be amended by adding a subclause as follows:—

(4) No prosecution under this section shall be commenced without the written authority of the Minister.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Mr. LESLIE: In spite of the improvements made to the Minister's amendment, I am not happy about it. What would constitute the illegal use of water? If a farmer rated on an acreage basis and entitled to so much water gave some of it to a neighbour, would he be illegally disposing of it? If a farmer in a rated area were in partnership with a person grazing stock on an outside area, could he use the water for that stock? If, during a dry spell, stock were driven into a rated area and a farmer took over some of the stock and used water from his scheme, would that be illegal? I foresee that many difficulties could arise and that the Minister would be inundated with requests for exemption from prosecution. A man who disposes of water at a profit should be penalised, but not otherwise.

Mr. Seward: He might take stock in for agistment.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, that happened in my district.

The Minister for Works: A farmer would be entitled to water stock on his own property.

Mr. LESLIE: But the stock might not be his.

The Minister for Works: That would not matter.

The Minister for Lands: So long as he did not take the water to another property, there would be no offence. The same rule applies in the metropolitan area.

Mr. LESLIE: A farmer might take stock into a rated area and use the water for it.

The Minister for Works: He would be entitled to do that.

Mr. LESLIE: So long as the farmer may use the water on his own property as he wishes, I am satisfied. My constituents are pinning their faith to this scheme. If the Minister is afraid that some person will make a heavy draw on the scheme, we will be worried about the position.

The Minister for Works: This will prevent that.

Mr. LESLIE: It is not sufficiently clear to me.

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

Clause 92—Minister may make by-laws: The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (xvi) of Subclause (1) the words "and prohibiting the sale by any person to whom water is supplied by the Minister of water supplied except with the authority in writing of the Minister" be struck out.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

### **BILL—COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.**

#### *Recommittal.*

On motion by the Minister for Works, Bill recommitted for the purpose of considering a new clause.

#### *In Committee.*

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

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

7. Where not less than fifty per cent. of the owners of rateable land in any portion of the country water area, the subject of the Scheme, such portion comprising not less than fifty thousand acres and not being a townsite, petition the Minister in writing asking that such portion of the country water area be excluded from the Scheme, the Minister may in his absolute discretion delete the portion referred to from the country water area, the subject of the Scheme; provided that any such petition shall be lodged with the Minister within three months from the date of proclamation of this Act.

The new clause is designed to give landholders within the proposed comprehensive water supply districts the opportunity to petition the Minister, should they so desire, asking that their particular area be excluded from the scheme. If the Minister receives a petition from, say, East Katanning, in which at least 50 per cent. of the landholders ask for the non-inclusion of their area in the proposed comprehensive scheme, the Minister can have the request investigated and, if he finds it possible and reasonable to exclude that part from the scheme, it can be

excluded. But if it is excluded, it would be no use for the landholders to come along a year afterwards, or even five years afterwards, and desire the area to be included. I am inclined to think that is what will happen in most cases.

Mr. Leslie: Would you not even put the pipeline past their property?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We would not. The scheme would be altered to exclude such localities which it is now intended to take in and would be expanded in other directions to include areas which it is not now intended to include. The people desiring to be excluded from the scheme must realise, if their request is granted, that they will be out of the scheme for all time. Another point for consideration is that while 50 per cent. of the farmers in the district might petition to have their area excluded from the scheme, 48 per cent, or 49 per cent. of the farmers in the same locality might petition to be included. It will be realised, therefore, that these petitions may result in headaches for the Minister in trying to reach a right decision. Members will note that any such petition must be lodged with the Minister within three months from the date of the proclamation of the Act. This is a safeguarding provision and is designed to prevent people from having the right to petition month after month or year after year. The amendment goes a fair distance in the direction of meeting the desire of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. SEWARD: I think the Minister is building up a headache for himself with this clause. He has said that if 50 per cent. of the owners of ratable land petition, an investigation will be made; and, if that is found to be justified, he may take steps to carry the proposal into effect. I should say it would be much better to make an investigation before anything is done. I can visualise a couple of districts very close to the Great Southern railway, on the east side of it, submitting such a petition and being exempt, and having a pipeline go through those districts to reach a district further out, which would increase the cost of the scheme considerably. If an investigation were made beforehand and a determination reached, it would be better than taking the course provided by the clause.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 14 of proposed new clause after the word "from" the words "or before" be inserted.

Quite a number of districts even now would be only too glad to take advantage of the amendment. By coming in before the three months, there would be no risk of overrunning it. The Minister pointed out that this will occasion extra work for himself and his officers; but, by providing for a petition to be lodged three months before or three months after the proclamation, we would make it easier for consideration and necessary action by the Minister and his officers.

Mr. LESLIE: I would ask the Minister to give consideration to providing some way of informing people when the Act is proclaimed.

The Minister for Works: We will do that.

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

Bill reported with a further amendment.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Fox in the Chair.

*Vote—Native Affairs, £60,000* (partly considered):

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [3.45]: I listened with interest to the Minister's remarks, particularly on the position of native affairs. One of the things I was very surprised to hear was that it is proposed to shift the natives—even though they be better-class natives, as the Minister described them—from the Moore River Settlement to the Kellerberrin district. I am not too certain that the member for Avon would be very happy about that, and I do not think anybody in the more central part of the State will be happy about it. I do not know the part of the country selected, and so am not aware whether it is suitable for the establishment of such a settlement; but I certainly think that a part of the State could have been secured for the purpose that would have been far more satisfactory than the Kellerberrin district. Whether it is intended that the natives are to be

trained to become farm hands ultimately or whether they are to be retained there in order that the settlement may become self-dependent is something the Minister has not told us. In any event, I do not know that I would be happy about bringing them so near to a closely-settled area.

From experience with natives, I know that, unfortunately, the closer they come into contact with whites the more readily they pick up the bad points rather than the good points of the whites. I consider that the policy of establishing small settlements within white areas is entirely wrong. The native question should be tackled along lines similar to those adopted in other countries where a native problem exists and where the situation has been dealt with on a big scale—and I think we shall have to tackle it on a big scale here. The policy which has been adopted in those places is complete segregation of the natives. The native only reaches a stage of mental inferiority and experiences a feeling of antagonism to the white man when he is brought into contact with whites who impress that outlook upon him. The native in his own right is as much entitled to have pride in his race as I, and other members of the white race, have to feel pride in ours.

The eastern and southern Europeans, people who are considered to be rather backward, have a pride in their race. We consider they are not nearly as advanced in modern civilisation and culture as we are, but they are no less proud of the fact that they belong to a certain race. We do not look down on them because they happen to be of that race, but because they are backward. Because of that the native is considered apart from us. But let him understand that he is, after all, part of a race and ask him, in his communities, to attempt to reach the standard of the white man, and we will get somewhere with him. The difficulty arises when he is amongst the whites and gets the idea that he is as good as the white man. When he realises that he is, intellectually, backward, that is when this spirit of antagonism against the white man comes forward.

