

of some men being for six years on sustenance. A case came under my notice the other day of a man who had spent 12 months on the 21s. scale, and during that time had only seven weeks' work. That was the information given to me. At all costs the State must grant some aid to these people who, for months, and perhaps years, have been living on a family income of possibly 21s. or 28s. a week, plus some little extra that they have been able to earn. Some of them suffer from disabilities of various kinds, as a result of which they cannot even do light work. They have the utmost difficulty in earning a few shillings a week at any kind of outside employment. Their household conditions, their furniture, and their clothes, have been reduced to the lowest possible level. Any Government, and any Parliament must at all costs do something to improve the condition of men in the C class. I do not care at whose cost it is done, whether at the cost of the taxpayer on the higher income, or whether as a general contribution from the taxpayers, but in any case, something must be done. I hope the Minister will be able to help these people in the near future.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—ROYAL SHOW.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [10.24]: 1 move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Thursday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 6th October, 1938.

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

QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY, UNDERGROUND MAINS.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is the advantage to be derived from placing electric mains underground in the Cottesloe district offset by the extra cost? 2, Will this matter receive attention—in view of the prevalence of storms and hurricanes—when the new power plant has reduced production costs? 3, If not, will consideration of the proposal be confined to the central sea-front, where beautiful Norfolk Island pines have to be mutilated and their growth stunted in order to keep them free from power wires which are stretched directly over and through them?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. The cost would be prohibitive. 2, No. 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—HOSPITALS.

Air-conditioning, Standardisation, Medical-Social Workers.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Health: 1, What progress has been made in the matter of air-conditioning in operating rooms of public, committee, and the larger private hospitals? 2, Does the medical-social worker, who, it is understood, forms portion of the complete scheme of hospital standardisation, play an important and useful part in the follow-up of patients after they have been discharged? 3, Is it possible, by this means, for patients to secure more

lasting beneficial effects after discharge? 4, Does the medical-social worker's part of investigating the ex-patient's living conditions and financial worries bring satisfactory results, and, if so, what progress has been made in its development? 5, Are nurses' notes and records taken and considered in conjunction with those of the physician, radiologist and pathologist? 6, What is the distinction, if any, between the terms "hospital standardisation" and "hospitalisation"? 7, Are such terms limited to any particular type of hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, Air-conditioning of operating rooms is only of recent adoption, and is being applied fairly generally in new institutions. The present proposals provide for it in the new Perth Hospital. It has been installed in a large private hospital. Provision is being made for its adoption at a later date at the new King Edward Memorial Hospital building. 2, Yes. 3, Yes. 4, It should do so. The system has been adopted in the three large metropolitan public hospitals (Perth, Fremantle, and Children's). 5, Yes. 6, Hospital standardisation means application of standards in buildings, equipment, and staffing of hospitals, with uniformity of these so far as possible. Hospitalisation means the placing of patients in hospitals. 7, The latter term applies to all hospitals of whatever type. Standardisation of private hospitals individually controlled cannot be applied, except so far as compliance with statutory regulations is concerned. In larger public hospitals it is only possible where they are under one control, except that standards of efficiency could be laid down by some form of legislation.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Sailors and Soldiers' Scholarship Fund.
Introduced by the Minister for Mines.
- 2, Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

BILL—NORTHAM MUNICIPALITY LOAN AUTHORISATION.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [4.38]: I support the second reading. The Bill proposes to permit the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company to extend its area to a point to meet the territory now covered by the Gas and Electricity Department of the Perth City Council. The map submitted shows the area marked clearly from the sea-coast to a point between Stirling-road and Stirling Highway, Claremont. I trust that this measure is in order. Last session we had a somewhat similar Bill before us, and some heat was engendered on the question whether the Bill was properly before the House. I hope that on this occasion it is being presented in proper form. That the district in question should have had to wait so long for the extension is a great shame, especially as the delay last session was due to a disagreement with the Upper House. No doubt there was good reason for the opposition to the measure. The Bill now before us perhaps shows that; it is slightly different from that of last year, which contained a paragraph as follows:—

Provided that any proclamation issued by the Governor under this section may be revoked by a subsequent proclamation.

That would have permitted of the revocation of the power given to the company after it had resolved to extend its mains to the district in question, and the company, perhaps at some future time, would have been unable to operate in the district. That proviso does not appear in this Bill. The object of the measure now before us is merely to enable the company to extend the area of its operations as delineated on the map. So far as I can judge, there is no room for objection to the Bill; in fact, the measure is long overdue. I have no wish to imply that the Government has been lax in introducing this legislation. As I have explained, a Bill was introduced last session. Still, I cannot help regretting that in a country where we have had these gas-producing plants for so many years, residents of Claremont and Swanbourne—which might be described as the heart of the metropolitan area—should have had to wait so long before their district was linked with this necessary service. We can cross the world in two

days by air service, but it takes us two years to get a gas service across the street. I am very glad the Bill has been introduced, and I hope it will become law.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [4.40]: The Minister declared this was a simple Bill, but as he did not give any substantial reason why the change in question should be effected, I have looked into the matter myself. The only reason given by the Minister for making the change was that considerable discontent had existed over a long period in respect of the present method. I find that the system of paying wages on the calendar month has been in operation on the Eastern Goldfields for no less than 40 years, and I have been unable to discover any sound cause for complaint against it. Many years ago on the Murchison the miners had some cause for complaint, because on one of the leading mines, the Great Fingal, wages were paid only once a month. I think it was mainly due to the monthly pay being in vogue there that the existing regulation was brought in.

Mr. Marshall: There was not even a fortnightly pay 40 years ago.

Mr. PATRICK: The present system has been in existence on the Eastern Goldfields for nearly 40 years.

Mr. Marshall: It was a monthly pay on the Eastern Goldfields, when I was there, and that was not 40 years ago.

Mr. PATRICK: The change over will mean only two extra pays per annum. The present system has been based on the calendar month, and all returns from mines are prepared on the same system. All expenditure and output are made up accordingly, and that has been the practice for a number of years. The point is whether anything is to be gained by altering the entire system of pay solely for the purpose of securing two extra pays per annum. The only advantage I can find about the proposal is a small one. The thrifty housewife may secure a certain advantage in being able to purchase fresh vegetables, etc., on market day, Friday. Even there the advantage is not outstanding.

because the truly thrifty woman will always have ready cash with which to buy commodities. When I was behind the counter in a business firm my experience was that not always were the people who drew the most money those who had most money to spend. They were not always the best marks from a business point of view. The best people to deal with were probably the thrifty women, who came to us with cash in hand for the commodities they required, although not having the advantage of a large amount of money. No doubt the system would also be of advantage in another industry with which you, Sir, have been dealing in recent times. The Bill does contain one or two little advantages, but I consider the disadvantages greatly outweigh them, when it is considered that the change provides merely for two extra pays in the year. I do not intend to support the Bill.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.45]: In supporting the Bill I wish to outline the advantages that will accrue, not only to housewives on the goldfields, but also to the business community there. The member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) could find no real reason for the alterations. There are, however, many sound reasons, which the hon. member would recognise if he lived in the district and worked under a system of bi-monthly pay. To a great extent the present system disorganises the business community in that the workers are not receiving regular pay once a fortnight as we find in other industries. They are not, therefore, able to do their customary shopping each fortnight as is done in other districts.

Mr. Sleeman: What about having it once a week?

Mr. STYANTS: I do not see why the pay should not be weekly. The business people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder pay their employees on that basis. If the pay cannot be made weekly it should certainly be made fortnightly. True, the existing system has been in operation for a number of years but it has operated under protest from the employees, and to the disadvantage of the business people. I understand a petition signed extensively not only by the inhabitants of the goldfields but by the business community, has been sent down requesting that the alteration should be made in the pay system.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Did the business people sign the petition?

Mr. STYANTS: A large number signed it, and I believe those who did not attach their signatures would certainly welcome the change to a fortnightly pay.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Did any of the mining companies sign the petition?

Mr. STYANTS: No, the mining companies are the objectors. They are not, however, entirely opposed to the fortnightly pay. I will outline the proposal that was made by the mining companies, and this, to my mind, goes 50 or 60 per cent. along the way. It was, however, so objectionable to the other 50 or 40 per cent. that the miners as a whole were not prepared to adopt it. The main objection to the present system is that at certain periods of the year the housewife is called upon to find her three weeks' rent out of two weeks' pay. That is a difficult proposition for people who are earning anywhere near the basic wage. Both in Kalgoorlie and Boulder—I do not know the system on the Murchison goldfields—the business people have for years on Saturdays put out week-end specials. I refer to certain commodities that are offered for sale at a rate cheaper than is ordinarily charged. The housewife finds that on certain Saturdays she has not the necessary cash in hand, because wages for the fortnight—half the month as it is now—have not been paid. Not having the cash in hand she cannot take advantage of the bargains that are offering, as other sections of the community do.

The difficulty of finding three weeks' rent out of a fortnight's pay is a real one. I know of no other industry in which either a fortnightly pay or pay for a lesser period is not customary. The Government with its railways and tramways and other activities makes a fortnightly pay. The business people of Perth have adopted the same principle as those on the goldfields, paying their employees weekly. A weekly in preference to a fortnightly pay is better for everyone. The greatest length of time that should be allowed to intervene between two pays is a fortnight. The matter comes within the jurisdiction of Parliament because the Mines Regulation Act provides that the Governor may at his pleasure declare that wages shall be paid bi-monthly. If he has that power, he also has power to declare that they shall be paid fortnightly. The mining companies

would be affected by the change only to the extent that for men working on contract the footage due would have to be measured up twice a year oftener than is the case under existing conditions. That does not involve much additional expense. Some five or six months ago, when the matter was put up to them, the companies offered to pay all men on the wages system fortnightly, and to pay men on contract work the Arbitration Court award rate for the first fortnight of the month but to defer paying them on the contract scale to the second fortnightly pay, when the work would be measured up. The contract men were so hostile to the proposal that the companies' offer was not accepted.

Consequently this method has been adopted to endeavour to bring the mining companies into line with other employers in the State paying under the fortnightly system. That system has been adopted by the chief employer of labour in Western Australia, namely the Commissioner of Railways. If the proposal involved any appreciable hardship on the mining companies, or if the additional two measurements imposed any considerable additional expense on the companies, I would be prepared to give consideration to their objections. However, the convenience conferred upon consumers, the retail buyers on the goldfields, and also upon the business community there, should prevail if no injustice will result from the passing of the Bill, which I hope meets with the approval of the Chamber. Wage earners on the goldfields should in this respect be brought into conformity with other wage earners in Western Australia, and therefore I trust the measure will be enacted.

On motion by Mr. Nulsen, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUREAU OF INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [4.55]: The object of the Bill is highly laudable, in that the measure endeavours to tackle the problem of this country's development. The more we study the international situation, the more we realise that unless Western Australia is developed and populated it will not belong to our descendants of a hundred

years hence. On the other hand, there is a great deal in what you, Mr. Speaker, said in opposition to the Bill. I consider that you spoke well, Sir, even if you did speak out of your turn. Undoubtedly there is a strong tendency in the Australian States generally, and in Western Australia especially, to shear from Parliament the functions of government. One thing that stood to the Anglo-Saxon form of government during the critical years of the war was that the functions of that system of government are vested in a Parliament elected by the people. Probably it is this fact that explains the survival of constitutional government in the British Empire while other countries succumb to dictatorships. However, in Western Australia we find continually that the functions of this House and its conjoint Chamber are being delegated to boards—boards for this and boards for that. To-day we who as members of Parliament are supposed to govern the country find that half our time is spent as glorified agents soliciting various constituted boards to do something for the people we represent, or else to refrain from doing something. Instead of being legislators, we have become 90 per cent. agency advocates. We are supposed to be governors of Western Australia, but we are continually pleading with other governing authorities. That has a strong tendency to undermine the authority of Parliament and to destroy public confidence in Parliament. Day in, day out we are saying to the people of Western Australia, "We are not capable of handling this or that responsibility; let us pass it on to some board which we shall create to handle it." Such a course, I repeat, has an unfortunate effect on public confidence in parliamentary government.

The Bill attacks a major problem of the State, that of ascertaining the resources of Western Australia, co-ordinating them, and developing them. There is nothing new in such a proposal. Of recent years all the leading countries in the world have had planned economies. The old system had come to a stage when it was breaking down of its own weight, and the problem of planning an economic future had to be tackled in those countries. Some planned for one thing, some for another. Undoubtedly certain European countries planned with the object of making available to the people the natural resources of the State and thus distributing the national wealth and raising the general standard of living. Other countries

have planned with the object of territorial aggression and ultimate domination by war. The United States adopted planning because it was faced with a breakdown of the old system. In every one of those countries there has been feverish ascertainment of resources and planning to benefit the people, according to the respective views of what is for the people's benefit.

Australia, and especially Western Australia, above all other States of the world, stands in need of a planned economy. We are holding a huge territory rich in natural resources, but holding it with comparatively a very small population. This Parliament, in my opinion, cannot undertake anything of greater service to the present and to the future than an examination of all natural resources, with a view to developing them and thus strengthening ourselves as holders of this land. I regard the Bill as contemplating the second step before we take the first. Before the information that will be garnered can be of any value to the people of Western Australia, we must have a re-alignment of powers as between the Commonwealth and the State. Unless we have the necessary power to give effect to any economic plan that may be evolved as a result of the deliberations of the bureau, the move will represent so much waste time and the work will all go by the board. Before we can develop our resources, our sovereign powers must be restored to us so that we can give effect to our wishes. The only way by which that can be achieved is to secure a revision of the Constitution as affecting the Commonwealth and the State. So long as the Commonwealth can take action, such as it did in connection with the iron ore deposits at Yampi Sound, we cannot regard ourselves as masters of our own destiny. All the information and knowledge in the world will be of no avail if another authority can step in and say that our proposals shall not be made effective because they conflict with the interests of people elsewhere. The first step to be taken should be an effort to secure a re-adjustment of the Commonwealth Constitution, and no State is better fitted for that task than Western Australia. If we cannot secure secession and sovereign powers through the instrumentality of that change, we can do what is possible to secure a revision of the Constitution. We could send a delegation to the Eastern States with a view to securing a convention and arriving at some via media. If we spent £100,000 on

such an effort, the money would be well expended. Even if we did not succeed in our objective, we would not be any worse off than we are to-day. Until we can attain some such objective, the Bill will prove of little effect. I realise that the data that will be compiled will be of great value, but nevertheless I regard the Bill as premature. No matter what may happen, until we work along the lines I have indicated we shall not be in a position to take advantage of the full intention of the legislation.

The second defect in the Bill is, in my opinion, that it provides for the establishment of a bureau of economic and industrial research, for the appointment of nine members apart from the Minister and the director, and for co-opting the services of others who will probably be technicians and experts in various industries and other avenues. I consider that those to constitute the bureau—if there is to be a bureau—ought to be nine members of Parliament. If the people of Western Australia desire the services of competent and well-informed members of Parliament, they must be prepared to bear the expense of training them. The cost of whatever efficiency is attained in a business, is a legitimate charge against that business itself. If the people want competent members of Parliament, they must pay accordingly. The training of every professional man is gained mainly as the result of his experience; and if he learns from his mistakes, someone must pay for them. The general public are the only people who pay in the end. The establishment of the bureau would provide the means by which intensive education in important matters of government may be obtained. What better section of the community could be selected for the benefit of that education than members of Parliament who would make use of their added knowledge in exercising their functions as legislators? No disabilities would be imposed upon the public if the bureau were established as a sub-committee of Parliament. The contention may be raised that by adopting that course we would eliminate technical skill and expert knowledge, which are not available amongst members of Parliament, but the Bill provides for the co-opting of others, who naturally would be specialists with technical knowledge. If the Bill becomes law, the members of the bureau would go to considerable trouble in carrying out the research work and acquiring a great

deal of information the results of which would probably be set out in reports presented from time to time to Parliament. Such reports would be most informative, but I am confident that those who would be actively engaged in the research work and in compiling the reports from the data they collected, would certainly possess a greater knowledge of the subjects handled than others who merely read reports covering the results of such research work. If we fortified nine persons with information regarding the resources of the State and their utilisation for the benefit of Western Australia, we would kill two birds with one stone if we declared that those nine people should be members of Parliament, because when subjects handled by them were before Parliament for consideration, those nine members would be on the floor of the House and would be able to express their views for the benefit of Parliament generally.

