

tractors. They should not be placed in the position of having to buy another engine for chaff-cutting, etc., when the tractor they have can do the work.

The second amendment, which is to be made to Subsection (1) of Section 53, will be the means of ensuring that all winding engines are under certified control. I do not infer that owners fail to realise the advisability of having certified drivers and employing them in all cases. As a matter of fact, they do. I have been advised that mine owners and the Engine Drivers' Union are agreed upon the need for this amendment. The existing section has application to steam and air winding engines only, and overlooks the electric winder. The section became law in 1921 and electric winders were in use at that time. Why they were not included in the Act, I do not know. I can only suppose it was due to some oversight in the drafting. If members read Section 56, they will find that the winding certificate is available for any winder, but power is lacking in Section 53 to enforce its application to electric winders. The point might be taken that the Mines Regulation Act requires certificated control of all winders. No doubt that is correct, but surely the Inspection of Machinery Act is the proper place for this authority. Briefly, the effect of this amendment is to include electric winders in Section 53.

The third amendment, which affects the second schedule, will bring under full control of the Act all passenger and goods lifts irrespective of where they are situated or the purpose for which they are used. No one can deny the need for regular and careful inspection of lifts that carry human freight or large loads of merchandise. I feel that sufficient reasons have been given to justify the acceptance of all three amendments. The first amendment will provide a long-felt want; it is necessary from the producers' point of view and will result in a saving of Government funds. The other two amendments will have the effect of regularising present and past practice. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [6.11]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 28th August, 1940.

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

QUESTION—DEFENCE FORCES.

Civil Servants' Privileges.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: In view of the announcement by the Prime Minister that the defence forces of the Commonwealth are to be increased to a total of at least 250,000 men, will he inform the House whether a civil servant desirous of joining those forces will, by so doing, lose all or any privileges, such as long service leave, seniority, or superannuation?

The **PREMIER** replied: All privileges are retained by permanent employees who volunteer for active service or are compulsorily called up for home defence. Employees who volunteer for full time home defence are given leave without pay during which privileges are suspended. The decision of the Government and the reasons are fully set out in my statement in the "West Australian" of the 22nd December, 1939.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Raphael (Victoria Park), on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

PAPERS—CASE OF MARTIN CHADWICK.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [4.35]: I move—

That all papers in connection with the accident to Martin Chadwick, of Wickepin, when returning home in the school charabanc on 4th July, 1939, be laid upon the Table of the House.

I regret being compelled to bring forward this case, but the circumstances surrounding it warrant the action I am taking. The boy, Martin Chadwick, 10 years of age, was a pupil attending the Wickepin school. He was going to school every day by means of the charabanc coming in from East Wickepin. Two buses run daily, both from the same direction. On the 4th July, 1939, the boy boarded the first bus that was leaving Wickepin to proceed to his home. On the way out of the town he had to be put down at a business place in order to perform an errand, a practice that is not unusual in the case of these buses. Rain had been falling, and it was still raining when the boy arrived in Wickepin, and he therefore did not then get out of the bus. In the main street of Wickepin there are no buildings on the north side; they are all on the south side. When the bus was in the main street the boy stopped it opposite the business place where he had to make a call. He was in the first bus, and the second one was coming on behind. When the lad alighted he ran in front of the first bus and was about halfway across the street when the second bus knocked him down, a rear wheel passing over one foot, with the result that the lad will probably be crippled for life. Some of his toes had to be amputated, and he is still in hospital.

Mr. Watts: And the accident occurred last year.

Mr. SEWARD: Yes. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that his parents have been put to great expense. All applications for monetary compensation have failed. The principle followed by the department is that an accident must occur to a child whilst in one of these buses before it considers itself liable. If a child leaves the bus and an accident occurs, the department does not consider it is liable. Actually the person from whom compensation would naturally be expected is the driver of the second bus. I understand, however, that although the driver contracted to transport these children, he was not insured. He must, however, be liable for the damage he has done and be under an obligation to the parents of the boy. In this instance the boy was obliged to cross the road to reach the business place in question. The oncoming bus did not sound its horn and gave no indication that it was close by. The point I rely upon is that the driver of the second bus saw the first bus stop, and was well acquainted with the practice followed by children in performing errands for their parents while on their way home. He also knew that whatever child got out of the bus was obliged to cross the road, because all the business premises are on the other side. He should, therefore, have taken extra care, at least slowed down, and sounded his horn. So far as I have been able to ascertain the driver took none of those precautions. I presume the driver of the first bus told the boy to hurry up with his errand, and to run quickly across the road. The street is bituminised, and, as I have stated, rain had fallen and the road was wet. When the lad was hurrying across the road he suddenly saw the second bus coming, tried to stop, slipped and fell, and the rear wheel passed over his foot. I put the particulars of the case before the department and received a reply from the Minister as follows:—

I submitted the papers to the Commissioner of Police. He advises me that, taking the whole of the circumstances into consideration, it is very doubtful whether an action would lie against any of those connected with the accident. He points out that it is necessary for reasonable precautions to be taken at all times when passing another vehicle, and that everything depends on the circumstances under which the accident takes place.

In this instance reasonable precautions were not taken. The driver of the second bus knew that the lad was getting out, and

should have given him some warning of his presence.

So far as the country districts are concerned, the traffic regulations, as you know, are the responsibility of the local authorities, and, as to the suggestion of a regulation to prevent vehicles passing a stationary school bus, the Commissioner considers this to be impracticable.

I would not suggest that a motor vehicle should never pass a school bus but when a school bus is about to pass such another vehicle, it should at least slow down in course of doing so and sound the horn.

There is a difference between a bus and a tram to the extent that the bus would pull in to the footpath to allow passengers to alight, whereas a tram, running on rails, pulls up several feet from the footpath, and it is for that reason that the regulations in the metropolitan area provide that vehicles shall not pass a stationary tram.

Viewing the matter in the light of that statement by the Commissioner of Police and a subsequent communication that I received, it seems to me that the departments concerned rely altogether too much upon regulations which have application in the city but which cannot apply equally in country centres. In reply to a further request from me that he should reconsider the matter, the Minister stated—

The Crown Solicitor has ruled as follows:—
“From a strictly legal point of view the department is not liable in this instance as there is no remedy available against it under the Crown Suits Act even if there were negligence on the part of the bus driver.

“However, apart altogether from the legal position, I cannot see how there can be any liability either on the department or the bus driver because the facts do not establish any negligence whatsoever. This is simply a case of a child crossing the road in front of a stationary vehicle which obscured the vision of the driver of the bus coming from behind that stationary vehicle. If the child had stepped out from the shelter of the stationary bus directly in front of the oncoming bus, even then I could not see how the resulting accident could be attributed to negligence on the part of the bus driver. But the above facts do not occur in this case because the child must have stepped out from the stationary bus after the oncoming bus had practically passed.

How could a bus that had passed the stationary vehicle possibly run over the child in such circumstances? I am at a loss to understand how that could happen.

The Premier: A vehicle has run into a train going over a crossing.

Mr. SEWARD: Never mind about what happens in other instances; I am dealing with the facts of this particular case.

The Premier: You said it could not happen; it has happened.

Mr. SEWARD: I still say that the bus that has passed a stationary vehicle could not possibly have run over a child.

The Premier: Perhaps so.

Mr. SEWARD: The Crown Solicitor's opinion continued—

“You will notice that it was the rear wheel of the oncoming bus which struck the child; therefore, the full length of the moving bus must have passed the stationary bus before the accident happened. In the circumstances the bus driver had nothing whatever to do with the accident. The child kept on after the moving bus had practically passed the stationary bus.

I say that the driver of the oncoming bus gave no warning of his approach, and, as the other bus had stopped, he must have known that a child was getting off there. The bus would have stopped for no other reason at such a spot. In those circumstances, I say that the driver did not take all the necessary precautions.

“In innumerable cases the courts have rejected claims from pedestrians who stepped out from the footpath from the shelter of parked vehicles into the line of oncoming traffic, so I have no hesitation in saying that there is neither moral nor legal obligation on the department to meet the claim now presented.”

The reference to pedestrians emerging “into the line of oncoming traffic” has nothing whatever to do with the case. Wickopin is merely a small country town, and the bus that had stopped was probably the only other vehicle in the street at that moment. There is nothing attaching to the point about the child stepping out from behind a stationary bus.

“It is a most unfortunate accident and I appreciate the fact that a very serious injury has been sustained by the child. I also realise that the parents are in an unfortunate position in that the medical and hospital expenses will undoubtedly be a severe liability. However, the facts do not justify even a recommendation for an ex-gratia payment, let alone the acceptance of any legal responsibility.”

In the face of that, I do not think the department has a right to the facts of the case. If the authorities are in possession of those facts, then proper consideration has not been given to them. As I mentioned before,

the department has had trouble with the driver of the second bus. He is, I understand, an unsatisfactory contractor, and I have not received proof that the man was insured. The department has a liability if it permits a contractor to accept the responsibility of transporting school children without requiring that contractor to be insured. If any such contractor is uninsured, then the Government must accept the responsibility attached to permitting the driver to carry on. That is the position, and I therefore move for the tabling of the necessary papers to bring this matter before the notice of the Premier, and the Government generally, in the hope that something will be done in the interests of the lad. Here we have a poor little youngster, 10 years of age, who has been in hospital for about 12 months, whose toes must be amputated in order that he may wear boots and who will probably be a cripple for life. In view of all the circumstances, I think the child is entitled to some consideration, and I sincerely hope the Minister will take up the matter with the Government and see that some compensation is paid.

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

MOTION—BERNIE'S CARAVAN.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.45]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on all matters relating to Lot 65, and part of Lot 64, of Class "A" Reserve A1720, and to the occupation and use thereof.

If the motion be agreed to, the time of members of the select committee will not be taken up for any long period nor will much expense be incurred. The select committee could, however, deal with a matter which, in my opinion, is of considerable interest and may possibly afford some assistance to certain people who are now suffering to a certain degree through the use to which this particular reserve is being put. The block in Mount's Bay-road is occupied by what is known as Bernie's Caravan. It was originally part of King's Park, which is Class "A" Reserve 1720, and has, I believe, been excised from the

Park and placed under the control of the State Gardens Board, which has let the block to the proprietor of Bernie's Caravan, at which a fish and coffee business is conducted.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Does this apply to the garage next door?

Mr. McDONALD: No, the garage is on private land. The block affected by my proposal has a frontage to Mount's Bay-road of about 100 feet and extends backwards up the hill. The suggestion I make to the House is that it would be of benefit to make inquiries concerning the use to which parks and reserves under the control of the State Gardens Board are put, with particular reference to those that are let to traders, as in the instance under review. Shortly after Parliament assembled this session, I asked the Premier some questions regarding Bernie's Caravan, and I was informed that the block was let from week to week. The business of the caravan is one to which nobody can take exception. It is an enterprise regarding which the proprietor—I understand he is a Mr. Hardwick—deserves credit. I do not make any suggestion that the business is not properly run. It meets a public demand. It is a lawful business, so far as I am aware, and no exception can be taken to it on that score.

Mr. Marshall: There is nothing "fishy" about it.

Mr. McDONALD: Quite so.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Are you referring at all to the garage.

Mr. McDONALD: No. My references are to Bernie's Caravan, not to the garage. The business at the latter continues to 8 p.m., when the sale of petrol ceases. On the other hand, the business associated with Bernie's Caravan continues throughout the night and until two or three o'clock in the morning, and sometimes later.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: "Bernie" is only a business term and not the name of the proprietor?

Mr. McDONALD: That is so. I think the name of the proprietor is Hardwick. The Perth City Council took up this matter and on the 6th June last I was advised by the Town Clerk of Perth that the council had resolved that an emphatic protest be made to the Premier, the chairman of the State Gardens Board and myself, as mem-

ber for the district, against the use of the land for the purpose of conducting a fish and coffee stall thereon. The letter went on to say—

The Council wishes to point out that this allotment was presumably vested in the State Gardens Board in order that it might be used for park or recreation purposes in the interests of the citizens. It is submitted that it is unwarranted that the land should be used for commercial purposes in order to provide revenue for the State Gardens Board. Particularly is it undesirable that, in a location which is rapidly improving from a residential point of view, the land should be used for the sale and consumption of fish and as a coffee stall.

