

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 25th November, 1954.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : State Brick Works, as to allocation of supplies	3238
Electrical equipment, as to suppressors	3238
Swan River, as to pollution and remedial measures	3238
State Housing Commission, as to resumptions in Canning electorate	3239
Electricity supplies, as to transmission line, Roleystone-Pickering Brook	3239
Interstate road transport, as to Privy Council judgment	3239
Annual Estimates, 1954-55, Com. of Supply, Votes and items discussed	3243
Bills : Fire Brigades Act Amendment, 1r.	3239
Soil Fertility Research, Com. remaining stages	3240
Bush Fires, Council's further message	3240
Reserves, 2r.	3240
Road Closure, 2r.	3241
Canning Lands Revestment, 2r., remaining stages	3243
Married Women's Protection Act Amendment, Council's amendments	3243
Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2), Council's amendments	3243
Public Service Act Amendment, 2r., remaining stages	3245
Plant Diseases Act Amendment, Council's amendments	3246
Inspection of Machinery Act Amendments, Council's amendments	3246
Bookmakers Betting Tax, 2r. remaining stages	3246
Milk Act Amendment, Council's message	3248
Parks and Reserves Act Amendment, 2r.	3266
Adjournment, special	3275

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

STATE BRICK WORKS.

As to Allocation of Supplies.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it a fact that he personally allocates the distribution of bricks from the Armadale Brick Works at Armadale?

(2) If so, on what basis?

(3) If not, who is responsible?

(4) What is the basis of this allocation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) The line of responsibility as affecting distribution of all bricks produced by State Brick Works is—

(a) Minister in charge State Brick Works;

(b) General manager;

(c) Production and sales supervisor;

(d) Order clerk.

(4) The general basis is preference to housing and living accommodation, a quota for Commonwealth and State Government requirements other than housing, and then consideration of other projects according to their need for pressed bricks and the supply position. Over the last 12 months these preferences have allowed allocation of limited quantities only of State bricks to projects which do not include living accommodation.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.

As to Suppressors.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is there any State legislation or regulations in force providing for the fitting to electrical equipment of suppressors against radio interference?

(2) If not, will the Government consider the preparation of such legislation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) To do this would need co-operation between the Commonwealth and State Governments. Steps will be taken to see if this can be brought about.

SWAN RIVER.

As to Pollution and Remedial Measures.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the statement made by him that the Swan River was said to be cleaner, and that it was in a satisfactory condition, and far better than it had been for a considerable time—

(1) What has been done to make it cleaner?

(2) Is he aware that the Pt. Walter bank is in a shocking condition?

(3) Is he aware that the Swan River opposite Manners Park reserve—a popular place for women and children in Mosman Park—is also in a state of rotten green condition?

(4) Is he aware that Dr. Davidson said, "Pollution control in the Swan River was largely control of decaying algae, and reclamation to prevent slack water breeding-grounds in winter was therefore the best solution?"

(5) If he believes in taking expert advice, can he inform the House when he will take steps to reclaim the shallows, and what area he thinks he will come under this heading, and what would be the cost?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Monthly chemical tests and close examination of likely points of pollution.

(b) Noxious trade wastes have been removed from stormwater drains and disposed of in sewers after suitable treatment.

(c) Other noxious wastes have been connected to septic tanks.

(d) Sewerage systems have been extended, thus reducing contamination from improperly functioning septic tanks.

(e) Financial assistance given to local authorities for the removal of algae from foreshores.

(f) An inspector has been appointed to patrol the river continuously to locate troublesome areas and to initiate action to remove promptly the offending weed or waste.

(2) No.

(3) No. The weed which has been evident in the past few weeks is not in a "state of rotten green condition." It is a live weed and constant attention has been given to it by the appropriate road board.

(4) Yes. I am advised, however, that Dr. Davidson prefixed his statement by pointing out that complaints of pollution arose from the smell of decaying algae and that this in itself was not a cause of pollution.

(5) Improvement can and has been effected by dredging of shallows and restoration of beaches. Considerable beneficial dredging has already been carried out and is in course. Further areas will be given attention as and when funds are available.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

As to Resumptions in Canning Electorate.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it the intention of the State Housing Commission to resume more land in the Canning electorate?

(2) If "Yes" is the answer to No. (1), where is the land situated and how many acres?

(3) How many owners are to be affected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The State Housing Commission has at present no intention of resuming further land in the Canning electorate.

(2) and (3) Answered by No. (1).

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to Transmission Line, Roleystone-Pickering Brook.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

On the 20th October, 1954, in answer to the following question:—

Is it intended to commence work on the erection of the transmission line between Roleystone and Pickering

Brook this financial year, thus connecting up many market gardeners and one of the largest fruit orchards in the State?

he replied—

Yes. Work will be commenced this financial year. All farms and orchards on the route will be connected where it is economically possible to do so.

On Wednesday, the 24th November, in answer to the following questions—

(1) When is it expected that the transmission line between Roleystone and Pickering Brook will be commenced?

(2) When will the plan be made available to local residents, in order that they may make arrangements for their houses to be wired when the power is supplied?

he replied—

(1) There is no transmission line planned or contemplated from Roleystone to Pickering Brook.

(2) See No. (1).

Which of the above answers is correct?

The MINISTER replied:

Because of the inadvertent substitution of the word "from" for "between", which occurred in the transmission by telephone of the question asked on Wednesday, the 24th November, that question was regarded as being different from that asked on the 20th October last, and was answered accordingly.

The contemplated transmission line to be started before the end of the financial year is from Pickering Brook to Karragullen and covers a question based on a transmission line "between" Roleystone and Pickering Brook but not "from" Roleystone to Pickering Brook.

It is not the practice of the commission to make a plan available in connection with the wiring up of houses in districts expected to be supplied, but residents are told to take no step in this direction until advised by the commission to do so.

INTERSTATE ROAD TRANSPORT.

As to Privy Council Judgment.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Would it be correct to assume that, pending receipt of the Privy Council judgment in the Hughes and Vale case relating to interstate road transport, the carters of goods between Norseman and Perth without a permit from the W.A. Transport Board, will be apprehended?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Housing and read a first time.

BILL—SOIL FERTILITY RESEARCH.*In Committee, etc.*

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BUSH FIRES.*Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the 'conference managers' report.

BILL—RESERVES.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [4.14] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is similar in all respects to measures that are brought forward at this time each year.

Clause 2, Reserve No. 18296 at Bruce Rock: This reserve comprises an unsurveyed strip of land $1\frac{1}{2}$ chains wide between Johnson-st. and the Bruce Rock station yard. It was set apart for the purposes of public utility and classified as of "A" class in 1923 at the request of the Bruce Rock Road Board. Access to the main station entrance and to other entrances to the railway reserve is obtained through the reserve. The road board desires to widen Johnson-st. by including portion of the reserve, and other amendments will be required after the necessary survey has been completed. To facilitate any such amendments, it is desired that the classification of the reserve as of "A" class be cancelled.

Clause 3, Reserve No. 12074 at Carnarvon: This reserve was set apart as an educational endowment in 1906 and comprised an unsurveyed area of about 9½ acres. Portion of the area was utilised for road widening purposes in the construction of the North-West Coastal Highway. The northern end of the reserve was used for water supply purposes because of a large sand hill, which is the highest point in Carnarvon and on which the town's water supply tank is erected. The balance of the reserve has been used as a site for the Carnarvon High School for which a modern school building has been erected. The land has been surveyed to exclude the road widening and to provide two separate lots which it is proposed to reserve for the respective purposes of school site and water supply. The cancellation of the educational endowment reserve is necessary.