Mr. North: What about the director?

Mr. HUGHES: It would not matter whether the director of the bureau were a member or not. It would not be feasible to draw the full nine members from one House or from one side of the House. Every member, irrespective of political views, is in favour of the development of our natural resources, in the interests of the present and of future generations. If we were to adopt the suggestion I advance, we would provide members of Parliament with opportunities to become what they really are—legislators. We would provide them with information and data that would enable them to carry out their functions more efficiently as legislators. In these days we are regarded as such in a minor degree only. Little opportunity is available for a private member to give effect to any legislative ability that he may have. It is worse now than when I was formerly a member of Parliament. In these days we have become agents for all sorts of interests. We are asked by people to do things that members of Parliament have no right to do, that are not their business at all. To a large extent we have been parted from our prime function, that of legislating. Under my suggestion we would have an opportunity to re-establish our position as legislators in a way that would be recognised throughout the State. If we con-

tinue to part with our legislative functions, we may find there will be a demand for a reduction of members and, ultimately, for the abolition of this House. If we cannot tackle problems involved in the adequate use of our natural resources, and give effect to what we desire, we may be regarded as incompetent. Parliament is qualified to undertake the task. All that is needed is the opportunity. I do not desire Parliament to be abolished. On the contrary, I am satisfied no one knows how satisfying it is to be in Parliament, apart from those who have been in and out.

The Minister for Mines: Particularly when out.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, particularly then. I have not known one who is out that is not most anxious to get in again. What objection could there be to nine members of Parliament constituting this proposed bureau? Is it to be said that we cannot obtain from among the members of Parliament of this State nine men capable of holding a position on the bureau? We have members of Parliament in various avenues of life, and we could select from among them men as capable of doing the work as persons not in Parliament, except that we would have to co-opt technicians. I feel so strongly on this point that I propose, when the Bill reaches the Committee stage, to move an amendment on those lines, although I am afraid it will be a forlorn hope.

Mr. Marshall: How would you stand under the Constitution Act?

Mr. HUGHES: I am coming to that.

Mr. Marshall: I want to get over it, not come to it.

Mr. HUGHES: What I meant to say will probably disappoint the member for Murchison. I was intending to suggest that if members of Parliament were appointed to the bureau, they should not receive any remuneration for their services.

Mr. Marshall: That would not make any difference; we would still be liable. What about a select committee?

Mr. HUGHES: Members of Parliament can only endanger their seats if they hold an office of profit under the Crown. If there is no profit in the office, their seats are not endangered. I can therefore assure the member for Murchison that he can accept as many honorary jobs as he wishes; if he is short of them, I can provide him with two

or three that I do not want. Suppose a member of this House were given the opportunity of serving on the bureau, he would gain information that would enable him to perform his functions more efficiently and that would be of great educational value to him, so why should he ask for payment? He is already getting a salary, and service on the bureau would be the means of educating him to do his work more efficiently. The opportunity of serving on the bureau and entering a course of study and research in the subject matters outlined in the Bill would be sought by any member, without desiring any fee or reward.

Mr. Withers: The number would be restricted to nine.

Mr. HUGHES: That is so, but half a loaf is better than no bread. The number would be limited to nine, but we would be in the position of saying that we had the opportunity of selecting nine members for special training. If all fifty members cannot obtain that special training, at least nine can. If members of Parliament were appointed to the bureau, I would have no objection, if it were so desired, to making them an allowance for out-of-pocket expenses; but the proper way to do that would be to provide for it in the Bill. In that way a breach of the Constitution would be avoided. But it should be done before the Bill becomes law. Do not let it be done 20 years hence, when we would have to indulge in the reprehensible practice of exonerating a member of Parliament for breaking the law. I hope, when the Bill reaches the Committee stage, that I shall have the opportunity of moving an amendment on those lines.

The Bill is designed to deal with technical education and research. I notice, however, that it contains an old and obsolete provision, namely, that no person can serve on the bureau whose affairs are in liquidation, who is an undischarged bankrupt or insolvent, or who has been convicted of a criminal offence. If a person has a toothache and desires a tooth drawn, he does not consider whether the dentist to whom he goes has been insolvent or convicted, in some remote period, of a crime. The first thing a person wants to know is whether the dentist is competent, and that ought to be the only factor to count. If a person wants some work done, he generally obtains the services of a man who will do the job efficiently. If a person requires:

the services of a professional man, he does not stop to consider whether that man is a person of loose habits or high morals. If he wants a doctor to perform an operation, he will go to the doctor who he thinks will perform the operation most skilfully. Personally, I would rather be operated upon by a competent surgeon who was a hopeless rake outside his professional hours than by a very inefficient surgeon who was a pillar of all the churches in the State. In these days of intense trading and economic pressure, a person may become bankrupt without any moral blame attaching to him. A person who goes bankrupt under conditions that are blameworthy can be severely dealt with under the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act. He is treated as a criminal. Surely those provisions should provide all the safeguard necessary against an unworthy person securing a position on the proposed bureau. We are setting up an authority to do a certain job, and the only consideration that should be taken into account is the qualification of the person to do the work. The only consideration should be efficiency. If a disreputable person made an invention that proved to be of great service, would any person refuse to use it because of the moral character of the inventor? I venture to say we would not give that a moment's consideration. If the thing suited us and supplied our wants, we would use it without hesitation. The man who invented the Maxim gun was one of the greatest enemies to mankind; yet he died wealthy and full of honour. The statement was recently made that the moment his invention was put on the market, it proved a great success; millions of men met sudden death from it almost immediately. In my opinion, although it may be warped, that man was of no value at all to civilisation. He did not end wars; he added to their intensity and horror. I hope these objectionable features of the Bill will be removed, and that the personnel of the board will be nine members of Parliament possessed of the talent necessary to carry out research work and make recommendations.

Mr. Thorn: Even if they are dishonest?

Mr. HUGHES: Does the hon. member think that every man who serves a sentence in gaol for an indictable offence is dishonest?

Mr. Thorn: No; I did not say that at all.

Mr. HUGHES: If we did, we would eliminate many men. I would like somebody to define "honesty" for me. Honesty is a very elastic term.

Mr. Withers: Very often it means "afraid of being found out"!

Mr. HUGHES: Some men do things they consider honest, but which other men consider dishonest. It may happen that a perfectly reputable citizen might unfortunately become involved in a motor accident and have to serve a term of imprisonment for the very serious offence of manslaughter. He would be excluded from serving on this Committee although 99 out of every 100 would consider that all that had happened to him was that he had been unlucky. There have been people convicted of offences who have reformed and have become reputable citizens. I would not shut the door in the face of any person who had transgressed, and say to him, "You have been punished by law for the offence that you have committed; now we will punish you a second time by depriving you of the right to do certain things." If the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) were in need of some urgent service, and the only person available for that service was a person who had been convicted, say, for theft, a few years before, I am sure he would not hesitate to employ that person.

Mr. Thorn: Speak for yourself.

Mr. HUGHES: If I wanted something done and no one else but such a person could do it, I would not hesitate to employ him.

Mr. Thorn: Would you trust such a person with your money?

Mr. HUGHES: I am in the happy position of being able to trust anybody with my money without fear of being robbed very much. If the hon. member happened to be in the unfortunate position that I occupy, that is, of having my money mortgaged before I get it, there would be no occasion for him to worry on that score. The position is that this is not a Bill that deals with the morality of persons. The object of the Bill is to appoint persons who can be of great service to the State, and I do not see any sound reason for eliminating any talent that can usefully be employed. The Bill provides for a court of research and service to the community, a court on which any member of this House would be glad to

serve. In the first place it would be a very interesting court of study. That would not be beyond the scope of any member of this House since it would enable him to gather not only informative but useful data, and it would be a pleasant task for anyone inclined to improve his mind to undertake. Having done so it would make him a thousand-fold more efficient than he is to-day. Although I think the Bill is a second step, we should first tackle the problem of our constitutional powers so that we might use for our own benefit the information obtained. We should have the power to make it a function of this House to appoint its members on such a bureau, and in that way prevent the further whittling away of the powers of Parliament. When the Bill is in Committee I hope there will be some members who will see my way and agree that the nine people who are to form the statutory committee shall be members of this House, first of all for the benefit of the members themselves, next to maintain the power of Parliament and further to make some of our members more efficient as legislators.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [5.24]: In offering a few remarks on the Bill I do so with mixed feelings. I realise that it was introduced in all sincerity by the Minister for Employment whose desire it is to help the State. That, I am sure, is the desire of all of us, but the few words I have to offer will be on the lines of those spoken by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes). I admit that there are resources in the State that require to be investigated. Our State is very large and is sparsely populated. I was rather struck by what the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) said on the subject of our mineral wealth, and I am convinced that if his remarks were true any number of investors would come to the State to assist in the development of that wealth. Every day we hear or read criticisms of Parliament. We are fair game for that criticism, and one of my most important reasons for opposing the Bill as it is before us, is the fact that we are asked to appoint an independent body of men to frame a policy for the consideration of Parliament, and for Parliament to carry out if it desires to do so. We know that a private member has not the same opportunity in the way of getting legislation through as, for instance, has a member of the Government. If it should be a financial Bill no one but a member of the Government

can introduce it; yet we propose by the Bill to say to an outside body, "You may tell us what to do and we will carry it out." I agree with the member for East Perth that if the Bill becomes law the personnel of the bureau should be composed of members of Parliament. If we are fit to occupy seats in this House—and the people who have elected us have shown their confidence in us by so doing—we are surely qualified to carry out the duty such as that which is suggested should be delegated to nine people from outside. I have done my utmost to alter the opinion held by the public in respect of Parliament, and now if we decide to hand over the duties set out in the Bill to an independent set of people, the public will be bound to say, "You members of Parliament do not know your job because you intend to appoint an independent board to carry out duties that should be yours, and ask that body to give you instructions." We have capable professional men in our departments from whom we could seek advice. We could also get whatever assistance was required from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. The agriculturists are receiving wonderful help from that body which is composed of highly qualified experts, and in addition in our own State we have available the services of Professor Nicholls at the University. Surely with all this talent at our disposal there should not be any difficulty in getting advice on right lines.

Mr. Marshall: They are taking up the scientific side; this is not scientific, it is economic.

Mr. MANN: I am talking about the scientific side. If it is a question of intelligence there should not be any difficulty in securing the services of members of Parliament to serve on the proposed bureau. I am convinced that there are members in both Houses who would gladly, and efficiently too, carry out any work of this nature that might be entrusted to them. As the member for East Perth has pointed out, the longer a man remains a member of Parliament the greater knowledge he acquires. The first three years as a member of Parliament are, I consider, a waste of time. Are we now going to belittle ourselves by saying that those of us who have been here for a considerable period are not capable of tackling a duty of this nature? We know, too, that a member, after having been here for a period, alters his opinions. He takes a broader view, his mind be-

comes developed, he drops many of the narrow views previously held and works for the welfare of the State. I say without fear of contradiction that there is not one member in either Chamber who has not the welfare of the State at heart. However the public may criticise Parliament, there is no room for scorn on the ground that members have not the welfare of the State at heart.

Mr. North: What about the attacks over the air on members?

Mr. MANN: I have heard discussions over the air about members of Parliament.

Mr. Fox: Slander.

Mr. MANN: And the churches, at any rate one at Claremont—the minister of which happens to be of my own faith—talks about “forcing your members to do this and that” and asks, “What are they there for?” If, having reached the stage when we have to listen to that sort of stuff, we appoint a body of men to rule the State, our position must be regarded as fairly hopeless. The proposal is to create this organisation and there is no telling where it will end.

Mr. Rodoreda: It is to be merely an advisory body.

Mr. MANN: It will not be merely advisory. Such bodies have the facility of digging themselves in and growing bigger year by year, and while Parliaments may come and go, those bodies continue forever. We do not know whom we shall have for director of the proposed bureau. The person selected for that position might prove to be some sort of Communist dictator. If the Bill passes the second reading, I hope the Minister will consent in Committee to stipulate that the bureau shall be constituted of members of Parliament. With a bureau consisting of members representative of each House, we would have a body capable of obtaining first-hand information. However capable the members of the bureau may be, the Minister will still be under the necessity of informing himself upon any legislation introduced on the recommendation of the bureau. By constituting the bureau of members of Parliament, we shall make better men of them and make them better fitted for undertaking the duties of Cabinet Ministers. I confess that I do not like the Bill at all. If it is negatived on the second reading well

and good, but if it does reach the Committee stage, I hope the Minister will favour the appointment of members of Parliament instead of outsiders.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [5.33]: I cannot help feeling that some members have become rather clouded in their vision in approaching this important subject. No member would dispute the statement made by the member for East Perth that the undoubted duty of members of this House, and of another place, I hope, is to do all in their power to ensure the satisfactory government of the State. With the hon. member I appreciate that the State Parliament suffers very serious limitations which, of course, must have a material bearing on the outcome of the establishment of an economic bureau or any similar institution. Primarily, we ought to realise that we have a huge State possessing unlimited mineral and other resources. On the other hand, we have a very sparse population, and a gradually increasing public debt. What member does not know that industries have been established in this State that lacked important information relative to their activities? This might even apply to industries being established at the present time. The people charged with making a success of those industries are responsible to their shareholders for huge sums of money thus invested. What has been practicable elsewhere in Australia under very similar conditions might to some extent be adopted in this State. No argument can be raised against the statement by the Minister that where large sums of Government money are to be expended, some preliminary investigation should be made to consider competition and other aspects and bring about a well-informed opinion. We have on the notice paper the Estimates for one of the departments controlled by the Minister in charge of the Bill. When those Estimates are under discussion, members rise in their places and rightly direct attention to the conditions that are prevailing.

Mr. Patrick: Do you think the Minister takes much notice?

Mr. SHEARN: I hope he does. Are we to throw up our hands and say there is nothing to be done? I am well aware of the opinion of some members that owing to the limitations of the State Legislature, little more can be done than is being done. How-

ever little may remain to be done, our duty is to do it. I agree with the member for East Perth that members of Parliament generally ought to do as far as possible all that they are paid to do. There are many important functions that a properly constituted bureau could perform, irrespective of whether it was composed of members of Parliament or of people from outside.

I could hope that the Minister would indicate his agreement to submit the proposal to a select committee for consideration. We have amongst us members capable of dealing with the various aspects involved, as the speeches on the Bill have shown. Matters of much less importance have been referred to select committees. I feel that we are, in a sense, putting the cart before the horse in proposing the establishment of a bureau rather than in appointing a select committee to modify—as they should be modified—many of the conditions laid down in the Bill. Let us tackle first things first. A select committee could consider the possible cost involved, a point upon which the Minister should have given us information. In the absence of such information, members must experience difficulty in forming an opinion. A bureau constituted as the Minister suggested might be impracticable, as was pointed out by you, Mr. Speaker. Still, we have the talent in the House to investigate the matter thoroughly. It is an important matter, and even if the inquiry of the select committee extended beyond the present session, though I see no reason why a report should not be submitted before the end of the session, the question is one that has been before us for years and should be investigated from every angle. Are we going to say to the youths of the State, to the sustenance workers and to other sections of the community that because differences of opinion exist amongst members as to how the problem should be tackled, the whole question must be flung overboard? Surely that is not to be our attitude! There is no party political principle involved, and I certainly am endeavouring to view the matter dispassionately. I hope the Minister will agree to an investigation by a select committee so that we may evolve something useful, rather than run the risk of the Bill's meeting the fate that seems only too apparent at the moment.

