

should live and breathe air. There is complete indifference to the conditions of workers who want to live in a reasonable way.

I say in conclusion that much has been said about the bogey of the centralist Government and the bogey of the philosophy of the Australian Labor Party, but it is a policy which I am proud to represent, and I am proud to say I am a socialist because socialism is the only way in which this country's wealth can be equitably distributed to enable the worker to take his place in what should be a good and wonderful nation.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bateman.

*House adjourned at 11.02 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 23rd October, 1974

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### BILLS (2): ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Acts Amendment (Judicial Salaries and Pensions) Bill.
2. Dongara-Eneabba Railway Bill.

### QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

#### 1. HOMOSEXUALITY

*Report of Honorary Royal Commission: Printing*

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Justice:

In view of the interest expressed by several bodies, both interstate and intrastate, would he make representations to the Premier for the printing of the report of the Honorary Royal Commission into Homosexuality, which was tabled this afternoon?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

I am grateful to the honourable member for giving some advance notice of his intention to ask the question. I am agreeable to conveying his request to the Premier.

### PARK AT REABOLD HILL

*Inspection by Members*

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [4.38 p.m.]: I would like to seek leave to make a short statement concerning a visit by members to the Reabold Hill area.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It is proposed that in conjunction with the Perth City Council, a visit by members of Parliament be arranged to the Reabold Hill area. Members may have some prior notice of this visit, which will take place on Thursday, the 31st October. Arrangements have been made to provide transport to depart from Parliament House at 1.45 p.m. on that day.

The arrangements are of such a nature as will enable members of both Houses to become a little better acquainted with the area, and for this purpose it is understood the visit will take some time and will probably conclude at about 4.00 p.m. on that day. I repeat that arrangements are being made to provide buses and members will receive notification of final details tomorrow morning.

As I have said, the visit will take place on a Thursday when the House normally sits at 2.30 p.m. Therefore, it will be necessary to make some arrangement—and I would like an opportunity to discuss the arrangement with you, Mr President—for the House to reassemble between 4.00 and 4.30 p.m. on that day. However, the final details will be made known to members tomorrow morning.

When members have received notification of the final details it would be as well if they acquainted their party secretaries of their intention to take part in the visit to enable matters to be finalised. I repeat, the visit will take place on Thursday, the 31st October, and the party will leave from Parliament House at 1.45 p.m.

### QUESTIONS (6): ON NOTICE

#### 1. DEFENCE BASES

*North-West*

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Minister for Justice:

Further to my question on the 19th September, 1974, concerning the establishment of Army, Navy or Air Force bases in the North:

- (1) Has the Western Australian Government been advised of such planning by the Federal Government, and if so, when was the advice received?
- (2) Has the State Government been advised—
  - (a) that a permanent Air Force base will be established at Derby for strategic and other reasons within a decade;
  - (b) that the aerodrome at Derby is about to be increased in length to 8 000 feet plus the construction of an aircraft apron and camp area to military specification as laid down

in reference No. DAFW 74/36 on a map entitled "Development of Derby Airport to Fighter Standard";

- (c) that annual exercises will be held when the aerodrome is completed;
  - (d) that the annual exercises will initially involve 36 fighter aircraft movements per day for two weeks, plus a total of 48 movements of Hercules C130 aircraft during the week before and the week after the exercise which involves the placement of 200-250 RAAF personnel; and
  - (e) that these exercises will later expand to involve 500 RAAF personnel?
- (3) Has the State Government been approached to assist with land acquisition and re-allocation of land in the Derby area for defence requirements?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) to (3) The question of joint training areas in our north is the subject of discussion between the Commonwealth and State Governments and in which discussion the W.A. Government has promised full co-operation because of our keen desire to see such facilities established.

Until these discussions are further advanced, it is not desired to make any detailed comment at this stage.

2.

## FISHERIES

### Coastal Patrols

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Health:

In view of the article in the September edition of the "Australian Fisheries", wherein details were given of six 14 metre aluminium-hulled patrol boats being built in Australia for gift to the Philippines under an Australian Government aid programme; these boats being complete with radar, navigational and communications equipment, to be used for customs enforcement and anti-smuggling patrols in the Luzon and Manila Bay areas—

- (a) would the Minister give details of any such similar patrol boats made available by the Australian Government for patrol work on our north-west coast;

(b) if not, is this because—

- (i) the boats would be of no use in our current problems related to overseas fishermen, quarantine and customs; or
- (ii) the Australian Government has supplied bigger and more suitable ships to deal with the problems?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (a) To the best of my knowledge similar patrol boats are not being made available by the Commonwealth for patrol work in the north-west.
- (b) (i) The boats referred to would be of use but may not be the most suitable design; and
- (ii) the Commonwealth Government has not supplied any ships but has increased Naval surveillance. I also point out that negotiations are in train with the Commonwealth Government on a State Government request for a contribution towards the cost of a new State patrol vessel which will be of a design more suitable to our needs.

3.

## HOUSING

### Armadale-Kelmscott: Undeveloped Land

The Hon. I. G. PRATT, to the Minister for Justice:

Further to the answer to my question on the 17th October, 1974, regarding State Housing Commission land within the Shire of Armadale-Kelmscott, will the Minister indicate—

- (a) the location numbers, zoning and area of each of the 17 parcels of land mentioned in his answer;
- (b) what area of land is involved in the current negotiations; and
- (c) what total area of rural land does the State Housing Commission intend to acquire within this shire?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (a) The Minister for Housing advises that it is not—and never has been—the practice of the commission to disclose the specific information as requested. The zoning and area of each of the 17 parcels of land are given in the attached schedule.

- (b) and (c) The commission has authorised negotiations be entered into to acquire up to a further approximate 380 acres of rural land.

Schedule of Parcels of Undeveloped Land owned by the State Housing Commission within the Shire of Armadale-Kelmscott—as at 17th October, 1974.

Parcel No.	Area acres	Zoning
1	150	Rural
2	69	Rural
3	70	Rural
4	76	Rural
5	49	Rural
6	132	Rural
7	157	Part rural, Part urban
8	48	Rural
9	8	Urban
10	6	Urban
11	52	Rural
12	108	Rural
13	78	Rural
14	114	Rural
15	330	Rural
16	150	Rural
17	111	Rural

#### 4. POLICE OFFICERS

##### *Off-duty Work*

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What is the Police Department policy with regard to private organisations hiring off-duty police officers for functions such as agricultural shows and sporting events, etc.?
- (2) Has there been any recent change of policy by the Department?
- (3) Has this policy the support of the Police Union with regard to its members?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) This is not favoured.
- (2) No, the policy has been the same for over five years.
- (3) It is believed so.