Clause 4, Reserve No. 6066 at Fremantle: The land comprising the Fremantle cemetery reserve is held in fee simple in trust for the purpose by the trustees of the Fremantle Cemetery Board. In 1943, under

the National Security (General) Regulations, a possession order was issued at the request of the Central Wool Committee for use of portion of the reserve at the corner of Carrington-st. and High-rd. for wool storage purposes. Substantial buildings are erected on the land and the Australian Wool Bureau desires to retain possession for the time being, but as the authority under the National Security Regulations has lapsed, it is necessary that parliamentary approval be obtained to enable the trustees of the Fremantle Cemetery Board to execute a lease in favour of the Australian Wool Bureau. It is intended that the proposed lease will expire on the 31st December, 1960, and that the buildings will be removed and the site vacated prior to that date.

Clause 5, Reserve No. A5304 at Geraldton: This reserve, which is at present set apart for recreation purposes and vested in the municipality of Geraldton, comprises land which it is desired to incorporate in the site for the purpose of bulk handling terminal. It is necessary to cancel the existing reserve so that the land will be available for the new purpose.

Clause 6, Reserve No. A11385 at Geraldton: The Geraldton High School is erected on portion of this reserve which is set apart for the purpose of an educational endowment. The trustees of the Public Education Endowment approved of Geraldton lots 620 to 663 inclusive being used for the high school site and it is desired to create a separate reserve for the purpose. Provision has been made in the current Road Closure Bill for the closure of portions of Dunraven and Onslow-sts., so that the whole site can be consolidated.

Clause 7, Reserve A18325 at Inglewood: Negotiations have been conducted between the Department of Public Health and the Perth Road Board to exchange certain areas at Maylands and Inglewood. An area of over 13 acres on the river front at Maylands has been held by the Crown for the purpose of a home for mentally retarded children. The Perth Road Board desires to acquire the Maylands land for recreation and river-front improvements, including a riverside drive, and is prepared to make available in exchange portion of Reserve 18325 at Inglewood to comprise approximately the same area. This reserve is set apart for recreation purposes and is vested in the Perth Road Board. The balance of the reserve provides ample area for recreation purposes.

While amending the reserve, it is also desired to provide for the widening of Dundas-rd. to a width of one chain involving an excision of about 2 roods 34 perches from the reserve. A further excision of about 8 acres 1 rood 17 perches is required to extend Hamer Parade, from Central Avenue to Dundas-rd., and to provide a separate reserve for parking area

and gardens on the south-eastern side of the proposed extension. A bitumenised road through the reserve in this position has been in use for many years.

Clause 8, Excision from Reserve No. 18987, National Park, Porongorup: The site selected for the Bolganup Creek lower damsite, in connection with the Mt. Barker water supply comes within the National Park Reserve A18987 at Porongorup. It is necessary to excise from this Class "A" reserve an area of about 16 acres, which will be set apart as a separate reserve for the purposes of the Mt. Barker water supply.

Clause 9, Reserve No. 22568 at Rockingham: The Fremantle Harbour Trust has requested that a reserve be provided at Rockingham for navigation lights. The selected site is on the shore of Mangles Bay and is at present portion of Class A reserve 22568, which is set apart for the purposes of park and recreation. It is proposed to excise an area of about 1 acre from the reserve near the corner of Governor and Rockingham-rds.

Clause 10, Reserve No. 12077 at Wagin: The Education Department desires to obtain the use of Railway Water Reserve No. 5733 for recreation purposes and swimming pool. The Railway Department is prepared to release the reserve in exchange for certain lots required for railway housing. The trustees of the Public Education Endowment are agreeable to Wagin lots 520 to 528, 534 and 535 being excised from educational endowment Reserve No. 12077 and being reserved for railway purposes (housing).

Clause 11, Reserve No. 14678 at Wickpin: This reserve for park lands and recreation is part of a larger area which the Wickpin Road Board desires to develop as a greater sports ground. It is desired to consolidate the reserves and it is proposed that the old reserve be cancelled and that the land be included in the new Recreation Reserve No. 23911.

Earlier in the afternoon I handed a copy of the Bill to the Leader of the Opposition, but he has hardly had sufficient time, perhaps, to consider it, so if he desires an adjournment of the debate, I shall have no objection. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. Thorn, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [4.22] in moving the second reading said: Clause 2, Closure of Road No. 7872, Beverley Road District: This road is no longer required but, if action for closure were to be taken under the provisions of the Road Districts Act,

1919-1951, the land comprised therein would revert to the adjoining holders in equal shares. The holders of the land on the eastern side are not interested in acquiring any portion of the land as their western boundaries are fenced with a substantial rabbit-proof fence which it would be uneconomical to move. The holders of the land adjoining the western side of the road are prepared to purchase the whole of the land for inclusion in their existing Certificates of Title.

Clause 3, Closure of a right-of-way off Shenton-st., Bunbury: At the request of the owners of the appurtenant land, the Bunbury Municipal Council has recommended the closure of a private right-of-way off Shenton-st., Bunbury. The State Electricity Commission and the Bunbury Water Board have no objection to the closure. It is proposed to vest the land comprising the right-of-way in the contiguous holders by dividing it down its centre line.

Clause 4, Closure of a certain right-of-way at Bunbury: The Education Department desires to consolidate the Picton schoolsite, for which purpose it is necessary to close a private right-of-way separating portions of the school reserve. The Municipality of Bunbury has no objection to the closure of the right-of-way which has not been used or developed as such and is covered with scrub and weeds at present. The main portion of the right-of-way it is proposed shall be included in the contiguous reserves 23769 (schoolsite) and 23714 (recreation and children's playground). The balance is to be included in lot 74 the holder of which is also the holder of the fee simple of the land in the right-of-way. When certain land was resumed in 1908 for an addition to this schoolsite, portion of the same right-of-way was closed by resumption and an alternative right-of-way was granted to the appurtenant owners by transfer of an easement. It is necessary now to cancel the easement.

Clause 5, Closure of portion of Road No. 9381 in Darling Range Road District: Road No. 9381 at Lesmurdie was deviated, involving resumptions from adjoining freehold land and it is desired to close portion of the old road and to vest the land contained therein in the adjoining holder in compensation for the land resumed.

Clause 6, Closure of Carter Place, Fremantle: This road was provided between community centre, recreation and park reserve No. 23529 and schoolsite reserve No. 23530 at Hilton Park, Fremantle. The City of Fremantle considers the road unnecessary and has requested its closure and that the land be added to the adjoining community centre, recreation ground and park which is held in fee simple by the City of Fremantle. The adjoining schoolsite comprises 13 acres 2 roods 11 perches and is sufficient for the purpose. A slight

adjustment of the western boundary of the schoolsite will be required to obliterate the truncation of the corners.

Clauses 7 and 8, Closure of Birch-st. and portion of Baston-st., Geraldton: The Christian Brothers of St. Patrick's College, Geraldton, have acquired the land through which these roads are surveyed and they desire to use the area for school playing grounds. To consolidate the whole area it is desired to close the whole of Birch-st. and portion of Baston-st. and to vest the contained land in the trustees of the Christian Brothers. The roads have not been dedicated for public use, having been provided in a private subdivision of freehold land. The Municipality of Geraldton has concurred in the proposed closure.

Clause 9, Closure of Blanche-st., Geraldton: It is proposed to obliterate a private road at Geraldton and to reinclude the land in the adjoining lots which have been resurveyed to adopt the centre line of the road as the boundary between the contiguous lots all of which have frontages to existing public roads. The land in the road is to be vested in the owners for the time being of the contiguous lots.