With these reservations, I support the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Hegney, debate adjourned.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY DISQUALIFICATIONS (DECLARATION OF LAW).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

MR. WATTS (Katanung) [5.40]: I support the second reading of the Bill, but unless it is amended I do not propose to support the third reading. On Tuesday evening we heard the views of the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) on the question whether a Bill in the nature of a declaratory measure such as this is supposed to be, or a Bill in the nature of an amendment of the Constitution, should be the one before the House. Whilst I agree with the hon. member that it would be better, and possibly more appropriate, if the Bill before us had been one to amend a certain section of the Constitution Act, at the same time the position is such that I do not feel disposed to prevent some reasonable means being taken to end what to my mind is becoming a somewhat intolerable position. Over a period of many years, dating from the early stages of responsible government in Western Australia, attempts have been made to amend the Constitution Act, all of them to a greater or lesser degree having some relationship to the question raised by this Bill. None of the Bills represented by those attempts ever reached the statute-book. The latest of them, I believe, was that which was introduced into the Legislative Council in 1935. It was, I understand, passed by that House, but it did not reach the statute-book. That measure, which I have carefully examined, sought to repeal a good deal of the Constitution Act, and to a great extent re-enact it. The particular addition, beyond the mere re-enactment—possibly a few different words but with practically the same subject matter—that was incorporated in the Bill was in very similar terms to the amendment I have placed on the notice paper.

Whilst I appreciate the reference by the member for West Perth to the suitability of the drafting of the amendment, I must in all humility inform the House that a great part of it was extracted from the measure to

which I refer. We are getting into an unfortunate position concerning the liabilities of members of Parliament under the Constitution Act. In this State, possibly more than in the majority of British communities, we find that the Government, in many instances quite rightly too, has undertaken various social and public services either to the exclusion of private enterprise or in conjunction with it. In certain directions it is compulsory for every member of the public either through legislation, as in regard to railways in certain matters, or through sheer necessity, to deal with Government departments in the carrying out of the ordinary business of the day. There can be no question on the part of members of this House or of another place—those who have entered into arrangements with the Government in respect of these social or public services—of any dishonesty or improper practice, provided, as I believe is the position in all instances, that the arrangements they have entered into have been entered into with the Government on exactly the same terms as those that would apply to a similar contract with any member of the outside public. Yet we are aware that grave doubts have arisen as to whether those very contracts which have been entered into in this bona fide manner do not place certain members of this House, and of another place, in the unfortunate position that they may have to vacate their seats. In some places it is said there is no doubt whatever on the point, that there is no question but that these contracts and arrangements which have been made, definitely bring the members concerned within the penalties etc., provided by the Constitution Act. Other sections of legal opinion, I understand, amongst whom the Crown Law officers may be included, contend that it is very doubtful whether the contracts in question do apply in that regard. As I gathered from the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that his view was that a declaratory measure was totally wrong unless there was a doubt to be resolved, I submit there is that doubt, and that in consequence it is reasonable to deal with the matter from the point of view of a declaratory measure and not only from the point of view of an amendment to the Constitution Act.

I am in entire agreement with the hon. member that the proposed declaration contained in the Bill is far too wide. I do not propose to reiterate his statements because I am in accord with them, but, as

expressed by him, the declaration could undoubtedly be adapted to contracts between members of this House and of another place and the Government, which would be thoroughly improper and most undesirable. Whilst I do not say that these contracts would be made, we must not lose sight of the fact that the opportunity would be available and might in certain instances be taken the fullest advantage of, to the obvious disadvantage not only of the probity and honour of an Assembly of this nature and of the Parliament of Western Australia, but also to the disadvantage of members of the public.

The Premier: We do not all become thieves because there is a law against stealing.

Mr. WATTS: I agree. I said there might be instances of this kind in the future. For that reason it is essential that we should, if possible, for the preservation of the dignity and honour of Parliament, lay down a law to prevent such a circumstance arising. In my opinion, erroneous though that opinion may be, it becomes necessary to define exactly what are the terms upon which we should permit a contract between the Crown—defining the Crown in the widest sense to include all social services of the Government—and members of this House. We have to consider not only ordinary contracts such as were referred to by the member for West Perth, sewerage, drainage, railway contracts, etc., but also the position in respect to the Agricultural Bank and other similar institutions, which lend funds to their clients out of Government revenue to enable them to carry on their business. We must consider, too, whether we are to continue in the belief, if we have that belief, that it is wrong for a person to come into this House owing the Agricultural Bank for an advance made in the ordinary course of business and on the ordinary terms available to the public, and whether having secured such an advance, it is impossible for that person to continue to occupy a seat in this Chamber. If that were so, we would be preventing a large number of people from the country districts, against whom there is nothing whatever other than such advance, from offering their services to the electors for entry into this Legislature. In fact, it would prevent about seventy per cent. of the farming community from ever offering their ser-

vices in that direction. My opinion is that if we succeed in defeating the measure at the second reading—as apparently has been suggested by previous speakers—we shall probably find ourselves in the position that no other measure will be introduced this session and that we shall again do what has been done by previous Parliaments, shelve the whole matter and leave a large number of our people, both inside and outside the House, in an extreme difficulty. Therefore from my point of view it is essential to arrive at some basis upon which we shall all be agreed, so that the doubt may be satisfactorily removed and the situation clarified. If we do not do that, I really feel we shall be neglecting our duty.

It is not my intention to occupy the time of the House long on the subject. My position, as an individual member, is perfectly plain. I claim that at the present time there is a grave doubt as to whether a contract which exists between members of Parliament and the Crown and its various departments should or should not prevent members of Parliament from occupying seats here. That doubt should be removed, and removed as speedily as possible. It should not be removed by opening the door as widely as is suggested in the Bill, but should be removed in a manner that will enable the public to realise that the only matters we propose to legalise are those that have been entered into in the ordinary course of business, in transactions just the same as could have been transacted by any member of the public, transactions in which no favour has been shown to the member of Parliament, and as regards which we feel that he should not be penalised, having done no wrong but having merely received the benefit of Government contracts made in a proper and reasonable manner and under the same conditions as those under which the public can make them. Beyond that I do not propose to go. The amendment I have placed on the notice paper is directed towards that end. In so far as loan funds are concerned, it would be better if after the borrower enters Parliament he should be unable to increase the amount by which he is indebted to the Crown. In the circumstances there is no need for me to dwell on the subject further, except to add that I intend to support the second reading, but that in the event of there being no suitable amendment

carried to alter the Bill, I shall be unable to support the third reading.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.54]: I do not propose to vote for the second reading of the Bill, and desire to place before the House my reasons for not doing so. But before dealing with those reasons I wish to make it clear that I am in favour of amending the Constitution Act at present operating in this State, by providing exemption for clients of the Agricultural Bank, clients of the Industries Assistance Board, and clients of the Soldier Settlement Scheme—all of whom are now dealt with by the one institution, the Agricultural Bank—and clients of the State Government Insurance Office and of the Workers' Homes Board, and generally all persons entering into contracts with the Crown for services to be rendered by the Crown which are usually rendered to the public, and at the same charge as is usually made to the public, with of course the proviso, which I regard as exceedingly proper, suggested by the member for Katanning, that whilst these exemptions would be made to the present constitutional provisions, the member who is elected could not during the term he is sitting in Parliament increase his liability. Those provisions can be made, and made only, as I hope to show shortly, by an amendment of our Constitution Act, and not by the Bill now before the House. The Bill proposes, if it is passed, to declare the meaning of Sections 32 and 34 of our Constitution Act to be the meaning set out in the Bill. I defy any member of the House who has read the Constitution Act to say that it is possible, having regard to other sections of our Constitution Act, to show clearly that the amending of Sections 32 and 34 undoubtedly embraces all contracts that are made between the public and the Crown in the Colony, as Western Australia was then called, or in the State, as it is now called.

Mr. Lambert: In that respect, of course, the Bill has been wrongly framed.

HON. N. KEENAN: Wrong only in one sense. With the substance of the Bill, with what it desires to effect, I have no cause of quarrel. But the object is not to be reached by declaring the meaning of a section to be that which, by reading that section and the other section, cannot possibly be placed on it.

The Premier: But that construction is placed on it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: One might as well take an Act which plainly, and in specific terms, provides for something in certain eventualities and say it was never meant. That is not the meaning of a declaratory Bill, which means this, and only this, that there have been two possible readings within every construction of the word "reasonable," and that Parliament meant one thing. That, in effect, is the argument put forward on the so-called Imperial precedent. But that Imperial precedent is not in point at all. It arose under extraordinary circumstances. At the end of the eighteenth century a war was being conducted between the then Kingdom of England and the present United States of America. It was exceedingly difficult for the English Government to finance the operations, in the first place, either as regards the payment of the soldiers employed there or as regards the cost of supplies. Bills of exchange existed then, of course, as they exist now; but there were none of the present banking facilities to resort to. In consequence the Government of England was obliged to secure the services of private contractors for both purposes—to remit the moneys and to pay for the supplies of goods—and these individuals made huge profits out of the transactions. Some of them were members of the House of Commons. It was to deal with that evil, and that evil only, that the statute was passed which was referred to by the Minister for Justice in introducing the Bill. The statute is called the Contractors Act. The statute was passed in order to deal with those specific cases. It provided that anyone who supplied moneys to be remitted abroad—and the extraordinary phraseology is repeated in our Constitution Act and this Bill—and also for the providing of goods, anyone indulging in that form of contract with the Crown, was debarred from offering himself for election to Parliament.

The Minister for Justice: There was an amendment to the Contractors Act of 1782 and that relieved many members of the House of Commons.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is possible, but that is the evil it dealt with. The only reason for doubt in legal minds is that Parliament had nothing else before it except those two particular transactions. It provided for

those two transactions and did include general terms.

The Minister for Justice interjected.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the Minister will allow me to explain—

The Minister for Justice: Bring your legal quotations up to date.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not know what the Minister wishes me to bring up to date.

The Minister for Justice: It was the law in 1931.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It has been the law since the 18th century, which is a bit earlier than 1931.

The Minister for Justice: At any rate it was still law in 1931.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, it was still the law, and the instance quoted, that the Minister refers to, arose from the fact that a member of the British Parliament by devolution of property, became a landlord of the Crown. He received the rent for a post office that was built on his property, which he had inherited. After he had consulted the Crown Law authorities regarding his position, the Bill of 1931 was introduced. But the circumstances on which the legislation in England was based, namely, the intention of Parliament in the 18th century to deal with two classes of evils, do not exist in this instance. There is no possible suggestion of their existing in this instance. Therefore, what was possible to be said in the Imperial Parliament to the effect that that was the only meaning of the law embodied in the Act of the 18th century, cannot possibly be said on this occasion. Why is that so? The point has been referred to by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald), but it will bear repetition because it goes straight to the root of the matter. If hon. members will look at the Constitution Act Amendment Act they will find that Section 35 reads—

The foregoing provisions—

That is to say, the provisions of Sections 32 and 34—

—shall not extend to any contract, agreement or commission made, entered into or accepted by any incorporated company where such company consists of more than 20 persons, and where such contract, agreement or commission is made, entered into, or accepted for the general benefit of such company, nor to any contract or agreement in respect of any lease, license, or agreement in respect to the sale or occupation of Crown lands.

Thus it will be seen that the provisions do not extend to certain exempted transactions, one of which refers to an agreement made between the Government of this State, or "colony," as it is referred to in the Act, and a company consisting of more than 20 members of whom one may also happen to be a member of this House, and the second relates to land alienated by the Crown under lease, license or agreement in respect to the sale or occupation of such land. If Section 32 meant nothing but the two matters dealt with in the Bill, what would be the reason for the inclusion of Section 35? There would be none whatever. That shows clearly that Section 32 expressly relates to dealings in land and dealings with the company of which a member was also a member of Parliament, while Section 36 deals with the devolution of property, the very matter that gave rise to the legislation of 1931 in England.

The Minister for Justice: So did the Contractors Act in England.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I cannot for one moment understand how the Minister could be advised that Section 32 could possibly be held to be restricted to cases of remitting money abroad, giving credit abroad to the Government of the State or to supplying goods to the Government—and to nothing further. Very properly has it been pointed out that if this declaration is made in the form suggested, not only will it be indefensible from the standpoint of common sense, but no single man of any repute at the Australian Bar would support such a contention. No single lawyer of repute, having regard to our Constitution—

The Minister for Justice: And in England?

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister again repeats his reference to the position in England, as if I had not already explained the difference between the situation in England and our experience here. I do not think that any man at the Bar either in England or in Australia would support the opinion that Section 32 could be said, by any construction placed upon it, to apply to nothing but the giving of money to the Crown for sending abroad, giving credit abroad for the Crown, or supplying goods to the Crown. If that is the meaning of the Bill, it is entirely opposed to common sense and, I would even say, to common decency, because if this Bill is passed, then, as pointed out by

the member for West Perth, members of Parliament will be able to effect all sorts of transactions with the Crown.

Mr. Tonkin: Enumerate a few!

Hon. N. KEENAN: For instance, I may invest in some land and may desire to sell it for some substantial price to the Crown; and I will be able to do so.

Mr. Tonkin: Why?

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the Bill becomes law, because it restricts the application of Section 32 to "contracts, agreements or commissions for the furnishing or providing of money to be remitted abroad or goods to be used or employed in the service of the public," nothing else will disqualify a person from becoming a member of Parliament.

Mr. Hughes: You will be able to take some fat fees for briefs.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is a personal matter, and that may be my excuse for not referring to it.

Mr. Sleeman: Could you take contracts for public works, if the Bill be agreed to?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Certainly. I could do anything except what is expressed in the Bill, and that is limited to remitting money abroad and selling goods. To prolong the debate is undesirable, because to do so would lead to reiteration, but some points that were not clearly established are still apparently in doubt. Another objectionable feature of the Bill, although it does not expressly state so, is the indemnity provided. If the proposal is to pass an indemnity for members of this House who might have committed an offence, possibly I might have good reason for supporting the Bill; but I shall not be a party to passing an indemnity under the lap, if I may use that phrase. No one reading this simple little declaratory Bill would imagine that it is an indemnity. Nevertheless, it is, and the public at large are getting rather sick of members of Parliament granting indemnities to one another. I was a party to passing an indemnity for a certain member of Parliament within recent years.

Mr. Hegney: You advised the late Mr. Scaddan against the incorporation of that very provision in the Bill then brought forward. That created all the trouble.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I supported that Bill because I knew the then Attorney General had advised the hon. member that he was not committing a breach of the law.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That was subsequently upheld by the High Court.

Mr. Lambert: Your Government made the appointment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so, and for that reason I supported the indemnity. There have been other instances and, as I say, the public are getting rather sick of this process of whitewashing a member of Parliament who commits a breach of the law. We can all recall the occasion when a member of Parliament and a member of the public conjointly committed a breach of the law. What happened? The member of Parliament received the King's pardon and is free of all taint, but the member of the public has been left with the stigma of a conviction and he suffers under it to-day. Therefore, if there is to be an indemnity, let it be a frank and clear indemnity, one that we are not ashamed of. Do not let it be done in the surreptitious manner attempted by this Bill.

The Minister for Works: You will have to get a schedule of names, from what I can understand.

Hon. N. KEENAN: For what purpose?

The Minister for Works: For indemnification purposes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No.