#### 5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

##### *Elections: Bar to Candidates*

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister for Justice:

Is there a provision in the Local Government Act whereby a person convicted in 1951 under section 31 of the Traffic Act, 1919-1973, is debarred from contesting a local government election?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:  
No.

#### ABORIGINES

##### *Visit by Federal Minister*

The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Did the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, visit Western Australia last week?
- (2) If so—
  - (a) did he advise the Minister that he would be in this State;
  - (b) did he contact the Minister whilst in this State;
  - (c) had he previously written to the Minister regarding Pandanus Park purchase negotiations;
  - (d) had he replied to a submission made to him by the Minister to establish a fishing industry at One Arm Point for the Bardi tribe; and
  - (e) had he prior to the date of his visit indicated that the Federal Government would be prepared to provide fishing boats for the Bardi tribe?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) No, he did not extend to me the courtesy of advice.
- (c) No.
- (d) No acknowledgment of the submission which was made on 26th April, 1974, has been received from Senator Cavanagh.
- (e) No indication had been received from Senator Cavanagh or the Federal Government prior to his visit that fishing boats would be provided for the Bardi tribe.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by the Hon. V. J. Ferry, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings of the House granted to the Hon. G. W. Berry (Lower North) on the ground of ill health.

#### CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

##### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. R. F. Claughton, and read a first time.

#### ALCOHOL AND DRUG AUTHORITY BILL

##### *Second Reading*

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central—Minister for Health) [4.46 p.m.]. I move—  
That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill, and a companion measure—the Convicted Inebriates, Rehabilitation Act Amendment Bill—represent an attempt to do something positive about the problems of alcoholism and drug dependence in our society.

It is not feasible to estimate with any certainty the number of persons in this State whose condition of life has been adversely affected by alcohol or drugs. Persons close to the problem suggest, however, that there could be 50 000 individuals with an alcohol problem in some degree. Drug dependence, while not so widespread, is so destructive as to present a hard-core problem demanding special attention.

While the problems are not the same, there are many common factors relating to the disease process, treatment, and rehabilitation that makes it desirable to deal with both in a single piece of legislation.

Honourable members may recall some of the events which lead to the drafting of this Bill. The matter was raised initially in this Chamber with the appointment of a Select Committee. In November, 1972, the members of the Select Committee were appointed members of an Honorary Royal Commission to enable the inquiry to continue while the House was in recess.

The commission carried out a wide investigation of alcoholism and drug dependence, and took note of factors which apply in this and other States, and also in other countries. Its findings and recommendations were published on the 1st May, 1973, and this Bill seeks to give effect to many major recommendations and concepts endorsed by the commission.

Following submission of the report the then Minister for Health (the Hon. R. Davies) appointed Dr John Pougher as his special adviser to develop a programme consistent with the report of the commission.

Following Dr Pougher's initial work, I appointed an interim committee to act as a working party to formulate proposals which are now evident in the Bill before members.

Before dealing with the Bill in particular I would like to outline the practical measures which the Government proposes to initiate under the proposed alcohol and drug authority. As a first step a counselling service and out-patient centre will be set up. This will enable communication to be established between the authority and the community. It will deal with individuals, and voluntary and other organisations which contribute in their own spheres of activity to one or more of the many facets of this problem.

This centre will conduct assessment procedures to determine the nature and severity of individual dependency and social problems with a view to ensuring that appropriate facilities are provided. It

is hoped that the Commonwealth Government will provide financial support for this aspect of the authority's work.

The Medical Department will establish a special hospital to cater for those patients whose condition requires inpatient treatment. The hospital will operate as a public hospital but its purpose will be solely to give specialised service to persons suffering from alcoholism and drug dependence. The third proposal is that the Byford centre, now operated by the Department of Corrections and administered by the Inebriates Board, will be administered by the alcohol and drug authority as a medium and long-term rehabilitation facility objectively to prepare people for return to society with their dignity restored, and equipped to rejoin the work force as effective members of our community.

Future planning envisages the development of "halfway houses" as a means of promoting the early return to full social contact of those whose rehabilitation has reached a point where they are able to resume employment with the aid of supportive services.

It will be seen that the title of the Bill avoids the use of terms such as addicts and drug dependence.

The authority will be composed of four members appointed by the Governor, at least one of whom is to be a medical practitioner. The authority may take and purchase real and personal property including property bequeathed or given to it, and may deal in the same for the purposes of the Act.

Each member of the authority shall hold office for a period not exceeding three years as the Governor may fix and be eligible for reappointment. In the case of inability, inefficiency, or misbehaviour, an appointment may be terminated.

The Bill contains the usual provisions for filling vacancies and casual vacancies on the board, and at all times one member must be a medical practitioner.

The Governor may fix fees to be paid to members of the authority for services and for the payment of travelling and similar out-of-pocket expenses, but acceptance of appointment of the office of member of the authority shall not be deemed an office of profit under the Crown.

The functions, powers, and duties of the authority are set out in division 2 of the legislation. These are comprehensively stated, and I think give a clear picture of what this Bill is about. Briefly they are—

- (1) To provide assessment, treatment, management, care, and rehabilitation of persons suffering from alcohol or drug abuse, and to subsidise and otherwise support, any other persons or organisations providing such services;

- (2) To establish and maintain suitable premises for such purposes, and to subsidise and otherwise support, premises conducted by others for similar purposes;
- (3) There are similar provisions as to providing accommodation as a rehabilitation measure.

The authority will be required to co-ordinate, promote, and subsidise, research into and education on the causation, prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse.

It shall inquire into the respective provisions of the laws of this State with respect to offences in which the use of alcohol or drugs, or both, is an element; and with respect to the penalties for those offences, to consider the desirability or otherwise, in the community interest, of repealing or modifying any of those provisions, and to make such recommendations thereon to the Minister and the Attorney-General as the authority may think fit.

There will be the further obligation to co-operate and enter into agreements with other persons and organisations, in this State or otherwise, to such extent as may be necessary for the purposes of this Act.

The authority will enjoy substantial autonomy, but as a necessary safeguard the power of the Minister to direct the authority is made clear.

It should be noted that it is not intended that the authority should assume total responsibility for all measures needed to assist with the treatment and rehabilitation of affected persons. The authority will seek to use, stimulate, and support, voluntary and other agencies which can contribute to the aims of the authority. The authority will report annually to the Minister.