Clause 10, Closure of portions of Hall Way, Geraldton: The Municipality of Geraldton has negotiated with the owner of Geraldton suburban lots 87 and 88 for provision in a subdivision of his land for an extension of Trigg-st. from Hilda Way to Pope-st. The proposal involves the closure of portions of Hall Way which the council holds in fee simple. It is intended that the council retain the portion required for extension of Lorna-st. The land comprised in the portions to be closed are to be vested in the owner of Geraldton suburban lot 88 in compensation for the land he will make available for extension of Trigg-st.

Clauses 11 and 12, Closure of portions of Dunraven and Onslow-sts., Geraldton: For the purpose of extending and consolidating the Geraldton High School site, the Education Department has requested the closure of portions of Dunraven and Onslow-sts., which have not been used or developed as public roads. The only adjoining holder affected by the proposed closure has indicated that he has no objection and the Municipality of Geraldton has approved of the proposals. All the land in the roads is to be included in the high school site.

Clauses 13 and 14, Closure of portions of Mark and Cecil-sts., Geraldton: The Municipality of Geraldton has undertaken certain town planning works involving the straightening of Mark and Cecil-sts., for which purpose the council has acquired the contiguous land. It is proposed that the adjacent area be resubdivided in a manner already approved by the Town Planning Board, which will provide a better road system. When the streets are closed, it is intended that the land therein will be

dealt with under the provisions of the Closed Roads Alienation Act, 1932, in such manner as may be approved by the Governor.

Clause 15, Closure of portion of a right-of-way off Brede-st., Geraldton: The owners of the various lots to which this private right-of-way is appurtenant, desire its closure as it is unsuitable for a thoroughfare. The Municipality of Geraldton has agreed to the proposed closure. The land comprised in the right-of-way is to be vested in the owners for the time being of the lots contiguous to its southern side. The owners on the northern side had no right of carriage way over it.

Clause 16, Closure of portion of Market-st., Guildford: Guildford school site reserve No. 7400 contains only 2 acres 2 roods 16 perches which is inadequate for the purpose and it is desired to include therein the adjoining portion of Market-st., which has not been utilised as a road. Provision has been made for alternative access to adjoining lots 179, 180 and 187, the owner of which is agreeable to the closure which has been recommended by the Municipality of Guildford and endorsed by the Town Planning Board.

Clause 17, Closure of Road No. 9616, Mewburn-st., Mandurah: The Mandurah Road Board desires to close Mewburn-st. with the intention that the land be used by the public as a park. If the road were closed under the ordinary provisions of the Road Districts Act, the land would revert to the adjoining holders. The road board considers that it serves no useful purpose as a road, but would be prepared to develop the land as a park. Provision is made in the Bill for the reversion of the land with the intention that it be reserved for a park as required by the road board.

Clause 18, Closure of portion of Venn-st., Northam: The Municipality of Northam desires to straighten Venn-st. and for the purpose, proposes to acquire lot 11 on Land Titles Office Plan 2436 in exchange for portion of the existing street. The land comprised in the portion to be closed will be vested in the municipality so that a resurvey can be effected of all the land concerned, which will provide a new road one chain wide and a new lot for transfer in exchange for lot 11.

Clause 19, Closure of a private right-of-way off Catherine and Wood-sts., Inglewood: The owners of the lots to which this private right-of-way is appurtenant desire its closure on the understanding that the land comprised therein will vest in the owners for the time being of the contiguous lots on the south-western and north-western sides of the right-of-way. The Perth Road Board has approved the proposal and the Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department has no objection.

Clause 20, Closure of portion of Williams-rd., Mount Yokine: In two adjoining private subdivisions of freehold land at Mount Yokine provision was made in each for roads which are contiguous to each other. Both are known as portions of Williams-rd. and it is proposed to close the portion shown on Land Titles Office Plan No. 5023, leaving the north-eastern portion available for public use. The land comprised in the portion to be closed will be revested in Her Majesty as of her former estate with the intention that it be disposed of to the adjoining holders.

Hon. L. Thorn: Could you read a little slower? We cannot follow it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I thought the Minister was reading to himself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member can have the file, and read it for himself. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. Thorn, debate adjourned.

BILL—CANNING LANDS REVESTMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [4.32]: I have had a look at the file and the Bill and, if my memory serves me rightly, I introduced a similar measure some years ago. The purpose of the Bill is to tidy up a housing project. When the State Housing Commission starts a building project, it has not time to carry out a close survey. Lines are run through with a view to making a start, and then it is often found necessary, after a practical survey is made, to make certain adjustments. I notice in the Bill that certain roads have been closed and the sites for some have been altered to suit latest town planning requirements. This applies also to rights-of-way and so forth. I have had a close look at it and, as there is nothing to which we could object, 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.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MARRIED WOMEN'S PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Works (for the Premier) in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2, page 2—Insert after the word "vary" in line 30 the words "or suspend."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I propose to recommend to the Committee that this amendment be accepted. It provides only for an additional action to be taken, and gives power to suspend as well as vary. I think that is reasonable, and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 2, page 2—Add after the word "fit" in line 32 the words "from time to time whenever the order for access is disobeyed by the married woman."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is along the lines of the previous amendment. Previously the Bill made provision for suspension only once. This provides that it can be done a number of times, whenever an order for access is disobeyed by the married woman. It is a continuing penalty and not a finite one as was the other. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Police in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The provision in the Bill referred to a concession given to primary producers in the depression years. The concession was that a farmer would be permitted to license one motor-vehicle on his farm at half the ordinary licence fee. That arrangement has operated ever since, officially. But in practice it has been imposed upon and infringed by primary producers, some of whom have a number of vehicles on their farms for which they claim the right of registration at half the licence fee.

At its annual conference the Road Board Association, realising that road boards were losing a considerable amount of revenue, requested the Government to amend the Traffic Act to preserve the original concession, and to make it clear

that only one vehicle on each farm or holding would qualify for half the licence fee. A number of specious objections were raised in this Chamber, saying that a holding or farm could not be defined. That was merely an attempt to draw a red herring across the trail.

I am informed by the Local Government Department that it is a simple matter to define a holding or a farm, and that it is not the person, as suggested by the member for Roe, but the one vehicle on each holding which was to receive the concession of being licensed at half fees. It is extraordinary how the views in another place coincide with those expressed here by members of the Liberal and Country Parties.

Mr. Perkins: It shows how closely they are in touch with country opinion.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The hon. member is not closely in touch, because he agreed with the contention of the Road Board Association that it would be a fair and reasonable proposition to have one vehicle at half-licence fee. Now he has somersaulted and it will be interesting to see his attempts to convince the board why he has changed his opinion.

The Minister for Works: That silenced him!

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I think the concession was a liberal one. The local government people, of whom the members of the Liberal and Country Parties speak so highly, will be the ones to suffer, because they will lose revenue. We are all pleased to know that the farmers have had an era of prosperity, but is there any reason—

Mr. Perkins: That is past.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: It is not.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Of course it is!

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: One would not think so from the price of wool or the price of meat.

Hon. A. F. Watts: You do not know what you are talking about.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: When the primary producers' representative tells us it costs 12s. 7d. to produce a bushel of wheat, it should not be wondered at that we are sceptical regarding whom they have on the board to calculate that amount. It would be a poor district and an indifferent farmer that could not raise wheat for less than 12s. 7d. a bushel today.