Mr. Marshall: Who constitutes the State Gardens Board?

Mr. McDONALD: That would be a matter of inquiry by the committee, but I believe the State Gardens Board to consist of two members, namely, Mr. Shapeott and Mr. Needham. I am not aware of anyone else being on the board. I believe the board was appointed under the Parks and Reserves Act, 1895, and I presume that the land is vested in the board under that Act. Hon. members will be familiar with the Act and the purposes for which it was passed, and for which it is usually employed. Parks and reserves are vested in various boards under this particular Act and the duty of the boards is to control and manage the parks and reserves committed to them. A board is given certain powers, the chief of which is to improve or ornament such parks and reserves and do all such things as are required to adapt such parks and reserves for the purpose of public recreation, health and enjoyment. Further—and I want to draw the attention of the House to this particular clause—a board may make by-laws regarding a park or reserve committed to it in respect of certain matters, one of which is the regulating or preventing of the sale or exposure for sale of goods, wares or merchandise on the park or reserve.

In bringing this matter before the House I am, in the first place, fulfilling a request made to me by the Perth City Council in the letter I have just read. The council feels, as it pointed out, that this being a park or reserve, presumably under the control of a board appointed under the Act, it should be used for the recreation and enjoyment of the people and the embellishment, according to the requirement of the Act, of

the locality in which it is situated, and that it should not be the subject of occupation by a commercial concern.

Mr. Marshall: Did the council take the matter up with the State Gardens Board?

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, a protest was made to the board. In addition, I was requested by residents in the vicinity to lead a deputation to the Minister controlling the administration of the Parks and Reserves Act and the State Gardens Board in particular. That Minister, I understand, is the Premier.

The Premier: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Minister for Lands.

Mr. McDONALD: Then I stand corrected. Residents in the vicinity were seriously concerned at the presence of this caravan. Hon. members will be aware that in that locality houses have been erected.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: How many? About three!

Mr. McDONALD: Not a great many, but a number of very handsome houses have been erected and they are an ornament to the locality. The owners have invested a considerable amount of money in them. That, however, is not the only feature involved. The presence of a coffee and fish stall, which operates at night—I do not think it carries on in the daytime; I was there a few minutes ago and the block was empty—means that there is a certain amount of noise inseparable from the conduct of such a business. As I said previously that continues until the early hours of the morning; until 2 or 3 o'clock and even later. I am not going to suggest—because I do not know from personal knowledge—that there has been any undue rowdiness, or anything in the conduct of the business contrary to the law. But if hon. members will consider for a moment the nature of the business, they will realise that, however well conducted it may be, there is inseparable from such a venture a considerable amount of noise. At all hours of the night and up till 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, those who patronise the stall, and who almost all arrive there in motor cars, draw up to that particular locality. There are facilities for stopping cars on the block. Seated in the vehicles, the patrons enjoy the refreshments provided by the proprietor of the caravan, and then drive away. Many of them visit the block after having at-

tended entertainments, and a certain amount of noise is inevitable. The patrons may conduct themselves very well, but they are nevertheless cheerful and jolly and there is a certain amount of blowing of motor horns, conversation, and various other noises.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They sing a good song at times.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. All I need to do, in order to enable members to appreciate the feelings of the people who live in the vicinity, is to ask them how they would like to have a similar business conducted in the immediate vicinity of their own homes.

Mr. Tonkin: We have the oyster beds in East Fremantle, you know.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not think very much is done in the way of this kind of business at Fremantle. If members will endeavour to imagine how they would react to the presence of a similar enterprise near their own homes—an enterprise carried on night after night until the early hours of the morning, and on nights which are so still that sounds are carried considerable distances—they will understand how seriously the caravan disturbs the peace which the people nearby expect to enjoy when they retire to sleep. The deputation had heard that the proposed lease by the State Gardens Board was for a period of three years. The idea was to meet the Premier and ask him to investigate the matter. The Premier and the Minister for Works were absent from the State at the time, and the Minister for Lands (Hon. F. J. S. Wise) was Acting Premier. I wrote to Mr. Wise and asked him to receive a deputation. He acceded to the request very promptly and met the deputation, which was gratified at the attention given to its story by the Minister. The deputation consisted of a number of men occupying responsible positions, residents of the vicinity, and a number of women also residents of that part. To all intents and purposes the Minister was very sympathetic.

Mr. Patrick: But that does not get results.

Mr. McDONALD: One woman living in the vicinity told a story of having had a nervous breakdown. Obviously she had suffered a good deal, and she said her illness had been contributed to by the fact that she could not sleep at night on account of the noise from Bernie's Caravan.

Several members interjected.

Mr. McDONALD: Some members might regard the matter lightly, but it is a different proposition for those who live in the vicinity. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) referred to a garage nearby. The garage is on private land, but there is no objection to it because the business is carried on by day, and I understand it is not open at night except to supply petrol till about 8 o'clock. Further, the garage does not cause annoyance such as is occasioned by the caravan. I understood Mr. Wise to say that he would forward the request to the Premier. The deputation took place on the 6th June. No reply was received, and on the 8th July I wrote to Mr. Wise asking whether the matter could be expedited. He replied by letter that the request had been forwarded to the Premier's Department. Knowing that the Premier is a very busy man, I allowed the matter to stand over. I received no reply, and on the 25th July I asked a question in the House as to the tenure of the lease to Bernie's Caravan and received the reply of the Premier. On the 29th July—about eight weeks after the deputation had been received by Mr. Wise—I received a letter from Mr. Shapecott, chairman of the State Gardens Board, who wrote—

With further reference to the representations made by a deputation which waited upon the Hon. Mr. Wise on the 6th June last on the subject of a fish and coffee business known as Bernie's Caravan located on Mount's Bay road, I have to advise you that this matter has been referred to me as chairman of the board controlling this area.

Mr. Shapecott went on to say that he was naturally anxious to see that the place was conducted with all proper decorum, and pointed out that there had been some clearing up of the block to make it more presentable than it was. The idea of the deputation was to obtain a review of the matter by the Government. In other words, it had become a matter between the residents on the one side and the State Gardens Board on the other side. The deputation has not received the views of the Government; nor has it heard the Premier, but the net result is that Mr. Shapecott, chairman of the State Gardens Board, who is, if I may so express it, one of the disputing parties, has pronounced judgment on the matter in his own favour.

The deputation did not wait on Mr. Shapcott. Had it done so, it would have been a different proposition. The deputation waited on Mr. Wise with the idea that the Government should review the activities of a department under Government control and come to a decision as to whether this was a fair and proper use to make of the reserve. From the time the deputation waited on Mr. Wise until the present, there has not been any reply from the Government. The only reply was that received from the chairman of the State Gardens Board.

Mr. Marshall: That is the usual departmental procedure.

Mr. McDONALD: No, it is not; a deputation to the Government almost invariably gets a reply on behalf of the Government, but the reply to this deputation has been given by Mr. Shapcott as chairman of the State Gardens Board. In justice to Mr. Shapcott, I say he is a man of considerable enterprise and has thrown a vast amount of energy into the work connected with the parks and reserves under his control. Still, I maintain that this particular reserve in a residential locality is being used for a purpose not fair to the people who have spent large sums of money to build creditable residences. That view is held not solely by the residents of that area; it is also the view of the local authority, the Perth City Council, which has made protests to the Premier, to the chairman of the State Gardens Board, and to me as member for the district.

It might be said that these residents could approach a court of law in the ordinary way—the Supreme Court—and ask for an injunction to restrain this particular business as being an activity that interferes with the quietness which any resident in such an area is entitled to enjoy at night. I feel that in the case of a Government activity, these residents should not be put to the trouble and expense of a Supreme Court suit. As the Government has not dealt with the matter, I ask the House to agree to the appointment of a select committee to make an inquiry, which would not take long, to establish whether it is a fair thing to permit the carrying on of the trade on this block, or whether the matter should not be regarded from a wider view.

This is a specific instance of a park under the Parks and Reserves Act controlled by the State Gardens Board. The board controls other Class "A" reserves—one that I know of and possibly there are more—which are in the hands of private enterprise for private profit and on which people have no right to walk at all. Taking this specific instance, I think it would be of assistance to the State Gardens Board in the way of advice and would give members an opportunity to arrive at an opinion on the matter if a select committee dealt with the question of the uses to which parks and reserves under the control of parks and reserves boards and the State Gardens Board should be put. A principle is involved as to how far these parks and reserves set apart for the recreation and enjoyment of the people, and, as the Act says, the embellishment of the locality in which they are placed, are being so used, and to what extent are they to be parted with to private enterprise and run by private enterprise for the sake of profit. This is a principle that concerns the community. The deputation did not desire to drive the proprietor of Bernie's Caravan out of business or to injure him in the slightest degree. The deputation made a suggestion that, if it was considered that he should occupy any part of the reserve, he might be transferred to some other part. There is the land known as Crystal Park, which is not in the vicinity of residences.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is close to a hotel.

Mr. McDONALD: Somewhat close to one hotel; it is not amongst residences as is this reserve. Abutting Mount's Bay-road and opposite to the Swan Brewery is a level piece of land which, I think, is part of King's Park. If it is proper that part of a park or reserve should be leased to a private trader, then portion of that area immediately opposite to the Swan Brewery could be granted without fear of causing any disturbance, because there are no residences within a considerable distance of that area. The reserve occupied by Bernie's Caravan, however, is near to Jacob's Ladder and in close proximity to houses in Mount's Bay-road. I have been informed by a householder on the hill in Mount-street that people there are seriously disturbed by

the noise from Bernie's Caravan. The conversation, the tooting of horns, and other noises inseparable from the business can be heard on still nights until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and people have their rest disturbed. In those circumstances I propose to ask the House and the Minister to agree to the appointment of a select committee. It may be said that this is a small matter in time of war; and it is. However, it is not a small matter to the people who are immediately concerned. After all, we have to carry on our normal duties and ensure that as far as possible in the administration of Government lands we are not giving any unfair treatment to anyone who may be concerned.

Mr. Marshall: It seems that you have not brought much pressure to bear on the State Gardens Board.

Mr. McDONALD: That is a question. I do not intend to go personally and sit on the doorstep of the Gardens Board and beg for this and that. I have led a deputation to a member of the Government in whom I have great confidence, and I have not yet received a reply concerning the matter. I do not intend to go to the Government or to the Gardens Board any more. I have done my part. In the circumstances I consider it is a fair and reasonable thing to the people concerned, and also to the City Council, whose views have been heard, that we should have a select committee to consider this matter, and not only on account of private feelings and the peace and quietness of the neighbourhood, but also on the broad principle as to how far we are to accept the position that our parks and reserves will be leased to private individuals and occupied—not managed, as the Act requires, by the Board—exclusively by traders who use the land for the purposes of private profit. There is in King's Park a place where one can get tea.

The Premier: And play tennis, and get charged for it.

Mr. McDONALD: There is a place in the middle of King's Park where one may obtain tea and light refreshments.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: During the daytime.

Mr. McDONALD: During the daytime it does not disturb a single soul. Two or three portions of King's Park are occupied by recreational services. The clubs which control them are open to any member of the

public who desires to join them. They are not profit-making. They are supplying a means of recreation which is for the benefit of the locality and the people. No person in those clubs makes one penny profit out of them from year's end to year's end.