Division 3 concerns the employment of staff. All officers of the authority will be appointed subject to the approval of the Public Service Board. Salary rates, wages, and conditions of employment will be such as the authority determines and the Public Service Board approves.

In effect the authority will directly employ wages staff such as farm workers, drivers, and domestic employees, but their conditions, as with the officers of the board, will be governed by existing industrial awards or negotiated by the Public Service Board.

There is provision for co-opting officers already in the employ of Government agencies and for the preservation of their rights.

It is expected that the benefits of the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act will be extended to all employees of the authority, but membership of the fund will not be compulsory.

The Bill also provides for persons to be engaged under contract, should this be found convenient. It is envisaged that in the initial setting up of the authority certain persons already employed in Government departments in areas of work which is to be undertaken by the authority will be recruited to form a nucleus of experienced staff.

Special provisions relating to alcohol and drug centres are contained in part III. The authority will maintain residential and other centres. It will be essential that there be rules relating to admissions and conduct in these establishments. In some cases fees will be charged, but as the majority of residents will be in receipt of social services benefits, these are likely to be quite reasonable.

There is also an obligation on the authority to inquire into any injury or death which occurs in a centre. The intention is not to intrude into the special province of the Coroner in any way, but to ensure that no such episode arises from an avoidable cause within the control of the authority.

Financial matters are dealt with in part IV. It is hoped that arrangements will be concluded to have the State Treasury process all accounting for the authority. Such an arrangement has worked well in the case of the Health Education Council and will keep staff to a minimum.

An annual financial statement is required to be presented to the Minister. Accounts will be certified by the Auditor-General and the report will be presented to both Houses of Parliament.

The funds available to the authority are—

- (a) Moneys from time to time appropriated by Parliament for that purpose;
- (b) Moneys received by the authority by way of fees, gifts, bequests, or otherwise;
- (c) Moneys borrowed by the authority under this Act; and
- (d) Moneys made available to the authority for the purposes of this Act.

These moneys shall be paid into and be placed to the credit of an account at the Treasury or at a bank approved by the Treasurer to be called "Western Australian Alcohol and Drug Authority Account".

The authority will have power to borrow money upon the guarantee of the Treasurer and to invest sums not immediately required for other purposes.

Before a guarantee is given by the Treasurer under this section, the authority shall give to the Treasurer such security as the Treasurer may require and shall execute all such instruments as may be necessary for the purpose.

The authority is further authorised, with the prior approval in writing of the Treasurer, to borrow money upon such terms and conditions only as the Treasurer approves.

There is also power delegated to the Governor to make regulations, mainly in relation to the maintenance of good order and discipline at centres operated by the authority. I commend this measure to members as a progressive step towards the solution of a problem which bears heavily on many citizens in our society. Alcoholism and drug dependence undermine the dignity, health, and social independence of so many people in the community that the problem deserves the best attention that we can give to it.

I must say that much of the credit for this measure before the House, and for the treatment which will be available to these people, must go to one of our members who moved for a Select Committee, and then became Chairman of the Honorary Royal Commission into the treatment of alcohol and drug dependence. I refer, of course, to the Hon. R. J. L. Williams. We should all be grateful to him for the wonderful work he did in this respect.

Members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I certainly appreciate his work very much, and I will always be grateful to him.

This measure is an earnest attempt at a solution to the problem, and I hope it will attract the support of all members. I commend the Bill to the House.

**THE HON. GRACE VAUGHAN** (South-East Metropolitan) (4.59 p.m.): The Opposition supports this Bill with much pleasure, and we also would like to pay tribute, as the Minister did, to the Honorary Royal Commission under the chairmanship of the Hon. R. J. L. Williams. This commission did a great deal of investigative work, and I believe the report of the committee has formed the philosophy behind the framing of the Bill.

In supporting the measure I wish to give notice that I intend to move some amendments during the Committee stage of the debate. The measure proposes to establish an important authority for the social welfare of the people of Western Australia, and I consider that the membership of the authority is insufficient. In fact, the size of the required quorum is, to say the least, ridiculous; a quorum of two is hardly a democratic body to decide such involved and important matters.

I would like to emphasise also that this Bill provides an example of the very thing I referred to yesterday, when I spoke to the amendment to the motion in respect of the attitude of the Federal Government to rural areas.

This may be an exercise in co-operation between this State Government and the Australian Government. It certainly is a very important aspect of the authority; the Australian Department of Health through its community health programme has already approved a grant of \$132 000 for the setting up of an assessment centre and counselling services. I understand that negotiations are now under way for a very large amount of money—something in the vicinity of \$850 000—to be set aside to help accommodate these people.

This brings me to another matter which I foreshadow will be the subject of amendments; I refer to the designation of one member of the authority. Clause 5(1) stipulates that he must be a medical practitioner. The body to be established is an administrative body and I feel that by circumscribing the qualifications of one particular member, we are perhaps denigrating the value of the five people—at least, I hope it will be five—we may find in Western Australia to administer this very important work.

I point out that the matter of the treatment, assessment, care, management and rehabilitation of alcoholics and drug dependants is not purely a medical matter; it is a social problem which has its genesis in matters of social environment. It continues through a period where medical treatment is required and progresses to a point where the patient's social environment is changed and where there is a careful guidance of the alcoholic and drug dependant back to the ordinary day-to-day type of life which we are all expected to be able to stand. As we all know, life has plenty of stresses.

Like alcoholics, drug dependants are people who are dissatisfied with the social environment. We all go through a period of adjustment every day of our lives. We all manage to make adjustments. Some of us do odd things which are acceptable to society, but some do unacceptable things. Those who find they do not have the resources to cope with the stresses of modern society often retreat into the dark realm of excessive drinking and drug dependence.

So, the importance of spreading the net and inviting people from as many areas as will ensure the success of this authority in this extremely important work should not be circumscribed by clause 5(1) which states that a medical practitioner shall be on the authority. In the field of the care of alcoholics, many people who are prepared to assist professionally as well as those from the voluntary personal sector are recruited to advise, manage, and do the practical work which will ensure the rehabilitation, care, treatment and non-recidivism of the people about whom we are concerned.