Mr. Perkins: How do you know that?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The member for Roe is not the only one who has ever worked on a farm. He imagines that experience in primary production is kept exclusively for members like himself who have made fortunes out of wool, wheat and meat. The hon. member says one thing in this Chamber and something totally different

outside. So far as he is concerned, I have reached that stage where, if upon a cloudy day he came into this Chamber with a bag of bibles on his back, and said it was raining outside, I would walk out and have a look.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Minister connect his remarks with the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Yes. The hon. member endeavoured to justify the continuance of the right of primary producers to have an unlimited number of motor-vehicles running on the roads and to pay only a half fee for them. As a reason for the continuance of this concession, he asserted that the farmers were having a bad time. He said that they did have a good time, but were having a bad time now. I was trying to point out how specious his reasoning was. This Bill is not mine. It came from the Minister in charge of the Traffic Act, and my brief is not to oppose the deletion of this provision. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not intend to oppose the motion, but I think the Minister will find the position is more complicated than he thinks. There was strong opposition to the provision by the Farmers' Union and by a great many local authorities. I know what I am talking about, because I have discussed it in detail.

The Minister for Police: I heard you discuss it with one local authority and you agreed to the provision.

Mr. PERKINS: Other complications have entered into the matter. I do not want to waste the time of the Committee by discussing them now. Members of the farming community are not so simple-minded as to believe that they can have certain charges against them reduced by the local authorities, and yet have the same amount of work done on their roads. They realise that if they gain something in one direction, they will have to pay something more in another direction. Overall, the opinion is that it would be more satisfactory not to have this provision; and I am glad that the Minister has agreed to its deletion, although, apparently somewhat reluctantly.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 5, page 3—After the word "amended" in line 2 insert the following:—

- (a) by adding after the word "implement" in the last line of the first paragraph the words "except an implement used or to be used in agricultural or horticultural pursuits while such implement is being driven, used or towed, during the hours between sunrise and sunset, on any road in a district or sub-district outside the metropolitan

area from a place in such district or sub-district to another place in the same or an adjoining district or sub-district; provided that the implement while being so driven, used or towed carries, bears or has attached thereto such signs, notices or markings as are or may from time to time be prescribed in respect of overwidth vehicles permitted under this section to be licensed, driven, used or towed on any roads; and

(b)

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: This amendment has to do with overwidth vehicles and implements. A regulation was introduced by the Government to try to ease the unfavourable position created in 1950 or 1951. The first attempt to deal with the matter was the insertion in the Act of Section 46A. Prior to that, the maximum width of vehicles was 7ft. 6in., but it was increased by Section 26A to 8ft., with the permission of the Commissioner of Police. Some time elapsed, and it was found that that was working disadvantageously to the primary producer as far as the conveyance of vehicles and implements along public highways was concerned. A regulation was introduced to ease the position, but it was disallowed. The provision in the Bill is agreed to by another place, but members there want added to it the words that are contained in this amendment. The provision is precisely the same, in effect, as the regulation that was disallowed.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It does not require permits to be issued.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: If the hon. member wants to talk about it he can. If he had not made a mess of introducing Section 46A, perhaps this trouble, which has occurred over two or three sessions, would not have taken place. I have no objection to the Council's amendment, and neither has the Minister for Local Government. It means, in effect, that between sunrise and sunset, provided that an implement carries whatever signs are required by the local authority or the authority in charge of the Traffic Act in a particular locality, the owner will not need to take out a licence or obtain a permit for the removal of the implement.

No Government could agree to a proposition that implements well in excess of 8ft. in width should be permitted to travel along public highways without adequate precautions being taken for the safety of other users of the roads. As the amendment makes it mandatory for such implements to carry adequate signs to indicate to other road-users that those implements are overwidth, there is no objection to the amendment. If such an implement is to be conveyed along the road at any other time than between the hours of sunrise and

sunset, it will be necessary to obtain a permit from the local authority, as is provided for in the Bill. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th November.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.0]: The Premier, when moving the second reading of the Bill, gave reasons for its introduction. He told us that a request had been received by the Government from the Civil Service Association for the appointment of a board of three to take the place of the single Public Service Commissioner.

The Minister for Housing: This request has been made for many years by the Civil Service Association.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes; I remember something about it. The Premier then went on to say that the Government was giving consideration to the request, and he said that nothing could be done about it this session, but that next session it was proposed to bring down legislation to meet the desires of the Public Service in regard to setting up a board. He also explained that the real reason for the introduction of the Bill was that the present Public Service Commissioner intended to resign before the expiration of his term of office.

I much regret that the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Taylor, has seen fit to resign, because he has been, and is, a most efficient public servant. Under the Act the Public Service Commissioner must be appointed for seven years, and the appointment of the present Public Service Commissioner will, I understand, not run out until December, 1955.

In view of the proposals that will be brought forward next session for the appointment of a board of three—I understand the Public Service Commissioner will be the chairman—it is necessary that this legislation be introduced so that a temporary appointment may be made until the end of 1955. When the Bill comes down authorising the appointment of a board of three, members will have a chance of debating the proposition. In view of the circumstances that have arisen, I can see no objection to supporting the Bill.

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.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
 - 2, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.
- With amendments.

BILL—BOOKMAKERS BETTING TAX.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.13]: The implementation of this measure depends on what happens to the Betting Control Bill which is now before the Legislative Council. At this stage I can only say that if the Legislative Council approves of that measure, then I think that off-the-course betting should pay a tax in the same manner as does on-the-course betting.

Mr. McCulloch: They should all be taxed.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes; but I do not want to indicate that I am supporting the betting Bill which is now being considered in another place. This measure provides for what is called a turnover tax on betting both on and off the course. The tax will amount to 1½ per cent., which, I think, is 3d. in the £. The racing clubs and the trotting clubs, so the Minister informed us, will receive 20 per cent. of the tax on all bets made on the course, and half of this amount is to be used for the increasing of stakes and the other half is to be used at the discretion of the clubs. I think that is correct.

The Minister for Police: Yes.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The same tax which now operates in regard to betting tickets on the course has not been altered. The 1½ per cent. tax will also operate on off-the-course betting, and of this amount the clubs will receive 10 per cent. Members should bear in mind that from on-the-course betting the clubs will receive 20 per cent. I ask the Minister: Why the difference? Why should on-the-course betting have to pay 20 per cent. and off-the-course only half that amount?

The Minister for Works: Surely that is not the way to put it. They are both to pay the same rate of tax whether they are on the course or off it. It is the amount the Treasurer makes available.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is so. Why is the Treasurer making the difference?

The Minister for Police: Why should the W.A.T.C. get 10 per cent. of the tax on the Melbourne Cup or the Sydney Cup? It is not providing the sport.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The racing clubs are the ones that go to all the expense of providing the sport, yet a greater part of the tax is to be taken from them than from the off-the-course bettor.

The Minister for Police: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the Leader of the Opposition is getting away from the Bill. He could have discussed this point when the Betting Control Bill was in Committee. The measure before us is simply to impose a rate of tax. I doubt if the hon. member is in order in discussing the aspects he has raised.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: If that is the case, it is not much use my saying anything at all on the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had his opportunity to discuss it at length.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am afraid I did not.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall have to keep the hon. member to the subject under discussion.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: If the Bill in another place is agreed to, I can only say that I would agree to taxation being paid on on-the-course and off-the-course betting. I do not know whether the Minister, when he was dealing with the previous Bill, gave an estimate of the amount of money that would be obtained from this tax, but I do not think he did. According to the Auditor General's report, the amount received last year from the winning bets tax was £164,890. When the Treasurer introduced the Budget I think he said he expected that a similar sum would be obtained from the turnover tax.

The Minister for Police: That was the Treasury share of the winning bets tax. It would return more than that.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The racing clubs get 20 per cent. of it. Other than the estimate given by the Treasurer when he introduced the Budget, I do not know what amount is to be obtained from this tax.