The Premier: The State Gardens Board does not make a profit. It spends all the money it gets.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not talking about the State Gardens Board. The question is whether reserves and parks should be leased by the State Gardens Board, or by any other board under the Act, to people who thereupon take exclusive possession of them and use them for the purpose of their own private profit. There are traders who take possession of parks and reserves, or of portions of them, and employ the land and enjoy the privileges for the purpose of making money. That raises a question of principle, and I suggest to the House it is a reasonable matter for the consideration of members, who can inquire into the matter with the Chairman of the State Gardens Board, or the chairman of any other board, and form an opinion and advise the House as to the proper course to be pursued. For those reasons, and for the sake of the people who are affected, and in my opinion very seriously affected, by this all-night business, and also on the general principle as to the control of our parks and gardens, which are the people's heritage, I submit to members that this matter might well be referred to a select committee; and I move accordingly.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

RETURN—MINISTERS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS.

Visits to Eastern States.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.21]: I move—

That a report be prepared giving information regarding the visits made to the Eastern States by Ministers and public servants on public business from 1st July, 1939, to 30th June, 1940, such return to indicate—

- 1, Department concerned;
- 2, Reason for the visit;
- 3, Period of absence from office;
- 4, Expenses of visit over and above ordinary salary;
- 5, Whether a full report of the business was prepared for direct submission to Parliament.

In my opinion it is time this House had some record as to the proportion of State administration that is conducted outside Western Australia. We read in the Press frequently of visits to the Eastern States by Ministers and by departmental officers. It is true that as members of Parliament we get the same information concerning those visits as the general public receives. We get what is supplied to the Press. I submit, however, that when matters of State concern are discussed outside the State, it becomes of great importance to Parliament itself, which is charged with the administration of affairs of State. It is essential when matters of State administration are done outside the State boundaries, that Parliament should have some direct knowledge and some report of them. The amount of State business conducted outside Western Australia is growing from year to year. When the practice originally began, after the adoption of the Financial Agreement of 1928, Loan Council meetings were called from time to time; and during the early stages reports were submitted to Parliament. It was recognised that Parliament was part and parcel of the administration of State affairs, and it was a general custom for Parliament to receive some direct report of State affairs transacted outside Western Australia, and Parliament did have some idea of the discussions which took place at meetings of the Loan Council and at other meetings of the kind covered by the motion.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We used to get copies of minutes of such meetings laid on the Table.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I need not go into details. Those members who were here just after 1928 know perfectly well that we were then regarded as part and parcel of the administration. I am speaking of Parliament. At that time Parliament did get reports and did have opportunities to discuss those reports. Moreover, there were occasions when Parliament was consulted prior to the departure of a Minister or public servant as to matters to be discussed outside the borders of the State. The present practice, however, has been growing from year to year; and in the same ratio as the practice has been growing, so have we been consulted to a less extent and fewer reports have been submitted to us. I know it will be said that of recent months the war position

has necessitated a greater number of such visits. I appreciate that fact; but, after all, we want to know how far we are being involved in regard to defence matters, and Parliament particularly should be educated with respect to any responsibilities that may involve the State in regard to defence matters. Therefore, so far as I am concerned, I will not take it as a defence against this motion that it is being moved in respect of a period when the number of visits had been multiplied, possibly, by the special need for consultation on war matters. What I am concerned about is that regardless of what subjects are discussed, I wish to be recognised as the people's representative, elected by the people for a definite purpose. My constituency charges me with a responsibility that I am not fulfilling and I worry about it because I see that to-day I am not consulted, that to-day I am not able to express an opinion, and not able to shape or direct, or assist in, the general administration of the State to the extent that I am justified and required by my constituency in doing, and certainly not up to the standard that I have done it over the years that I have had the honour of being a member of this Chamber.

It may be said that I am aggravating the position, that the lack of information is not so great as to justify the carrying of my motion. But I submit that you and I, Mr. Speaker, do not know; that we have no knowledge of all the matters that are discussed by those who travel outside the State on behalf of the State. Therefore we desire that the existing practice should stop. I ask the House to agree to start the making of a record as from the 1st July, 1939. Let us have in a book such reports and returns as the motion covers. If its scope is not wide enough to satisfy the desires of members it can be extended. I have covered what I regard as essential matters which the people of Western Australia expect their members of Parliament to know about and which they specially elect us to check up. We are not doing our job. We are not able to do our job because we are not part and parcel of the State activities carried on outside the State. That may seem a wide statement to members; but I submit that it is a long time since we had an opportunity, outside the ordinary possibilities of discussion, really to watch matters that are discussed

by our State Ministers with other State Ministers and the Commonwealth authorities. Therefore it is time we had some kind of record so that we shall at least know what was discussed, the time occupied in the discussion and the cost to the State of that discussion. Again, we should know to what extent others are interfering with the general administration of State. We may be fearful that greater encroachments are being made by these consultations upon the province of State. While there is no public announcement in regard to such matters, we may not appreciate the danger that exists of further encroachment upon matters that come purely within the scope of State administration.

Mr. North: The movement is all in one direction.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: So far. The trouble is that we do not get sufficient details to ascertain the progress being made in Federal administration. I desire the motion to be carried so that we shall have a record of these subject-matters and know whether they are really matters which should be discussed outside of this Chamber, and whether or not a decision should be arrived at on them outside of this Parliament. If the motion is passed, members will realise the enormous amount of business, directly associated with the general administration and welfare of the State, that is being discussed outside the State. I repent that we are not fulfilling our duty if we permit to be discussed outside with others, a subject that in any way affects the general welfare and progress of the State. True, Governments must accept responsibility.

The Premier: That is very true.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is true also that Parliament should have a voice in the general direction of the affairs of State. A majority carries responsibility; and the responsibility is on the Administration to discuss with members its policy and the general progress of the affairs of State. While it is true that Governments must accept responsibility in the conduct of the affairs of State, it should give members an account of its stewardship. Our departmental officers attend conferences held in the Eastern States. Many officers of course accompany Ministers for the purpose of assisting them in their duties. The

presence of such officers is required at those conferences just as much as it is within the State, in order to assist Ministers; but there are occasions when officers attend conferences unaccompanied by Ministers. I venture the opinion that no Government would allow a departmental officer to attend a conference without first giving him directions as to the Government's opinion in regard to the subject-matter to be discussed and telling the officer the Government's policy. Ministers do so because they appreciate that the Government officer can voice only Government opinion; he can agree only where agreement is in definite accord with Government policy. Just as Ministers do that with departmental officers, I submit they should do it with members of Parliament. There is no difference. When Ministers go to the Eastern States to discuss matters of State, I submit it is due to members that they should be consulted in regard to the subject-matters, so that members might, as units of a party, as Government supporters or simply as members, exercise their right, play their part, carry their responsibility and justify their presence in this Chamber. Government officers should, I submit—and I include this in my motion—be called upon to submit reports not only to Ministers, but also to Parliament. Such reports should be laid on the Table of the House. Some of them may under existing conditions include confidential matter, but I am not concerned at the moment with confidential matter—I am speaking in general terms of the administration of State, the responsibility of State.

Take a recent happening. The Premier was called to attend a meeting of the Loan Council. We saw the announcement that a date had been fixed; and the matter was of grave concern to the State, as indeed all Loan Council meetings are. The Premier announced that he proposed to attend the meeting. Parliament was actually in session, yet the Premier left the State without saying a word. He had us all around his seat, yet he left Parliament and went to the Eastern States without giving us any details. He did not take members into his confidence as to what was to be discussed. He did not say, "Parliament being in session, I feel it my responsibility to say something to members before I leave." The extraordinary thing is that while on his

trip, the Premier made a statement to the people of Adelaide, South Australia. I submit that what the Premier should have done was to tell the House what he intended to do, not let us gather the information from a statement made by him in Adelaide on his way to the Loan Council. The report reads—

An allocation approximating the £2,000,000 grant made last year would be sought by Western Australia at the meeting of the Loan Council, which will open at Canberra on Monday, the Premier of Western Australia (Mr. Willcock) said when he arrived in Adelaide by the Westland Express tonight.

We would all have been pleased to hear the Premier make some such announcement before he left. He might have told us exactly how the calculation was arrived at and the nature of the case he intended to submit to the Council. Had he done so, he would have attended the Loan Council fortified by the support of members. He could have told the Loan Council, "My Parliament was in session and I submitted to it my hopes and my desires. Parliament knows that I have come here to get so-and-so." If such a course is of no value, if it would not assist the Premier, then there is no room for this Parliament. We are all a lot of hypocrites.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I submit that in such circumstances we are all a lot of hypocrites.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not reflect on other hon. members.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am reflecting on myself. I can make a general statement of that kind, as it is well within the Standing Orders.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may, if he is allowed to do so by the Chair.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not desire to argue, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can proceed so long as he speaks in a proper way.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. I will keep within my rights. We convey to the people of the State that we come to Parliament for a given purpose. If it is wrong for the Premier to consult us then we have no right here and are obtaining our salaries under false pretences. But let me

proceed with what the Premier said while in Adelaide—

"I am approaching the meeting with a full realisation that if the Commonwealth can provide necessary defence works in our State, then we will have to justify our position to meet them," said Mr. Willcock. "However, I know that there are certain works, such as railway requirements, which must be provided by the State through loan funds. Apart from these works we are ready to co-operate in anything the Commonwealth desires for defence purposes."

That would have been an interesting matter to bring before us this session, so that the Premier might have had the benefit of our assistance in possibly framing something in such a way as would have helped him in his discussions. The Premier's statement in Adelaide continued—

Mr. Willcock said that the Commonwealth Works Co-ordinator, (Sir Harry Brown) would not have the last say in the allocation of the year's loan funds. He would simply make recommendations to the Council, and those recommendations would be the subject for discussion by the Council representatives.

We should have that information; we should not have to read it in the columns of the Press. If that was worth saying in Adelaide, it was worth saying also in this House.

The Premier: It was said in Perth. You should attend to your duties.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I tell the Premier that there is no member in this House who pays more attention to his duties than I do. I am not in the habit of neglecting my parliamentary work and there is nothing that happens that I do not read. I do not remember any particular reference of the kind I have read with regard to the limitation of the rights of Sir Harry Brown. When I read it, it struck me as being something new. If others heard of it, or read it, then I must be a little deficient.

The Minister for Works: Rip Van Winkle.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not a Rip Van Winkle, and I am certain that the statement made in Adelaide was quite new so far as Western Australia was concerned. Let me read it again.

The Premier: No, don't

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It reads—

Mr. Willcock said that the Commonwealth Works Co-ordinator (Sir Harry Brown) would not have the last say . . .

The Premier: On a point of order, is the hon. member entitled to waste the time of the House by reading again what he has already read?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is entitled to emphasise a statement, but not to reiterate it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, I wish to emphasise it. It reads—

Mr. Willcock said that the Commonwealth Works Co-ordinator (Sir Harry Brown) would not have the last say in the allocation of the year's loan fund. He would simply make recommendations to the Council, and these recommendations would be the subject for discussion by the Council representatives.

Discussing the likelihood of applications by certain Eastern States for increased amounts for semi-governmental authorities, Mr. Willcock said that the present was a most inappropriate time for such bodies to increase their loan expenditure. These organisations were mainly concerned with works of a developmental nature. Mr. Willcock said he thought that a programme of such works would have to be framed so that post-war development would be assured. However, he believed that no big increase in semi-governmental borrowing should be sanctioned at present.

That is a very important statement. Semi-governmental borrowing has been a matter of grave concern to the people of this State, so much so that I have raised it over and over again. On one occasion while in Sydney I proceeded to Canberra for the purpose of discussing the subject with the then Prime Minister, the late Mr. Lyons, and the Treasurer, Mr. Casey. I emphasised the harm that the carrying on of that practice in the other States was doing to Western Australia, and I stated that the policy of the Loan Council was driving us into adopting the practice of semi-governmental borrowing. I pointed out that we were against that form of government, that we believed in parliamentary control and not board control. I also stated that we were being seriously misrepresented and that because we would not agree to the appointment of boards, we were sacrificing money that would otherwise be available to the State. I quoted what would happen at Fremantle, and that it was proposed to borrow £350,000 from the Commonwealth to construct wheat silos. I gave other illustrations and said that I had raised my voice in this House against the appointment of boards to borrow money and in that way remove from parliamentary control the responsibility of administration.