We should also realise that we are not talking only about alcoholism but also about drug dependence. As the Minister has said, the latter is not a problem which involves great numbers. However, it certainly is a problem on a world basis. While Western Australia probably has less problems in this regard than any other Australian State, it still represents a threat which hangs over our heads and which we must fight. In the main, I would say that the social environment and the type of system we have established probably provide the major causes of the drug dependence problem. However, given that the system does not change immediately and stresses are not relieved, we may find that we will acquire a drug dependency problem amongst young people.

Therefore, I urge the Minister to give earnest consideration to the inclusion on the advisory council of a person concerned with young people and their problems; one who has some understanding of the necessity to get close to young people so that direct preventive work can be undertaken. We should not have to go to the expensive business of rehabilitating people who have been caught in some medium of escapism; rather, we should help them with the stresses of every-day life, so that they reach a point where they do not need to resort to drugs.

I also stress that with an authority such as this we will find that it will come down to individual cases. The Bill contains a provision permitting individual members of the authority to proceed with their own inquiries, where they feel it is necessary, without first receiving the permission of their fellows on the authority. They will have access to institutions, half-way houses, hostels and the like which come within the orbit of their authority. When we have this face-to-face situation with a client, it is extremely important that we look for people who have an objective approach to the problem.

It should be emphasised that political appointments will not be made to this authority. I do not consider that all political appointments to authorities are bad; sometimes, they are very useful. However, in a face-to-face situation there could always be allegations of party political bias and this must be avoided. I am sure the Minister will use his discretion and heed all the advice he receives. A great number of professional and voluntary people are available in this State who can give the Minister much advice as to the type of people who should be on this authority and the advisory council.

I congratulate the Minister on his presentation of the Bill. I am very pleased that something concrete has come out of the deliberations of the Honorary Royal Commission. So often, we establish these bodies and find that their recommendations are shelved. However, in this case,

the Government has introduced a Bill very quickly after the Honorary Royal Commission presented its report on this very important aspect of social welfare.

**THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS** (Metropolitan) [5.09 p.m.]: I am extremely grateful to the Minister for the way in which he presented his second reading speech and for his kind remarks. I also wish to thank the Hon. Grace Vaughan for her kind remarks. I feel I owe it as a personal debt to thank members of this Chamber who supported me some two years ago when I moved a motion to establish a Select Committee. You would have good memories, Mr President, as my then leader, of the time when I first came to you for advice upon a matter and you very kindly steered me through what would have been many traps for a young player. I am grateful to you for your personal help at that time.

I am very sorry that the Hon. Lyla Elliott is on parliamentary duties elsewhere because I owe a personal debt to both her and to the Hon. T. O. Perry who for months sat with me and discussed, travelled, rediscussed, re-examined, wrote, and rewrote the Honorary Royal Commission's report. When the Minister for Health approached me and asked me if I would chair the Interim Working Committee to establish this authority, I could not refuse because I had become somewhat wrapped in the subject. Long before I came into this House, I had dealings with the subject at a professional level.

For the purposes of *Hansard*, it would be extremely remiss of me if I did not draw the attention of members to four people sitting in the President's gallery this afternoon. I wish to pay tribute to them. They are Mr Parker, Mr Lee, Dr Pougher, and Mr Coates. I may have had the ideas, but these people in 11 weeks translated all the ideas into a Bill and took care of the negotiations, staffing, pricing, and approaches to the Commonwealth Government; each of them carried out his task with an infectious enthusiasm which spread its way amongst the departments of the Public Service in this State. At no stage did we encounter difficulties which lasted longer than 24 hours. Once people within State departments and in the public sector knew what we were attempting to do, we were given their wholehearted, 101 per cent co-operation—if such a thing is possible.

I do not wish to weary the House, but I should like to refer to an article which may show members the extent of the problem we are discussing. I should like the House to appreciate that the setting up of the authority is only the first, tiny step, albeit based on a very sound foundation. The article will be found at page 24, of the July, 1974, issue of *Rehabilitation in Australia*, Vol. 2, No. 3. All members have received a copy of this journal, and

at the risk of wearying members, I should like to read a couple of significant paragraphs from a section entitled, "Alcohol in Industry" written by Captain Cedric Bedwell of the Salvation Army. The article states—

It is now generally recognised that alcoholism is the fourth major health problem in our society, surpassed only by the degeneration of the heart and blood vessels, by psychiatric disorders (mental disorders) and cancer.

Many of these diseases result in illness and death in the later years of our expected life span, but alcoholism has its major impact on the individual and society in the earlier years viz., in the third, fourth and fifth decades of life.

In 1970 it was estimated that five percent of the Australian adult male population and one per cent of the adult females were alcoholics giving a total of 215,000 men and 43,000 women. According to statistics fewer than ten per cent of the men were skid row alcoholics and only two per cent were over the age of sixty-four.

These are sobering statistics, and one feels very wary when a measure such as this is introduced to cope with such a tremendous problem. However, in our discussions and examinations on the Royal Commission we were given tremendous help when we visited South Australia, where a similar system had been operating for a number of years. South Australia is very interested in the passage of this legislation, because it proposes to look at it and update its own particular version. South Australia indicates that it has one or two deficiencies which our Royal Commission report will help remove; but I would hasten to say that it is only by that State's pointing out to us the snags that existed that we were able to include such provisions in our report.

I am sorry that possibly not enough explanation was given to the Hon. Grace Vaughan, who has foreshadowed her intention to move an amendment to the size of the authority. If I explained the reason behind having four members on the authority, she may well reflect upon it and not proceed with her amendment.

I think we are all aware of the old adage that a camel is a horse drawn by a committee. It was in order to keep the size of the authority down and to keep it flexible in its administrative capacity that we decided that four was the optimum number at this stage. This decision was taken on the best advice from every other organisation we contacted—in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the States of South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland. After having made these contacts and deliberated for many hours amongst ourselves—and I now refer to

deliberations between the Hon. Lyla Elliott, the Hon. Tom Perry, myself, Dr Pougher, Mr Lee, and Mr Coates—we came to the conclusion, as I have said, that four should be the optimum number at this stage.

Let me assure the House however that in addition to the four members of the authority—as is the case with the other States—it is envisaged that both the medical director of the authority and the administrative director of the authority will be present at all these meetings. So, in point of fact, what we are actually dealing with is a committee of six with two having no vote.

Today there seems to be an idea about, that because one is on a committee one must have a vote; but one has to disagree. During the 11 weeks—it will be 12 weeks next week—that I had been working on this committee not once—and a search of the minutes, if that is required, may be made—did we find it necessary to vote on any particular issue. Indeed, there was one very famous chairman of a Government body in this State—and that was a committee of four—who never voted.