The reasonable policy is to inculcate into the Western Australian natives the belief that they are part of a race and are entitled to be proud of their separate nationhood.

It is their duty to show their worth so as to take their place as a race within the country. They can reach the same stage as natives in other parts of the world—I speak of the South African natives—who are proud of the fact that they are coloured people and, because they have reached such an advanced stage of culture, consider themselves different from the whites only by virtue of the colour of their skin.

The Minister for Lands: What section has reached that stage?

Mr. LESLIE: Quite a number.

The Minister for Lands: The Zulus, the Kaffirs, or which?

Mr. LESLIE: Many African natives including the Basutos, the Zulus and the Pondos, will not bow to the white man. If we go among the native people who have their own laws, king and parliament, we will find as complete and as good a community system as anywhere, and there will be much less vice and anti-social spirit.

The Minister for Lands: When those natives get to Johannesburg they are treated as slaves and put in a compound.

Mr. LESLIE: They are treated as well as possible, and we will be faced with the same position in this country. We will have to segregate the natives from the whites in the towns.

Mr. J. Hegney: We have disturbed the blackfellows' conditions here.

Mr. LESLIE: Of course we have. The Minister controlling the Department of Native Affairs is also the Minister in charge of Fisheries, and I ask: What success could he expect to achieve if he went to the Swan River and took a couple of tons of fish from it and sent them to the wheatbelt and expected them to grow on wheat? That is what we have attempted to do with the natives; we have tried to take them out of their environment.

The Minister for the North-West: You mean we have bred them out of their environment.

Mr. LESLIE: I agree that we have, and I suggest that there is no necessity for us to perpetuate that evil. We have made a mistake in the past merely because we have attempted to absorb natives into the whites. I have said here before, and I repeat now, that the evidence in all parts of the world

goes to show that the native cannot be absorbed. I do not know whether that is because of strength of character or historical background, but it is so. In America that was attempted on a large scale, and a far greater native problem has been created there than in any other country. No bigger failure can be found anywhere than exists there today—unless, perhaps, we point to some of our attempts in Western Australia. We have made mistakes in the past; let us see that we do something to right them. The only way to do that is to realise that we have a native race to deal with and not a native trouble. Let us make the native, when he walks down the street, feel pride in his race. He may not be able to do some of the things that the white man can do, but in his own sphere he is successful. When an Indian Prince goes to London, with all his princely decorations, the people do not say, "He is just a nigger." He is an example of achievement, and we can do the same thing with our natives.

The Minister for Lands: You would not class King Billy with an Indian prince, surely?

Mr. LESLIE: In his own sphere, yes.

The Minister for Lands: What is his own sphere?

Mr. LESLIE: He considers he is important among his own people, and so does an Indian prince; there is no difference. There are any amount of races with a white skin that many of us would not class as coming near our standards, and we would consider them unfit to mix with us in the ordinary way. But that does not say that in their own country they are not correct. We can by precept, by example and education, not by trying to bring the natives amongst us, elevate them to our system of culture, if that is what we want to do with them. We cannot do that as we are going today; we will simply create a bigger problem. I regret to find that the policy of attempting to absorb the natives is still being pursued. We are going to establish another little settlement where the natives will have contact with the whites, and where one white person by the wrong word at the right time will do more harm than a dozen who would talk to the natives in the right way.

Mr. J. Hegney: That happens to the whites as well.

Mr. LESLIE: I grant that. What happens to the native children attending

schools where there are white children? The natives are considered to be something apart. The Minister attended at Goomalling, a little while ago, on a day when sports were held, and the native children who took part in the events shone, in comparison with the whites, in athletic prowess. But when the races were over the natives got together in a little group on one side and the whites stood together at the other side. But nobody had told those children that the nigger was not good enough. The natives withdrew because they realised that there was some difference between them, and that oil and water do not mix. The trouble is that by withdrawing they get into their hearts a feeling of bitterness against the white man.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is much the same in this Chamber. There are different groups on each side.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, but on the left hand side we have sensible groups. The circumstances affecting the natives are entirely different. If the Minister cares to visit other schools he will find the same thing applies, and if he asks these children why they keep apart from the white children they will not be able to tell him. If we ask them why they do it they cannot tell us, or define it, though they know there is a difference. As a child I was brought up with natives and understood some of their outlook, and I know their pride. There were 3,000,000 natives in the district to which I belonged, but only 300 white men in the town. We never attempted to tell them they were no good, but endeavoured to show them how far our civilisation had gone. They laughed at many of our habits. They preferred sitting on the ground to eat their meals to sitting on chairs.

If we deal with the problem of the full-bloods we will overcome the problem of the half-castes, but by continuing our present policy we will only aggravate it. There must be a segregation point somewhere. I have heard it stated that it would be possible, within a period of generations, to absorb the Australian aboriginal, yet I have not seen much evidence of it. It is said to be possible in seven generations to absorb the African negro, but that is not so. Even if they are turned out with white skins and the white man's features, so that they cannot be recognised as being of the negroid type, they will still have the characteristics

that have made the world dance to their tune, with jitter-bug dancing, and so on. We must adopt a different policy and realise that the problem cannot airily be brushed aside by saying that we can educate the white man to absorb the native.

The natives must be segregated, and the half-castes dealt with on similar lines. A start must be made, and it is no use saying we made the mistake in the past of allowing half-castes to be born, or circumstances to arise that permitted their entry into the world. We must ensure that similar circumstances do not arise in the future. In Africa it has been found necessary to make it a serious offence for a white and a black to co-habit. Once the law put its foot down heavily it prevented a tremendous amount of co-habitation between whites and blacks, to the extent that the half-caste problem does not exist there today. The law has been vigorously enforced, with the result that there are only the two breeds, native and white. The native considers that nobody can hold a candle to him, and in many respects that is true. The whites and natives do not attempt to compete in their social ideas. Their living standards are different and the white man tells the native to try to come up to the white man's standard.

If the native is content to remain on his own standard, he does so, and I believe there is more contentment in those native provinces than in any of the white countries of the world today. They live peaceably together, and are doing a good job. They do not have to apply for doles and assistance, but produce sufficient for themselves to live on. I doubt whether there is any community in the British Empire that, during the two world wars has had a finer record than that of Basutoland. In both the 1914-18 war and the last great conflict those natives contributed more in money and goods than any community of similar size in any part of the British Empire.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Mt. Marshall had better deal with Western Australia. I have given him some latitude, but now he had better deal with the Vote.

Mr. LESLIE: I am only drawing comparisons. If natives can do such things in one country there is no reason why they should not do them elsewhere.