My motion was not influenced by the Premier's action in not saying anything to Parliament and subsequently making an announcement on reaching Adelaide; but I

am given the opportunity of bringing right home to members how necessary it is that we should have reform—

Member interjected.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not want any of the hon. member's comments. I am a representative of the people and have been in this House longer than any other member. I do not want anyone to jeer at me and tell me that I am not doing my job.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better keep to the motion.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Ministers proceed to conferences in the Eastern States and on arriving at Kalgoorlie on their return give a report of the proceedings to the local newspaper.

MR. CROSS: The Press always meets the train there.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Press meets the hon. member at times and he makes the maximum use of it. I am protesting that this is not the way to conduct the affairs of the country. Parliament is a channel through which reports should be given to the public. I do not say that Ministers should not make a statement to the Press, but I submit that reports of Loan Council meetings should be given right here when there is an opportunity to do so. In that way we can get first-hand information and we then have the opportunity of discussing the report that has been made. I desire to bring home to members the fact not only that we are not consulted, but that we are liable to be charged by our constituents with irresponsibility. Every member has a duty to perform and we cannot go back to our constituents and say that the Government dealt with such-and-such a matter and that we were not involved. Of course we are all involved in matters of Government policy and we are all responsible for the carrying out of that policy. We cannot escape it. We might think that we can explain it, but I submit that there is the danger that in the explanation we will not be able to convince our constituents. Under existing conditions, if Parliament is not to be consulted, if Parliament is not to have reports from Ministers, then we must admit that eight men are administering the affairs of the State. That makes it Cabinet control and not parliamentary control. We then become superfluous. I want members to realise that they are never consulted with regard to Government expenditure. It is

true that the majority uses that majority to carry out its policy, but to-day the majority on the Government side of the House is not in control because announcements regarding expenditure are made in the newspapers, large sums being involved without parliamentary authority. I know the Premier will state that that is essential, and I am aware that he must work on a monthly balance, that the Financial Agreement demands that. But I submit that eight men cannot go on indefinitely authorising expenditure. There is a grave danger in permitting that to continue; we are simply looking for trouble. It is impossible for it to go on. Of course we have to do our job and the Loan Council has made it necessary for a monthly balance instead of an annual balance. The Annual Estimates are just a record of what has been done and what it is proposed to do. We cannot discuss the details of the Estimates to-day because the money has already been expended or authorised. I realise Parliament's limitations under the Financial Agreement, and that it was the people of the State who voted us into its acceptance. It was done against my advice and vote. I opposed it in this House because I saw the danger of it. The majority, however, decided otherwise. I am aware of the difficulties with regard to expenditure, but there are many opportunities for submitting reports to Parliament. If those reports were presented, we could be brought into the position where we would have a say in regard to the expenditure. I want this recorded because I consider it is time that we knew to what extent the Commonwealth control is expanding. We should know to what extent the affairs of Western Australia are discussed outside the State, and what is involved in those discussions. I submit that just as this system expands, so will the cost to the State increase. The matter should be taken into consideration by the Disabilities Commission. I refer to the expenses incurred on behalf of the State by those who are travelling in its interests. I believe this motion will prove of assistance to our representatives who appear before the Grants Commission. It will enable them to strengthen their case for the disabilities from which Western Australia is suffering compared with that which appertains to the other States. This is not a disability in

the sense that I have just referred to, but a disability from the financial point of view. These trips cost money. We should know the extent to which costs have been incurred. The fact that we shall have a record of those costs as a result of this motion will enable our representatives to use the information, and submit the expenditure as one of the disabilities from which the State is suffering. They can even endeavour to obtain a recoup of that expenditure. I submit that the motion is timely. We must know where we are going. The people of the State are justified in ascertaining to what extent Parliament is able to adjust the affairs of the State, and to what extent we have to go outside it to consult others as to what we may or may not do. I believe the Commonwealth influence is encroaching. As the member for Claremont (Mr. North) said, the grip of the Commonwealth Government on everything is becoming greater. We want this record so that from year to year we can compare notes, and be enabled to arrive at a conclusion upon what is an important matter. I trust Parliament will take a serious view of this question and assist me in obtaining a record, so that we may know exactly to what extent we are directed in our affairs by conferences and gatherings that take place outside Western Australia.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [6.3]: The motion now before the House, *inter alia*, asks—

For a report giving information regarding the visits made to the Eastern States by Ministers and public servants on public business.

All visits made to the Eastern States by Ministers and officials are always given prominence in the Press. Does the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) desire that a Minister should get up in the House and say, "I propose to go to the Eastern States," when everyone knows that it is necessary under the Constitution for the State to be represented, for instance, at Loan Council meetings? Does he suggest that the Minister for Lands should stand up here and gravely announce to the House that the Agricultural Council will shortly be sitting and that he proposes to attend its meetings? This State has always been represented at such meetings and will continue to be represented thereat. Does he suggest that the Minister for Works or the

Minister for Mines, or some other Minister, should stand up and say, "It is necessary in the interests of the State that I should endeavour to perform my duty by the State and visit other parts of Australia?" Does he suggest that Ministers should announce beforehand that they are going to visit certain States? Of what use would that be to Parliament? If any objection is raised to what Ministers have done in the past, I am prepared to defend anything that either they or the Government have done concerning anything that appertains to the discharge of duties outside the State. I was surprised that the hon. member should have produced an interview I gave to the Press of Adelaide. He quoted what I said to a newspaper reporter in that city. All the time I spent with that reporter was in travelling from the railway carriage to the street. The conversation that ensued is correctly reported. The hon. member said I should have made that statement first to the people of Western Australia. I will read the statement I made in the "West Australian":—

August 13 has been suggested as the date for the next meeting of the Loan Council. The Premier (Mr. J. C. Willcock) yesterday received advice from the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) that that date had been proposed, and he asked if it would be suitable for him. Mr. Willcock replied stating that the date would be convenient. At the forthcoming meeting the Council will receive the first recommendations of the Co-ordinator General of Works (Sir Harry Brown) who was appointed under the new wartime loan funds scheme agreed upon at the last council meeting. The recommendations, which will cover borrowings for civil purposes, including deficits, and will include details of works and services, their total cost and the proposed expenditure in the current financial year, will be submitted by Sir Harry Brown after conferring with the Co-ordinator of Works of each State.

Previous to that, I announced to the Press that we had taken steps in accordance with the resolution passed by the Loan Council to appoint a Co-ordinator of Works. Everyone interested in the State knew that the Director of Public Works and Commissioner of Main Roads (Mr. Tindale) had been appointed Co-ordinator for Western Australia. My statement continued—

Opportunity probably will be taken while the State leaders are at the Council meeting to hold a further discussion with the Prime Minister on the national war effort, in accordance with the arrangement made between Mr. Menzies and the Premiers some time ago.

That statement practically covered what was said to the Press in Adelaide. The reporter there may have been a little more inquisitive about something that affected his State more particularly than it did Western Australia, and asked some questions with regard to semi-governmental works. That matter has been discussed extensively at Loan Council meetings and has been dealt with in this House. We in Western Australia were not particularly interested in what was said in that interview. I found some time ago that in the allocations made to State Governments in regard to their loan expenditure only a certain amount of money could be raised, and that the money that was to have been raised was seriously jeopardised by the inroads upon it on the part of semi-governmental authorities that were borrowing money in the Eastern States. As a member of the Loan Council, and being desirous of conserving the position of Western Australia to the greatest possible extent, I elaborated on the position in the South Australian Press. In conjunction with the Premier of South Australia, whose Government was also adversely affected in this way, we put up such an effective protest that the tendency of semi-governmental authorities to borrow money was stopped at that stage. Instead of going on year after year raising money in this way, they were limited to certain amounts, and the predominant claim upon the money raised for expenditure in the States was that which was required by the State Governments. Thus the State Governments now have first call upon any funds that are available. That aspect had been given some publicity in Adelaide on that day, and the newspaper reporter asked me some questions, and I expressed my opinion. It cannot be said that I withheld any information from the people of Western Australia. Whilst I do not perhaps use the Press for publicity purposes to nearly the same extent as is done by other people, if there is anything that counts in the general progress of Western Australia, I am always ready and anxious to give first-hand information direct to the people through the local Press. I have never hesitated, when matters of importance have to be discussed or when information of any consequence has to be given, to make use of the local Press. I have not waited until Parliament sat, and

then got up in my place and announced that I wished to make a statement to Parliament. I have not by adopting that procedure wasted the time of members, who in turn would pass the information on to their constituents. By means of the Press I have given the information in a way that ensures that everyone in the State has an opportunity to read it, and I have given that information at the earliest possible moment. The hon. member seems to think that everything done by the Government should be done in Parliament, that we should report this and that to the House, and indeed lay printed reports on the Table of the House. He suggests that every member should first know about everything that happens before it is given to the public, and that members of Parliament should be the only ones to have access to reports, and that after they have seen the documents the information they contain should be reticulated to the people of the State. In a democratic country such as ours, we require to get as close to the people as possible. We want the people to know what is going on and how it affects Western Australia. The sooner that information is given to the people, without waiting for formal procedure in Parliament, or a full-dress discussion by members in the House, the better for all concerned. I do not think members of the House would desire that we should adopt any other course. Does the hon. member desire that there should be a full-dress debate on matters that have been discussed at Loan Council meetings? The only time when I remember a report being made to the House in connection with such meetings was during the depression. There had been a Premiers' Conference, lasting for five or six weeks, to deal with what was termed, "The Premiers' Plan." A report was made by the Premier of the day. I was one of the two or three members who alone discussed that report. The Order of the Day was left on the notice paper until the end of the session, and never discussed again. I think that was in 1932. I remember the circumstances well, because I was one of the few members who had anything to say about it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The paper and the information were available, but to-day there is no paper available.

The PREMIER: The paper with regard to the Premiers' Conference, dealing with the Plan and the terms imposed on the people of Australia, certainly was available. That was the only occasion when I remember a report being placed before the House in the manner suggested by the member for Guildford-Midland. With regard to the return, I thought perhaps the hon. member had a grievance and felt that Ministers had been visiting the Eastern States too often.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No.

The PREMIER: If that is so, I am with him. I have a distinct grievance because of the fact that, compared with the Premiers of other States, I have to spend an inordinate amount of time travelling between this and other States, whereas the Premier of Victoria, for instance, has only to walk from one office to another, and can get through Loan Council meetings in one or two days. I remember the people of Bunbury complaining that, though I was Premier of the State, I had been unable to accept an invitation to visit the town.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: I was referring to the fact that shortly after Christmas I had been asked why I could not visit the South-West more frequently. Then, casting back in my mind, I considered just what I had been doing during the year, and found that three months of it were spent either travelling to or from, or being in, the Eastern States. For my part I am really sick of visiting the Eastern States. It involves tremendous waste of time. It is a handicap which members of a Western Australian Government have to put up with, while other States are greatly inconvenienced by their proximity to the places in which the conferences are held.

The mover did not seem to deal with the major portion of the motion. He devoted much more time to dealing with the question of an entirely new procedure which he suggested might take place, and for which there is no provision in the Standing Orders. Only by indulgence of the House or by your permission, Mr. Speaker, could one adopt that procedure. Is it desired that a new procedure should be initiated requiring that the Government, before doing anything of

any consequence or visiting the Eastern States, should first obtain a mandate from Parliament? That will involve an alteration of the whole procedure as regards real responsible government. My conception of responsible government is that Parliament is elected by the people of this State, and that out of that Parliament a majority of members form an Executive which makes responsible decisions. Ministers then have to be assured that the actions they take meet with the approval of at least a majority of members of this Chamber. When the majority is dissatisfied, the Government no longer holds the confidence of the House and has to go out and make room for a Government which is in accordance with the desires of the majority. That is the way in which responsible government is conducted in all British Dominions. No one objects to consultations or discussions or debate or initiation, or any opportunity whatever to discuss anything that has an effect on the well-being of the State. For this members of Parliament have ample opportunities during the session.