One cannot spell out everything in the legislation, because this is initial legislation which seeks to do something which has never been attempted before. Rules and regulations will have to be drawn up by the authority, and this will be done very much on the system of experience.

If we find it is necessary to add a member to the authority, there is nothing in the Act to prevent us coming here and inserting an amendment to that effect. But I would plead with the Hon. Grace Vaughan on this occasion, because there has been so much deliberation on this previously, to allow the authority to exist as four at the moment. If we find, with the passage of time, that this is quite unsatisfactory, then I assure the Hon. Grace Vaughan that I will be the first to go to her and say, "I have heard from the authority that it is not satisfied with the number. I now apologise to you for not going along with the amendment you sought to move."

I hope the Hon. Grace Vaughan will accept that, as I am sure she will, in the spirit in which it is given. I would draw attention to the provision containing a recommendation on page 26 of the Honorary Royal Commission's report.

I feel the idea of a medical practitioner being appointed to such an authority is essential. It was prescribed, because we felt if the authority is composed only of lay people, and we are dealing with medical staff, and medical directors and their staff, it could be possible that from time to time the authority would be confronted with a situation in which sheer medical jargon and gobbledygook would prove confusing to its members. By this I do



not intend to denigrate the medical profession at all, but I am sure members will realise the thinking behind the fact that a medical practitioner should be appointed to the authority, if there is one available. There are so many complications that arise from alcohol and drug dependence that an authority would be bound to seek the advice from a medical practitioner; so why not have him on the authority—if we can get him—to be a constant adviser?

I wish to draw attention to one other point. I realise that the Hon. Grace Vaughan knows about this; she is fully aware of it. I feel that in her speech undue emphasis was placed on drug dependency in youth. I know she is aware that when the House thinks of drugs it is entitled to think of the best way to deal with such drugs as marihuana and heroin, and what is termed loosely as the harder drugs.

However, we do have several people in our older communities who are addicted to all sorts of other drugs—to those in the barbiturate group, to aspirins, and Bex powders—as was pointed out to us; and Mr Tom Perry will bear me out when I say that such people were really hooked on these drugs and, as a result, we had to broaden our field and scope.

I will weary the House no longer—

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: May I say the honourable member is not wearying the House.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: You never said that to me.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I thank Mr Gayfer for that. I think this is an adventurous subject, and if the House needs any assurance I will tell members that during the 11 weeks we considered this matter as a committee every church organisation and voluntary organisation—and other organisations that have anything to do with drugs or alcohol in this State—were contacted, and some of the feedback has been pretty quick and stiff.

No-one in this State need now feel that he has a problem, or that there is a problem within the family that cannot be looked at by an agency that is not punitive. Gone are the days when the drunk was an automatic candidate for gaol. Gone, I hope, ere long will be those days—and this refers to the other Bill which will come up this afternoon, which seeks to drop from the Statute the Convicted Inebriates' Rehabilitation Act.

This Act has served its purpose; it was essential at the time, but even the words "convicted inebriates" smack of Victoriana. Society today has had a chance to look hard and long at the problem. Other countries have rushed in and fallen flat on their faces.

If we take the case and follow the parallel of the United States of America we will find that the alarming drug problem that has been apparent in the United

States is receding almost as fast as the manner in which it came in; but in its wake—and we must remember there will always be this dependency in society for which we try to legislate and which we try to treat—there is coming a tidal wave of alcoholism among youth.

Statistics prove that Australia is the heaviest drinking nation in the world. We have a duty in this respect. People might say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" In this case I think we are, because we have a duty towards ourselves, our families, and to succeeding generations to ensure that the very best possible use can be made of both Government and voluntary facilities to instruct, and warn, if we like, the people concerned; and after having failed with some of them in these categories we should endeavour to rehabilitate them back into the community.

We hear a lot today about productivity, and I know you would be delighted, Mr President, to know that I attended a seminar not so long ago in Perth. It was the first of its kind, and there were many people present who were reconsidering their thoughts and sentiments about alcoholism and drug addition. This was the seminar on alcohol and the trade unions were invited to attend.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: How did you get them together?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: They were the most willing participants, because the union members realised the problems that confronted them. They appreciated the idea of Bill working next to one of them on Monday, and even though they knew that because of this problem, he could not cope they would never dob him in—not in any way at all.

Unfortunately too many people get injured, and we hope that with the co-operation and help we know we will get from the trade union movement, it might be possible for somebody to advise Bill that he has a problem, and that he and his family will be better off if, without punitive measures being taken, Bill went along and got treatment. Similarly we hope management will allow Bill to have that treatment without his being cast out as a hopeless alcoholic.

The ramifications of the problem are many and varied. The new authority—whatever its members may be—will have a tremendous task in front of it. It will be a tremendous task and a tremendous challenge which will need the co-operation not only of the people who comprise the authority but of the entire community, and we must appreciate just what the authority has been set up to do.

This is an emotional moment for me. One cannot work at a task for eight hours a day for two years; one cannot have people coming to one's door and asking for help and being suddenly reminded there are such people in society, without feeling some emotion in the matter.

One looks at oneself in the mirror every day and wonders whether one is likely to go the same way. On sheer statistics there could be other members in this Chamber who, while they may not be affected by either of these dependencies, could have a family, a friend, or a relative, about whom they know.

I wish to thank members for their support of this Bill which will enable us to go out to these people in the community at large and say, "You no longer stand alone."

I support the Bill.

**THE HON. T. O. PERRY** (Lower Central) [5.30 p.m.]: I would like to support the Minister in the tribute he paid to Mr Williams whose drive and dedication were responsible for the success of the Royal Commission and the findings it submitted. I would also like to pay a tribute to Miss Elliott, who unfortunately is not here today; and thank all those in various departments who assisted the commission in any way at all. In my thanks I include the Minister for having introduced the measure at this time.

Some of the evidence, particularly on drug addiction, given to the Royal Commission was a little conflicting and therefore it was difficult to assess the degree of addiction in this State. The evidence received on alcoholism gave a much clearer picture in that respect.

The Bill provides for the establishment of an authority to set up centres for the assessment, treatment, and management of those in need of help and to assist with the rehabilitation of alcoholics and drug addicts. Any measure which helps to rehabilitate people and return them to the community as worth-while citizens who have regained their dignity and self-respect will work for the good of all mankind.