The CHAIRMAN: I have given the hon. member some latitude, and he must now get back to the Vote.

Mr. LESLIE: There is no reason why we should not do the same with our Western Australian natives. To establish little settlements would, I think, be a mistake. It would be better to apportion part of the country and tell the natives to run it for themselves, under white supervision. I think that is the only way to solve the native question, and we should face up to it as has been done elsewhere.

I did not catch the figures relating to fisheries given by the Minister, in order to form a comparison as against other years, but I noticed that he claimed there had been a considerable increase in the output of canned fish. He said the total amount included the product called "Frelish." I would like to know whether only the fish used in canning that product was counted, or whether the whole of the contents of the tin, which contains a considerable amount of potato or some other vegetable, were included. I do not think that product is very well thought of on the Western Australian market. The amount of fish contained in it is low, reminding one of the pork and beans, where we had to look through a lot of beans to find a very little bit of pork. I, together with others who have sampled Frelish, have been disappointed with it as a Western Australian fish product. The amount of fish contained in it is disappointingly small and I am afraid it will not do the name of our canning industry much good, if put on the market as a fish product. As to our Western Australian salmon, I think as much of that product as possible should be made available on our own market. I inquired this morning at several big stores in Perth for Western Australian tinned salmon, but was told that they rarely see it.

If our products are as good as we claim them to be, I think it is only right that we should make certain that they are available on our own markets. I agree that a certain proportion should be sent away to establish markets elsewhere, but we should not denude the markets within our own State of local products. We must not forget that when there are big supplies of local products available and a dwindling



demand for them outside the State, the producers or manufacturers look to the local market to maintain their factories in operation over that very difficult period. If their products are unknown on the local market, those manufacturers will not secure the support that they would have deserved had they made available their goods in reasonable quantities and established them on the local market in good times.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [4.11]:

I would like the Minister to give the Committee, if he can, any information at his disposal in relation to the projected visit to this State of the eminent anthropologist, Professor Elkin, who holds the Chair of Anthropology in the Sydney University. The professor is not only associated with organisations dealing with the welfare of natives in the Eastern States but is the author of a number of standard works on the subject. Through the interest of a missionary body—I think it is the Missionary Society of the Churches in Australia—proposals were made that Professor Elkin should visit this State and I believe—I speak subject to correction—that the society was prepared to provide the whole of the expenses involved in connection with the visit including the expenses of anyone that might accompany him. The object of the move was that Professor Elkin should come to Western Australia, not in any critical spirit but as an acknowledged authority, to see for himself the conditions regarding native affairs in Western Australia and to confer with the officers of the Department of Native Affairs with a view to advising and being helpful and constructive in any forward-looking policy to improve the prospects and conditions of the natives of our State.

I am disappointed to find that Professor Elkin has not so far arrived. From what I can ascertain, he was willing to come here and his non-arrival appears to be due to our failure to take advantage of the services and advice of so eminent an authority. I would like to hear the Minister discuss the matter because there are many people who feel a responsibility to our natives, such as the Minister himself feels very deeply, and those people were looking forward to Professor Elkin's visit. They regret very much that it has not taken place to date. It seems to me that if the State and the Department of Native Affairs have an opportunity to

secure the constructive and helpful advice of an authority like Professor Elkin, they should take advantage of it.

Despite my great respect for the Minister, personal and otherwise, I sometimes feel that his department rather tends to look upon any criticism or suggestion as a reflection on it. That is not necessarily so at all. The position of our natives is something that touches many people of Western Australia very closely and they are concerned as to whether we are doing all we could to discharge our great responsibility. If I might tender any advice, I would suggest that the department should encourage the fullest outside help and the greatest possible number of suggestions from outside organisations of a responsible character and from outside people in that category, so that they, too, could share with the department in doing the best to meet the needs of our native population. By that means the departmental administration might be more constructive and its responsibilities could very well be lightened because they would be shared with other people. In 1944 I moved for an inquiry into matters affecting the native population of the Commonwealth. Although I believe that the administration of native affairs should be in the hands of State Governments, which are more closely in touch with the coloured population in their respective areas, I also hold that there should be a responsibility on the national Government from a financial point of view in relation to the people who were the original owners of the continent we now occupy.

A resolution was passed in this House under the terms of which the Government was to seek financial aid from the Commonwealth and the amount mentioned was, I think, £50,000. Some time ago I put some questions to the Minister who told me that representations had been made to the Commonwealth for a grant of money in aid of the improvement of conditions for the native population, but so far no response had been made by the Commonwealth. I hope that the matter will be followed up actively and that the Minister will use his utmost endeavours to secure from the Commonwealth a grant to improve native conditions in Western Australia. I notice that the Commonwealth Government has recognised its responsibilities to the natives in the Northern Territory. It has undertaken something

in the nature of an experiment on, I believe, Melville Island where a sawmilling industry is to be set up and the natives are to play a large part as artisans in the enterprise. It will be interesting to watch the development of the scheme.

If the Commonwealth Government is becoming more alive to its responsibilities to the native population and is giving evidence of it in the Northern Territory, then it is only right that this State, which has the biggest burden of all the States of Australia in the care of the native population, should be a very proper subject for considerable financial aid in the task of bettering the prospects of our aborigines. I am keenly anxious to see the best possible brains in and outside this State and even those available outside this continent interested in the furthering of native affairs. I think we should have a long-term policy regarding the natives for, say, the next 100 years. We have to look as far as we can in envisaging the development of our native population and make up our minds what our objectives are to be over a long-term period.

There is, for example, the absorption of the half-caste population into the white population. All responsible writers on native affairs in Australia agree that the only humanitarian view regarding the half-caste population is that it should be assimilated into the white population of Australia. By means of schools, settlements, selected industries, child and adult education, we must try to work out a system which will facilitate the absorption of the present and future half-caste population into the white population. This is a matter, not for a year or a decade, but for a long-term policy, and no offer of responsible advice should be refused by this State that may aid the Government and the Department of Native Affairs in formulating a policy for such a period according to the most enlightened ideas prevailing for the protection and advancement of our full-blooded native and half-caste population.

I turn now to the subject of fisheries, and desire to refer to a matter which the member for Murray-Wellington asked me to mention. He has been obliged to leave; otherwise he would have lost an opportunity of returning to his constituency. In Victoria, the matter of fish hatcheries is receiving great consideration. A large trout

hatchery is to be built near Thornton and £22,000 is to be spent on it in the next two years. The complete plan for the hatchery involves an expenditure of £75,000. There is to be an annual production of 1,000,000 young trout from the eggs and, in addition, it is proposed to pay attention to the rearing at the hatchery of several valuable indigenous fish. The progeny of the hatchery, including the indigenous fish, will be distributed through Victoria and put into streams and even into farmers' dams in suitable localities where the dams are not likely to run dry. It is thought that this will provide an addition to the food supplies of the country areas that in time will be of very great value.