The Minister for Police: You would have to guess the value of off-course betting, and there is no means of judging that.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I realise that would be difficult. When I introduced a Bill to provide for a winning bets tax the present Government, which was then on this side of the House, raised considerable opposition to it, the present Treasurer being very much opposed to it, particularly to the provisions which gave money to the racing and trotting clubs. He did not consider there was justification for it and said that the most that should be given

was 5 per cent. I remember the present Minister for Works saying that a bankrupt Treasurer should not be giving anything away, and the member for Collie also expressed strong views and said it was a very doubtful means by which a Treasurer could obtain money. I wonder what his views are on this Bill.

Mr. Heal: But this is an entirely different measure.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No, the principle is exactly the same. The racing and trotting clubs are to receive their percentage and so the member for West Perth cannot split straws in that way.

The Minister for Police: The difference is that the bookmakers will pay this tax and the punters paid the other.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The question we debated when I introduced the winning bets legislation was whether the clubs should receive anything at all. However, if the Betting Control Bill becomes law I do not see that we can raise any objection to off-the-course betting being taxed. I leave it at that.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.16]: I must say that by and large my views on this Bill coincide greatly with those of the Leader of the Opposition. The situation, as I see it, is that I still hope the Betting Control Bill will not become law; but if it does, it will be because Parliament has made that decision. The duty of Parliament will then be to consider what legislation should be the corollary of it. In my view it would be unreasonable that legalised betting in those circumstances, should not be taxed, and as I understand the position, if this Bill were not passed that would, to some degree at least, be the position.

If the figures that have been suggested by the Treasurer in his Budget speech and which were mentioned recently by the Leader of the Opposition, are in any way correct—that is to say, that a sum of at least £160,000 is to be expected from this tax—it is obvious that the Government contemplates a tremendous volume of betting, because $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. is one-eighth and if that fraction is going to reach a level of £160,000 or thereabouts, the turnover is going to be in the vicinity of £13,000,000.

If the £160,000 that is suggested is merely the sum that the Treasurer is to receive, then that figure must be plussed by 80 times the figure that the racing clubs are going to receive as their share of the turnover tax. It would therefore be conceivable that the volume of turnover would be in the vicinity of £20,000,000 per annum. Of course, I have not the slightest idea what the position is today and I do not suppose anybody else has, because the statistics will be available only when the betting control board, if it ever commences

operations, obtains its returns and exercises its powers in regard to the examination of licensed bookmakers' books.

But if the tax is going to reach the figure that has been suggested, then, as I have said, the volume of betting that will be subject to turnover tax is going to reach a tremendous figure for the population of this State. I would suggest that those figures support the contention put forward by those who have opposed the measure now before another place—and which will be associated with this Bill, if it becomes law—that the volume of betting is not likely to decrease.

Were I in a position to do so—unfortunately, I am not—I would move an amendment that this tax be double because I would be merely following a policy which I adopted in regard to this matter, namely, that betting should be made as difficult as possible. So the more they have to pay out of the total amount they extract from the gullible public, the better I would be pleased, and that is why I suggest—and would like to move—that the tax be double.

As far as I can ascertain, that is the position, and therefore I do not propose to oppose the second reading of this measure, knowing that if another Bill now before the Legislative Council does not become law, this measure will go into the discard, and also knowing that the first-named Bill would suffer a similar fate.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie—in reply) [5.23]: In replying to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party, it would be very difficult to assess the amount that would be derived from this turnover tax. Last year the amount of bookmakers' turnover, on which the winning bets tax was computed, amounted to about £9,000,000. That amount provided a total net revenue of £205,000, 20 per cent. of which went to the racing clubs, leaving £164,000 for the Treasury.

In drawing a comparison between the figure I have just quoted on the turnover of betting, this tax will produce considerably less revenue than the winning bets tax. In South Australia, where there is no legalised off-course betting, with the exception of that conducted at Port Pirie, the turnover was £25,000,000 for betting transactions on horseracing, trotting, greyhound racing and interstate racing.

It is generally conceded that in this State there is a greater volume of betting off-course on Eastern States racing events than there is on our local races. The chairman of the W.A.T.C. and the president of the W.A.T.A. have said that they consider that that would be correct. So it would be very difficult to assess what the tax would return, either from on-course or off-course betting, because there is a considerable difference between the

amount on which the betting tax would be computed—that is, on £9,000,000 of bookmakers' turnover—and what might be derived from the tax on the turnover of bookmakers who are operating off-course. It would simply be a guess to estimate the amount of money involved in the turnover of off-the-course betting transactions.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do you not think this tax will bring in much more revenue than the winning bets tax?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: It will, on a higher turnover. The winning bets tax which the Leader of the Opposition introduced was based on 2½ per cent. This tax will be 1½ per cent. on turnover. So, unless the turnover of bookmakers off-course is much more than the turnover of bookmakers who were subject to the winning bets tax, the amount will not be as much as was derived from the winning bets tax. However, we are assuming that there would be at least twice the volume of betting done off-course, principally on Eastern States events, compared with what there would be on-course; so, in the aggregate, it is anticipated that this tax will produce more than the winnings bets tax. It may produce a little more, but we do not think it will be a great deal more unless there is a greater volume of turnover of off-course betting than we anticipate.

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.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the further amendment made by the Assembly to its amendment No. 3.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1954-55.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Department of Native Affairs, £152,251.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.30]: Last evening, I rose to my feet and asked that you report progress, Mr. Chairman. You did call the division number but several members were not aware that we had reached the Education Vote. As I have said, in calling, Sir, you did call Division No. 23, but I think it has always been the practice to call the name of the department, especially when we are going from one department to another. The Minister for Education was not in his seat at the time.

The Minister for Education: I had to leave the Chamber for a few minutes.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not complaining, but the Minister was not in his seat at the time.

The Minister for Education: Were you in your seat?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. I was present at the time, and I came across from the other side of the Chamber to my seat. I am wondering whether the division could be put again. I am not doing this with the object of holding up the Committee. I am quite prepared to assure the Treasurer that I am perfectly willing to assist in bringing the session to a conclusion as soon as possible. However, I think that Education is a most important vote. I do not think it will have a good reaction throughout the State when it is known that such an important vote has been put through without one word being said on it.

As the Minister for Works knows, the Education Department is a most important one, and its Estimates deserve some consideration. I feel, Mr. Chairman, that, when you called the division last night, had you also called "Education", it would have given members a better opportunity to be ready to discuss the matter. I am asking whether consideration can not be given to calling the item again so that members may be given an opportunity to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, I might point out that my duty as Chairman of Committees is merely to put the question. I admit that I did not call the name of the department, but I did not do so with the vote of the Department of Public Works, either. All through the Estimates I have called the division number only. Members have a copy of the Estimates before them, and as we pass from one division to another, it should be quite easy for members to follow. At the time, we had a rather thin Committee, and there had been a great deal of discussion on water supplies. When it ceased, I do not think the Minister for Water Supplies replied. I put the vote and it was passed.

I had to take time to turn over to the Education Division, which is Division No. 23. I called the amount of the vote, which is £5,000,000 odd, and I then put the vote to the Committee. As no member rose at that stage to discuss the vote, it was passed. I remember that at the time the Leader of the Opposition was on the Government side of the Chamber conferring with the Deputy Premier, but he crossed to his seat and asked, "Which item?" and I called the division dealing with native affairs.

Members will realise that I am here to enforce the Standing Orders and ensure that every member is afforded equal rights. I cannot be expected to know what is in the minds of members. My job is to put

the question, whether it be a motion or an amendment, after discussion has ceased. Consequently, I would not know what is in the mind of the Government or the Leader of the Opposition. Therefore, when I put the Education Vote to the Committee, I could not see the Minister for Education in his seat, and the vote was put and passed.