My thoughts go back to the time when members of the Honorary Royal Commission were in Adelaide. We entered one of the most beautiful churches in Australia, built over a crypt which was used to help some of those who had unfortunately degenerated—I do not like the use of that word—to a state where they were desperately in need of assistance. These people were brought in off the street and given food and clothing. Many of them could not be employed because they were in such a physical condition they just could not work.

To enter that crypt just a few feet below the church was to experience a sensation of entering a completely different world.

I believe that every member of the House, regardless of his or her political persuasion, will support the Bill; and I sincerely hope the day is not far distant when the results of the work of the authority will be evident. With those few remarks I support the Bill.

**THE HON. N. E. BAXTER** (Central—Minister for Health) [5.33 p.m.]: I would like to thank the Hon. Grace Vaughan for her contribution to the debate. Mr Williams replied fairly clearly to the comments she made on her foreshadowed amendments, and I am afraid she will be disappointed in their reception. I can only say at this stage that should it be found necessary to increase the size of the authority I will be the first to agree to a requisite amendment being made to the legislation for that purpose. I believe that the present provision of four is quite adequate to enable all matters to be covered. The four members will work very well together because it is not anticipated any antagonism will occur or any voting will be required.

I would instance the Egg Board of Western Australia which was reconstituted some years ago because on many occasions the voting was divided equally on important measures. However, with the change of the constitution of that board under the then chairman who used his logic and common sense, and the present chairman, no situation has required a vote. The members either mutually agree or mutually disagree; and I expect the situation to be the same with the authority to be established under the Bill. Its members will mutually agree or disagree and no occasion will arise when a division of opinion is such that a vote will be required. If such a situation does occur and it is found necessary to increase the number on the authority to five because of a stalemate which has been reached, I will be the first to introduce an amendment to the Act to overcome the problem.

The honourable member referred to the finance for the authority and made a reference to the assistance offered by the Federal Government. Let me say at this stage that any assistance given by that Government is given from money which belongs to the people. When we apply for money for programmes and projects, it is our own money for which we are applying, not money we are getting as a grant, as it is called. It is money to which we are entitled for the various objectives desired for the State.

**The Hon. R. Thompson:** It is the first time an Australian Government has offered money for such a purpose as this though.

**The Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** The Leader of the Opposition used the word "offered". Whose money has the Australian Government "offered"? It is the Australian people's money.

**The Hon. S. J. Dellar:** I thought this was not to be a political issue.

**The Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** I think I have explained before in the House that years ago under uniform taxation the revenue of Australia was divided amongst the States which worked out their own solutions and handled their own problems.

I am not blaming any particular Government for the present position which has arisen because successive Governments have taken the attitude that the States must be "given" money for various purposes. All I want to say is that any money contributed to any project like, for example, the one under discussion—and no matter what the project—is money belonging to the Australian people.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: It is a pity you brought politics into this debate.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have not.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: You have.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have not. I have referred to successive Federal Governments.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: I am talking about what you said before.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am trying to explain that the money contributed by the Federal Government is no credit to the Federal Government, because the money belongs to the people. I think we had better leave it at that.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I will give you a tip: Don't stonewall your own Bill.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not stonewalling. I am making something very clear.

When referring to the amendments of which she has given notice, the Hon. Grace Vaughan mentioned the inclusion of a medical practitioner on the authority. I do not know what objection she has to a medical practitioner being on the authority. I consider such a person is most important.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister could talk about the composition of the authority when the Bill goes into Committee.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is so. The honourable member also referred to the necessity for a person to be able to get close to young people on a social basis in order to carry out some preventive work. This, of course, is necessary, but in our State this kind of social work is catered for by other organisations such as the Health Education Council and many others. I do not think it should be the work of those on the authority; it should be done by those in the organisations at present undertaking this work, with which the authority will be in close contact. Many organisations are at present trying to help addicts and those who could easily become addicts. No need exists to include in this Bill a provision along those lines. If, as time goes by, such a provision is found to be necessary, an amendment can be made to the legislation. No Bill when first introduced is ever perfect and usually it is found necessary to make amendments. I thank the Hon. Grace Vaughan for her contribution to the debate.

I also thank Mr Williams for his contribution. He created a great deal of interest in the information he gave on the

various aspects of the Bill and on alcohol and drug dependency. He has a vast knowledge of the subject; it exceeds my knowledge of it. I also thank Mr Williams for paying a tribute to the interim committee which has worked so hard on the Bill and assisted in bringing it to its present stage. Also I express my appreciation to some of the officers of my department—I will not mention their names—who have played a great part. It has been a matter of co-operation right along the line from all sources and we cannot wish for anything better than the co-operation received from everyone concerned with this measure and its future. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (the Hon. J. Heltman) in the Chair; the Hon. N. E. Baxter (Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Establishment and incorporation—

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 14—Delete the word "four" and substitute the word "five". The explanation given by Mr Williams for the provision in the Bill would have been the same as the opinion given by the interim committee, and of course he should support that. However, I have given considerable thought to the matter and my reason for wanting five on the authority does not involve only a question of voting, but also that the authority might be given an opportunity to recruit members from as many interested areas as possible, which is the reason for my proposed subsequent amendments.

A later clause stipulates the functions of the authority and these cover many aspects of treatment, rehabilitation, management, care, assessment, etc. of the people in question and therefore in the administration of an authority with the importance of this one the need exists to spread the net far afield in order to have available as much expertise as possible.

A committee of five would still be manageable. We could say that the best committee is one of three with two away sick; and this is probably the sort of committee on which I would like to serve.

For a State-constituted authority upon which rests the heavy responsibility for this social welfare programme, five is certainly not a large number. It is manageable and at the same time will enable one more area of expertise to be plumbed.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As I said earlier, this is a new concept and we wish to keep the membership of the authority

to a reasonable minimum to get it under way. At the present time, I cannot see what advantage will accrue to the authority by increasing the membership from four to five. I believe four people can deal quite adequately with what is required at this stage. For those reasons I am not prepared to accept the amendment.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Only last week we dealt with a Bill to amend the Distressed Persons Relief Trust Act—which was introduced into this Parliament in 1973—by increasing the number of trustees from four to five, primarily because difficulty had been experienced in obtaining a quorum of two people at meetings.

My interest in this matter is to ensure that it works efficiently from the start. I think every member of the Chamber gives it wholehearted support, and good work has been done by many people to get it to this stage. I would be the last person to knock the legislation, because I endeavoured to set up an alcohol foundation in 1960 and I brought Professor Eric Saint up here to address Parliament on the matter. But obviously we were 14 years before our time. The Government of the day would not take any notice of us, nor would the Australian Government, to which I also made representations for the setting up of an alcohol foundation throughout Australia.