The Minister for Works: Yes, you will.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No, because an amendment could be made to Section 35 of the Constitution Act to include all the classes I have outlined. That amendment could be made subject to the section which provides for a penalty being enforced only after the Bill becomes law. There would be no difficulty about that. I wish now briefly to refer to the amendment suggested by the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts). That amendment practically, if not entirely, covers the same ground as the amendment of the Constitution which I said I favoured. But I cannot see how it would be possible to move that amendment to the present Bill; although, of course, the Chairman of Committees will have to rule whether the amendment is within the scope of the Bill. Therefore, apart altogether from the objections I have to the declaratory Bill, I do not see how the member for Katanning can maintain his attitude and expect the Bill to pass the second reading. He will almost certainly have to revise his opinion. I hope the House will not pass the second reading; the Bill should be dropped and a proper measure brought down to amend the Constitution Act.

The Premier: We tried that three years ago.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We did not.

The Premier: We did, in the Upper House.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, but what did the Government do in this House?

The Premier: The thing was ridiculous.

Hon. N. KEENAN: When I ask the Premier what was done in this House, he says the thing was ridiculous.

The Premier: The Bill was.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Bill was passed out for some reason of which I am entirely unaware. It may have been pique because the Bill arose in another place.

Member: It had too many frills.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Those in charge of this House at the time did not allow the Bill to be considered, and so it does not lie in their mouth to regret the loss of that Bill. The proper course to pursue now is to drop this Bill and bring down an amendment of the Constitution Act that will achieve the purpose. Such a Bill would be fairly supported by all members of the House. We shall then be acting in a proper manner and will deal with the matter on its merits. If we pass such a Bill, our action will at least be frank, but if we pass this Bill in its present form we shall be subjected to considerable criticism.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. NORTH: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [7.31]: I regret that I am unable to support the Bill. That, however, is not to say that I do not think some alteration of the law is necessary. If one considers the history of the introduction of amendments to the Constitution Act in this Chamber, one finds that they appear to have met with the fate that I believe will befall this Bill, namely, that judging by the speeches already made, it will not command the support of an absolute majority of members at the second and third reading stages. In 1908 Mr. M. L. Moss, K.C., introduced a measure and pointed out the penalties to which members were liable because of the violation of the Constitution Act. He stated definitely that there was hardly a member who would not come under the dis-

qualification. At that time Parliament did not seem inclined to alter the Constitution. Subsequently Mr. Draper, now Mr. Justice Draper, also attempted to make an alteration. He pointed out the position in language somewhat similar to that which had been adopted by Mr. Moss, but even then members did not show any desire to make the alteration. More recently still we have deemed it necessary again to review the position.

I contend that members give very serious consideration to all legislation brought before Parliament, but possibly they give more serious consideration to this class of legislation. There are two very important statutes that form the foundations of our Parliamentary system, namely, the Constitution Act and the Electoral Act. Those two statutes may be regarded as the people's Acts. If this Parliament is not properly constituted, then all legislation must suffer. Consequently, I believe that members do show a tendency to be very careful about altering the Constitution Act. Admittedly, there is some necessity for an alteration, but after carefully reviewing the Bill now before us, I feel convinced that the Minister is opening the door so extremely wide that members will be able to transact with the Crown almost any business that the public can transact with the Crown. I think I am reading aright the amendments proposed by the Minister when I say they will nullify that portion of Section 32 dealing with contracts for the construction of any railway or other public work. The words used, of course, might imply that those contracts are excluded.

The Minister for Justice: They are not referred to as contracts.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, but they are contracts. Clause 2 of the Bill provides—

It is hereby declared that Sections 32 and 34 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, so far as they relate to contracts, agreements or commissions or any part or share of any such contracts, agreements or commissions, extend only to contracts, agreements or commissions for the furnishing or providing of money to be remitted abroad or goods to be used or employed in the service of the public. Now let me quote the second paragraph of Section 32 of the Act—

Or shall knowingly furnish or provide in pursuance of any such contract, agreement, or commission any money to be remitted abroad, or any goods whatsoever to be used or employed in the service of the public.

Though it does not say that they are contracts, agreements or commissions, surely the implication is that they are contracts! If we consult the dictionary interpretation of the word, we must admit that the question would be open to very grave doubt if tested in a court of law. Members who have spoken to the Bill have clearly stated their views, and little remains to be said that would not be reiteration. The member for West Perth and the member for Nedlands have, I believe, satisfactorily cleared up the point involved in the reference to money to be remitted abroad. There is no necessity for that to-day. We do not remit money abroad; the banks or financial houses undertake that service and the Government has no interest in it. In the days before the establishment of banks when the Government dealt with the matter, such a provision was necessary. That amendment, however, is quite unnecessary to-day. The Government does not remit money abroad otherwise than through the banks, and there would be no advantage in anyone's approaching the Government with that object in view.

There may be a very grave danger, however, if we throw open the door to enable members of Parliament to enter into contracts with the Crown. I am not inferring that present members would do anything that the public would not be permitted to do, but to secure an amendment of the Constitution Act is a very difficult matter. As I have pointed out, this disqualification has been recognised over a number of years and many attempts have been made to rectify it. Even at the time of the introduction of the Act, Mr. Alex Forrest directed attention to the disqualification, and in those days, of course, the ramifications of government were very limited as compared with the present time. Still, he pointed out that no member of Parliament could borrow money from the State Savings Bank. I do not know whether members had been in the habit of doing so in previous years. The Parliament of that time, however, considered it inadvisable that members should borrow money from the Crown, so in those far-off years the disqualification existed and was recognised. At the same time, I do not think we should restrict the choice of the people to only those men and women who have no dealings with the Crown. As was pointed out

by Mr. Moss, K.C. and Mr. Draper, a member who consigned goods over the railways would come under the disqualification. The State Transport Co-ordination Act prevents a farmer from transporting goods by road; he has either to dispose of the goods on the farm or use the railways as a carrier. If the goods are consigned over the railways, there is a contract between him and the Crown. That is a point which ought to be cleared up. I am in favour of the amendment proposed by the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts).

The Premier: The House is unanimous as to the need for removing these disqualifications and anomalies.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We are going too far, and that is why I disagree with the Minister for Justice. I am anxious to do the right thing, but do not desire to protect members of Parliament when they violate the law whilst withholding that protection from the general public. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. A member of the community might commit an offence against one of our laws, but he would not come to Parliament for protection. If the Government desires to make this amendment, it should go to the country immediately and come back allowing all members to have a free hand.

Mr. Rodoreda: This applies to the Council as well. An election would not affect another place.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I dare say this House would be more greatly affected than would another place.

The Minister for Lands: Another place is more affected than we are.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think so.

The Minister for Lands: Members there are up to their necks in it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Governments have increased their activities. The position is quite different in the case of the Imperial Parliament. It is of no use to quote that Parliament.

The Minister for Justice: It is affected, just as we are.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think not. In the case of Great Britain, the supply of goods would mean the supply of warships, munitions and armaments.

The Minister for Justice: Every member who has a telephone would be affected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know that that would be so.

The Premier: That is what was said in Great Britain. It was held to be a service made by contract.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is a great difference between the two institutions. In this State, the Government sells timber, bricks, gravel, etc., and owns the railway service. In England the railways are not run by the Government. Here almost everything is more or less under Government control.

The Minister for Lands: The wheat and wool you send to port are carried over Government railways.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have already been over that ground. We are prevented by law from sending our wool by road to its destination. Either we have to dispose of it on the farm, or enter into a contract with the Commissioner of Railways to deliver it in Perth.

The Minister for Lands: How does the ordinary member of the community suffer from that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I agree with the substance of the amendment forecast by the member for Katanning, but I think we ought to have this measure brought down in a new form. We cannot amend Sections 32 and 34 of the Act in the way proposed. The amendment should be to Section 35, which contains certain exemptions.

The Minister for Lands: A member of Parliament ought not to be allowed something that the general public cannot enjoy.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister may be trying to annoy me, but I do not intend to become annoyed. Whilst members are in this House, they have no right to increase their liability to the Crown. Let us see what could happen! A member of the Country Party, or any other party, might become Minister for Lands, whilst he was still in possession of a farm. He would probably have borrowed money from the Agricultural Bank, and might desire to increase his liability to the Crown. As Minister for Lands, he might control the Agricultural Bank, or the Workers' Homes Board.

The Minister for Lands: In such circumstances, he would not borrow any further moneys.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If he made the request, the authorities would not refuse him, although his security might not justify any further advance.

The Minister for Lands: If he were Minister for Lands, that would be the last thing he would do.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I remember one Minister for Lands who got into trouble in this State. It is no use the Minister saying such things would not happen.

The Minister for Lands: I would be surprised if they did.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: One member of Parliament who became a Minister borrowed money from the Crown for wire netting.

The Minister for Lands: That was a long time ago.

Mr. Patrick: We should not allow such a thing to happen.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Very naturally, priority was given to him by the officials concerned, because it was thought at any time he might become their Minister.

The Minister for Lands: He did not make the purchase, in that instance.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I know very little about it.

The Minister for Lands: You know all about it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, but the Minister seems to know. This Bill will give preference to members of Parliament.

Mr. Cross: Would you not permit a member to connect up his house with the sewerage scheme?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes; so long as he received the same service at the same price as that given to any member of the public. Apparently I have to repeat the same thing whenever some particular member makes an interjection. Members of this House ought to be treated just as are people outside, and no better. If a member has had an advance made to him, he should not be debarred from election to the House, but he should not increase his liability while he is here. Members will find difficulty in supporting the Bill because it will place them in the position that they will be able more than favourably to compete with the public. We do not desire that, and I am sure it is not the desire of the Government. I hope the Bill will be withdrawn, and another brought down on the lines suggested by the member for Kattanning. We should amend Section 35 of the Constitution Act, for I do not see how the Bill could have any application to Sections 32 and 34. In attempting to clarify

the Act, the Government has gone too far. I cannot support the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Lambert, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1938-39.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 4th October; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Vote—Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £68,200.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [7.49]: I am willing to agree that within the limits of his political code the Minister has put his heart and soul into the work of his department during the past year. But with what result? Not only has the result been disappointing and surprising, but highly disturbing. The report of the Minister on the work of his department for the last financial year filled the House, I am sure, with very serious misgivings of what may be pending. The tenor of the Minister's speech intimated that there was a mere accidental drop in employment owing to a quite temporary slackening in the timber and building industries. I hope that when he said that he was expressing the position as it really is, but I fear he did not do so. I would like the hon. gentleman to give the Committee the unemployment figures for the past 15 months, for the year 1937-38 and for July, August and September last. Then the Committee would be enabled to estimate for itself to what extent we are making the recovery which the Minister claims to see. If, unluckily, there is a definite trend in the wrong direction, we would be unwise to pretend that all is well. The Minister for Employment can read the signs as well as anybody else, probably better, having regard to the nature of his departmental work during the past two or three years. I would like the Minister to tell the Committee whether he has assessed the possibilities of employment throughout the State in the immediate and the near future, and, if so, just exactly what those possibilities are. I was saying that the Minister ascribes the drop in employment figures to the timber and building industries, to a slackening in the export figures for timber, but as regards building the Minister did not seem able to find any reason whatever that

would suit him. I ask the Minister whether he does not think the reason is that the housing available in the metropolitan area—I am not speaking of country districts, because the same conditions do not apply there—has certainly got beyond the needs of the people.

Mr. Cross: You do not know the position, or you would not make such a ridiculous statement.

Mr. DONEY: The hon. member is entitled to his opinion. I do not think he can take much notice of what is occurring in the City of Perth. Everybody else realises that there are far too many new flats and blocks of offices. Anyone would think, watching building operations in the metropolitan area, that we have heavy annual accruals of population, whereas in fact our population is pretty well at a standstill. I said that the year's unemployment result was surprising. It was surprising because the Premier, when making his Budget speech a few weeks ago, saw very little wrong with affairs in Western Australia. The hon. gentleman saw continued progress everywhere, and found the future very bright indeed—leading the Chamber to expect that when the Minister for Employment came to make his report on unemployment matters he would have a cheerful tale to tell. Instead of that the Minister gave us what is, I suppose, the most disappointing report for quite a few years. Last year at this time he was able to inform the Committee that there were 1,600 fewer men unemployed than in the preceding year. This year, however, there is no decrease in unemployment. We have not even managed to hold our own. There are now something like 200 men more unemployed than there were at this period 12 months ago.

Mr. Cross: What about men employed in the farming districts?

Mr. DONEY: Not many men have been placed with farmers from the ranks of unemployed unionists, and the figures we are now dealing with refer to unionists. For the last five years the Government has been telling us that a reduced unemployment figure is the one sure sign, and the one sure result too, of an improved industrial and general outlook. I think the Committee is inclined to agree with that view. In that case, however, what has the Minister to say in the face of an increased unemployment figure? Just exactly what does that mean? I also think it quite proper to ask the Minister how does

he reconcile the rather extravagant optimism of the Premier with the somewhat dismal admissions the Minister has had to make in regard to his own department. The Minister may say—as did, I may remark, the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox)—that the 6,000 mark just about represents what may be called the irreducible minimum of unemployment, the hard core of the unemployment problem. For my part I do not think we should look at it in that light. If we can be guided by the nature of the men unemployed in our respective districts—and in this matter I am guided by what I see in the Williams-Narrogin district—we must agree that probably out of the, roughly, 6,000 men unemployed, there might be 4,000 who—

The Minister for Mines: Who said the 6,000 men were unemployed?

Mr. DONEY: The Minister knows very well what I mean. We are in the habit of terming them unemployed, but to meet the Minister I will say men upon relief work.

The Minister for Mines: Men working for the Government.

Mr. DONEY: If they were working for the Government, as the Minister says, there would be no standing down period; so there is an obvious distinction between the men he is thinking of and the men I am thinking of. I will say, 6,000 relief workers. The Minister cannot grumble at that. We cannot say what the irreducible minimum of unemployment is until all the employable men, the able and willing workers, have been put back into employment. Not until that happens are we entitled to regard the balance of 2,000—a rather indefinite figure, I may remark—as the irreducible minimum of unemployment.

The Minister for Employment: You overlook the fact that relief workers to-day average more work during the year than men on public works used to average during the years before the depression.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister overlooks the fact that the comparisons we are making as between this year and last year refer to years in which the same conditions of employment have obtained. The Minister's comparison is not a proper one at all, in the circumstances. I was leading up to the point that if the 6,000 odd men we refer to do really represent the irreducible minimum of unemployment, as the member for South Fremantle believes, then there can surely be no pressing reason, anyhow, for the reten-

tion of the portfolio of Employment by the hon. gentleman. Not that I am deerying the Minister's abilities when applied to his department; far from it. I do not mind recognising most readily the Minister's temperamental and general suitability for that work. Particularly in view of the fact that the department is manned by a very capable staff, and as the machinery of the department is in fine running order, the Government might very well consider transferring the Minister to another department where, in all probability, his administrative abilities could be used to some better purpose. The one cheerful portion of the Minister's review of his department's activities had reference to the C class men engaged on clearing operations at Wooroloo. The form of employment on which that type of man is employed is very desirable in every way. No one can gainsay that the work is reproductive and healthy. From my own knowledge and from the Minister's admission, the physique of the C class men has improved out of all knowledge since they have been engaged on that work. Upwards of 90 per cent. of labour is involved in that form of employment. I am glad that the Minister has turned his attention to that avenue for C class men in particular, for otherwise they would have been receiving rations in the city to-day. When Wooroloo and Werribee are passed by train, some fine pastures are to be seen. True, the Minister is not concerned with the Werribee undertaking, and the work at Wooroloo must be placed to the credit of the Mitchell Government. I understand the pastures were laid down by the then Minister for Lands, the present Leader of the Opposition. I am quite sure that the Government can advantageously continue that particular class of work to as great an extent as it wishes. If so be it is desired to carry on in that direction, much similar work is available and can be undertaken.