I do not know that there is anything I can do now, because the vote has been confirmed in the Votes and Proceedings. Frequently, a member will miss out on a particular department. If I had the power—which I have not now—it would be an easy matter to reintroduce the vote for discussion. If the Leader of the Opposition had raised the matter last night, I might have agreed to his request but, as the decision on the vote has been recorded in the Votes and Proceedings, it is out of my hands. If, for example, another member had missed speaking on the vote on the Lands Estimates and had asked permission for the discussion to be reopened on it, I think we would be leaving ourselves open to lax procedure. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, I am unable to reopen the discussion and the matter is definitely out of my hands. I do not see what we could do now in regard to the matter.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Would it be in the power of this Committee to order that consideration be given to this vote? I can appreciate your position, Mr. Chairman, but I was always under the impression that this Chamber was the master of its own destiny, and if it decided that such a question as this should be reopened for discussion, there was the necessary authority to do so. I can only repeat that a vote of £5,000,000 has gone through without one word being said by a single member of this Chamber, including the Minister.

The Minister for Works: That is not without precedent.

The Minister for Education: A vote for £30,000,000 has gone through without a word being said on it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: There may be some other means whereby we can discuss the Education Vote, perhaps by way of special motion, to give members an opportunity to speak under this heading. Perhaps the Deputy Premier would like to express his views.

The CHAIRMAN: I doubt whether the Leader of the Opposition is in order now because we have passed the Education Vote. The vote, so far as I am concerned in Committee is Division No. 24, dealing with native affairs. I have already stated that the question of reintroducing the Education Estimates is beyond my control.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.43]: Firstly, I would like to say that I

was absent when the previous division was called. I had to leave the Chamber for a few minutes on a matter of business and, during my absence, progress was reported. I regret that we cannot go back to discuss the Education Vote, but we are now dealing with the vote for the Department of Native Affairs. I do not want to prolong the discussion on any particular item but, in fairness to the Chamber, I will make a few brief comments on them generally. I might point out that the Native Welfare Bill is now being discussed in another place, and it would be out of order for me to refer to it here.

The latest available figures show that there are approximately 8,200 full-bloods in Western Australia including 1,843 children. There are 7,260 all other bloods of whom 3,224 are children. There are 25 missions operating with a total of 2,195 children. The total number of children in the State is 5,270, and as members know, some of them who are classed as natives in law are attending State and denominational schools in various parts.

Mr. Bovell: Do you know how many full-bloods there are in Australia?

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: No. We know the approximate total of natives in their tribal state in Western Australia; it is estimated at 6,000. They are not in touch with civilisation. Numbers of them go into the Pallottine Mission at Balgo, approximately 250 miles south of Hall's Creek.

With regard to assistance to missions, as from the 1st July, 1954, the Government decided that the weekly subsidy payable to children who are being cared for by missions would be increased to 30s. 9d. This is the same amount that is paid by the Child Welfare Department for the upkeep of white children. In previous years the maximum amount payable was 12s. 6d., but this was increased to 22s. 6d. on the 1st July, 1953, and to 30s. 9d. on the 1st July, 1954.

The latest figure respecting natives holding citizenship rights certificates in Western Australia gives a total of 748. Natives are employed largely on a temporary basis, particularly those in the South-West Land Division. In the northern part of the State many natives work on P.W.D. projects, in the Harbour and Light Department, on the wharves and on main roads. Quite a number work on cattle and sheep stations and many of their dependants also reside on those stations. The standard of employment and accommodation of such natives cannot be compared with the standard of other station hands. At the same time, there are some very competent persons of less than half-blood engaged as windmill hands on stations and they are paid good wages.

The State Government has taken up with the Commonwealth the question of payment of social service benefits to natives. This largely emanated from an interpretation of the Social Services Consolidation Act. As a result of continued representations to the Commonwealth, it is hoped that the interpretation will be liberalised. I might mention that the vote includes an amount payable to the Department of Public Health for medical care of the native community.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [5.47]: Some time ago I asked a question of the Minister relating to Cunderlee mission station. The answer was that there were 32 adults and 27 juvenile natives and eight missionaries stationed there. The cost of running that station for 59 natives was over £4,000. The case of a boy from this station was referred to me some time ago. He has a bent for mechanics and his name is Peter Pontarra. His parents were natives from the Warburton Ranges and it is well known that the tribes in that district are hostile to the tribes from the Trans-line area.

After a little while the parents of this boy moved away from Cunderlee station but left the boy behind. However, they found a suitable place where the boy could be properly trained. They had made arrangements with the chief missionary at Kurrawang mission station to teach the boy mechanics or engineering. Kurrawang is about nine miles from Kalgoorlie and a bus runs daily between those two places. The Cunderlee mission refused to release this boy. I cannot understand the reason for that. I do not know whether the mission is determined to retain its inmates to justify the existence of eight missionaries.

I understand the Minister has already been approached on this matter, and I ask him to see that justice is done. The boy has no possible chance of learning anything at Cunderlee, not even cutting sandalwood, because that pursuit has been abandoned. He is able to earn a few shillings by cutting other varieties of wood but will not have an opportunity to learn a worth-while trade. If he is permitted to go to Kurrawang, he will be able to make a career for himself. There might be some reason for retaining this boy of which I am not aware. The boy is in his prime of life and if he is kept at the mission beyond the age of 21, he will forget what civilisation is.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [5.48]: I would like to reply to the remarks of the member for Hannans. I presume that the hon. member has received a similar letter from Miss Bennetts in regard to this boy. She was an ex-school teacher at Cunderlee and is

a fine woman. The position has been investigated. The Premier, the Leader of the British Parliamentary Labour Party and other notable persons have been circularised by Miss Bennetts in regard to this case. The member for Hannans pointed out that the boy was labouring under an injustice, but I am sure he has not seen the file. I shall be glad to make the file available to any member of this Chamber so that he can see the circumstances under which the lad entered the mission and what the present position is. After reading the file I am sure the member for Hannans will not consider that the Department of Native Affairs is meting out an injustice to the lad.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Labour, £11,275; Prices, £925; Factories, £25,730—agreed to.

Vote—State Insurance, £5.

Item, Less rebates from State Insurance Fund, Government Workers' Compensation Fund and Government Fire and Marine Insurance Fund. £73,730.

Mr. COURT. I would be obliged if the Minister could explain the significance of this item. I cannot appreciate the full meaning of the words mentioned. No doubt there is some simple explanation related to some form of protection given to Government risks.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Unfortunately I have left the notes relating to this vote in the office. I undertake to obtain the information for the member for Nedlands.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Chief Secretary, £94,837; Registry and Friendly Societies, £70,661; Prisons, £157,313; Observatory, £3,533; Local Government, £31,806—agreed to.

Vote—Town Planning, £37,400.

Mr. WILD (Dale) [5.58]: I do not know any Government department which wastes so much money as this one. I am not saying this against the Minister because he has co-operated very well. I do not think he will agree with me that it is a waste of time and money. He will, however, tell us that he is the Town Planning Board because he has to go out on his own and make his decisions. Recently he has been out to my electorate on several occasions to exercise the correct functions of the Town Planning Board. I want to bring the notice of a few instances that have occurred in recent months which have necessitated the Chief Secretary's having to go out and override the decisions of the Town Planning Board. These are not isolated instances. I am referring to the action of the board in rejecting applications for subdivisions.

When an application is rejected, the member for the district lodges an appeal on behalf of the owner, and to indicate how ridiculous the policy of the board is, of the last nine appeals in the Gosnells-Armadale district, the Minister has upheld eight of them. On behalf of the Gosnells Road Board I wish to quote some of the reasons that are being given by the Town Planning Board for its rejection of the right to subdivide.