I agree with what has been said by Mr Williams and the Minister. It is better if members of a body can reach total agreement than being divided in their opinion or having to call for votes when dealing with very human problems such as those with which this authority will be dealing.

However, this year we amended an Act because it had been found that there were not sufficient members on an authority, and we should not make the same mistake again. I suggest the Minister give favourable consideration to increasing the number on this authority to five, on the basis of past experience.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I wish to correct one thing which the Hon. Grace Vaughan said; it is only a matter of fact. She is quite correct in saying it was a recommendation of the committee that the authority comprise four people. However, this was a firm recommendation in the report of the Royal Commission and it appears on page 6 of the report.

The figure four is not a magical one. I would not at this stage like it to be increased to five, because of the experience in other States. The people in one State implored us to ensure we had no more than three on the authority but, as the commission at the time, we felt that with only three we would not get a spectrum of the experience in all fields. I do not think an extra person would make any difference. While the commission recommended four, the various subject fields

have been changed because certain other things took place and there was no reason for having a representative in one particular category. It was envisaged that when the authority was established there would be no Bill and the authority would be responsible for drawing up the legislation. One of the recommendations on page 26 was that one member of the authority be a senior legal practitioner; but apart from the medical practitioner, no other categories were designated. I support the Minister and oppose the amendment.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Leader of the Opposition referred to the amendment to the Distressed Persons Relief Trust Act which increased the size of that trust. Parliament will meet again within a few months from now, and if it were found in the interim that meetings could not take place because of a lack of attendance, we could then consider increasing the size of the authority.

South Australia has an authority comprising three persons, and that State has experience of the way these things operate. From what the interim committee and others have told me, I believe an authority of four will be adequate.

Amendment put and negatived.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I move an amendment—

Page 3, lines 15 and 16—Delete the passage “, one at least of whom shall be a medical practitioner”.

It follows logically from the decision of the Committee to have a small and manageable authority that recruitment to the authority should not be limited by designating that one member shall be a medical practitioner.

In my second reading speech I outlined my reasons for saying this is not purely a medical matter and there are many people in other professions, the voluntary sector, and Government departments who are now responsible in a limited way, and who we hope will be responsible in a much more expanded way, for dealing with this social welfare problem. To designate that one member of the authority shall be a medical practitioner is to limit further recruitment from a wide area of expertise. The other three persons will represent the areas of expertise other than medical treatment and assessment. Most of the work will be done in the social environment of these people rather than in medical treatment.

To have a medical practitioner on the authority to help interpret the jargon which may be used is not a very good premise for the discussions which it is anticipated will take place. If a person using medical jargon is not able to express himself in terminology which is understandable to the people who do not know

medical terms, in fact the medical representative will be making the decision for the whole authority. One must be able to understand what is being said before one can agree to it. So that is not a good argument.

In addition, the authority might have on it a sociologist—and I could flabbergast members by using sociological terminology, as could Mr Medcalf by using legal terminology. Perhaps the authority may have appointed to it a biochemist who could say what effects alcohol and drugs have on the tissues and physiological functions of a human being. So I hardly think there is reason for having a medical practitioner.

The Hon. John Williams said the size of the authority would be enlarged by the presence of nonvoting members, the administrator, and the medical adviser. Surely the medical adviser could interpret medical jargon. I am not against medical practitioners but I do not think we should limit the expertise which we can gather and present to the authority in order to obtain the very best advice on how to assess, treat, and rehabilitate the people for whom we are introducing this social welfare programme.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I appreciate the comments of the Hon. Grace Vaughan and I am sorry I have not been able to persuade her. I will mention a name, which I am loth to do; and I say right away that as far as I am concerned this person is one of the top-ranking general practitioners in this State; he has done a tremendous amount of work not only in alcoholism but also in community health services. He is well known both here and abroad.

It is envisaged we should have on the authority general practitioners who have links with the community and with the Australian Medical Association, from which we may require help from time to time. The doctor I refer to is Dr Barney O'Brien. There is no better example of an excellent general practitioner who is completely community oriented and who understands the alcohol problem. He does not deal with this problem in the community as a doctor, but rather as an enabler because he has information at his fingertips regarding which specialist should be consulted, where a person can go, and what the Seventh International Conference on Alcohol and Drugs said. Such a doctor would be invaluable in fostering the goodwill we seek for the authority.

For the reason I have stated, I still feel the inclusion of a medical practitioner is essential. It is required that a psychiatrist be a member of the Inebriates Advisory Board.

The Hon. R. Thompson: He is a medical practitioner.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: That is right.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I am easy on this. If we designate that there shall be one medical practitioner, we might find we need two. I would like to see the provision left open so that we can do that.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: That presents no problem. If we had two Barney O'Brien's in the State I daresay the Minister would appoint both to the authority.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Does not the Bill say, "one at least of whom shall be a medical practitioner"?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: That is right. The Minister must appoint one medical practitioner, but the way is open to him to appoint four. I oppose the amendment.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I find this argument specious to say the least. I know there are people like Dr Barney O'Brien and Dr John Pougher who are interested in this question, but as many people who are working amongst alcoholics and drug dependents will verify, it is necessary for them to have a broken leg or head to be treated by a general practitioner or in a hospital.

I appreciate that we may indeed have an authority consisting of four medical practitioners, and if they are people who will administer the authority in the best possible way I would be the first to congratulate the Minister on their appointment. However, as the Minister will appoint the members in any case, surely we need not restrict the provision by saying one at least shall be a medical practitioner. I am considering the limitations those words impose. I have expressed my feeling to the Minister—and he agreed with me—that we should have someone on the authority who is concerned with young people. Surely we should have such a member either on the authority or the advisory board, because in all probability the other members will be middle-aged and will be able to look after the older people. I do not want to appear dogmatic; I am thinking about the operation of the authority.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I cannot understand the objection of Mrs Vaughan to the provision that one member shall be a medical practitioner. I feel it is essential that one member should be a medical practitioner and, as the Minister, I will recommend such a person. Perhaps in time to come another Minister may not recommend a medical practitioner, and we could have a situation in which the authority has not a medical practitioner as a member. I can see no harm in leaving the provision as it stands, because in my opinion it is necessary for the authority to have the advice of a medical practitioner.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is difficult to understand the persistence of the Government in respect of this clause. The argument of members opposite seems

to suggest that the words sought to be deleted are in fact unnecessary. At the moment they are well aware of an excellent person in the medical profession who will be appointed in any case; so the amendment will not create any difficulty. In respect of the previous amendment it was remarked that, if it were found necessary, amending legislation could be introduced in a few months' time. As this is experimental legislation, why should we not leave the provision open? That would not prevent the Government from carrying out its wishes; and in the relatively near future circumstances which cannot be foreseen at the moment might suggest the appointment of a person with abilities or qualities necessary for that situation.