The most dependable of all our industries is, of course, that relating to farming. For some strange reason, and despite the fact that for many years past the Minister has had to provide for a great many men on rations, and is frequently hard put to provide work of a reproductive nature, he will not listen to any suggestion to assist the agricultural industry by subsidising farm labour. I cannot help thinking that the time may very well come when the Minister will be pleased to utilise that opportun-

ity, even though at present he seems to be quite independent of work arising in various phases of that industry. I suppose the reason is because gold mining, road construction, forestry and ordinary building operations in the city and throughout the country districts have proved to be fairly reliable sources of employment. The question arises, what of the future? I dare say that question is as disturbing to the Minister as it is to other members of this Committee. The Minister will concede that gold, although it has stood by us so splendidly during the last eight or nine years, is unfortunately notoriously uncertain, and, although I sincerely hope to the contrary, it may let us down at any time. Some 15 months ago Mr. Casey, the Federal Treasurer, in an article written by him in the "West Australian," which article, no doubt, was read by most hon. members, expressed the fear that there would be a drop in gold prices through the inability of the United Kingdom and the United States of America to continue paying the highly exorbitant price gold is fetching to-day. The Minister knows, and so do we all, that a drop of 20s. or 30s. in the price of gold, which is quite possible, would have such an effect upon gold mining that—it is difficult to say just how many would be affected—possibly upwards of 4,000 men would be thrown on the labour market and would flock to the city.

The Minister for Employment: Automatically, that would mean better prices for wheat and wool.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know how the Minister can support that contention. For the moment, I see no connection between his assertion and my statement.

The Minister for Employment: There is every connection.

Mr. DONEY: I would like the Minister to indicate what it is when he replies to the debate. In the event of what I suggest happening, I wonder just how the Minister would place those men. The Minister seems to regard the position that I refer to as altogether unlikely to arise, but he surely must know it is a contingency likely to arise at any time.

Mr. Rodoreda: Just as likely as for wheat farming to become payable.

Mr. DONEY: And that, too, is likely to occur at any time.

The Minister for Employment: If the price of gold goes down, the prices of other commodities go up.

Mr. DONEY: If the Minister is satisfied with that conclusion—

The Minister for Mines: Are you not?

Mr. DONEY: I hope he is right with regard to wheat. I concede that if the position should arise, forestry would remain to the Minister as a source of employment. A slump in the gold mining industry would automatically cut out the building trade. Of that there is no doubt. We have caught up with our main road construction programme, and there is not much opportunity for additional employment in that direction. Further, I cannot see that there are any more justifiable public works to be undertaken in the metropolitan area, at any rate not on a big scale. In the circumstances, the Minister must, of necessity, turn his attention to the rural areas. Just exactly what he will find there, the Minister knows as well as I do. I suggest it would pay the Government to lend a hand now to so improve the rural situation in its various phases that, in the event of happenings such as I forecast, upwards of 3,000 workers could be absorbed, should a slump in gold mining result in those men making their way to the coast. I remember that in 1937 the Minister said he was satisfied—he was speaking of the farm-labour problem—that the only solution was for the farmers and the farm labourers to come together and agree upon some acceptable arrangement.

The Minister for Mines: An acceptable arrangement was made.

Mr. DONEY: No. I have wondered several times since what the Minister had in mind when he made that statement. Obviously an acceptable arrangement would meet the situation, but what was it?

Mr. Withers: Co-operation.

Mr. DONEY: The achievement of any sensible result would imply the ability of farmers to pay the basic wage.

The Minister for Mines: Is there any shortage of farm labourers?

Mr. DONEY: The Minister for Employment can tell the hon. member the exact position.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not you believe your own Minister?

The Minister for Mines: I am asking the member for Williams-Narrogin.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DONEY: I do not know what the exact position is at the moment, but I do know that, as a general rule, farmers cannot secure their requirements through the Labour Bureau.

The Minister for Employment: That is a tale.

Mr. DONEY: It has not been a tale for a number of years past. It is futile for the Minister to say it is a mere tale. It is not.

The Minister for Employment: It is.

Mr. DONEY: I know of many instances, about some of which I had occasion to interview the Minister's department. We are constantly applying to the bureau, but our applications fail to achieve any good purpose. I suggest a solution to the Minister. A subsidy should be provided for farm labour.

Mr. Raphael: Is that going to be your election cry?

Mr. DONEY: Never mind.

Mr. Raphael: Let us in the know.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DONEY: I would like some information from the Minister with regard to the supply of rations to sustenance workers. I shall quote the case of a relief worker at Narrogin, but the particulars I shall give might apply just as easily to many hundreds of other such men throughout the State. The worker I refer to is a man with a big and, unfortunately, a very unhealthy family. The work upon which he was engaged finished, and in due course his standing-down period ended also. He took his clearance papers to the police and was informed that no work was available. When introducing these Estimates, the Minister said he recognised no responsibility for finding another job for a man at the termination of his employment, although the Minister did add that he was doing his best to find work.

The Minister for Employment: I did not say that at all.

Mr. DONEY: I made an interjection and thought I put the question quite plainly. I asked the Minister whether he considered he was responsible for finding work at the completion of the official standing-down period. If I have misunderstood the Minister, I am very glad; I hope he will accept some responsibility. I said that the standing-down period for the man I mentioned had ended. He made several applications for work without success; and, ultimately, upon my applying to the department for

rations, rations were granted. I pointed out the distressing circumstances of this man and his family. When eventually work was found for him—this is the point I am leading up to—the cost of the rations was deducted from his first and second payments of wages. I ask the Minister whether this is in keeping with the policy of his department.

Mr. Cross: It is not the practice.

Mr. DONEY: Is it not the practice?

Mr. Cross: No.

Mr. DONEY: Let the Minister answer the question. I ask him whether that is in keeping with the policy of the department.

Mr. Marshall: Cannot the member for Canning tell you?

Mr. DONEY: The member for Canning can give me all sorts of answers in reply to questions.

Mr. Marshall: He might be right.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DONEY: I hope the Minister will in due course intimate to me whether he considers that such treatment is fair. I desire to refer to one other matter while speaking to these Estimates, namely, the practice of exacting from sustenance workers 30s. annually for the A.W.U. as payment for new jobs.

The Minister for Employment interjected.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister need not worry, I shall not refer to this matter at length, because the member for Swan has already spoken on it. The Minister knows that many men throughout the State have been unable, through illness or other misfortune, to pay the full amount of 30s. within 12 consecutive months. That, of course, meant they were not financial, and consequently did not receive any benefit at all from the amounts paid on account. As a matter of fact, they were in precisely the same position as if they had paid no contribution to the A.W.U. at all. It frequently happens—very frequently, as a matter of fact—that a man has been unfinancial for five or six years owing to circumstances quite beyond his control. During that period he may have paid a total sum of £6, £7 or £8 to the funds of the union; but during all that period he has been unfinancial and has not enjoyed the benefits, rights or privileges accruing to the financial members of that union, such as voting for officers of the union and any benefits there might be. In fact, he was no

better off than the men who contributed nothing to the funds of the union, except that he secured some work. I ask the Minister whether the policy of the Government really permits this differential treatment, and I hope the Minister will answer me. If it is the policy of the Government, then will the Minister inform me whether, in his opinion, it is fair or unfair?

The Minister for Employment: Why do not the non-unionists accept farm work, to which union conditions do not apply?

Mr. DONEY: That is an entirely different matter upon which I desire to put no question to the Minister. He is dodging the question by asking another about a matter on which I sought no information whatever.

Mr. Raphael: He wants you to draw an analogy.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [8.18]: When introducing these Estimates, the Minister said the unemployment position was not as satisfactory this year as it was last year and he gave his reasons for making that statement. He informed the Committee that during the past month or two, owing to a shortage of funds, the Government were compelled to find employment for a greater number of men. Despite this position, however, the employment position is very much better than it was a couple of years ago. The present unsatisfactory position is due to no fault of the Government, but to a set of circumstances entirely beyond its control. The record of the Government during the past two or three years speaks for itself. The Government has had to provide employment for an army of men bordering on 7,000. That takes a lot of doing. Private employers were compelled to reduce their staffs, and the men thus thrown out of employment thrust a greater responsibility upon the Government. That difficulty is not minimised when we recognise the financial limitations of the Government referred to by the member for Murchison. Those limitations are well known, and I have no intention of occupying the time of the Committee by dealing with that phase of the question. Again, the Government has had and still has further difficulties. Not only has it the responsibility of providing work for this army of men, but it has not discovered the class of work to ensure the greatest amount of labour necessitating the least expenditure.

Mr. Doney: Yes, what about those clearing operations?

Mr. NEEDHAM: This has been the major difficulty outside the financial limitations.

Mr. Doney: It need not be the major difficulty now.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member knows perfectly well there are public works that might well have been taken in hand and, if completed, would have been reproductive. That class of work would have meant the expending of much money on material, some of which could not have been obtained in this State, and this would have resulted in a lesser amount being spent for actual labour. Apart from financial limitations, that has constituted the major difficulty of the Government. I venture to say that the Minister for Works could submit to this Committee a list of public works that could be put in hand at any time, but would not absorb the requisite amount of labour to cope with the number of men to be provided for.

The member for Subiaco last week laid particular stress on the fact that men in receipt of sustenance were receiving only 7s. a week, and criticised the Government very strongly on that account. By no stretch of imagination can it be said that any member or supporter of the Government contends that 7s. a week is sufficient for any man or woman. Members will agree that anybody who said so would be fit for some institution outside this place.

Mr. Raphael: Heathcote?

Mr. NEEDHAM: Well, perhaps Heathcote would not be quite suitable for him. When the party supported by the member for Subiaco was in office, it did not give any greater amount than 7s. a week to people on sustenance. If by any stroke of misfortune the party of which she is a member ever again controls the Treasury benches, and economic disturbances occur under the present financial limitations, that Administration will not be able to do any more than the present Government is doing, and has done, in the matter of sustenance allowance.

Mr. Doney: That party would not spend money on trolley buses, but would use it for this purpose.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Governments controlling the destinies of other States and of the same political thought as the member for Subiaco are not granting even 7s. per week for sustenance. Next time the hon. member addresses herself to this question, I suggest

that she bear these two factors in mind. The financial limitations by which all Governments in the Commonwealth are controlled preclude the possibility of giving more than 7s. a week, though every member desires that the people on bare sustenance should receive more. I ask the member for Subiaco to cast her mind back and compare the position to-day with what obtained when her party occupied the seats on the right of the Chamber.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I was in Turkey then.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Certainly the hon. member was not here, and we do not know whether we shall be here after the elections next year. Still, the hon. member's political opinion and support were behind the party in power at the time, and the conditions were not nearly as good as they are to-day. During that period there were thousands of men on bare sustenance. The position to-day is that only a handful is on sustenance. I admit that the number on sustenance to-day is too large; but the point I wish to make is that while there were thousands on sustenance during the regime of the hon. member's political party, together with the party on the direct Opposition benches, there are relatively few to-day. Thus the position has improved vastly. I do not say this has been brought about solely by the change of Government. Economic conditions in this country and throughout the world have changed considerably during the last three or four years, but the method of administration adopted by this Government, as compared with that of the previous Government, had a considerable effect in bringing about the improvement.

We must also appreciate the difficulty that confronts the Government in dealing with a C class man—the man physically unfit for the type of work that the Government has in hand. That work is naturally of a very laborious nature, and there is considerable difficulty in finding work suitable for him. That man is in a very unenviable position. He is willing to work, but suitable work is not available for him. If by any means the Government can devise methods to provide suitable work for that class of man, another difficulty will have been overcome. I know that the Government has endeavoured to find such work, but members will appreciate the difficulty of providing suitable work for men in that physical condition. The Minister referred to the lack of co-

ordination between private employers and the Government, and suggested that as one of the reasons why the employment position was not as good as it had been earlier in the year. I made reference to this in the course of my speech on the general Estimates. Much could be done in the building trade by greater co-ordination between employers and the Government. That trade is the barometer of our economic position. When it is busy practically every other trade is busy. In the construction of a house nearly every type of artisan is employed. To avoid our passing through spasmodic periods of activity in the building trade, some method should be devised whereby private employers could carry on with a certain class of work, the Government following on with a continuity of work in respect of public buildings. Already the Government provides for a certain amount of continuity of work by its programme that is submitted to the House every session. The member for Murchison referred to the financial limitations of the Government, and indicated that the Loan Council had the final say in these matters. That is not quite so. Actually the Loan Council proposes, but the Commonwealth Bank disposes. When the Premiers and Treasurers have met at the Loan Council and indicated their requirements for their respective States, although they have frequently mentioned the sum they needed, just as frequently the Commonwealth Bank has refused to let them have it. The final word is not with the Loan Council but with the Commonwealth Bank.

Our local industries have a great effect upon the employment situation. Some years ago the Government inaugurated a campaign to popularise local products. This was no fitful or spasmodic effort but was continuous particularly on the part of the department concerned. It was started by the first Minister for Industries and has been carried on by the present Minister. I regret to say that really good results have not been achieved from that campaign for more money is actually being sent to the Eastern States than was sent some years ago.

Hon. C. G. Latham: More than ever is being sent over there now.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes a sum bordering on £12,000,000 a year. It is a great pity. The community ought to become Western Australian minded. A very large proportion of the goods we now import from the Eastern States could and should be made locally.

I am glad to know the Government is placing an additional £9,000 this year at the disposal of the Child Welfare Department for assistance to widows. That is a step in the right direction. Many widows are finding it exceedingly difficult to rear their children, not only those who are under the working age but some who are over it. Although many of the children are over the working age they cannot get employment, and having lost the breadwinner the widow has a hard struggle. I am indeed glad to know that this extra assistance is to be provided.

Perhaps the Minister will tell me whether it is possible for the Government to re-establish the psychological clinic which has been referred to on various occasions during the last four or five years. The sooner that clinic is re-established the better will it be for those who will make use of it and appreciate its value. Greater attention should be paid to the necessity for finding homes for children who go before the Children's Court. Surely it should be possible to find homes for them rather than to send them to gaol. No boy or girl should be sent to gaol for the misdemeanours for which they are taken before the Children's Court. Time and again the magistrate has reminded the community of the necessity for something in this direction being done, and much against his will he has had to send a boy to gaol, because there was no other place to which the lad could be sent. If homes could be found for these children they would have an infinitely better chance to make good.

Something should also be done to provide better premises for the Children's Court. I have referred to this on several occasions but no action has yet been taken. I am told there is difficulty in finding a more suitable building. Some other place should be found, and if it cannot be more comfortably furnished it should offer greater privacy. Everything connected with the Children's Court should be conducted in the greatest privacy. One has only to walk along Irwin street to see children with their parents waiting to be called into the court. No shelter is provided for them in wet weather.

Mr. Marshall: The position is not a bad one, but the building is deplorable.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes. No privacy whatever is provided and there is little or no accommodation.

Mr. Marshall: No accommodation whatever.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The accommodation in the court itself is conspicuous by its absence. Parents who have the misfortune to be obliged to attend that court with their children should at least have privacy, whereas under the present conditions they are obliged to stand in the street, the cynosure of all eyes.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [8.40]: The outstanding feature of the unemployment situation is that we still have unfortunate people compelled to live on 1s. a day. I venture to say that if the present Government had been out of office and another Government in power, the C class men would have been got rid of long ago, because the supposed Opposition would have set up such a howl that something would simply have had to be done. There is no reason at all why C class people should be obliged to live on 1s. a day. The Public Accounts for the past year show that the revenue obtained by the Government in that year represents a record for all revenues obtained in Western Australia in any one year. There are not many of the unfortunate C class people. The wages tax was established for the special purpose of relieving unemployment. Last year it produced £100,000 in excess of the figure for the previous year. In 1930-31 there was no wages tax, and in that year the Government spent from revenue in relief of unemployment £436,000. In 1931-32, when there was no wages tax either, the Government spent from revenue in relief of unemployment £643,000. In 1932-33, the first half-year of unemployment relief taxation, that tax produced £202,000, and yet £346,000 was spent from revenue in unemployment relief. In 1933-34 the tax produced £411,000, but only £232,000 was spent in relief of unemployment. Thence onward the returns from the tax increased by leaps and bounds, and the amount spent from revenue in relief of unemployment may be said to have fallen by leaps and bounds. In 1934-35, although the wages tax produced £684,000, only £72,000 was spent in relief of unemployment.