One of the main objections advanced in the Gosnells area is with respect to the size of the subdivision. When an applicant desires to subdivide a block of one acre or five acres into quarter-acre lots, the board says, "No, we will permit you to divide into half-acre or one-acre lots." Yet, as the Chief Secretary has seen with his own eyes, alongside those very blocks, there are quarter-acre lots. At present I have a case before the Minister concerning a block at the corner of Fremantle-rd. and Hicks-st., Gosnells.

The Minister for Housing: Are you criticising the Minister or the board?

Mr. WILD: I am not hitting at the Minister, as he well knows. As a matter of fact, I informed him that I intended to attack the policy of the board. But for the fact that the Chief Secretary has his head out of the clouds and sees matters for himself, the injustices would not be righted.

The Minister for Lands: He has his feet on the ground all right.

Mr. WILD: He certainly has. If ever there was £37,000 being tipped down the drain it is the vote for this board. In the case that I have before the Minister, an application has been made to subdivide a block, and it bears out exactly what I have stated. In respect to adjacent land, only three months ago the board approved of subdivision into quarter-acre lots. Yet, in reply to this application, the board has stated that it will approve of nothing less than one-acre lots. These blocks are situated side by side on the main road and have the normal light, water and sanitary services.

Another reason given by the board for rejecting an application for subdivision is that roads have not been reconstructed. Many members of the Chamber have served as representatives on local authorities and are aware that each year the board meets to discuss its estimates. Whether working by wards or as a whole district, there is a certain amount of money to be spent, and members know that during the current year there will be so much money available for certain roads. Now what happens when an owner of a property of five acres or one acre wishes to subdivide? He writes to the Town Planning Board and receives an answer that it will approve of the subdivision subject to the road being

constructed. It is a gazetted road, though it has not been formed. So the applicant goes to the local authority and states that he can get approval for the subdivision provided the road is constructed. The board, however, has already framed its budget for the year, and is it to be expected to scrap its estimates and give priority to the construction of some other road? It has to say that nothing can be done in this financial year and that the applicant will have to wait until next year.

The next instance applies particularly to the Gosnells district, and I point out that this will be of interest to the Minister for Health because the Health Department now comes into the matter. That department has been sending out an inspector to test the ground, and subdivisions are being refused on the score that the water table is too high and that the land is not suitable for the installation of septic tanks. The department claims that, if the water table is higher than 2ft. below the ground surface, the land is not suitable as building sites. Yet one can go over the whole of the Gosnells area or ask any surveyor and one will learn that it is difficult to find a spot where the water table at some time during the year does not rise to within 2ft. of the surface.

Furthermore, there are in the district over 200 septic tanks. Yet the department is frequently using the reason, "This land is not suitable for building sites because, owing to the high water table, septic tanks cannot be installed. Two appeals recently were made against such decisions, and the Chief Secretary was good enough to inspect those blocks as well as others. On one of the blocks, although rejected on account of the high water table and therefore being unsuitable for the installation of a septic tank, there has been a house for seven years and it has had a septic tank for four years.

The land is owned by a man who, when his son returned from the war, told the boy that he could build at the rear of the property and later on he would get the block subdivided and give the boy the title. Six months ago, the father decided to do this, but the application was rejected on the score of the high water table rendering the land unsuitable for a septic tank. Yet, as I have pointed out, there has been a septic tank on the block for four years.

These cases illustrate the grounds for rejection that people in the district are receiving and they represent nothing but procrastination. It is a serious matter for the people concerned, and it is disheartening for members of the road board—men who give their time gratis—to be by-passed by an authority that has not a clue and does not know what it is doing. The next case is a most interesting one and it occurred only a few days ago.

The Minister for Works: Who set up the board? Your Government.

Hon. A. F. Watts: No, it was set up long ago.

Mr. WILD: I am not concerned with that; I am criticising the policy of the board. The block I have just mentioned is only about 75 yards from my home, and I know the land well, because I pass it every day on my way to the city. In this case, the application was rejected on the ground that it must receive a foot of filling before approval would be granted. I should mention that an application was rejected on the 13th April on the same ground, but the owner did not come to see me until about two months ago.

For my part, I realised that it would be impossible to put in a foot of filling over the whole block, as to do so would cost a fortune, so I suggested that he write again to the Town Planning Board and, if unsuccessful, appeal to the Minister. Now the case is before the Minister by way of appeal. This is what the secretary of the board wrote under date the 9th November in response to the second application for permission to subdivide—

Lot 17, Canning Location 7.

I. M. Duncan.

With reference to the above proposed subdivision, I have been directed to advise that, after further consideration of the amended proposal put forward, the board is prepared to approve of a diagram of survey establishing the lots as set out on sketch received in this office on the 30th September, subject to the front halves of the lots 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12 being filled to a depth of one foot, all lots having a frontage to a constructed road, and the corner being truncated in accordance with the by-laws.

The board is also of the opinion that lot 8 requires filling, but in view of the fact that there is an existing house on the lot, the board is prepared to waive the condition in respect of this lot only.

An old lady and gentleman have, for 30 years, been living in the house mentioned in the letter and, for their age, they are enjoying very good health.

The Minister for Housing: Have they a septic tank?

Mr. WILD: No, but I have one at my home and my block is on exactly the same plane, about 75 yards away. To show the inconsistency of the board, and how ridiculous its action is, the block in question was one of four acres and was divided into two 2-acre blocks. Twelve months ago, one of those blocks was subdivided into quarter-acre lots, the application, for which was approved, and not a yard of filling was required and already there are three houses almost completely

constructed on those lots. Yet that same land is as flat as the floor of this Chamber, but the applicant is told that the board will not approve until he puts in a foot of filling.

Therefore I say that by this vote we have £37,000 going down the drain. The Chief Secretary himself admits that he has virtually been converted into the Town Planning Board, and with good reason, because he has a pile of appeals on his office desk. I am receiving complaints almost every day, and the only way to get wrongs righted is to appeal to the Minister. Probably other members are having a similar experience.

As I have mentioned, eight out of nine appeals to the Minister have been upheld. I have accompanied the Minister on some of his visits and he has been amazed that the applications should have been rejected on the grounds I have mentioned. I desired to draw the attention of members and of the Minister representing the Chief Secretary to these instances. I repeat that I told the Chief Secretary of my intention to criticise the board, and I conclude by saying that it is time Parliament did something about the Town Planning Board.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [7.30]: The member for Dale, in his references to town planning, virtually paid a tribute to the Minister for Town Planning, who is the Chief Secretary, for his application to his duties as Minister. The fact that he has a more practical approach than has the Town Planning Board from the decisions it has made—which, after all, are subject to appeal to the Minister—is apparent. Quite frankly, I have experience of some puzzling decisions made by the board which comprises the Town Planning Commissioner as chairman and three others who are not town planners—one is an architect, another a surveyor and the third is drawn from a metropolitan local governing authority. So it could happen that the laymen on the board could override the town planner because he is outnumbered three to one.

Mr. Court: Is that so in actual practice?

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I could not say, but, as the member for Dale mentioned, there have been some obvious anomalies and exactly how the board operates or who wins the fights, I know not. While certain decisions now being made might appear on the surface to be in direct conflict with what was done previously, it could be that the Town Planning Board has some prior knowledge of what is envisaged by Professor Stephenson in his regional plan. I was hoping to be able to consult the Minister in respect of

some of the principal points raised but unfortunately he had an engagement and it was impossible for me to see him.