On the second day after the opening of Parliament, quite apart from the Address-in-reply, a Supply Bill is introduced, and if members want to discuss practically any subject under the sun affecting the State generally, they can do so on that Supply Bill. Not long afterwards the Budget is introduced and the estimates of each department are placed before Parliament, whereupon time is given for the consideration of any matter of administration affecting any department, its policy, its officers, or anything of that type. A further opportunity is provided on the Loan Estimates later. Then comes the Appropriation Bill, affording still another opportunity. In fact, there are at least half-a-dozen occasions in every session when a member is able to express his opinion on anything he desires, and to question Ministers. Moreover, Ministers can be questioned on every sitting day in regard to any aspect of administration whereon members may desire information. Then again, on private members' day members can bring forward motions of any description and discuss them at any length, and put forward any views they hold as to the welfare of the State. If any proposal of a private member meets with the approval of the majority of members, effect can be given to it. There is no burking of

discussion, nor any desire to dodge the giving of information or the full discussion of any matter affecting the State in any more or less important degree.

However, the Government of Western Australia is becoming more and more a part of the Government of Australia. We have Australia-wide problems which can be settled only by agreement with the other States. For example, the Agricultural Council is a highly important body. It has been formed for the purpose of securing uniform action in regard to agricultural production and marketing and distribution, and to consider every aspect of agricultural production. The Constitution of Australia being what it is, we have many difficulties in that regard, as all members are aware. A proposal may be agreed to by all the States except one, and that one State, failing to come to agreement with the others, may be the cause of preventing something being done that is of immense importance to the people of Australia generally and to one or two States in particular. The agreement of five States can be nullified by the action of one State. That position arose only a few weeks ago at a conference attended by the Minister for Lands in the first instance, and later by the Minister for Labour. The entire scheme of apple and pear production and adequate safeguards and joint action between the Commonwealth and all the States to ensure some financial assistance to the growers of apples and pears in the Commonwealth was almost nullified because of disagreement on the part of one State. The problem was Australia-wide in its incidence, and because of one obstinate State was likely to fail. However, common-sense prevailed in the long run, thanks to negotiations and a full, frank and free discussion by responsible men. Thus an agreement was reached which redounds immensely to the benefit of Australian producers.

Mr. Marshall: I would like to know the benefits which have resulted to the producers.

The PREMIER: Benefits resulted to the whole industry, and to a majority of the Australian States—Tasmania, New South Wales, and Western Australia, and to a less extent Victoria. Each of those States

organised its industry on an export basis. Unless some means were found of obtaining payment for production, three-fourths of the production of those States would have to be absolutely thrown away, without the growers receiving any remuneration whatever for the three-fourths. That is because of the incidence of the war. Unless an agreement can be reached in regard to the matter, half or three-fourths of the apples and pears in one State, or of some other product, would have to be destroyed, and the grower would receive no remuneration whatever for the growing and marketing of those three-fourths. Therefore we need to have the confidence of the Australian people in order that an agreement in the best interests of Australia may be reached. By these conferences we do get a measure of agreement. While one State may sometimes be affected adversely by an agreement, there is generally a spirit of compromise in these conferences which results in the greatest benefit to the greatest number of the Australian people. That could not be achieved unless we had close co-operation and conferences where the difficulties of each State could be put up for general understanding, and the exigencies of the various States made plain. Then there is some chance of securing unanimity regarding the course of action to be followed, and the States can make combined representations to the Commonwealth regarding finance, because in many instances the financing is entirely beyond the resources of any individual State. The Agricultural Conference is now in the nature of a permanent institution. As a result, splendid work has been accomplished in the interests of producers throughout the Commonwealth. The discussions have crystallised into action the many divergent thoughts and ideas that have existed in the several States, and agreements have been reached that could not possibly have been arrived at without representatives from each State attending such conferences in order to put forward the various aspects requiring consideration. We hear people talking about the problems associated with the production of wheat. That phase was discussed seriously at a conference attended by the Premiers and Ministers for Agriculture from the various States. Agreement was almost reached, but was blocked because of the action of the Victorian Pre-

mier, who would not accept any financial responsibility but wished to foist it upon the Commonwealth. As the Federal Government was not prepared to accept that responsibility, an agreement that might have been of immense benefit to the wheat-growers had to go by the board. However, the war intervened shortly afterwards; and I believe that if a further conference were held some agreement would be reached and a uniform policy agreed upon by all the Governments of Australia, with benefit to all the wheatgrowers in the Commonwealth. Similar procedure is adopted with regard to other matters. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) knows, as regards the dried fruits agreement, that unless all the States had agreed upon joint action, effect could not possibly have been given to it.

Mr. Thorn: Exactly.

The PREMIER: But for the agreement nothing could have been done to assist the dried-fruits producers. However, as a result of that agreement, action extremely beneficial to the producers of those commodities was taken. And so it is with other forms of production. Hence the necessity for the holding of such conferences.

Mr. Thorn: By means of such an agreement, machinery was set up that proved of great assistance when war broke out.

The PREMIER: Yes, and that would not have been possible but for the holding of conferences attended by Ministers dealing with such matters. This focuses attention upon one of the faults of the Australian Constitution. When the people had the opportunity, they would not agree to surrender many of their rights for the purpose of securing problematical benefits. Necessarily, therefore, we must gain the desired end by means of agreements, which cannot be arrived at unless the matters at issue are discussed. Therefore conferences are held from time to time. While some people may think those gatherings are unnecessary, the fact remains that if they were not held great disadvantages would be experienced by those associated with agricultural production. Members will be aware that the Agricultural Conference meets every six months. The results of those meetings have proved most beneficial to the producers of Western Australia and, indeed, of Australia generally. If we choose to adopt a policy of non-cooperation, which the moving of such a motion

as that under discussion might possibly imply, this State would be adversely circumstanced. I remember a conference held 18 or 20 years ago at which the Commissioners of Railways of the various States met to discuss matters of importance. For some reason—I think it was on the score of expense—Western Australia was not represented. Ever since that time a decision arrived at by those attending the conference regarding the basis of the ratio payable to each State on account of interstate fares has operated detrimentally to Western Australia, costing this State between £4,000 and £5,000 a year. That decision was arrived at without Western Australia being represented at the conference; and, notwithstanding Herculean efforts to reverse the decision, it stands to this day.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The PREMIER: Thus the policy of non-co-operation would be the very worst we could contemplate at the present juncture. I have given members a specific instance. Unless the State is represented at conferences held to discuss issues of importance and the position as it affects the State is adequately submitted, we cannot blame others if consideration for the special phases affecting us is not secured. Many advantages accrue to the States from the method adopted of discussing questions and reaching agreements upon them. Having attained that end, representations having behind them the full weight of the States in agreement can be made to the Commonwealth Government; and very often the Commonwealth Government, having heard the views of the States, has shown a disposition to help, and has done so in many directions.

As for the Loan Council, members will appreciate that it is a statutory body and that we must attend its meetings, which have a tremendous bearing upon the interests of our people. On the representations made and the strength of a case submitted depends the amount of money made available for development and other phases of State activities. Western Australia is extremely niggardly regarding its representation at Loan Council meetings. Very often I have been the only representative of this State. The other States do not so regard Loan Council meetings. Their attitude is, "This is the most important meeting that takes place, in respect of its effects upon the Gov-

ernment of the State." At the latest meeting of the Loan Council I represented Western Australia. In addition, there were one Treasury official and a clerk who is also an official of that department. Mr. Tindale, who is the co-ordinator for this State and is acquainted with the details of matters within his purview, was the only other Western Australian officer in attendance. On the other hand, New South Wales was represented by five Ministers of the Crown, who very often withdrew and conferred upon questions that arose from time to time.

Mr. J. Hegney: Could they all participate in the deliberations?

The PREMIER: They were not debarred from speaking, but they could not all vote.

Mr. J. Hegney: But they could speak.

The PREMIER: Yes, and in consequence Ministers could speak regarding their several departmental activities that happened to be discussed by the Loan Council. The New South Wales representatives included the Premier, Mr. Mair; the Treasurer, Mr. Richardson; the Attorney General, Sir Henry Manning—I do not know why he was present, unless it was to advise on Constitutional matters—the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Bruxner, and one other Minister. As for officials, the meeting was held in the House of Representatives room, which was almost fully occupied. There is some excuse for it. They are there in full force and strength; and should any item arise as to which a Minister may have more knowledge than has the Treasurer or Premier, then, to use a colloquialism, the Minister "oils him up." In that way the State is adequately represented. Economists, Treasury officials and co-ordinators attend these meetings. In comparison with other States, our representation is small and niggardly. Other States have a big idea of the importance of these meetings and send their representatives in full force. Even Tasmania, which has only five Ministers, sends three of them—the Leader of the Upper House, the Premier, and the Treasurer, as well as four or five officials. It seems to be fashionable for some people to inquire, "Why the necessity for these trips to the Eastern States?" Personally, I do not want any more; in fact, I feel annoyed that they occur so often. It is not a pleasure jaunt; because, for instance, on the trip before last when I went to Melbourne, I was away for a week; during which time I spent six

nights in the train. The last Loan Council meeting was held at Canberra. On that occasion I slept in a different bed almost every night. I spent eight nights on the train, one night in Adelaide, one night in Melbourne and one at Canberra. In my opinion, it is unfair that representatives should be asked to attend a conference of that description immediately after having spent four nights in the train, with its jolting and inconvenience. One cannot be expected after such an experience adequately to state a case before an important conference, as one feels jaded and tired. In justice to the representative, he should arrive at the place of meeting two or three days before the conference starts, so as to get himself into a proper frame of mind to deal with the various matters to be brought forward.

Mr. North: Does the Loan Council authorise you to travel by plane?

The PREMIER: Yes, if a person is prepared to take the risk of that means of transport. One is not encouraged to travel by air after the tragic disaster which occurred recently at Canberra. Other conferences are held which I am sure are worth while. Every member knows that the Commissioners of Railways hold a conference—I think every two years—when matters affecting the administration and working of the railways are discussed. As a result much information is obtained that is ultimately to the benefit of all the States. The Directors of Education meet every two years. I am sure that such conferences prove of great assistance in the administration of Education Departments. The Commissioners of Police also confer. A conference of police commissioners was found to be particularly necessary when the Commonwealth decided to take action with regard to subversive activities throughout Australia. The commissioners met and decided upon a line of action. Only today I received a telegram from the Prime Minister. He is promulgating regulations under the National Security Act with the object of forming a force, which is to be called the National Security Force, and he desires that the Commissioners of Police shall meet and agree upon a policy. What am I to do in such a case?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There is nothing in the motion to suggest that too many conferences are held or that the conferences should not be held.

The PREMIER: From the way in which the motion is framed, I think that is the implication. The motion would seem to indicate that in the opinion of the hon. member, and perhaps of the House if the motion is carried, these conferences should not be held.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, that is not suggested.

The PREMIER: Or that somebody is getting too much in the way of expenses.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: For the information of the House, it is not to restrain—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Guildford-Midland to keep order.

The PREMIER: It seems to me that the underlying motive might be adverse criticism of what are considered to be unnecessary visits to the Eastern States.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Oh, no!

The PREMIER: Most members would consider a motion of this kind is designed to secure information to enable one adversely to criticise Government representatives who make unnecessary visits to the Eastern States.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You have misread the motion.

The PREMIER: I have an idea what underlies the motion. If I have misunderstood the hon. member, I cannot help it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You could not misunderstand me.

The PREMIER: I gather from the hon. member's speech that he desires a report—which, as I say, is almost invariably made public beforehand—laid on the Table with all due solemnity; a Minister must get up and move it, because a motion is necessary. A general discussion should then take place upon what, after all, is in most instances only informative.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I want a permanent record kept.