The Premier: Who said this was an unemployment tax?

Mr. HUGHES: That was the original name of the tax.

The Premier: It is not the name now.

Mr. HUGHES: When the tax was under consideration here, an amendment was moved

from the Opposition benches that the proceeds be earmarked for the relief of unemployment. Unfortunately the amendment was defeated.

The Premier: And you have been harping on it ever since.

Mr. HUGHES: I shall continue to harp on it.

The Premier: Nobody takes any notice of you. No matter how often you are corrected, you keep on repeating the wrong name.

Mr. HUGHES: What is the good of saying—

The Premier: Those things have been proved wrong time after time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: What is the use of saying nobody takes any notice when the head of the Government immediately takes notice?

The Premier: I am merely telling you how often you have said a wrong thing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Premier to keep order.

Mr. HUGHES: When the tax was first introduced it was called, in the Public Accounts, the unemployment relief tax.

The Premier: It was not called that by Parliament. You have no right to refer to it by that name.

Mr. HUGHES: In the Public Accounts for 1932-33, over the signature of the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer, this tax is called the Unemployment Relief Tax.

The Premier: It does not matter what the tax is called. Why do you harp on that?

Mr. HUGHES: This tax was introduced for the specific purpose of relieving unemployment. That was the great argument used in favour of the introduction of a flat-rate wages tax.

The Premier: Keep on saying what is wrong!

Mr. HUGHES: I shall keep on repeating it every session.

The Premier: You have been proved wrong in every session.

Mr. HUGHES: I have never been proved wrong yet.

The Premier: No, not to your satisfaction.

Mr. HUGHES: I venture to say there is no difficulty in proving that I am right on this occasion.

The Premier: No, there never is, according to you.

Mr. HUGHES: I need not rely on what I say, because the Public Accounts, signed by the Treasurer, are here. As the Premier signed them, it ill becomes him to dispute their accuracy.

The Premier: Oh!

Mr. HUGHES: I know that the Premier may not have understood the accounts. However, this point is not very difficult to understand, because in the Auditor General's report for last year appears a schedule showing the increase in the wages tax from year to year.

The Premier: You are twisting now. You called it an unemployment tax.

Mr. HUGHES: It is the tax introduced specifically for the relief of unemployment. Let me repeat that if the Premier had had his way, the proceeds of the tax would have constituted a trust fund specially earmarked for the relief of unemployment.

The Premier: But they were not.

Mr. HUGHES: That is most unfortunate.

The Premier: It is not that, either.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the dialogue will cease and that the Premier will keep order. He will have an opportunity to speak later.

Mr. HUGHES: When the receipts from the tax rose to £684,000, relief for unemployment came down to £72,000. In the following year, when the tax receipts reached £827,000, unemployment relief went down to £49,000. The year before last the tax produced £971,000, and only £51,000 was made available for the relief of unemployment. For last year the receipts passed the million mark, £1,074,000 being garnered from the wages tax, alias the financial emergency tax, but in reality the unemployment tax. That represented an increase of £100,000 over the receipts from the tax for the previous year. Yet only £50,000 was spent in relief of unemployment. Surely if the Government got £100,000 increase from that tax, it could have managed to find something more than 1s. a day for the unfortunate C class men! Luckily there is not a great number of them; but, as the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) pointed out, they have been trying, in some cases, to live on 1s. a day for three, four and even five years. It would not matter where the money came from. I do not think there is any more meritorious avenue for the expenditure of Government funds

than giving those unhappy people something to relieve their situation. It would not matter if the unemployment tax were increased for that purpose.

The Premier: Mr. Chairman, is the hon. member in order in referring, time and again, to a tax which does not exist?

The CHAIRMAN: To which tax does the Premier refer?

The Premier: The unemployment tax.

The CHAIRMAN: We call it the financial emergency tax.

The Premier: The member for East Perth insists on calling it by a wrong name.

Mr. HUGHES: So long as we all understand to which tax I refer, it does not matter.

The Premier: That is all right.

Mr. HUGHES: It does not matter very much. I am rather glad that I have annoyed the Premier.

The Premier: You have not annoyed me.

Mr. HUGHES: It is shameful to think that although we have collected over £1,000,000 from this tax, we cannot provide relief for the C class men who receive 1s. a day.

The Premier: Surely you did not think you annoyed me.

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier made it very plain.

The Premier: I do not like anyone to misrepresent the position.

Mr. HUGHES: There is no misrepresentation about it at all. If I were as frivolous as the Premier, I could call upon him to withdraw his statement, because the figures I have quoted are taken from the Public Accounts. I defy the Premier to show that I was in error in any one figure I quoted. The Premier has tried to misrepresent the position, not I.

The Premier: What next!

Mr. HUGHES: He ought to be ashamed of the position. Members on the Government side of the House are never tired of criticising the Federal Government, yet that Government provides £1 a week for men who are unable to work. Every old-age pensioner receives £1 a week.

The Premier: Then why do not these men get it from the Federal Government?

Mr. Cross: The men are not fit to work, but the Federal Government will not give them pensions.

The Premier: Why do not they get pensions, if they cannot work?

Mr. Styants: There is a catch in it.

Mr. HUGHES: What is the difference between a man who is unable to work because of old age, and one who is unable to work because of physical disabilities? What is the difference between them and the man who is able to work but cannot get it? There is no difference whatever as far as their individual requirements are concerned.

The Premier: No, but there is no country in the world that allows payments to people as you suggest.

Mr. HUGHES: Does the Premier suggest—

The Premier: No, I do not suggest that we can beat the world.

Mr. HUGHES: We could easily set the world a good example in this direction. In view of the enormous revenue derived from the financial emergency tax we could provide £50,000 more, and so increase the payments to the unfortunate C class men. If we took merely half the increase in the tax that was received last year, a substantial advance in the payments could be made to people who are endeavouring to live on 1s. a day.

The Premier: They are receiving better treatment here than anywhere else in the world, and you know it.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not care what treatment they receive. When the Premier uses the word "better" in referring to the treatment meted out to people who are endeavouring to rear children on 1s. a day, he discloses a poor appreciation of the true position.

The Premier: No, but that position exists, no matter how we view it.

Mr. HUGHES: The fact that in other countries there are people who receive worse treatment, is no excuse for the Government keeping people in Western Australia on the 1s. a day basis.

The Premier: They are better treated to-day than ever before.

Mr. HUGHES: That is no reason why the Government should continue to pay C class men 1s. a day. If we set aside £100,000 for the assistance of these people, we could do it and provide them with more than the 1s. allowance. We should do it not only from the humanitarian point of view, but also from the standpoint of the community as a whole. Many of the C class people are rearing children; and if those children do not receive proper nourishment between the ages of 2 and 14 years, they will become

defective for the rest of their lives. It is almost amusing to hear the suggestion advanced in this House that we should have more babies, particularly when we know that some members of the community are endeavouring to rear babies to become healthy citizens, although they are in receipt of only 1s. a day. Many who support the Premier agree that the C class men should receive an increase in their sustenance allowance.

The Premier: Anyone would think that there are thousands of them to hear the way you talk.

Mr. HUGHES: And there are not! That is the strong point that I make. If there were thousands of them, the contention could be raised that it would be so much more difficult to provide increased sustenance for them.

The Minister for Employment: We have done far better than increase their sustenance rate. We have put practically all of them to work.

Mr. HUGHES: Many of the C class men have not had much work.

The Minister for Employment: Most of them are working now.

Mr. HUGHES: That is a very different tale from what they tell me.

The Minister for Employment: Of course.

Mr. HUGHES: And it is different from what other people say.

The Minister for Employment: There are 177 C class men working to-day.

Mr. HUGHES: And how much work have they had in the last 12 months?

The Minister for Employment: They have been working for at least eight months.

Mr. HUGHES: How much work did they get?

The Minister for Employment: If they have three or more children, they get full-time work; if they have two children, they get seven weeks on and one week off; if they have one child, they have seven weeks on and two weeks off; if they have no children, they get six weeks on and two weeks off.

Mr. HUGHES: What is the average earning per man?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This conversation must not continue.

Mr. HUGHES: It is easy to say what the Minister has remarked.

The Minister for Mines: And it is hard for you to believe.

Mr. HUGHES: We know some of the C class men are getting work, but they are not as well off as they were in 1932 when they were allowed to earn £1 over their sustenance. If a man happened to earn 35s. in one week, when he was in receipt of 1s. a day, 15s. was stopped out of his sustenance in the following week.

The Minister for Employment: When was that?

The Premier: Years ago.

Mr. HUGHES: That was during last Parliament.

The Minister for Employment: That has been altered.

The Premier: You are out of date.

Mr. HUGHES: If that has been altered, it merely shows that some good has arisen through our bringing the matter under notice. There is no excuse, seeing the money that the financial emergency tax is producing, for anyone to be compelled to live on 1s. per day if he cannot secure work. With the money at our disposal we are in a position to provide upwards of double the amount now paid to people who cannot get work and are compelled to live on sustenance. I make no apology for drawing attention to this position. When comparisons are made with conditions that obtained some years ago, such comparisons are worthless unless the increase in revenue available is taken into consideration. With the money we have at our disposal, there is no excuse for unemployment or for anyone being in receipt of sustenance at all.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Labour, £1,137; Factories, £6,136; Arbitration Court, £7,180—agreed to.

Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £131,050:

Item, Salaries and allowances, etc., £16,600.

Mr. HEGNEY: I congratulate the Minister on providing an increased allowance for widows.

The CHAIRMAN: The item deals with salaries and allowances, and has no reference to widows.

Item, Assistance to Women on whom Children are dependent, and Outdoor Relief, including services and grants, etc., incidental thereto, £83,750.

Mr. HEGNEY: Under this item, an increased amount is provided for widows and

children. Their position during the past few years, owing to the increase that has taken place in the cost of living, has become difficult. I contrast the Government's attitude in this matter with what is proposed for widows and children under the National Insurance Scheme. Under that scheme, if a husband has paid his contributions for 104 weeks and then dies, a widow becomes entitled to 12s. 6d. per week, plus 3s. 6d. per week for each dependent child. I congratulate the Government and the Minister upon their decision to increase the payments to the widows and children in this State. The attitude of the department towards these unfortunate recipients of relief has, during the past 12 months, been much more sympathetic.

Mr. CROSS: I, too, am pleased at the increased allowances provided for women and children. The member for Williams-Narrogin, when speaking to-night, said there was no justification for the Government's carrying out further work in the metropolitan area.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not speaking to the item before the Committee.

Mr. CROSS: I am.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the item.

Mr. CROSS: I shall do so. In my opinion, the Minister should devote his energies to formulating a housing scheme for widows and their children, so that they may get a home at a rental which they can afford to pay. That is work which could be done in the metropolitan area at the present time.

Mr. Doney: The Government cannot do that from this item. The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. CROSS: These unfortunate people cannot afford to pay the rent demanded from them in the metropolitan area to-day. The position is a disgrace to any Government. The problem must be tackled at once. It has already been tackled in almost every European country.

Mr. Raphael: Mussolini has tackled it.

Mr. CROSS: Yes. In the last few years, since Mussolini has been in power, the Italian Government has provided £25,000,000—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss Mussolini.

Mr. CROSS: I hope the Government will do something in the direction I have indicated. Homes are being built under the Mc Ness Housing Scheme. A special effort should be made to provide homes for these recipients of relief.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I am not one of the members who are scratching the Minister's back.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member propose to speak on the item before the Committee?

Mr. RAPHAEL: Yes. I shall not speak of Mussolini or Hitler.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. RAPHAEL: Some members have mentioned the great improvement effected by the Child Welfare Department during the last 12 months in the provision for widows and for outdoor relief. Outdoor relief might give the Committee a fairly wide scope in the discussion on this item. I point out that the Child Welfare Department continues to write to persons receiving assistance inquiring whether any improvement has taken place in their circumstances. The action of the department from time to time in reducing the allowance to families by 7s. or 14s. a week is wrong. It is equally wrong that members should have to make representations to get the reductions restored. I have previously had occasion to complain of departmental action of this kind. The Government should appoint a co-ordinating officer. If there was an official controlling both unemployment and child welfare grants instead of having two sub-heads as at present, much of the hardship inflicted upon persons receiving rations from Marquis-street would be obviated.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Rations from Marquis-street do not come under assistance to women and out-door relief.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I claim that I should be permitted to advocate the co-ordination of this work under one official head. Widows with a couple of children under 14, and perhaps two or three children over 14 but unemployed, have received no assistance from the department in respect of the older children, but when one of them has obtained work producing perhaps 18s. or 20s. a week, the department has written to the widow stating that owing to the improvement in

her circumstances, her allowance will be reduced by 7s. or 14s. a week. I claim there has been no improvement in the circumstances of such a woman. The department provided no assistance for the children over 14, and because they happened to earn sufficient to provide themselves with food and clothing, the department should not reduce the allowance to the widow and the children under 14. Yet that is what is taking place every day in the week. I could quote the names of persons who have received a letter to that effect from the department. One woman had a stepchild living with her who strongly objected to paying £2 10s. a week to support his stepbrothers and stepsisters. After strong representations had been made to the department, the amount of the reduction was restored. The departmental attitude to men who were receiving outdoor relief but were later graded as C class from Marquis-street and put under the Child Welfare Department should be condemned, though in a few instances there is reason for congratulation. Some years ago the Government wisely decided that all these men should be medically examined.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed along those lines.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I intend to connect my remarks with the Child Welfare Department.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is wandering too far from the department.

Mr. RAPHAEL: But, if permitted. I wish to wander back to the department. When a man is unfit for manual labour he is transferred from sustenance to the Child Welfare Department. Many of us believed that when a man was so transferred, he and his family would receive the increase from 7s. to 9s. I have had to make representations in dozens and perhaps hundreds of cases to get the increase to 9s. Only to-day I had another case before me. A man had been sick for a long time; he was an outdoor patient of the Perth Hospital, and it took a considerable time to get him transferred to the Child Welfare Department. According to the medical certificate he needs extra nourishment, including milk; and the milk should be subjected to more than two tests to show that it is free from tuberculosis.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot go on talking about milk tests. I have already allowed him considerable latitude.

Mr. RAPHAEL: But the Child Welfare Department issues milk orders to indigent cases.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The other night I heard a couple of letters read.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will speak to the item.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The cows, instead of the milk, should be tested. Men transferred from Marquis-street to the department are suffering extreme hardship, and I hope the department will grant them the maximum amount. According to a statement by the Minister the maximum amount is to be increased. All the cases I have indicated should be granted the 9s. per unit per week. Some Victoria Park families of seven to nine children are on the Child Welfare Department, and they find it hard to pay £1 a week rent and keep ten people on the balance of £2. I should not like to have to do that.

Mr. Hughes: And yet you are responsible for it.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The attitude of the department towards widows is on some occasions very harsh. From time to time the officials suggest to mothers that as plenty of domestic service is available they should go out and find jobs. That means leaving the children in the care of other people whilst the mothers go out to work. Such a suggestion has been made to many mothers in my electorate. If a woman is placed in the unfortunate position of being obliged to rear her own family, the Government should see that she is adequately cared for. Old age pensions should not be used as an offset against any allowances that are granted by the Child Welfare Department. I trust the points I have mentioned will be carefully considered by the Minister.