Amendment put and negatived.

*Sitting suspended from 6.08 to 7.30 p.m.*

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6: Term of office—

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: In speaking to this clause, would it not have been desirable to stagger the term of appointment of members of the authority to minimise the possibility of all members retiring at the one time? Members of the authority will be eligible for reappointment. Therefore if at the end of three years, members did not wish to extend their term of office, the possibility of all members retiring permanently at the same time would be minimised if the terms of appointment were staggered.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: This is not an unusual situation. Many hospital board members are appointed for a three-year term. There is not much difficulty in staggering the terms of appointment in a situation such as this, because it is fairly normal procedure for a Minister to sign an Executive Council minute to appoint a member every three years. There is not much difficulty in that respect because it is carried through prior to the final date of a member's term.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: As I understand the clause, the Minister in charge of the Act, who at the present time will be Mr Baxter, will have power to fix a term for a period shorter than three years. It may be for only two years.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes, the term could be varied if the Minister so desires.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 36 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

#### *Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

### **SOIL CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

**THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON** (North Metropolitan) [7.38 p.m.]: This Bill seeks to amend the Soil Conservation Act, and I notice that there is an amendment on the notice paper.

**The PRESIDENT:** Are you talking about the Minister's amendment?

**The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON:** Yes. The Bill contains several provisions. It seeks to delete the interpretation of the word "Commissioner" and to substitute a new interpretation which will embrace a person who is, for the time being, holding, or acting in, the office of the Commissioner of Soil Conservation under this Act. We agree with that amendment.

I cannot see anything in the Bill to which I can object, and it has my support.

**THE HON. R. T. LEESON** (South-East) [7.40 p.m.]: I have pleasure in supporting this Bill which seeks to make certain amendments to the Soil Conservation Act. As the previous speaker mentioned, the principal amendments concern the appointment of a deputy commissioner of soil conservation and to increase the personnel of the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee. Other amendments in the Bill seek to update the principal Act.

The Act itself has operated for many years and, in the main, has proved to be fairly successful in a State like Western Australia which has quite a variation of climatic conditions ranging from drought to floods. Being a large arid country there are, for various reasons, considerable problems in respect of soil erosion, and therefore it is important that these problems be dealt with because they are viewed with the utmost concern. It is for this reason that committees such as those mentioned in the Bill have been appointed to investigate the problems as they arise to ensure that steps are taken to solve them under the provisions of the Act.

The Bill contains several small amendments also and members of the Labor Party have studied them and find them to be in order. From the notice paper I see the Minister for Justice seeks to move an amendment to the Bill, but this does not require a great deal of explanation. With those remarks I support the Bill.

**THE HON. J. HEITMAN** (Upper West) [7.42 p.m.]: I support the Bill. I think this is the second time, since I have been a member of this House, that a Bill has been introduced to amend the setup of the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee. The main reason for my speaking tonight is to say how much I appreciate the work performed by the soil conservation officers in the field. Over the years they have done a tremendous job to assist the Main Roads Department and the local authorities in an endeavour to keep as much water off the roads as possible. This is

proved by the fact that they construct banks and rather than let the water just run onto the road they channel it in such a way that it will cause the least damage to roads.

The Soil Conservation Advisory Committee meets from time to time in an endeavour to assist the men in the field. At one time I think I asked a series of questions, prior to the previous amending Bill being introduced, wherein I suggested that two extra members should be appointed to the committee. The committee had not functioned for some time. In fact, it had met only three times in two years, and I think that only about half the committee members turned up at the meetings.

At that time Mr Tom Smith was appointed and then things really began to progress. In the field new officers were appointed. They were called soil conservation engineers; a designation that we had not heard of before. Since that time soil conservation has progressed by leaps and bounds and in various districts many soil erosion problems have been solved. I am not suggesting that mistakes have not been made. In the first place they commenced the work of conservation in the construction of true level banks and these kept the water on the property to such an extent that the water banked up for three or four chains and the paddock, as a result, could not be worked for some time. Since then the soil conservation officers have devised a scheme of making small gradients by which the water is removed much more successfully and is then run into creeks where it cannot do too much damage to the paddocks. Over the years, everyone has learnt a great deal about soil conservation as a result of the work that has been done.

On some hilly farms a conservation bank is constructed to take the water around a certain portion of the hilly country into a channel which conveys the water to another part of the farm, where the surplus water can be disposed of. The gradient is so slight and the water flows so slowly that little damage is done to the soil. If paddocks are not contoured properly great problems will arise with the water rushing straight down to the creeks, and in so doing wash out the top soil. Another disadvantage is that the water is not retained on the property.

I participate in the second reading debate mainly to compliment the officers of the department who are doing this work; in my opinion they are rendering a great service to the State. I only wish that sometimes they were able to progress faster than they have in some cases, and that more water conservation work could be undertaken throughout the State.

With those comments I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. C. R. Abbey.

## CONVICTED INEBRIATES' REHABILITATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Order of the day read for the resumption of the debate from the 22nd October.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee, etc.*

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

## SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

**THE HON. E. THOMPSON** (South Metropolitan—Leader of Opposition) [7.49 p.m.]: It gives me much pleasure to support this piece of legislation. As I understand the position, it was initiated by the Chief Justice. It is a machinery measure, and will make the enforcement of orders much easier and less costly.

I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee, etc.*

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

*House adjourned at 7.52 p.m.*

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## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 23rd October, 1974

The SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

## PROCEDURE OF THE HOUSE

### *Members Rising to Speak*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Hutchinson): Before papers are tabled, may I inform the House that the Standing Orders have it that when a member rises in his place he should do more than merely rise in order to attract the attention of the Speaker; he should call, "Mr Speaker". Perhaps I have contributed somewhat to a decline in the usage of that Standing Order, primarily because there are times when I can facilitate the business of the House by ignoring it; but at times it is difficult to see a member under certain circumstances. I therefore ask Ministers and members to conform with the Standing Order by calling "Mr Speaker" whenever they want to catch the eye of the Speaker.