The PREMIER: I do not know that we can have a permanent record of every conference. To do so would entail remodelling the Standing Orders so as to enable Ministers to make statements about their visits to the Eastern States; or, if a departmental officer is sent, to enable a Minister to make a report on the officer's visit and lay it on the Table. Probably then a solemn discussion would take place upon the necessity for the visit and whether or not the

decisions arrived at were worth while.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not in the motion and is not suggested.

The PREMIER: That is the impression I have. I see no necessity for the motion, nor for the action which the hon. member proposes. When a report is furnished to Parliament every member is entitled to a copy. We have 80 members.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The report should be tabled.

The PREMIER: It has to be printed and tabled.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, that is not necessary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: Suppose half a dozen members were supplied with a copy of a report and the hon. member did not receive one; what would he say? If one member has access to a report, so also should every member. Here I may mention that with regard to the printing of reports we must conserve our financial resources. We shall not be able to have voluminous reports printed. All unnecessary printing must be avoided, and that will be our endeavour. Almost invariably when any officer goes anywhere to represent Western Australia, full publicity is given to the matter. Furthermore, information as to the reason for such visits is always made available.

The hon. member desires that the proposed report should give details of the period of absence from office of Ministers and public servants. I do not know that there has been any unduly extended period of absence from office. Certainly there has not been if my experience is any criterion. I have travelled almost every night that I have been away, and this applies to other officers. In fact, I think we are unfair to ourselves in doing as much as we do; nobody should expect people to undertake visits to the Eastern States under such conditions. The hon. member also desires to know the expenses incurred in respect of such visits. Every Minister or officer travelling either within the State or to the Eastern States is entitled to a certain set scale of expenses when he leaves home. Unless approval is given by the Treasurer for extra expenditure—and I do not remember that ever having been done—the set scale applies. I know that several Ministers visiting the Eastern States have spent much

time inspecting, and making inquiries from, departments similar to those which they control here; but nevertheless have omitted to claim expenses. The Minister for Mines (Hon. A. H. Panton) went to the Eastern States at the beginning of the year in connection with the Federal gold tax because the Government felt that direct personal representation was essential. This House passed a resolution on the matter, and the Government decided that the Minister should make a direct approach to the Commonwealth Government in order to place before it the views of this House. I consider that one of the deciding factors in regard to the alleviation of the tax and the subsequent grant of £114,000 from the Federal Government to assist the industry in this State, was the information our Minister was able to supply to the Federal Treasurer at firsthand. The cost to the State of the Minister's visit consisted of three days' expenses incurred while he was occupied exclusively with that work. The Minister for the North-West (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley) also went to the Eastern States and spent a considerable part of his time in departmental inquiries, but did not claim any expenses. He travelled for the purpose of having a holiday and securing relaxation, but if he had been so inclined, he could have engaged himself definitely on departmental business and collected expenses. Many of the inquiries he made have resulted in benefit to the State since his return.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are putting up a good argument for the appointment of a Minister to the Eastern States.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth Government has suggested to me that it would be very desirable if we could have a direct representative in the Eastern States.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think it would be a good plan.

The PREMIER: An urgent telegram reached me five or six weeks ago from the Prime Minister asking could I meet the other State Premiers in conference to discuss war measures. I could have said, "I am not going over. I am about sick of it, and I refuse to consult with the other Premiers and with the Prime Minister about problems connected with the war." But I did not do so. The State was represented at that conference, which was purely of a consultative

character, information being imparted in regard to a particular aspect of the war. A report of that meeting could not then have been published because what transpired was absolutely confidential. Most of the information we received on that occasion was not made public until four or five weeks afterwards; some of it has not been made public yet. We cannot adopt a policy of non-co-operation. I certainly do not desire to do that.

As these reports are made directly to the Press and thereby everybody receives the information, I do not perceive why, before I go away, I should come to the House and say, "Mr. Speaker, I am going away for a trip to the Eastern States; I propose to attend the Loan Council and to say this and that." As a matter of fact, in many instances I do not know beforehand what I shall say. What the Commonwealth representatives and other people at the conference say first determines what I say and do. It is a matter of consultation and negotiation rather than one of having a set policy. In my efforts adequately to represent Western Australia I have the support of the Parliament of this State. I know that the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. C. G. Latham), the Leader of the National Party (Mr. McDonald), and members of my own party are prepared to give me every support in all the representations I make on behalf of Western Australia. The better I fare, the better pleased are they, and the better pleased am I myself. But there is no need to consult people before I go away. The most we could say to anybody prior to his departure would be, "We wish you luck and hope you will be able adequately to represent the State, and sufficiently to impress on the Loan Council the needs of Western Australia." I do not know what else could be said. On the return journey of myself or any other Minister from the Eastern States an hour or two is spent on the Trans-rain compiling a carefully prepared Press statement giving such particulars of the business transacted as the exigencies of space in the newspapers permit. That information is published in the Press on the morning the Minister arrives back in Perth. I do not know what other information the House could want. If further details were required, they could be obtained by questions in the ordinary way, and the matter

could be discussed on the Annual Estimates, Loan Estimates, or Supply Bills, or at some other appropriate opportunity.

For these reasons I do not propose to support the motion. To do what the hon. member suggests is impracticable. It would only mean considerable delay in making the facts known, whereas at present the public of Western Australia is given all necessary information at the earliest possible moment. If I had to make a report to Parliament of my visits to the Eastern States and that was followed by a full-dress discussion, considerable time would be wasted. Visits outside the State are made in the best interests of Western Australia. Personally I am weary of visiting the Eastern States. I have already spent two out of the first eight months of this year either in travelling to or from the Eastern States or attending conferences there. That is a tremendous loss of time, and when I return I find work piled up waiting to be done, with the result that I cannot see as many people as I would wish and cannot properly attend to urgent business. In view of the fact that full publicity is given to what is done at conferences in the Eastern States, it is redundant for me to make a report to Parliament in order that there may be a permanent record. After all, actions and results count for more than records. The motion should not be agreed to. If any hon. member desires information in regard to expenses, questions can be asked and replies will be given. I do not want to hide anything of that kind. I can assure members that whatever expenses have been drawn have been in accordance with the regulations. Most Ministers when they go away are only too anxious to get back to their work instead of spending time in the Eastern States. I know that I am. I have devoted a week to travelling to Melbourne and back in order to attend a two-days' conference, and after having travelled that distance, one does not feel inclined to tackle a week's arrears of work. Anyhow, I ask members not to agree to the motion.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [8.11]: I listened attentively to the remarks of the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving his motion. I did

not gather that he desired to criticise the visits paid to the Eastern States by Ministers. I think all members are agreed that those visits are very wearing and that Ministers would much sooner not have to undertake them. However, such visits to the Eastern States are essential. Considering our isolation, if Ministers sat in their offices when matters of great moment to us and to the rest of Australia were being decided in the Eastern States, the effect would be a very adverse one for this State. Therefore I support a full measure of co-operation at the conferences that take place in the East with the representatives of the Commonwealth and the other States.

The motion moved by the hon. member, however, deals with the past, the period of 12 months ended the 30th June last. The hon. member is asking for certain information regarding the business transacted in that period, and incidentally the cost involved. I have always considered that where the information desired by a member involved a fairly lengthy answer, he should not seek the information by way of question, but should move that a report be laid on the Table giving the information required. The motion asks for information as to the purposes of the visits, the business transacted and the expenses incurred to the State during the 12 months ended the 30th June last. True, the hon. member, in the course of his remarks, referred to a report being made to the House by the Premier and other Ministers on their return from conferences in the Eastern States. I confess to a certain sympathy with his view. Some years ago I had occasion to remark here—I admit it did not seem to create any profound impression—that the then Premier—the member for Boulder—went off periodically to the Loan Council and came back with £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 obtained in some mysterious way, and that that seemed to be all we knew about it. It would be of great information to members if the Premier and other Ministers made periodical surveys telling us, as responsible representatives, something of the trend of the discussions at the conferences. The Premier rightly said that the Loan Council is perhaps the most important event in the life of the States.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We voted ourselves into the Loan Council.

Mr. McDONALD: We did. Its discussions involve the sinews of war, the financial position of the State, the standard of living of our people. There is no event of the year which is so important to the State. I agree that the conferences attended by the Minister for Agriculture and other Ministers are also of the utmost importance. We spend a certain amount of time dealing with matters which, compared with the proceedings at the Loan Council and at other conferences, are of very slight value. I think we would be assisted, and we might even be able to make a suggestion not without value, if opportunity were offered from time to time to consider a report by the Premier or one of his Ministers. Members would much appreciate it. In other Parliaments that is done. On matters of overshadowing importance in England to-day, statements are made by the Prime Minister to Parliament. The Press takes its reports from the statements made in Parliament. In the Commonwealth Parliament Ministers, such as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. McEwen, make statements to Parliament regarding the trend of foreign affairs. The Leader of the Opposition and other members vitally concerned take the opportunity to intervene. That, I consider, is a policy with some merit. I hope the Premier will accede to the request of the hon. member to give the information desired. The Premier has intimated that if the hon. member asked by way of question, the information would be forthcoming.

The Premier: About expenses.

Mr. McDONALD: The information about the other matters might also well be given, namely, the number of conferences, the nature of the conferences and the business transacted, where the business was not confidential. On principle, if a member, as a representative of the people and in the discharge of what he believes to be his duty, asks for reasonable information, it should be given unless there are strong reasons why it should be refused. I cannot see that any such strong reasons exist here, and therefore I propose to support the motion.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [8.18]: I regret that the House did not agree to an adjournment of the debate as I requested. Usually, the Leader of the Opposition is

given the adjournment. I have had little opportunity to ascertain what was in the mind of the mover of the motion.

The Premier: That applies to me.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And I was certainly dissatisfied with the reply of the Premier. But for my feeling of dissatisfaction, I might not have risen in my place now in order to speak. As a matter of fact, the information sought ought to be given to the public. There is no reason for hiding it. What is there to hide? I cannot understand why there should be any opposition to the motion.

The Premier: There is no opposition to it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But the Premier said he would not agree to the motion.

The Premier: About the reports to Parliament.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The mover of the motion asks for a report giving information regarding the visits made to the Eastern States by Ministers and public servants on public business for the year ended the 30th June last. I do not know how many there have been, but the number should not be difficult to ascertain. The hon. member also asks for particulars of the departments concerned and the reasons for the visits. Probably the reply would be that the agricultural industry had necessitated several of the visits. The motion also asks for "the period of absence from office." Why should not that information be given? Then it asks for "The expenses of visit over and above ordinary salaries." Why should that not be stated? It is all set out in the regulations, and Ministers and officials do not get more than is provided in them. I feel sure that if they drew amounts in excess of what is provided, the Auditor-General would have something to say about it. The motion also asks, "Whether a full report of the business was prepared for direct submission to Parliament?" We do not know the answer to that question.

The Premier: That never has been done.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the Premier had listened to what the mover of the motion had to say, and given consideration to his remarks, I am sure that in a few minutes he would have been able to satisfy the House. Instead of doing that he made a lengthy speech and only clouded the issue.

The Premier: It was only a quarter as long as the speech you made last night.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: My speech was on a much more important matter, the expenditure of £330,000, and probably a great deal more. I was within my rights in making that speech. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, will protect me, so long as I am speaking to the question before the Chair. The Government ought to be able to supply this information, and I am surprised at the Premier's opposition to the motion.

The Premier: I am only opposed to having reports made to Parliament as indicated by the hon. member in his speech.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I believe that minutes are prepared of all Loan Council meetings. Ministers go to the Eastern States to borrow money. I presume very little of it is raised in this State. That is not a secret Chamber.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, it is.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Is it? Perhaps the hon. member has been at those meetings and I have not, but I think I know more about them than he does.

Mr. Marshall: I have seen what appeared in the public Press.

Mr. Cross: Did you bring back reports to the House?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the records between 1930 and 1933 will show that not only were there reports of Premiers' Conferences dealing with financial emergency legislation, but that reports of Loan Council meetings were also tabled.

Mr. Marshall: I do not think so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have seen them.