Mr. TONKIN: My first impression was that this money meant an increase in the number of persons who would be claiming assistance. I now understand the increase in the Estimate really means improving the lot of those already receiving help. The officials should not be held down too tightly to this estimated expenditure, and I hope the Minister will not be hard upon them if they exceed the amount allotted. Much requires to be done under this item. Some women with one or two children are struggling very hard to keep a home together, and find that the financial assistance ren-

dered to them does not enable them to pay rent and provide food and clothing. They have, therefore, been obliged to place their children in the care of other people and go out to work. Every endeavour should be made to allow the mothers to remain with their children. I hope the allowances to women placed in this position will be increased, so that the amount they receive will be sufficient to cover their rent and the necessities of life. A sum of 7s. per unit is inadequate. There are some instances in which men have received 9s. a week. I know of men who have been transferred from the Unemployment Bureau to the Child Welfare Department and have received 9s. per unit, and I have been told that even the 9s. has been exceeded.

Mr. Cross: Clothes and footwear are sometimes given.

Mr. TONKIN: When the money is being distributed I hope the Minister will see that for small families as high as 12s. or 15s. per unit is paid. A woman with one child or two children has to pay rent, and if that has to come out of her aggregate allowance very little is left for the family. When the widow has six children the allowance per unit is generally sufficient to enable her to pay the rent and have enough left to live on. As much money as possible should be given to enable mothers to keep their homes together.

Item, Maintenance of Children, including aid to Orphanages, etc., £26,000.

Mr. TONKIN: The Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief Department frequently imposes upon the good nature of foster mothers by cutting out the allowance when the children have reached the age of 14. The little ones are boarded out but as soon as they reach the age of 14 the allowance is discontinued and the foster parent is obliged to send the children out to work or maintain them for nothing. In very few instances do we find foster parents willing to give up their proteges. They do wonderful work and should be encouraged. The department has no right to impose upon their good nature in this way. Under normal conditions it would be possible for boys and girls on reaching the age of 14 to get a job immediately. Under present conditions that is not so. Therefore these foster parents continue, out of love for the children whom they have brought up, to keep them without any allowance whatever from the department. I hope the depart-

ment will see its way clear to continue the allowance beyond the age of 14 years.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Council of Industrial Development, £3,036:

Item, Bureau of Industry and Economic Research, £1,000.

Mr. MARSHALL: In view of certain legislation contemplated, it is remarkable that this item should have found its way on to the Estimates. It did not appear last year.

The Premier: We have to make provision for the Council in case the Bill for its establishment passes.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Premier has so much money that he can anticipate the passing of that legislation, possibly we cannot spend the amount better in any other way. What is proposed to be done with this £1,000?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: A Bill before Parliament has for its object the establishment of a bureau of industry and economic research. If the Bill becomes law, as the Government anticipates, certain expenditure will be necessary in connection with the operations of the proposed bureau between the time it comes into existence and the end of the financial year on the 30th June next.

Mr. Marshall: Do you think the amount will suffice?

The Premier: It represents only expenditure for this financial year.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Bill will not be finalised before the end of November, and the bureau cannot be organised before the end of January. It is estimated that the £1,000 will suffice, or more than suffice, for the remaining five months of the current financial year.

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £87,525:

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. F. C. L. Smith—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [9.35]: The revenue to be derived from all sources during the current year is estimated at £319,000 compared with last year's actual collections of £303,044.

The apportionment between the respective divisions is as follows:—

	Estimate, 1938-39.	Annual, 1937-38.
	£	£
Div. 25—Crown Law...	240,550	225,807
Div. 26—Licensing ...	78,450	77,237
	<u>319,000</u>	<u>303,044</u>

The actual collections for last year were only £10,344 in excess of the amount estimated, viz., £292,700.

Justification for an estimated increase of £15,955 in this year's collections is shown in the explanations dealing with the respective items.

The statement I shall now read summarises the Crown Law revenue position for both the current and preceding years—

	Estimated, 1938-39.			Actual, 1937-38.		
	£	£	Percentage to total Revenue.	£	£	Percentage to total Revenue.
Probate ... ..	...	115,000	47.80	...	101,631	45.00
Law Courts—						
Judicial Fines and Fees ...	50,000			47,487		
Local Court Fees	9,000			9,303		
Supreme Court Fees	26,000			25,167		
		85,000	35.34		81,957	36.30
Crown Law Department ...	...	8,550	3.56	...	11,897	5.27
Land Titles ... ..	...	32,000	13.30	...	30,322	13.43
		<u>£240,550</u>	<u>100.00</u>		<u>£225,807</u>	<u>100.00</u>

The item of probate is rather difficult to estimate, but by some means or other the departmental officers seem to get pretty close to actual results. In estimating col-

lections one can only be guided by past experience, and the knowledge of any estimates in connection with which duty will be paid during the current year. It is

known that several fairly large estates have yet to be finalised. In view of information to hand the estimate of £115,000 does not appear unduly optimistic. Under law courts the estimated collections are £85,000, whereas last year's receipts were £81,957. These collections are derived from three sources—judicial fines and fees, local court fees, and Supreme Court fees. Naturally the collections depend entirely upon the activities of the various courts during the year. There is no great fluctuation from year to year in the fees collected under the second and third headings, but owing to the activities of the police courts fines and fees have shown a steady increase during recent years.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do the figures include starting price betting fines?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. It is a fact that for some unknown reason activities under these headings seem to increase with increasing prosperity. At all events, that has been the experience.

Mr. Hughes: Possibly you may lose the starting-price betting item.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Possibly. It does not amount to a large proportion of the total. However, the present position does justify the expectation of a further increase under that heading, and the total amount from law courts is likely to be realised.

Crown Law receipts for the current year are estimated at £8,550. Last financial year's collections totalled £11,897. The item generally fluctuates in proportion to the variation in amounts escheated to the Crown by the Curator of Intestate Estates. Last year the amount transferred to revenue was just over £7,000, which compares with £5,100 likely to be available this year. The other sources of revenue are departmental re-imbursements and certain payments made by the Commonwealth to this State department for Savings Bank work undertaken by clerks of courts, cleaning of bankruptcy offices, and services of State officers which are made available to the Commonwealth. Prior to this year, £312 per annum was also recovered for rent of offices used by bankruptcy officials; but in future the rent will be collected by the Public Works Department, and our estimates have been reduced accordingly.

Under the heading of Land Titles we estimate for this financial year a revenue of £32,000. Last year's collections totalled £30,322. Last year was exceptionally satisfactory from the revenue standpoint in that branch, and there is no indication at present of any falling off in business. It is possible that a slight increase will be realised this year; hence the provision appearing in the Estimates.

With regard to licensing matters, liquor licenses are estimated to produce £78,450 as against last year's collections of £77,237. This revenue is mainly derived from the minimum annual fees and the 5 per cent. and 6 per cent. additional fees, together with the premiums payable on the granting of new licenses. The summer conditions last year were rather unusual. They were such as not to prompt anticipation of Western Australia's drink bill reaching its maximum. I recollect that many of the proprietors of soft-drink businesses at Cottesloe complained about the weather and the persistent south-westerly blows. Generally speaking, it was a remarkably cool summer, such as we can hardly expect each year. In the circumstances, it is possible that the summer this year will be more normal. We are justified in assuming that there may be an increase in the 6 per cent. fees, and provision has been made accordingly. It is not anticipated that new premiums will be collected, or that there will be any marked increase in the minimum annual fee. Other licenses are estimated to produce £1,450 as against last year's collections totalling £1,408. There is no great fluctuation in the revenue collected under this heading, which is derived from the licenses of employment brokers and billiard saloons.

The expenditure in connection with the Crown Law offices, excluding licensing disbursements, is estimated at £87,525, whereas last year the actual expenditure was £81,679. The estimated net increase compared with last year's expenditure is £5,846. This is mainly accounted for by additional provision being made under the headings of salaries, general, and by-elections. Licensing expenditure is estimated at £3,090, as against the actual expenditure of £2,984 last year, showing an increase of £106. This is due to the basic wage increase in the salaries of two clerks, and the provision of £46 for temporary assistance.

MR. NULSEN (Kanowna) [9.45]: I rise reluctantly to disagree with the policy of the Licensing Court. Norseman is in the Kanowna licensing district and, since 1922, two licenses have lapsed and two hotels have been de-licensed. Since 1934, three applications have been made for provisional certificates. The first was made in November, 1934, the second on the 2nd March, 1937, and the third on the 3rd September, 1938. The three applications were refused on the ground that there was already sufficient accommodation available in the Norseman district. The people claim definitely that there is not sufficient accommodation. When Mr. Clarke lodged his application for a license in 1934, it was proved conclusively, according to the evidence that I have, that there was not sufficient accommodation. The same position applied in 1937, although I agreed with the Licensing Court to a certain extent, because I consider that a man who has spent his money on building a very fine hotel is entitled to get some of it back. In 1938, everyone in the district thought that the application for a license then made could not possibly be rejected, not because there was not sufficient bedroom and dining-room accommodation available, but owing to the congestion in the bar at the one hotel. In 1934, Messrs. Smith and Walker made an application for the transfer of the license from the old hotel building to the new premises. The application was granted, under certain conditions. The new hotel would accommodate only four more persons than the old place, but an undertaking was given that the old premises would be available for permanent boarders, and that procedure was followed for a certain time. The position at Norseman, from the point of view of bar trade, is very unsatisfactory. I do not think the policy of the Licensing Court is correct. From 1934 to 1937, the population of the township more than doubled, and during the next 12 months the number of residents in the town ward increased by 100. The townspeople fully expected that the application for another license would be granted in 1938, and they were amazed when the court rejected the application.

Mr. Marshall: Has the population of Norseman increased?

Mr. NULSEN: I have already pointed that out. The population is now about 2,500. When the second application was made to the Licensing Court, it seemed to me

that the court allowed further additions to be made to the existing premises, for the sole reason of cutting out the second license. If those conditions were warranted, why did the licensee say, in his evidence, that between September, 1936 and February, 1937, he had had an average of 12 beds vacant? It seems conclusive to me that there must have been some understanding between the Licensing Court and the owners that if an application were made, the expenditure of a few pounds on the existing hotel would mean that the second license would not be granted. The great trouble at present is the congestion in the bar of the hotel. On pay day and other days out of the ordinary, the bar is particularly congested; 300 or 400 men may be there at one time. Personally, I would rather have two hotels in the district, costing £30,000, than only one hotel costing that sum. Two hotels would be better for the public; there would be more harmony and conditions would be more congenial. To give members an idea of the psychology of the Norseman people, I may say they have sent me a manifesto addressed to the Premier, declaring that the Labour Government does not represent the workers of Norseman while it countenances the exploitation of those workers by permitting a hotel monopoly and allowing the Licensing Court to frustrate the will of the people.

Mr. Patrick: Could not the one existing hotel put in a bigger bar?

Mr. NULSEN: I would not regard even that as fair. A man who wants a quiet drink should not be forced to go into a bar where hundreds of noisy men are drinking. To keep the bar clean in such circumstances is impossible; people will spill beer and some become dirty in their behaviour when drinking. The manifesto I mentioned will give members an idea of what the workers of Norseman think of the policy of the Licensing Court. I am not merely echoing the sentiments of the workers, but of at least 80 per cent. of the people of Norseman. The policy of the court seems to be extraordinary. Only two years ago a highly respected storekeeper, who has been in the district for 40 years, applied for a gallon license.

Mr. Marshall: I bet he did not get it.

Mr. NULSEN: His application was refused on the ground I have already stated, namely, that sufficient accommodation already existed.

Mr. Patrick: It is a good monopoly.

Mr. NULSEN: A respectable elderly gentleman expended all his capital in erecting a billiard room and purchasing two new billiard tables. He complied in every respect with the provisions of the Licensing Act, and made application for a license, but his application was refused on the same ground. A billiard room was already in existence.

Mr. Patrick: Is it at the hotel?

Mr. NULSEN: No. It is in another building. I cannot understand the court's attitude at all. It has been inferred that the members get a rake-off, or have their palms greased. I do not agree with that, because I know the members of the court and do not doubt their integrity.

Mr. Sampson: Do you like the idea of gallon licenses?

Mr. NULSEN: It is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Sampson: I think it is.

Mr. NULSEN: A storekeeper holding a gallon license sends his traveller out for orders. It is convenient for people to order a gallon of beer, whisky or wine, if they so desire, and have it delivered to them.

Mr. Sampson: It is awkward when a storekeeper makes a mistake in the accounts and gets the beer mixed with kerosene.

Mr. NULSEN: I have had a gallon license for years and have not abused the law in any way. If a customer orders a gallon of beer or whisky, I supply it.

Member: And if a customer orders half a gallon?

Mr. NULSEN: He would not get it from me.

Mr. Sampson: It would not be done deliberately.

Mr. NULSEN: I have been requested by the people of Norseman to move that the salaries of the three members of the Licensing Court be reduced to £50 per annum each.

Mr. Marshall: Why overpay them?

Mr. NULSEN: The people at Norseman consider the members of the court have outlived their usefulness.

Mr. Marshall: If they ever had any.

Mr. NULSEN: I do not agree that the members of the court might be worth only £50 per annum. They have their own opinion and policy. To a very great extent, the fault lies with the legislation Parliament has placed on the statute-book. It seems to me, however, that the members of the court lack discretion and vision. In my opinion, competition is better than monopolies. I wish to give mem-

bers some statistics: the Central Norseman Gold Mine employs 264 workers to whom salaries and wages were paid as follows:—

	£
1935-36	34,972
1936-37	64,380
1937-38	102,732
1938 (first five months)	38,957

Members will note the steady increase. The Norseman Gold Mine employs 322 workers, the Blue Bird Mine 32, and the Golden Gate 8. Roughly, the amount at present paid in salaries and wages at Norseman is not less than £250,000 per annum. One hotel has more or less all that to itself.

Mr. Doney: Do not the people spend their money on anything else?

Mr. Watts: Do not they buy anything else at Norseman?

The Premier: Nothing else counts.

Mr. NULSEN: Improvements are being effected on the Norseman Gold Mine to a value of not less than £50,000. This money is being expended on plant necessary to treat extra ore. The district therefore is not going back; it is improving and the population is increasing.

Mr. Patrick: That must be a very solid mine.

Mr. NULSEN: The district is solid. The water scheme has been extended to Norseman. The work was carried out some three years ago after a thorough investigation by the present Government. As a matter of fact, Mr. Collier, when Premier, was rather sceptical about extending the water scheme, but changed his opinion after a consideration of figures presented to him. I think the Licensing Court should have all this information. Norseman would not be over-capitalised if it had a second hotel.

Mr. Patrick: I think the one hotel must be the best mine there.

Mr. NULSEN: It is a real gold mine.

Mr. Sampson: The hotel is conducted wonderfully well.

Mr. NULSEN: I have some figures showing the number of employees on the 31st August, 1938: Central Norseman Gold Mine, 240; Norseman Gold Mine, 288; Blue Bird Mine, 32; Golden Gate, 8; Goldfields Diamond Drilling Company, 7; Prospectors, 50; Road board employees, 10; number employed outside mining, 250; total, 885. Others include woodcutters, Government employees, and the employees of stores, banks, painters, builders, undertakers, etc. Adult males total

1,386 and females 598, while the number of children is 450, a total population of 2,434.

Mr. Sampson: Is it fair to include the undertaker?

Mr. NULSEN: Well, he drinks beer.

Mr. Hughes: Do you know how much rent the publican is paying?

Mr. NULSEN: About £100 a week.

Mr. Warner: Who owns that paradise?

Mr. NULSEN: The hotel is owned by Messrs. Smith and Walker, two very good men. The local government revenue in 1934 totalled £2,300; in 1937, £5,712; and in 1938, £8,274. Thus in four years the revenue increased fourfold. From 1934 to 1937 the population more than doubled, and since 1937 has increased by 100. The chairman of the Licensing Court seems to adopt a nasty attitude of hostility to witnesses. I do not know the reason; it seems to be his nature. Whether he means it or not, I cannot say. However, the people are taking great exception to his manner. When Sergeant Archibald was giving evidence the chairman accused him of being not quite honest and said he did not take much notice of the evidence of policemen. Other witnesses, as well as the applicant, were the victims of the chairman's hostility. I cannot see that such behaviour is necessary. It is not right that witnesses should be treated in that way.