The hon. member also mentioned the great interest being taken in the matter of trout hatching in the South-West. Trout are now being liberated in the tributary streams of the Murray River, and a number of other rivers, and there is a feeling of optimism as to the success of these ventures and the possibility of increasing the supply of fish for food and for sport. He desired me to say that he commended the Minister on the work done in this direction, and hoped the department would foster, by all reasonable means, the development of fish in the streams and inland waters of our State.

I do not propose to spend much time on the matter of sea and coast fishing, as to which I do not pretend to have any precise knowledge. I do wish to say, however, that there is some opinion held by a number of people that we are not exercising all the precautions we should to ensure that immature fish are not being taken. I am not of my own knowledge able to say whether that is so or not. The Minister might feel that on the whole it is not so, and might tell us that such is the case, but I hope that, in view of this opinion, he will, through his officers, make searching inquiries to ensure that the opinion of the department is entirely correct.

It is said that fish are taken at spawning time and before they have reached maturity and have had an opportunity to reproduce, and that generally the safeguards to ensure the perpetuation of our fisheries resources could be strengthened. I pass this opinion on to the Minister and hope he will not merely say, with a wave of the hand, that these statements have no sub-

stance, but will consider it right to address his mind again to the matter and make quite certain that there is not an element of truth in the opinion that is held. Another item in these Estimates refers to the North-West. It is dealt with from the financial point of view, and in a somewhat summary manner; in fact, a very small amount is shown, and that, I think, refers mainly to the Minister's necessary and proper expenses for travelling to the North-West to visit the areas under his control. Speaking from memory, the amount involved is £181 or £200.

The Minister for the North-West: A few stamps and administrative costs have to be paid out of that.

Mr. McDONALD: The Loan Estimates, however, propose expenditure of a more substantial nature. From the points of view of defence, of our responsibility for an immense area, of the welfare of the people who are now there and the possibility of bringing more people to those areas, the North-West must occupy a very large part of the responsible consideration of Parliament and the Government. Voluntary committees have been formed in the North-West by gentlemen who reside there and I wish to say—all members will agree with me in this—that the greatest possible credit is due to them for their public response in trying to meet the problems of the area in which they live. Men up there attend conferences often involving their travelling hundreds or thousands of miles in an effort to formulate plans to help the Government in developing and creating better conditions in that part of the State, and the Government has properly secured the services of highly-trained public servants and also members representing the North-West on a committee to make plans for the North-West.

I hope we may have an opportunity for more discussion on the North-West in the near future. Some months ago an interim statement was issued by the North-West Committee sponsored by the Government, but since that time I have heard nothing more. I should like to know whether any final conclusions have been arrived at by the committee and endorsed by the Government, and, if so, the terms of those conclusions. The position is one which requires help and a policy, as soon as one

can be formulated in times which admittedly are somewhat difficult and during which there is so much to do. But I would like to see the Government more vocal on the North-West and give Parliament and the public some up-to-date ideas of the stage it has reached in the formulation of its policy for the future of those areas.

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn - Coolgardie) [4.31]: I desire to touch only on one subject of the Minister's introduction, and that is in reference to fisheries. I am a little disappointed at the small increase provided for this department. We have been assured from time to time that consideration was being given to the many aspects of the Fisheries Department and no doubt it is the department's desire to further the interests of this important industry. I feel that the additional money which could have been voted to this department could very well be earmarked for the appointment of additional inspectors. I touched briefly on this important point recently. In my opinion, many of the offences that are being committed today against the Fisheries Act are the outcome of too little vigilance, and not of the neglect of either the department or the few inspectors employed by it. The main difficulty is that we have insufficient inspectors to police our long coastline and the large number of estuaries that come within the ambit of the department. Therefore, as I said, I am disappointed that a greater amount has not been made available so as to permit of the appointment of at least four additional inspectors.

The reference by the member for West Perth to the taking of immature fish is opportune. Undoubtedly, a vast quantity of immature fish is being taken and consumed, not merely from the local estuary but from other sources also. Had an extra amount been made available to police the coastline and the estuaries this could not have taken place. I presume the Minister will say that his inspectors tell him that it is not going on; but I assure him that large numbers of immature fish are being taken every day of the week. Dozens of men outside the control of the department are selling such fish. They should be stopped. They are not professional men, but merely men who are gaining a few shillings by selling fish "under the lap." I have had brought under my notice on numerous occasions small pieces of

filleted mullet less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. It is impossible to fillet a mullet 5 inches long and get pieces more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and therefore it is quite patent that immature fish are being taken from the river. At the same time, I think the department has realised that the setting of a very high standard— $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches—is a mistake. Many fish slightly smaller could profitably be taken from the river without causing any great harm. The taking of immature fish, however, is waste.

If we had more inspectors policing the various waters, greater protection would be given to all marine life, particularly two types on which I have spoken previously at some length in this House. I refer to crabs and prawns. The crab position should be clarified. The department, through the Minister and the Press, has at various times commented on the crab position over the years. The contention has been advanced that floods were chiefly responsible for the short supply of crabs during the 1945-46 season, and that various other influences in the continental shelf have contributed to the supply of crabs in the river. In my opinion, there is need for intensive research by the department before making statements of this kind. I assure the Minister that, notwithstanding the department's contention that the great majority of crabs which we find in the estuaries are the product of the continental shelf, that is not the case. Twice during last June I put nets in the river and on each occasion caught a number of crabs in the deep water that were little bigger than spiders.

All the year round it is possible to catch crabs if nets are sunk far enough in the deep channels. I refer particularly to the Blackwall Reach area. It is during the period when the crabs are supposed to be bred on the continental shelf area that large quantities of small crabs are spawned in the river. This goes to show that much of the crab life in the river is of a local nature and is bred in the deep waters of the river. It is time the department framed legislation to prevent the taking from the river of large numbers of crabs such as were taken when they were plentiful, to the detriment of ensuing years. There are four main regulations required if the department is to conserve the crab life and not allow it to be depleted to such an alarming extent as has taken place in the past. The first of these regulations that I think could be put to effective

use would be one governing the period when the crab season should open. This is a rather hard point to decide, as in some seasons crabs begin to come about in the middle of October.