The Premier: We do not make them now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They were made, and the Premier has probably seen many of them. They were printed. The people should know about all these questions. Why should there be any secrecy about them? The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in the course of his speech, went a little beyond what is contained in the motion, but he put forward a good argument. Had I been able to give consideration to all the points I would probably be possessed of a little more knowledge than I have at the moment. I rose in my place more to protest against the refusal to grant an adjournment of the debate on such an important matter. It is not as if this was the only business before the House. There are many other matters for debate. If

it is the intention of the Government not to give the Opposition a chance to consider these questions, we must take up all the time we can in discussing them with the little knowledge in our possession, and in consequence we may delay the business of the House. Whilst it may be the duty of the Opposition to delay the business, we have no desire to do so.

The Premier: If you had been serious about wanting an adjournment of the debate, no objection would have been raised, but you did not call for a division.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not want to do that when members sitting on the Government bench voted in the negative.

The Premier: I do not think they said anything; only two members had anything to say.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I cannot be answerable for what other members did. There have been many occasions when it has been difficult to decide how many voices there were for or against a motion. I sometimes wonder how you, Mr. Speaker, are able to give a decision. At times there is almost complete silence on both sides of the House, and it is difficult to say how many members are in favour and how many are against a particular motion. I hope the Premier will now agree to the passage of this motion.

The Premier: Which motion?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The motion now before us. There is nothing in it.

Mr. Cross: If so, why worry about it?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It would be easy to ascertain how many departments were concerned, and for what reasons Ministers and officials had attended conferences. It should not be difficult to obtain information as to what business was done. That information would be of value, and would probably cause the people of the State to appreciate that Western Australia was attempting to do all that was possible by way of finance to assist them with their industries. If we decline to give that information they will not understand what is being done on their behalf.

The Premier: The whole tenor of the hon. member's speech was that we had to discuss all these questions in Parliament.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is not a question of what the hon. member suggested, but what is contained in the motion. We are

not dealing with anything else. If the Premier will read the motion carefully, I am sure he will not hesitate to give the information asked for. There can be no necessity to hide anything. The Premier receives an allowance according to the regulations, and he gets no more than that. The same thing applies to other Ministers and civil servants. I should like to have the information myself. We get news sent to us sometimes from the Eastern States. A statement may be made to the Press in Melbourne or Sydney that conveys a great deal more information than we get from the Premier on his return. Many of the subjects are important, such as was the statement made the other night by the Minister for Lands. He had a right to claim the indulgence of the House and to tell us what was going on in the other States. Our isolation places us in an awkward position. True, we get very little information from the Eastern States through the newspapers. When the Premier goes there he is probably interviewed, in his official capacity, by some journalist and the results are telegraphed to this State. In a general way we gain very little knowledge from those sources. Occasionally we see that grants are made, such as the grant for £15,000. The Premier, however, says we have not yet received the money. We only get such information by reason of a word dropped here and there. That is unsatisfactory.

The Premier: That was given in a communication from the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I was referring to a statement made concerning allocations to all States of money for defence expenditure.

The Premier: You mean the grant in connection with the Technical College?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. I am surprised there has been so long a debate on this motion, when I consider the facts as they appear in cold print on the notice paper. The motion itself is all the Premier has to worry about.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is all I can get.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And yet the Premier rambles about and builds up a case that may be knocked down or substantiated, but it is still a case that has nothing to do with the motion. I am surprised that he is not in agreement with that which has been moved. That being so, we shall not be given the information asked for. That may indicate

there is something to hide. No one, however, can hide anything, because anything that is hidden will ultimately come out in the Auditor-General's report. If there has been any overdrawing of allowances, that will be revealed. The visit by officials to the Eastern States is a matter of Government policy. The Auditor-General cannot, of course, check those visits. We ought to be candid with the people. I hope the Premier will alter his mind and make the information available. Probably it would not take more than half an hour to put together. For these reasons I support the motion.

On motion by Mr. Thorn, debate adjourned.

MOTION—HEALTH ACT.

To Disallow By-law.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [8.31]: I move—

That the new by-law 1A, section C, Part IX., made by the Bayswater Local Board of Health under the Health Act, 1911-1937, and published in the "Government Gazette" on the 24th day of May, 1940, and laid on the Table of the House on the 30th day of July, 1940, be and is hereby disallowed.

I have here the new by-law in question, and propose to read some lines of it so that members may know what it involves. After a long preamble as to the authority given to the Bayswater Local Board of Health, the by-law states—

Prohibited Area for Keeping of Swine or Pigsty—1A. As from and including the 1st day of July, 1941, no person shall keep any swine, or use or erect any pigsty, within an area bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of Lincoln road and Wellington road

The boundaries are fully set out. The salient portion of the new by-law, however, is that "no person shall keep any swine or pigsty." The position is that in the area referred to—more particularly the Morley Park area in the Bayswater Road District—a good many men were engaged in pig farming at the time I entered Parliament. The Morley Park Progress Association was active there, and nearly all the residents in the area were members of the association. It was my duty, from time to time, to make representations to successive Ministers for Works urging the expenditure of public funds on a road which would give the pig-raisers who were then living in that area access to the Midland Junction abattoirs. The Minister

for Works in the Mitchell Government, and various Ministers for Works in later Administrations, were pleaded with similarly, it being urged that public funds should be spent on a road system enabling the pig-raisers of the district to reach the abattoirs at Midland Junction. A decent road system has been provided in the district. However, we also pleaded for other services. We asked that the Perth City Council should extend its electricity system through the district, so that light and power might be provided for the pig-raisers. We also pleaded for a school, which eventually was provided.

At the present day only two pig-raisers remain in the area; but before I have finished I believe I shall have convinced the Minister that a distinct injustice will be done to the two pig-raisers left, for whom I am putting up a case to-night, since they have right and justice on their side. The Bayswater Road Board and Health Board and the Morley Park Progress Association have joined in numerous deputations to Ministers for Works, and a considerable amount of public funds has been spent on the road for the purpose I have mentioned. When the original pig-raisers got the road system, in stepped the Health Department, consisting of civil servants not conversant with the activities and agitations of these men in days gone by, and declared that the pig-raisers had to be removed.

Mr. Hughes: Did the road board ask for that?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: No; but pressure was put on the road board to pass this by-law. I am informed that various members of the road board were not keen on passing it, and that it was passed owing to pressure exercised by the Health Department. However, the people in the area concerned do not want these two pig-raisers to be put out of the area. As regards the agitation for their removal, an individual who came into that district and was himself engaged in pig-raising for years, without however making a success of it, has done all the propaganda work and made representations both to the Town Planning Commissioner and the Health Department, and in fact has done everything possible to induce the powers that be to have the two pig-raisers removed. He has succeeded in convincing some authority of the necessity for their removal.

Early last year, knowing that this man was using his influence in that direction, I had interviews with Mr. Davidson, the Town Planning Commissioner, and from him I heard that the complaint was that the health officer of the Bayswater district was not doing his job, that the piggeries were not being conducted in accordance with the Health Department's regulations. An officer of that department was sent to investigate and report. He made a report after his first visit. Then he made a second visit in conjunction with the Bayswater health officer, and they reported that everything was satisfactory and that there was nothing to complain about. I pointed out to Mr. Davidson that in the Belmont district piggeries existed within a stone's throw of the main road, and in a district more populous than Morley Park, where the residents are scattered. I asked Mr. Davidson, who was influenced by the man to whom I have alluded, "Do you complain that the Bayswater health officer is not doing his job as regards inspection of the Morley Park district? What about on the other side, in the Belmont Road District, where many men are engaged in pig-raising and where piggeries exist within a stone's throw of the main road? Are things satisfactory there?" The Town Planning Commissioner replied, "Yes. The health officer is doing his job there." Then I said, "Are you aware that the health officer who functions for the Bayswater Road Board is the same health officer who functions for the Belmont Park Road Board? To deny the ability of the health officer as regards one district and to declare him all right in another district has no force whatever." Later, at the request of the Morley Park Progress Association, I interviewed Mr. Huelin, the Under Secretary for Health. This was just prior to last Christmas. I discussed the matter with Mr. Huelin. In fact, he read the file to me from beginning to end. I pointed out to him what had happened in the district, and mentioned that a main road passing through it now had been provided for the benefit of the primary producers there, and similarly as regards other services, although there was not much evidence of increase in the population. The fact is that many of the men formerly engaged in pig-raising have ceased operations.

Mr. Seward: Is the area you refer to closely settled?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: No. Although there is a bus service to the district, it is sparsely settled. It is a primary-producing district, and little building activity is apparent there.

Mr. McLarty: Is that because of the piggeries?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: No. The allotments there are in the main extensive. Various residents go in for poultry-raising, and some of them have areas comprising eight or ten acres. If there were an increase in population and evidence that the district was going ahead, those affected would know that they must go further out if they desire to continue their operations. That, however, is not the position. The men of whom I speak have been operating for years. One man has spent a lot of money in reticulating his property. For years they have agitated for the construction of roads and the provision of other conveniences to enable them to reach the metropolitan abattoirs with their pigs. Now, when they have the benefit of those facilities, the Health Department steps in with the object I have already indicated. During the last five years I do not think more than three or four new houses have been built in the district. The country is low-lying, and not adapted for a townsite. At present the Bayswater Road Board, acting as a health authority, has power to prevent the granting of any new licenses, and the two men now engaged in pig-raising have to apply for a renewal of their licenses annually. The premises are subject to rigid weekly inspections by the local health authorities. If any newcomers desired to engage in similar operations, it is hardly likely they would persist if they knew the local health authorities could refuse to grant licenses and had indicated their intention of adopting that course.

Mr. Marshall: Is there no appeal?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: No. Those engaged in the industry at present have certain rights, and the local authorities would be reluctant, having regard to the small increase in population in that district, to hamper their operations. One man is established in the bush well away from the main centre of population, and the other is located near the individual who formerly carried on a similar business but did not make a success of it. The last-mentioned is the individual who got up the petition and has made all the

trouble regarding this matter. Merely because a certain individual desires to get rid of someone else and avails himself of machinery provided by legislation, Parliament should not tolerate such an attitude. If these men are forced from their present holdings, they will have to secure blocks further afield and suffer a repetition of the difficulties they have experienced in past years.

Mr. Sampson: Is there no possibility of securing compensation?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: None whatever. One of the men has a wife and family to maintain, and I understand the other man has little or nothing at the back of him. To force them out of the industry, would simply mean adding to the number of those dependent on the Government for sustenance.

Mr. Thorn: Section 36 of the Health Act makes provision for this contingency.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I know that, but I have been advised by the Bayswater health authorities that they possess power to refuse applications for new licenses. I do not think anyone would engage in the pig-raising industry and expend the money necessary for that purpose if he knew that the board could refuse to grant a renewal of his license at any time. In view of all the circumstances I regard the by-law in question as years ahead of its time. For that reason I desire its disallowance. The other evening I listened with interest to the statement of the Minister for Lands that the British Government could take all the pig-meat procurable from Western Australia. These two men are engaged in an important industry in that they contribute to the supply of meat for the metropolitan market. When I met the members of the progress association upon this matter first being raised, I was advised that the two men affected had a reasonable claim to fair treatment by the department.

Mr. Marshall: Who signed the petition?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Signatures were obtained from as far as Beaufort-street, which is three-quarters of a mile from where the piggeries are established. As to the piggery in Morley Park, I believe members of this House would get lost in the bush if they attempted to find it.