Mr. Marshall: They are very lucky. At one time he used to abuse them, but lately he has become quite civil.

Mr. NULSEN: The police favoured a second license at Norseman. Their reasons were, firstly, the congestion due to the lack of facilities leading to disorder and rows; secondly, that they would have more control over the people; and thirdly, that they had received numerous complaints from residents that a second hotel had not been established.

Mr. Patrick: I thought you said they took no notice of the police.

Mr. NULSEN: No, I was quoting the chairman's statement. On the subject of the bar congestion, I should like to read statements from the evidence given—

Alfred Baldwin Williams, sworn, said: I am a prospector. I am working a show three miles east of Norseman. I am chairman of the Prospectors' Association. I visit Norseman every Saturday. I usually find the bars crowded.

Harry Suggett: I am a miner at the Norseman Gold Mine. I am the union representative on the mine. In my opinion the present

bars at the hotel are congested on Saturday and pay night.

Edward Richards, sworn, said: I am employed at the Central Norseman Mine. I am a miner. I am the representative of the A.W.U. on the mine. At certain periods the bar at the hotel is congested and as a result of the congestion the bar becomes dirty with spilt beer.

That gives an idea of the condition of the bar. The rent of about £100 a week for the hotel seems enormous.

Mr. Hughes: How much did the hotel cost?

Mr. NULSEN: I gather that the cost was about £20,000. Mr. Walter Clark and his two colleagues, Messrs. Alan Muir and A. R. Williams, were prepared to spend £15,000 on the building of an up-to-date hotel. I take it that those men had considered the proposition thoroughly and in view of their proposal to spend £15,000, they must have seen an opportunity to get their money back. The provision of a second hotel would create more work, not only in the erecting of the building but in the staffing of it. A second hotel would be desirable from a business point of view and the people would have the choice of patronising whichever place they preferred. Further, it would have a great effect on the harmony of the town. When all classes of people are congested in the one hotel, police are needed to watch over them continually. A couple of policemen are provided to quell rows, but less trouble would occur if there were two hotels. I cannot see why the will of the people should be thwarted, especially when outside investors are prepared to spend their money in the town. There was some talk of black-balling the existing hotel. I said to those who spoke in that strain, "You would be very foolish to do that. I do not blame the owner or the licensee; I blame the court, so why penalise those interested in the present hotel for doing what you would do if you had the opportunity?" The court is maintaining a monopoly and the people are becoming very restless. They consider it unfair to be kept continually under the eye of the police when they go to have a drink, but in existing conditions the police must be there. I could say a lot of nasty things, but I do not propose to do so. At the same time I feel very strongly about the action of the court. Even if there was sufficient accommodation at the existing hotel, it is not fair, when the town has such a large population, that everybody should be com-

pelled to patronise the one place. On the goldfields it is not a question of Englishmen or Australians, but people of all nationalities. That is how trouble comes about. The only objectors to the second license are the owners of the hotel, the licensee, and his family. Even the churches, against their principles, do not object to a second hotel at Norseman. If a petition were sent round to-morrow 80 per cent. of the people would sign it. Up to date I have received more than 50 letters concerning the congestion in the bar at the Norseman hotel.

Mr. Raphael: Would Bertie Johnson get the second license?

Mr. NULSEN: It would be better that he should have it than that Norseman should be left with only one hotel. I am not speaking personally in this matter. The owners, Messrs. Smith & Walker, are well-known to me. They are fine gentlemen and enterprising. The hotel is well managed by Mr. Neville. One could not find a better hotel manager anywhere in the State. The premises are clean and comfortable, the bedrooms are excellent, and no one could wish for better dining-rooms. About the whole place, one could say it was all that could be expected of it. The licensee is a good citizen, he is a public-spirited man, chairman of the road board, is a member of the hospital board, and takes an interest in everything. I am not speaking against the owners or the licensee. I do not blame them for taking the stand they did, but I do blame the court for its policy. Norseman is not the only place that is penalised.

Mr. Raphael: You will support me if I move to strike out the amount covering the salary of members of the court?

Mr. NULSEN: I would not say that. Manjimup is in an even worse position than is Norseman. I am told that the population of Manjimup is 5,000 and that the town has only one hotel.

Mr. Doney: Who told you that?

Mr. NULSEN: I obtained that information from the statistics.

Mr. Marshall: I believe the Salmon Gums hotel is about to be delicensed.

Mr. NULSEN: In the Manjimup district are three large timber mills within six miles of the town, employing 200 timber workers exclusive of the mill hands, whilst the balance of the population is made up

of farmers and general employees. There is no prospect of the district going back. I am told the hotel cost £25,000. Remarkable to relate, the rent for a five year lease is put down at £2,500, on a capital expenditure of £25,000. If a man were to borrow £25,000 and build a second hotel at Manjimup, the investment would be a good one. I think he could borrow the money at 6 per cent. if he had the necessary security. Six per cent. on £25,000 is equal to £1,500 a year, and at the end of five years that would yield £7,500. If we take that amount from £22,500, we find a profit is left of £15,000. In addition to the rent of £22,500 for five years, I understand the licensee has to pay rates, taxes and insurance. The policy of the court in that respect is definitely wrong. Since the hotel was re-built I am told the bar space is now the largest in Western Australia. As many as five barmen are working there. About three years ago two applications were made for a second hotel, and within the last 12 months a further application was made. Plans were prepared for an expenditure of £25,000. If any business man is willing to spend that much money he must see something in the proposition. I have ascertained from the local authorities that no application was called publicly by the Licensing Court for additions to the hotel, but the owners were allowed to make additions to the value of £8,000. Probably more than that amount was actually spent. This policy of allowing additions to be made has resulted in keeping out the second license. That is not fair to the community in question. The court is inconsistent in its policy. It has power to delicense hotels and everyone should be put on the same basis. Pemberton is 25 miles south of Manjimup, has a population of 2,000 and one hotel. Bridgetown is 21 miles north, has a population of 2,200 and four hotels. Greenbushes, which is 31 miles north, with a population of 900, has two hotels, and Boyup Brook, which is 40 miles to the north-east and has a population of 1,500, has one hotel.

Mr. Cross: And Toodyay has three.

Mr. NULSEN: From the newspapers I gathered that someone in Bunbury applied for the right to transfer a license from an old hotel that is pretty well worn out to a new site, and this person was prepared to

spend £17,000 on the building. On merely a trivial point the application was refused. I am told that the reason why the court turned down the proposition, and prevented this money from going into circulation, was that on the site chosen for the building there would be insufficient air. Apparently the court sets itself up as being possessed of knowledge superior to that of those who should know what they are doing in a commercial enterprise of this description. The excuse for turning down the proposal was both trivial and frivolous. From the point of view of the State's development the policy is wrong. I ask the Minister to consider the desirability of amending the Act. Such an amendment should be on the basis of population and turnover in the bar. From the little experience I have had of hotel keeping I consider that any town with an adult population of 1,200 persons is entitled to a second hotel. It is more desirable that a town should have a second hotel than a third one. I would not mind if the margin between the second hotel and third were made greater than between the first and second. I hope the Minister will heed my remarks, and do something to enable the public to obtain more comfort and conveniences than they now possess. I refer to congestion in the bar. No one has anything to complain about in the accommodation provided in the hotel at Norseman, other than as to the congestion in the bar.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [10.19]: I was delighted to hear the remarks of the member for Kanowna. For the last ten years I have been trying to convince the Chamber concerning the futility of the Licensing Court. Here is an opportunity for the member for Subiaco to get £3,090 with which to provide free milk for children. The money would be better spent in that direction than upon a court of this kind. I suggest that the court is an especially dangerous court, in view of the unlimited and unchallengeable powers it possesses. There is no appeal from its decisions, and there is nothing but discourtesy from its chairman, who is a man without capacity to control a sty for swine, much less to preside over a court where civility is expected though not obtained. The chairman of the court is the most astounding person I have had the unpleasant experience of listening to; he does not even possess the capacity to speak the

English language correctly. His discourtesy and ignorance are displayed in almost every minute he spends in court. And still the Government tolerates and re-appoints him. In some parts of the State the Press has tried to inform the Government regarding the man's attitude. It amounts to impudence to ask people to sit or stand in court and submit to discourtesy and occasional downright abuse from this individual who is remunerated by the taxpayer. The board never served any useful purpose after it finished its work as a Licenses Reduction Board.

It is true, as stated by the member for Kanowna, that some of the court's decisions are almost unbelievable. Unquestionably they are utterly inconsistent. Cases upon cases could be cited to prove this. For years there was only one gallon license at Wiluna. The present holder of that license had to make several attempts before he could get a second gallon license for the centre, making two in all. The holder of the original license became bankrupt, and an offer for it was made and accepted. A transfer was applied for but refused. So there is now only one gallon license at Wiluna for a population of 7,000, as against a former population of about 100. Geraldton, also with a population of about 7,000, with more favourable climatic conditions, and with its people more concentrated, has eight licenses, I believe. What is the idea of such inconsistency? What is behind it? The sooner the Government wakes up and dismisses the board, the better. One man obtained a license for himself while he was sitting on the bench.

As years go by, no doubt others will succeed in doing the same thing. We do not know what is going on. What purpose does the court serve? It never visits outside centres except when an application for a new license is to be heard. Then the court takes a joy ride to decide that application. Over periods of years, occasionally, the local magistrate and police administer the licensing law; but an application for a new license brings the court on the scene. I respectfully suggest that the licensing system under the existing Act would be equally effective without the board. I do not suggest that justices of the peace should sit with the local magistrate. However, the magistrate knows the district and its requirements, and the licensees. The court knows nothing whatever of these aspects. Nevertheless, it makes

its appearance when a new license is required. This august body of important individuals quite unnecessarily living on the taxpayer was travelling between Meekatharra and Wiluna when the railway was under construction. The number of coaches hauled by a train was limited then, there being only one first-class compartment. The personnel of the court at this time was not the same as it is now, but one of those members remains. On arrival at Wiluna the then members of the court took over the first-class compartment for themselves, passengers who had paid first-class fares being turned out. The august body was travelling to Wiluna to decide on an application for a new license. The local magistrate could have done the work far more effectively.

I fail to understand the Government's tolerance of the court. We do not want a repetition of the remarks of the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes). The whole history of the court reeks with suspicion. That has been known for many years. The Government should have taken action long ago to disestablish the court. This matter has been a hardy annual with me; I have been at it ever since the compensation fund has been exhausted. Ever since the court has become a burden on the taxpayer, I have attacked it. For years, however, members gave me no support. Now they begin to see the light of day. I have been told previously, and doubtless shall be told to-night by the Minister, that I should pay attention to the improvement the court has effected in hotels. The board has made no improvement. Whatever improvement has been made is the result of the Act itself. There were beautiful hotels to be found in our cities and elsewhere long before the board was ever thought of. One objectionable feature of to-day that did not exist formerly is the monopoly of licenses. Only wealth coupled with a good deal of cunning can secure a hotel license nowadays.

Mr. Raphael: Mostly Bertie Johnston.

Mr. MARSHALL: I mentioned a "degree of cunning" that was displayed in some instances! I was delighted to hear the member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) speak this evening, for he showed that we had another convert. As the years pass, others will wake up. They have allowed conditions to continue for years and have not protested.

Mr. Thorn: Let us wipe out the court to-night.

Mr. MARSHALL: We cannot do so.

Mr. Raphael: Yes we can; why can't we?

Mr. MARSHALL: There is only one way, and that is by amending the law.

Mr. Raphael: Cut out their salaries.

Mr. Marshall: We can do that, but they will be paid from some other source.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Government would not dare to do that.

The Premier: They have to carry out the law.

Mr. MARSHALL: When dealing with this subject that is the only point upon which I agree with the Premier.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You would not require to amend the law merely to give effect to the wishes of the Committee.

Mr. MARSHALL: There is nothing in the Constitution that provides for that.

Mr. McDonald: Then what are we here for?

Mr. MARSHALL: Just to fill up, and make a party!

Hon. C. G. Latham: You give us a chance to try.

Mr. Hughes: Does not the Licensing Act say that the members of the court can be retired without compensation?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not think so, but I would not care to argue the point. The Licensing Act was passed originally in 1911, and in 1922 an amending Act was passed under which the Licenses Reduction Board was created. Then again in 1928 the Act was further amended and the board became simply the licensing body for the whole State. From that stage onwards, I have viewed it with a great deal of suspicion.

Mr. Patrick: The Licenses Reduction Board did not cost the State anything.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. The board was paid out of a special fund, and carried out fairly good work. The present Licensing Court, so far from doing any good, has done a lot of harm, the effect of which will be appreciated in due course. I could say quite a lot that would verge on the personal, and it would have a bearing upon certain members of this Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect upon members of the Committee.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, that is why I do not intend to make the statement. Nevertheless, I regard the Government as being par-

ticularly dilatory regarding the licensing authority. Ministers are not blind and can see what has been going on for years. So long as I am in Parliament, irrespective of which party may be in office, I shall enter my protest on these Estimates while the licensing authority, as now constituted, is in existence.

With regard to the magistrates in the metropolitan area, I respect them as particularly efficient and able men. Nevertheless, I agree with the Commissioner of Police in his contention that the limited section of his officers placed in control of the traffic laws should receive more assistance from the magistrates when convictions are secured. Penalties should be inflicted that would at least be regarded as deterrent. I refer mostly to convictions against drivers of motor vehicles. In the course of his annual report for the year ended the 30th June last, the Commissioner of Police says—

So far as dangerous and negligent driving are concerned, I consider that when a conviction is obtained more severe penalties should be inflicted by the court. Strictly speaking, the duty of the police is finished once the facts of the case are presented to the court. Owing, however, to the great loss of life in a small community, as well as injuries to persons, I feel compelled to comment on same in regard to the ridiculous penalties imposed by courts throughout the State. Recently a motor driver was found guilty of dangerous driving, and through his negligence damage to the extent of several hundreds of pounds was sustained by the owner of certain property, yet this reckless and negligent driver was fined £2.

It was a miracle no lives were lost. The Minister should go into this particular phase. I am firmly convinced that specific definite penalties should appear in the Act, so that no one could alter them.

The Minister for Justice: We have some in the Traffic Act that cause great injustice at times.

Mr. MARSHALL: Probably that cannot be helped, but we must do something to prevent the desire on the part of some people to commit suicide or to murder others, a desire that resulted during the past year in 140 persons being killed and 927 injured throughout the State. Those figures indicate an increase of seven fatal accidents and upwards of 130 serious accidents, compared with the records for the preceding 12 months. This simply means that much of the money we paid in respect of migration schemes has been emptied into Karrakatta,

seeing that people are being murdered so rapidly.

The Minister for Justice: That difficulty is associated with the business everywhere.

Mr. MARSHALL: But in a State like Western Australia, it amounts to positive lunacy.

The Minister for Justice: I thought you were referring to the ratio of deaths.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is not the congestion here that is apparent elsewhere.

Mr. Patrick: Nevertheless, the death rate is high for such a small population.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will not deal with the matter at greater length, but will discuss it when the Police Estimates are under consideration. To treat this matter lightly is useless. When it strikes home, then one feels the full effect of its meaning. The telephone rings, and the member is told that one who is near and dear to him is dead. That is when the position strikes home, and makes one realise the need to put an end to the desire on the part of a few to murder others. Only those who have experienced the anguish and misery of holding in his arms the body of some one near and dear to him can realise what it means, and can feel fully the urge to save others from a similar experience. I trust the Minister will take up these matters and see what can be done. I do not know whether or not he is busy but it is no use Parliament passing legislation and the police enforcing it, only to find the law-breakers mulet in a paltry sum. So far as I am concerned, that will not be done without a protest.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.