In 1944-45, during October, there were myriads of young crabs in the Swan River and between then and the middle of November they were caught in vast numbers. The 1944-45 season was one of the best crab seasons we have had for 10 or 15 years. At that time a number of requests were made, both in the Press and in this Chamber, that the department should view the position seriously. Had notice been taken of those requests, much of the reduction in numbers that has occurred would have been avoided. I would suggest that possibly the middle of November to the end of that month should be the time for the lifting of protection for crabs; that is, crabs should be totally protected until some date between the middle and the end of November. The second requirement is a regulation governing the carapace measurement. I do not think we should set too low a size on an overall measurement; nor should we set it too high. I saw in the Press at one time a contention that the size should be 30 ins., but that is ridiculous. I think most members will agree that the number of crabs caught in the Swan River and reaching a measurement of 30 ins. is not great. The majority vary from 16 ins. to 23 ins. There are odd ones between 23 ins. and 30 ins., but the number is smaller by far. A reasonable carapace measurement would be 17 ins.

A third matter that should receive earnest consideration is the total prohibition of set or sunken nets, particularly during the spawning season. I think that the complete prohibition of these nets would be preferable to limiting their prohibition to the spawning season, because there is no doubt that the use of this type of net has been responsible to a large degree for the reduction of the crab life not only in the Swan but in other estuaries also. A fourth requirement is the total prohibition of the catching and destruction of female crabs. If that were done, I think the position in future would be safeguarded to a certain extent; although, in spite of the fact that there is no regulation about the taking of any type of crab from the river, we frequently find that people interested in catch-

ing crabs observe a code of honour under which female crabs are protected to a great extent. But during the summer period the number of males removed from the river is excessive. So although my fourth point is important, it is perhaps not as important as the other three I have mentioned.

It was contended by the Fisheries Department that the shortage of crabs in the 1945-46 season was due to flooding, but the other day we had a complete reversal of that particular reason. We are told now that the crabs are not dependent on the Swan at all. Although a question was asked of the department regarding the effect of the flood this year, no comment was made on that matter, the department confining its remarks to the statement that the crab was an habitue of the area outside and within the continental shelf. I contend that the real reason for the scarcity of crabs was the free use of the nets to which I have referred, particularly the set net in the summer months, and the unrestricted use of the drag net in the winter months. The summer use of the set net has been very extensive and was particularly noticeable during the 1944-45 season. That was the good year; and I think it can be proved that these nets were used right from the Canning down to the Preston and that they were used in great numbers. Almost any night, eight or nine of these nets could have been picked up at the Narrows during that year; and if some notice had been taken of what was happening at that time, the present position would not exist.

During that same year thousands of crabs were taken from the Swan—and this matter was brought before the department's notice on a number of occasions—indiscriminately taken and used for various purposes; though in many instances they were just left on the shore without any use being made of them at all. During that period the use of the sunk net should have been brought to the notice of the S.P.C.A. Frequently, particularly during the latter half of the season, those nets were left for days on end without any attention. I know that between Canning Bridge and Como, on both sides of the river, a number of those nets were left repeatedly for several days on end; and when they were hauled in, a number of crabs were found to be dead and in some cases semi-putrefied. That is de-

struction that should not be allowed to occur; and, irrespective of whether or not the regulations I have suggested are promulgated, the appointment of additional inspectors would obviate a good deal of such waste.

I spoke of drag nets. I consider that they are the greatest curse the Fisheries Department has allowed in the river. They have the effect not only of destroying most of the spawn, but also of harming many of the small fish and crabs and disturbing to a great degree the fish food that abounds on the bottom of the river. So I think that, apart from the great harm these nets do to young and immature marine life, for other reasons I have submitted their use should be prohibited. I do not know whether members are aware of the nature of the net of which I have been speaking. The drag net has two 40-yard wings and it has at the end what is known as a flounder bag. It also has two hauling lines, one of 100 ft. and the other of 120 ft. Those are approximate measurements. By the use of such a net, it is possible to recover even a knife from the river bed.

In many instances the police have used drag nets to recover bodies from the river and have done that after dragging operations over a number of days had proved ineffective. As soon as a drag net is used, there is no doubt of the result. I have mentioned those things because of the far-reaching effect the drag net has on the marine life of our various waters. I want again to emphasise that it is not the river floods that have done the damage in the river, but the flood of nets—sunk, seine and drag. If we are going to conserve any of the marine life of the river, the department must make definite regulations to govern the use of these nets, and more serious consideration should be given to the suggestions I have made.

I said earlier that I desired to mention the matter of prawns. For the benefit of members I propose to make a few references in that connection. A similar set of circumstances to that affecting the crabs surrounds the depletion of the prawns. It is 15 or 16 years since we had any abundance of prawns. Many members present have had, over the years, much pleasure in taking large quantities of prawns from the river each season, and

some hundreds of other people have done the same thing. But they took only sufficient quantities for their own use and did not interfere with the spawning of the prawns when propagation was taking place. But one bright, observant fisherman realised, 15 or 16 years ago, the habit of the prawn. He discovered that during the spawning period the prawns were in abundance in certain muddy patches of the river, and sometimes these patches were quite extensive. The prawns, to the average person, were out of season, but this man was permitted to drag a flounder net with a prawning bag without interference from the Fisheries Department. He, of course became the forerunner of others and so, within two years of his discovering the habit of the prawns when spawning, the river was practically depleted.

If the Minister consults his records he will find that what I say is correct. Since that time the quantity of prawns taken from the Swan River has been practically negligible. A person might drag all night and get only a quart potful. It is high time that the department went into the matter of the use of these nets and totally prohibited them, because there are still a few prawns left in the deep water; they rarely come on to the banks now. There is only one way to get prawns into the river again, and that is by bringing spawn from other places where prawns still abound in large quantities. If that were done, and the type of net that I have referred to were totally prohibited, great strides could be made by the department in this matter. I hope the Minister will endeavour to make some of his officials see a little more commonsense in conserving these two wonderful assets for the people of the State.

**MR. HILL (Albany) [4.55]:** The Minister in charge of these Estimates controls the Harbour and Light Department and also the Bunbury Harbour Board, and this is the only Vote on which we can discuss our port administration or, perhaps I should say, lack of administration. I very much doubt if there is any problem so little understood as that of the ports. Recently there has been laid on the Table of the House the report of the honorary Royal

Commission on outports, of which I was a member. I say without hesitation that the most important recommendation of that commission is the one for the formation of a State harbours board. The port of London, 40 years ago, was a down grade port. It consisted of a conglomeration of docks owned by various shipping, dock and railway companies, and there was no co-ordinated policy of development, administration or control. The British Government took a hand and bought out the various companies with the result that in April, 1909, the Port of London Authority took control of the whole of the docks on the River Thames. Since then the port of London has been continually on the up grade and the administration of the port is an object lesson to the world. I have here a copy of the address delivered by Sir David J. Owen, president of the Port of London Authority, when he was appointed president of the Institute of Transport of Great Britain. He dealt there with the problem of port costs. I am obviously not going to read all of his address, but I would like to quote two or three extracts. The first is—

The significance of a port from the point of view of transport lies simply in the fact that it is the junction between sea and land—in other words, a point at which one form of transport is changed for another. On sea we have virtually only one means of transport—the ship; on land the continuance of the chain of transport may be by railway, road, or inland waterway. Thus ports, while obviously of vital interest to the shipping industry, are not matters of unimportance to railway companies, road-haulers and canal proprietors.