Mr. Sampson: Signatures to a petition do not mean very much.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The men have a reasonable case, and I have been assured that the Bayswater health authorities were not anxious to pass this by-law, which would not have been promulgated but for the pressure emanating from the Health Department. As I have said, the local board of health—which is the Bayswater Road Board—and the Morley Park Progress Association, which represents almost every person in the district, do not desire that these men should be driven further out. If there was an increase in the population of the district, the men would be the first to leave; they would have to look for another suitable site, but that position has not yet arisen. I know the district as well or better than do the civil servants who are interested in this matter and who I consider are three to five years before their time. The men concerned are prepared to spend approximately £150 on a reticulation service. If, however, this bylaw is allowed by the House, then on the 1st July of next year they will have to move, with their families, further back into the bush, tear up the pipes and demolish their sheds. If there were need for such action I would be silent on this issue myself; but these men should not be deprived at the present time of the amenities they are enjoying. When I first entered this Chamber some nine years ago, I was continually pleading for money to be made available to construct Government roads. I convinced the then Country Party Minister for Works, as well as the late Mr. McCallum and the present Minister for Works, that money should be provided for the purpose. The Commissioner of Main Roads was also convinced of the necessity for the construction of a road to enable these men to get to the public abattoirs. Thousands of pounds were spent on road construction, yet the Health Department is doing a disservice to these men by forcing them to leave their present site. These regulations may be desirable some four or five years hence. Those are the facts of the case and I commend my motion to the careful consideration of the House.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

MOTION—FIRE BRIGADES ACT.

To Disallow Regulations.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [8.54]: I move—

That Paragraph (E) of Regulation 371, and Subsection (7) of Regulation 37R, made under the Fire Brigades Act, 1916-1925, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 2nd February, 1940, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 30th July, 1940, be and are hereby disallowed.

I am not sure whether this scheme is a superannuation fund or a pension scheme. I would rather use the term retiring allowance. The scheme was agreed to by the Fire Brigades Board and its staff. The workers contribute 5 per cent. of their salaries to the fund, the board contributing a similar amount. The allowance is paid to the workers when they reach the age of 60 or 65 years, according to the age decided upon when the worker joins the scheme. It is a voluntary scheme. Regulations were made governing it. For instance, if a worker is dismissed for any cause, or leaves in order to avoid dismissal, he receives the amount he has paid in. That is provided by regulation. There are limitations in other respects. If a worker leaves the service before he attains the retirement age because of ill-health and is considered not to be fit to be employed again in the industry, he receives as a retiring allowance the amount due to him; but if he accepts other work then the regulations provide that the board may recover the greater portion of the amount paid to him. If a worker does anything especially wrong and is dismissed, he is not paid the amount contributed by the board at all.

Mr. Seward: He should not be.

Mr. CROSS: That is so. I am not objecting to the regulation. I am explaining the position so that members will understand it. Paragraph "E" of Regulation 371 is self-explanatory. I do not think a similar provision is contained in regulations governing any other pension or superannuation scheme, and I have perused many regulations governing such schemes in this State. The subsection provides that in the event of a subscriber committing a breach of trust or other wrongful act by which the board suffers or may suffer pecuniary loss, the board has full power to use the amount standing at credit to such subscriber's account for the purpose of making good any such loss, and the bal-

ance (if any) shall be forfeited. Therefore a worker who has contributed to the fund for 25 years and then commits a wrongful act—he might break a window which would cost about £2 to repair—is deprived of the amount which he has paid to the fund. That means the man might be penalised to the extent of hundreds of pounds.

Mr. Seward: You would not describe the breaking of a window as a breach of trust.

Mr. CROSS: It is a wrongful act. Other acts might be termed wrongful. The board might consider that a man who went out with a machine and smashed it and who might have witnesses against him, was negligent. The damage might amount to £50 or £60. The board might say to the worker, "You have been negligent and we shall dismiss you; you will have to pay for the damage and in addition you must forfeit what you have paid in to the superannuation scheme." The regulations are not definite as to what constitutes a wrongful act or breach of trust or anything else. While the board is entitled to a certain amount of protection, I consider that when a man has paid for any damage done or loss incurred it is entirely wrong that he should have to forfeit the balance of his subscriptions. The suggestion is unjust and I do not think hon. members will agree to it. If this regulation were deleted, another could be substituted that would be fair and just to both sides. The regulation does not give the board any loophole at all. It says, "The balance, if any, shall be forfeited."

The other regulation to which I object is No. 37R. This has to do with the taking of votes when any variation of rates of contributions to or payments from the fund are proposed. Such proposals have to be submitted to a ballot of the subscribers and before a change can be effected a two-thirds majority must be in favour. There is a proviso, however, that seems to me to be entirely undemocratic. Paragraph 7 reads—

In so far as voting papers sent or given to subscribers are not returned to the board before the time fixed for the closing of the poll, such voting papers shall be included in the count of the votes as votes in favour of the proposed alteration or amendment.

Mr. Warner: That needs altering.

Mr. CROSS: It should be altered for this reason: While I would not impute improper

conduct to the present board or its officers, the fact remains that at some future date there may be a new board and a new secretary who will desire to reduce the board's contributions to the fund. In that event it would be simple for them to omit to send out a few ballot papers to out-stations; and because the papers were not returned from those out-stations they would be counted as being in favour of the proposal. Since these regulations were tabled agreement has been reached regarding the payment of contributions by men away on active service. Seven or eight of these men will contribute to the fund and the board will pay its share. After the men have been absent for some time, however, the board may decide that it does not desire to pay its share any longer. The war may last a long time and the board may wish to be relieved of its responsibility. If a ballot were taken, these men would not have any chance of voting because they would not be in the State. Ballot papers would, however, have to be sent out under the regulations but, as they would be unlikely to be returned, the men would be regarded as having voted in favour of a proposal which it is pretty certain they would not agree to if they had the chance. That may be a far-fetched example, but there is no doubt that the principle of regarding voting papers that are not returned as being in favour of a proposal is entirely wrong and undemocratic. I therefore ask the House to support the motion for the disallowance of this regulation. If men are opposed to a proposal we need have no fear of their not registering disapproval, and similarly if a proposal is regarded favourably men can be relied upon to vote in the affirmative. There is no need for me to delay the House any further because I think the justice of my claim for a disallowance of the regulations is evident.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley [9.5]: I am informed that the Fire Brigades Board is prepared to amend these regulations and that it will submit others which have been made necessary by the enlistment of certain members of the board. Consequently I do not propose to offer any opposition to the motion.

Mr. Thorn: Why did you not tell us that before? Had you done so we would not have had to experience what we have just suffered.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It is the usual procedure. I do not oppose the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—DENTISTS ACT.

To Disallow Regulation.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [9.6]: I move—

That Regulation No. 69 made under the Dentists Act, 1939, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 9th February, 1940 and laid on the Table of the House on the 30th July, 1940, be and is hereby disallowed.

I think this regulation is a matter of bad draftmanship more than anything else. It deals with charges or complaints against dentists or assistants made under the Act that was passed last year. The Act provided for the framing of regulations and a considerable number has been promulgated. My interpretation of the regulation to which I object is that a person may be tried by the board without any charge or complaint being made against him. The regulation is worded as follows:—

69. Where no charge or complaint has been made, but the board is desirous of proceeding on its own motion to strike the name of any dentist off the Register, or the name of any assistant off the record, the same practice as on a charge or complaint shall be followed as nearly as may be.

Regulation 60 provides that a charge or complaint against a dentist or an assistant shall be made in writing and shall distinctly state the conduct complained of, give an address in Perth where notices and other communications may be served and be signed by the complainant or his agent and lodged with the Registrar. Subsequent regulations leading up to No. 69 provide that the dentist or the assistant is to be notified of the charge which must be set out clearly. The accused individual is to be clearly informed of the complaint and given a period in which to reply, but as far as the board is concerned,—

The Minister for Health: It is quite all right. The board has to go through the same procedure.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister must not forget these words, "where no charge or complaint has been made" If the regulation said that a charge might be made by any person or the board I would be prepared to leave the matter at that, but as the regulation reads, the board is empowered to strike the name of a dentist off the register without informing him of the charge against him.

The Minister for Health: It is provided that the board itself shall lay a charge.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The regulation does not state that the board shall lay a charge. It says—

Where no charge or complaint has been made, but the board is desirous of proceeding on its own motion to strike the name of any dentist off the register, or the names of any assistant off the record, the same practice as on a charge or complaint shall be followed as nearly as may be.

The board could simply say that it proposed to strike a man's name off the register, send him notice and give him 14 days' after receiving the notice to file a statutory declaration. On what would he file the declaration? The board should have the same power as is provided for outside persons, but it has not sought to take that power. I have asked two or three lawyers for their opinion and have been informed that I am right.

The Minister for Health: Two lawyers drew that up.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But even lawyers make mistakes. I have no doubt what is the intention of the board, but it is not clearly expressed. We should require the board to redraft the regulation. What is intended is that the board should have the power to lay charges against a dentist or an assistant, just as the public has power to do. The Minister should bear in mind that the opening words of the regulation are, "Where no charge or complaint has been made." The board should do exactly the same as anyone else would have to do.

The Minister for Health: The board will have to.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the House will agree to sending the regulation back for redrafting. If the House disallows the regulation, the board will have an opportunity to amend it. I have been in touch with the registrar and he, to some extent, agrees with me.

The Minister for Health: He does?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. I told him that until the board made the intention clear, I would not be prepared to give the power to strike a man off the register or off the record without making a charge or complaint against him. We ought to make our regulations clear, because regulations, once passed, have the force of law.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

MOTION—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulation.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [9.14]: I move—

That Regulation No. 2 made under the Builders Registration Act, 1939, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 26th April, 1940, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 30th July, 1940, be and is hereby disallowed.

The Builders Registration Act deals almost throughout with a person. This regulation is designed to include a corporate body. I wish to quote a statement by an eminent lawyer, who says—

The regulations made under the Act purport, by Regulation 2, to make provision for the registration of a nominee of a company "for and on behalf of and as the representative of the company," and Regulation 2 (3) provides—

When a person nominated as aforesaid has been registered as a builder for and on behalf of and as the representative of the incorporated body or company by which he has been nominated, and while he continues to be so registered, the said incorporated body or company shall, for all the purposes of the Act and these regulations, be deemed to be registered as a builder, and also shall be in all respects responsible for and liable in respect of all the acts and omissions of the person nominated and registered as aforesaid, insofar as such acts and omissions are directly or indirectly related or incidental to the business and operations of the said incorporated body or company as a person trading as a builder.

My object in moving the motion is that builders in the form of an incorporated body will not, in my opinion, be brought under the provisions of the Act. A corporate body will still be unable to sue for moneys due, and might at any time be opposed in its trading after starting the erection of a building. What is desired is that the Act be amended so that not only a per-

son but also an incorporated body may be brought under the provisions of the law. I ask the House to disallow the regulation, not to prevent the registration of an incorporated body, but to enable the Minister to amend the law to meet the case. I understand that the Minister has been in communication with certain lawyers on the matter and I hope to hear from him what the intentions of the Government are. There would be no point in disallowing the regulation and allowing the matter to rest there.

The Minister for Works: The Builders Registration Act was introduced as a private member's measure.

Mr. NORTH: Yes, but the question involved is a very important one. We have a statute which is preventing companies from building structures to a value of over £400. According to the Act only "persons" may build structures exceeding £400 in value. The reasons for disallowing the regulation might be largely extended, but I see no need to add anything further at this stage, beyond saying that we should not approve of a regulation that will not fully meet the case. Therefore I urge members to accept the motion.

(On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.)

House adjourned at 9.19 p.m

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 29th August, 1940.

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

QUESTION—BAGS, STATE MANUFACTURE.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for the North-West: Is he able to give information concerning the difficulty of obtaining suitable bags for charcoal, grain and grain products, super and other commodities, referred to in a question submitted on Thursday, the 8th August, and the reply that inquiries would be made as to the establishment of jute weaving and bag making in the Fremantle Gaol?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied: No, inquiries are still proceeding.

QUESTION—ENGINEERING TRADES AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Labour: In view of the heavy demand for men capable of carrying out engineering work, both for war purposes and the making of producer gas equipment, will he take steps to ensure that the position is brought before the Arbitration Court with the object of liberalising or removing the restrictions regarding the employment and instruction of lads at present unable to enter the engineering and allied trades?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR replied: I am not aware of the alleged heavy demand and would be obliged if the hon. member would supply me with details.