He then went on to say—

A port, not being in itself a means of conveyance or transport but only a facility or accommodation for the actual instruments of transport, must—in order to serve its purpose effectively—adapt itself to changing conditions in the means of transport. If it does not, then its trade may leave it for more suitable places, or, if this is not possible, the result will be a handicapping of trade by increased costs and delays. I use the phrase “if this is not possible” advisedly because the port as a link in the chain of transport is an enormously costly one to provide and new ports cannot spring up elsewhere easily or quickly.

Towards the end of his address he said—

One essential point is that we should look at the problem of transport as a whole. The word “co-ordination” is very much overworked nowadays, so I use the term “co-operation.” The present is a time when it is more necessary than ever to have the closest measure of co-operation in all public utility services.

His concluding remarks are—

I visualise, however, a day not far distant when the legitimate function of each of the various methods of transport will be defined clearly and regulated in the best interests of the national needs and, in the picture that will then be on view, docks and harbours will be seen in their proper perspective acting as efficient links between sea transport on the one side and the various forms of land transport on the other.

If we are to have our railways and other means of transport acting in the most economical and effective manner for the State, what I have just read must be our objective. When we look around Australia we find that in Queensland there are various harbour boards for the different ports. In 1939 a Royal Commission, dealing with transport in Queensland, recommended the formation of a State Harbours Board with honorary advisory boards at different ports. About 1938 all ports in New South Wales were put under the control of the Maritime Services Board. That State has a very difficult port problem. Sydney has a wonderful harbour, but it is a costly port to develop. Newcastle and Port Kembla, the two coal ports, have their local advisory boards, but the outports of New South Wales present difficult and costly problems. New South Wales has Sydney, two coal ports, and about 30 smaller ports. The problem there is a difficult one. In Victoria, there are the Melbourne Harbour Trust and the Geelong Harbour Trust, while the other ports come under the control of the Public Works Department.

In South Australia, there is the State Harbours Board, and our proposal is modelled on similar lines, except that we propose local advisory boards at the various ports. Before the war, the State Harbours Board in South Australia had paid over £1,100,000 into Consolidated Revenue. In this State today we have the Harbour and Light Department, under the control of the Minister for the North-West, the Bunbury Harbour Board, also under that Minister, the Fremantle Harbour Trust, under the Chief Secretary, and the jetties at Albany, Esperance, Busselton and Port Hedland, together with the wharves at Geraldton, under the Minister for Railways. Bulk-handling facilities come under the Minister for Lands, and cool-store facilities under the Minister for Agriculture. When any district wants anything spent on its port, it has to go cap-in-hand to the Minister for Works, who is

the Minister in charge of harbours and rivers, and the port that can pull the most political strings gets money spent on it. Under those conditions, co-ordination and efficiency are absolutely impossible.

Our proposal is for a permanent board of three experts, whose job it will be to control and administer the whole of the ports of Western Australia, assisted by the local advisory boards. Every port that we visited has a different problem, and to get the utmost efficiency I am confident that our State harbours board, when appointed, will benefit from the assistance and advice of men with local knowledge and experience. Another matter that might give some people thought is the recommendation to give the State harbours board financial autonomy. From the figures I have before me, I am convinced that, provided that when the board takes over its capital values are fixed at a reasonable figure, it will have no trouble in making ends meet and showing a substantial profit; but it is when we look to the future that we see the greatest gain, because a properly instituted harbours board would not tolerate uneconomical harbour works. At present, those using the Fremantle Harbour complain because it is used as a taxing machine.

The function of a port or any other Government facility should not be that of a taxing machine. Its purpose should be to provide the State with the activities that are necessary if we are to progress. The figures provided in the Estimates under the heading of Harbours and Rivers show the Fremantle Harbour with a surplus of £142,178. In spite of that large surplus, the total shows a deficit of £60,114. The Fremantle "other" shows a deficit of £13,850. The Bunbury Harbour Board shows a deficit of £29,270, and the Bunbury "other" £4,075. Geraldton shows a deficit of £34,271, Albany £8,693, Esperance £762, Busselton £977, North-West ports £44,233, Swan River £27,998, dredges, steamers and plant £19,019, and other jetties and works £19,642. I will now deal with the loan liability of one or two different concerns, taking only those that come under the Harbour and Light Department.

The Railway Department controls the wharves and jetties, and they are included under the railway figures. Geraldton is shown with a loan liability of £709,000 odd.

It would be interesting to find out how much of that is due to the old jetty that was scrapped as useless many years ago. The Swan River loan liability is £442,000, with a deficiency of £27,998. I am not opposed to the reclamation on the Swan River, which no doubt increases the beauty of this fine city, but I think it is unreasonable to expect the trade of Fremantle to pay for the beautification of the City of Perth, and that is what it is doing. The figures charged for Albany harbour show £153,000 for the harbour and rivers, and £119,000 for jetties and so on under the control of the Railway Department, which brings the total loan liability to £273,000.

I have a list of the expenditure on the port of Albany since 1859. Between that date and 1871, £6,898 was spent out of revenue on the Albany jetty road, yet today that is charged against the harbour, which is expected to pay interest and sinking fund on it. Another item is the Kalgan River work shown at £2,000 odd. The member for Guildford-Midland remembers that work. It should be charged to the inefficiency and bungling of the Public Works Department, and not to Albany harbour. I was president of the Progress Association when that work was done, and the Public Works Department engineers would not be guided by me or other men with local knowledge and experience. That money was wasted, yet it is still charged to the Albany harbour. The Emu Point jetty was built, but one day there was a landslide and the jetty was left out to sea. It has since been removed, but is still being charged up.

I have quoted those figures to show that our recommendation that the State harbours board should be given financial autonomy is sound, and I am sure members will agree that the State harbours board should take over its assets at a reasonable figure. The Melbourne Harbour Trust has financial autonomy. One-fifth of its gross revenue is paid into Consolidated Revenue and some of that contribution goes to assist the Geelong Harbour Trust, which shows a loss. Of the balance of what is taken into Consolidated Revenue, some is used to make good the losses on the outports of Victoria. As experience has shown, Fremantle is a good investment for the Government, in spite of the fact that in the past there has not been sufficient pro-

vision made for a sinking fund and the wiping out of the debt. Up to date, the amount paid by the Fremantle Harbour Trust to Consolidated Revenue would more than wipe out the whole of the expenditure on the Fremantle Harbour. In the financial year 1938-39 Albany almost paid the interest and sinking fund charges on its inflated loan liability, in spite of the fact that fruit and wheat handled through that port did not pay any wharfage dues. The Esperance jetty is another very good investment for the Government.

If these three ports—Fremantle, Albany and Esperance—handled the trade that should pass through them, they would prove very effective earning activities for a State harbour board. The ports of Bunbury and Geraldton will never be able to make ends meet. Ports that are favourably situated must be prepared to help those not so blessed by nature. The problem in relation to the North-West is entirely different. I am confident that if we had a State harbours board empowered to manage the whole of the ports throughout Western Australia, it would not only make ends meet but would enable the ports themselves to play a much greater part in the economy of the State than they have hitherto. I would like to mention an incident that occurred in the early part of last year when the railways were experiencing difficulty in handling commodities.

Major D. J. Howse, Director of Rail Transport for the Commonwealth, paid a visit to Western Australia and while here discussed various problems with the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Pingelly and myself in the Leader of the Opposition's room at Parliament House. During the course of the discussion he said, "You must insist that the ports are properly equipped. We want the ports equipped so that when the trains go to ports they can unload quickly and get back on the job of hauling stuff to ports again." He told us that they should take four or five days instead of six or seven days to do the round trip. I chipped in at that stage and said, "They take 11 days in this State." That is the position. It should be borne in mind that there is just as much difference between the ship of today and that of 50 years ago as there is between a motorcar and the old spring cart.



A ship was launched in England two days ago and the account of the proceedings was published in this morning's issue of "The West Australian." One gentleman present at the ceremony pointed out that the cost of the vessel that had just taken the water was ten times that of the craft in which he had gone to Australia. Vessels of such a type not only represent the expenditure of a large sum of money but also a huge value in respect of the cargoes they transport to and from our shores. It is absolutely essential that we have ports properly equipped to handle goods in and out of the ships. Western Australia is paying a terrific price today because of the fact that it has never had the benefit of efficient port administration. I hope the Government will lose no time in giving effect to the recommendations that the Royal Commission on Outports submitted.

I desire to pay a tribute to the manager of the Harbour and Light Department, Mr. K. G. Forsyth. I knew that gentleman as a boy and I was most disappointed that I was in hospital and did not have an opportunity to hear his evidence. I read it, and his evidence convinced me that Mr. Forsyth has made a very careful study of his job. His evidence was very sound and very helpful to the commission. When we have men like Mr. Forsyth and others of like capacity, we should extend to them every encouragement and opportunity to learn everything they can through going abroad and otherwise so that they can be of even still greater service to Western Australia in their respective positions. We want not only men of experience but men possessed of local knowledge, and when we have the advantage of officers like Mr. Forsyth and others I have in mind, we should not hesitate to send them overseas in order to broaden their minds in every possible way. I can assure members of the Committee that the port problem is one of very great interest and importance to Western Australia.

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley—in reply) [5.15]: I desire briefly to reply to the remarks of members who have discussed the Estimates. First of all, I shall deal with the comments of the member for Mt. Marshall, who, in my opinion, made

a very ill-considered contribution to the debate.

The Premier: He would.

**The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST:** In comparing our native problem with that relating to natives the world over, he, in my opinion, was very wide of the mark in his references to the Australian native. I disagree with his remarks concerning the new settlement to be established in the Kellerberrin district. The member for Mt. Marshall certainly gave a lot of advice that must have interested the member representing that particular section of the State, and his words will be of interest to those residing there. However, I will leave his statements for the member concerned to deal with. The idea of starting a new settlement in the Kellerberrin district arose for the very obvious reason that we have learnt through mistakes. The Moore River settlement was selected many years ago by those in authority at the time. I assume they did not anticipate that the native problem would increase to such an extent and become such a drag upon the State as it is today. They apparently thought it was just a matter of shifting the natives to some isolated spot and that would appease the objections of the public at the time. As I said during my earlier remarks, they selected the worst section of country that could have been chosen in Western Australia.

The native problem has grown and it has become a greater burden upon the taxpayers of the State, who are quite unable to deal with it no matter how willing they may be or what good advice may be tendered to them. The department's objective at Moore River was to make the settlement self-supporting and in that direction and elsewhere the State spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in an endeavour to educate the native children and to ensure that when they left school they would have an opportunity to secure the manual and farming experience and practice necessary if they were to carry on successfully in after life. Now when the Government suggests securing a property where that objective can be furthered and the project made self-supporting, with the result that the taxpayers' money will be saved and the natives can develop so as to become useful citizens, Ministers are told by the member for Mt. Mar-

shall that it is all a mistake and that we should segregate these people.

I entirely disagree with the segregation policy. So far as I am concerned personally, and I hope I can speak on behalf of the Government, no time will be wasted on such a policy affecting any particular section of the community in Western Australia. The member for Mt. Marshall also suggested that we should deal with the natives as a separate race, which would enable them to take pride in themselves. That might have been all right if that policy had been adopted 50 years ago. As it is, there is only a small percentage of the race left and those that remain are absolutely tribal in their outlook and practise tribal laws. The hon. member, if he endeavoured to give effect to what he suggests, would find himself in a very awkward situation, unless he were to agree that the State should annihilate all the coloured people such as the half-castes, quarter-castes, octoroons and so forth, thereby enabling us to start afresh to develop the separate race to which he has referred.

I am very much afraid that the hon. member in his contribution to the debate was not in any way helpful. He also informed members that the native children and the white children did not mix, and asserted that they would never mix. I entirely disagree with him. As a matter of fact, they do mix and many play together at school just as though there was no difference in their colour at all. He also stated that this arose from the children's volition and that the parents had no influence in the matter. In my opinion the whole trouble is created and the objection to half-castes attending the State schools has been raised by the parents and not by the children. The reason for the parents' objecting is quite obvious; the children mix and play with the half-castes at school and the parents are fearful of what may happen in after life.

Information was sought by the member for West Perth about a proposed visit to the State by Professor Elkin. That proposal has nothing to do with the Government. I as Minister was approached by representatives of a religious organisation to know what my repercussions would be to their bringing Professor Elkin and the Reverend Love to Western Australia to

conduct an inquiry into the native position as the church authorities were handling a huge sum of money which was intended to be spent particularly on half-castes and natives. My reply was that I had no objection whatever. If the organisation desired to import any authority to advise how and where the money should be spent, it was a matter for the organisation and the Government would have no objection.

Mr. McDonald: Was not there some difficulty about getting permits to go on the native reserves?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The law provides that no person may enter a native reserve except with the authority of the Minister, but a request for permits was not made. I was asked what attitude the Government would adopt, and replied that it would not interfere in any way. The first proposition was that the organisation had so much money, wished to start off on right lines and desired Professor Elkin and the Reverend Love to lay the foundations of a scheme. I have the greatest respect for the Reverend Love and for his judgment and knowledge of natives, and congratulated the organisation on its choice of that gentleman. Later I was informed that the Reverend Love would not be able to come, as he was too busy on the mission he was superintending in South Australia. The committee then asked what financial assistance I would be prepared to give. I replied, "This is no concern of the Government's and we would not be prepared to give any financial assistance." I was asked what other assistance I could give, and I offered permission to travel anywhere and find out what was desired and supply maps and particulars of numbers and the whereabouts of the majority of the natives. I offered access to the office files and to any information we had.

I was also asked what assistance could be given in the way of transport and I had to reply that we possessed no transport. The only transport we have is a truck running from the Moore River settlement to the siding. So we could not assist in that direction. Further representations were made that, though the Rev. Love could not come, Professor Elkin was prepared to do so and would want two assistants. My reply was that, if he submitted the names of the assistants, we would consider whether they

would be granted permission to visit the native institutions and settlements. This, for obvious reasons, is a very necessary precaution. Apart from a letter from Professor Elkin asking certain questions, which I answered, I have received no further information. I do not know why the proposition fell through. It was not one in which the Government was interested. It was purely one put forward by a religious organisation—the Australian Natives Missionary Council, I think, though I am not certain of the name. The Government did not prevent the proposal from being given effect to, except that it would not assist financially. To my knowledge that is the only reason why the inquiry was not proceeded with. The department is fully aware of all the suggestions that have been put forward by Professor Elkin. He issued a pamphlet setting them out, and officials of the Native Affairs Department and Health Department have perused them and know exactly what he has in mind.

The member for West Perth asked what had happened regarding the motion passed by this House requesting financial assistance from the Commonwealth in the interests of the natives. The Commonwealth said it could not at that moment find the £50,000 required. Further representations were made, and the latest information is that a conference of officials of Native Affairs Departments would be called early in the new year. So far we have not received any intimation as to when the conference will be held.

The hon. member spoke of what Victoria is doing in the matter of trout hatcheries. The object of the department in assisting the trout hatcheries in Western Australia is to get trout distributed throughout the State so that permanent waters or dams, particularly in the wheatbelt where fish is so scarce, may be stocked to augment the food supply of the people. There is nothing new about the Victorian idea. The department had the same objects in view when it originally assisted the trout hatcheries in this State. I think it was the big possibilities presented by the scheme that influenced the Government in providing some hundreds of pounds to enable the Pemberton Acclimatisation Society to increase the breeding of trout so that the fry could be distributed throughout the State.

The general vote for the North-West of £200 was also queried by the member for

West Perth. This means exactly what is stated in the Estimates. It is provided for the travelling expenses of the Minister, and the hon. member may be wise in keeping a tab on what the Minister spends. The amount absorbed for travelling expenses is quite light as the sum on the Estimates includes items for postages and telegrams for the department.

Mr. McDonald: I think it is very modest. You could learn something from Canberra about expenses.

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST:** It is a vote for emergency expenses. Anything may happen. For instance, it may be necessary to send fruit and vegetables urgently to the North-West and this Vote could be used for that purpose. The Vote may be overdrawn, if required, like other Estimates. The hon. member also said there were some public-spirited people who had made all sorts of suggestions to the Government and he inquired what was being done with respect to them. Personally I, as member for Kimberley, submit matters to the local governing body. I am more interested in what it advises the Government that I am in the advice of progress associations or bodies of people. The road board is a semi-Governmental institution and has power to do many things. I think it is doing a very good job. I know that a conference was held which made all sorts of suggestions to the Government; but I also know that the Government appointed a committee of inquiry long before the private conference took place. A report was made to the Government by the committee just before the conference was held at Whim Creek.

We have carried out a number of the recommendations of the committee; but the Commonwealth is concerned in many of its recommendations, and all we have been able to do in that regard is to make representations to the Commonwealth Government. A few of the minor recommendations made by the committee appointed by the Government were also made by the private conference and these have been accepted and put into operation; such as the purchase of stations in the North-West for experimental purposes, freight reduction on State vessels, a road programme—this has been put into operation by the Main Roads Board—and refrigeration, which has been installed, or

is in process of being installed, in many of the North-West towns. In addition, a new vessel has been ordered for the North-West. I think those are all the points on which the member for West Perth asked for information. The progress in road development has been slow for the reason that we are unable to procure the necessary plant required for the big road work to be done throughout the North-West. The Main Roads Department is hoping very shortly to be able to procure the necessary machinery at some Commonwealth disposal sales which are taking place outside Australia. The Government has sent a representative to attend those sales and he will watch the interests of the Government, as well as the interests of road boards, and we are hoping that much good will result from his efforts.

Another item mentioned by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie was crabbing in the Swan River. This item is a hardy annual. Much has been said about it by the public, who naturally are interested in the crabbing that takes place. However, the departmental advisers are not interested in the protection of crabs and have given their reasons on more than one occasion. I realise, of course, that many people not only derive pleasure from crabbing, but also obtain a good food supply. When introducing my Estimates, I said that the C.S.I.R. had recently been taking greater interest in the fishing industry in this State. We have had two vessels built at Fremantle and I think that recently two additional officers of the C.S.I.R. have arrived, making four in all in this State. I must accept their advice on these matters. Some of the things that have been mentioned will be given strict attention, and I think the hon. member may leave them until this time next year in order to see what progress has been made in the meantime. I cannot give him any further information on those points.

The member for Albany asked for much information which I cannot supply. My department controls the Navigation Act, the Boat Licensing Act and pilotage. The hon. member was quite entitled to discuss those subjects on these Estimates. A Government committee was appointed to go into the matters and I cannot inform him exactly what it has recommended. I have not had time to study the committee's report, nor has the Government studied it; but I shall be able

to give him more information this time next year after the Government and I have given consideration to the report.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes*—Harbour and Light and Jetties, £41,180; Fisheries, £10,136; North-West Generally, £200; Forests, £101,830—agreed to.

Progress reported.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gaseoyne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 19th November.

*House adjourned at 5.38 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 19th November, 1946.*

	PAID
Questions: Water supplies, as to shortage at Norseman	1991
Daylight saving, as to introduction during railway strike	1992
Motion: Urgency, Government acquisition of properties and provision for residents, withdrawn	1992
Bills: Land Act Amendment, 1R.	1999
Country Areas Water Supply, 1R.	1999
Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply, 1R.	1999
Vermitt Act Amendment, as to recom.	1999
State Housing, Com.	1999
Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R.	2006
Western Australian Trotting Association, Com.	2007
Adjournment, special	2011

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS.

### WATER SUPPLIES.

*As to Shortage at Norseman.*

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Has the Minister noticed the publication in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the 11th November, regarding the acute shortage of water supplies at Norseman?

2, If so, what action is proposed to be taken?