The effect of a board, or some persons, of authority, whom I shall refer to as file or paper officers, is a matter of considerable concern to those other departments, people or authorities whose task it is to get on with the job. No doubt other Ministers, and Ministers of previous Governments, have had experience of this. For instance, the State Housing Commission might want to proceed in a certain way and produce houses; but it finds, and I say this with all respect, that it is waiting on the passing of a survey plan, or something like that. For certain reasons the health authorities may object to houses being built in certain places; local authorities have by-laws that differ from authority to authority; all those red-tape obstacles have to be overcome—sometimes they have to be steam-rollered over in order to get on with the job.

It would appear that many who seek to subdivide their properties are experiencing the same sort of difficulty. I would hazard a guess that there will, in all likelihood, be a continuation of this unsatisfactory state of affairs for a further period yet. It was hoped that Professor Stephenson would have lodged the details of his regional plan in October of this year. Recently the Minister for Town Planning announced that he expected to receive it in December, while the latest information I have is that the 28th January is the earliest moment; but there is talk of its being delayed until April next. I daresay the Government will have a look at that situation to see whether it is not possible to have this most important scheme submitted far earlier than the last-named date because it is having a most unsettling effect on many people and interests and on the plans of local authorities and those who desire to carry out developmental work of one sort or another.

Members will recall that last year, when certain amendments were made to the Town Planning Act, a provision was inserted limiting the period of appointment of members of the board to two years instead of three. That was done from the 4th November last year because the term of office of members of the Town Planning Board had expired. The Government thought that the period of two years would probably suffice for the production of a metropolitan regional plan and the appropriate action either to give effect to the whole or part of it. In any event, the matter would have been finalised one way or another by November, 1955.

All I can say is that while it entails a considerable volume of work, we are fortunate that the present Minister for Town Planning is more than interested in these matters and goes to the extent of inspecting proposals on the site and, in many

cases, has made decisions which would appear to have given general satisfaction. I imagine the Minister concerned is aware of all the cases mentioned by the member for Dale, but in any event, I shall draw his attention to them.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Lands and Agriculture, £564,946:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [7.40]: At present the State is experiencing a boom so far as applications for land are concerned. That, of course, is a good thing and frequently for every block of land thrown open for selection as many as 15 or 20 applications, and sometimes more, are received.

Mr. Bovell: That has been the case since the war.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is a general indication of what is happening in the State. It shows that people generally have faith in the State and are anxious to take up some form of agriculture in a place which, in my opinion, has a wonderful future. We have found it necessary to carry on with our immigration policy and so extend, at the greatest possible speed, according to the expediency of the occasion, the number of citizens in the State of Western Australia. It is a good thing that these people do not want to go into secondary industries and we are receiving more applications for land than can be met at present.

Recently six blocks of land at Esperance were made available for selection and no less than 32 applications were received. That is rather surprising when so little is yet known of this large tract of country. What interested me was that 14 of the 32 applicants had a considerable amount of capital themselves. It indicates that we are getting partly away from the old-fashioned idea that to take up a block of land one must receive Government assistance. It appears that today there are many people in the State who have a considerable amount of capital and are prepared to invest it in some form of agriculture. In my opinion, therefore, we have a duty to make land available at the earliest possible moment.

Talking of Esperance, information is being collated which will enable the Government to undertake a planned civilian scheme and it will cover a terrific area in the southern portion of the State. At present all the details have been presented and all that is now required is an aerial survey in order to tie up the photographic plan. Much of the reconnaissance has already been done, but the weather has been against aerial photography. As some members know, it needs only a wisp of cloud to prevent the taking of aerial photographs.

However, we are expecting it to be completed in the near future and then steps will be taken to round off what I think will be a reasonable plan for that area.

Mr. Yates: A large number of ex-servicemen are still awaiting farms.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We still have 700 or 800 applications. But it is expected that not more than 300 to 350 will require farms. The others have not yet signified their intention not to take up land, but, through inquiries I have made, it is clear to me they have already got occupations with which they are satisfied. If we have 350 of the remainder, it will be as many as we could hope to get.

Provision has been made in the Surveyor-General's division for 1954-55 for a few additional surveyors to come to the State. We have been applying for surveyors throughout the Commonwealth but not with a great deal of success, despite the fact that the Government was and is prepared to spend a considerable sum of money in buying the equipment needed for this class of work, and allowing the surveyor himself later on, and over a period of years, to pay the amount back in instalments. The Surveyor-General tells me that he has had some success in that direction but not as much as he anticipated.

We are endeavouring to overtake this shortage which must cause quite a number of hold-ups so far as subdivisional work is concerned and which would interfere with any large-scale town planning. Very often our surveyors are sent many miles from the metropolitan area and as a consequence there are not enough of them to cover the whole of the State, with the result that somebody must suffer.

The survey and mapping expedition has been completed in the North Kimberleys. In one dry season alone it accomplished much more than was thought possible. In addition to the general topographical survey and land classification over more than 10,000 square miles, it has surveyed a traverse of 190 miles from Gibb River station to the north coast near the mouth of the Drysdale River. As a result of the information we obtained, we shall be almost certain to open up that country. We shall inaugurate the scheme in the certain knowledge that much of the country is fertile and can carry a certain amount of stock. Provided we can make facilities available for getting stock off the stations, I should imagine that the North Kimberleys will play a tremendous part in the economy of the State. I know the Government is particularly interested to have something done. In fact, it was our idea that this exploration work should be undertaken to seek out that knowledge.

I would like now to refer to war service land settlement. The land settlement board is actually nearing the completion of the

development of repurchased estates. Almost all of its energies now are being directed to the development of Crown land for the purpose of providing for the few remaining 300 or so settlers promised farms under the scheme. In Rocky Gully, Narrikup, South Stirling, Mt. Many Peaks and Jarramongup areas, 266 new farms have been designed and development to date has enabled the board to allot 91 properties. Good progress has also been made at Eneabba where there is a development of 50 farms taking place, following the establishment of a depot. This project is north of Hill River and west of Coorow and Three Springs.

A new project south of Jarramongup and west of the Gairdner River is now being designed and this will provide an additional 100 farms for the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen. This area is known as the Gairdner project. Up to the 30th June, 1954, a total of 887 farms, in both repurchased estates and Crown land projects have been allotted under the war service land settlement scheme. The Land Settlement Board has the machinery at hand on the completion of the work in relation to war service settlers to undertake a fairly large scheme for civilian settlement. We are hoping that we will be able to carry on with quite a bit of that type of undertaking later on. For instance, the scheme for the area I have referred to in South Jarramongup will for the most part, be civilian in character, and once we have tidied up the information we are seeking in relation to Esperance, that should be a project, with the right assistance, of some magnitude.

I would like to give members an idea as to what is being done today in regard to the release of land for civilian settlement. Whilst we are awaiting details so that we can have a planned settlement in the Esperance region, I would explain that for the period the 1st January, 1953, to the 20th May, 1954, the following areas of land have been allotted to the successful applicants for civilian settlement. The number of applications approved for conditional purchase was 31,051, and the area involved was 1,273,000 acres; the applications approved for special leases numbered 171 and the area concerned was 293,065 acres. For pastoral leases, 40 applications were approved and the area involved was 2,491,486 acres. Further to that, the recent figures given to me show that there are 70 applications in now for about 175,000 acres. They are awaiting survey under conditional purchase conditions, and are now being approved.

Accordingly, that should indicate that the Government is anxious to throw open as much land as can reasonably be made available to approved settlers who, of course, must have some capital. I think it was during the last session of Parliament that I promised the member for Vasse that

I would have some attention given to the throwing open of land in the Vasse electorate, particularly as it related to land that had been blanketed for war service land settlement purposes but which was no longer required. There have been 46 locations in this connection and 8,684 acres have been made available.

To show the keen interest of would-be farmers, there were no less than 106 applicants for those 46 locations. In the Northcliffe area 46,000 acres have been released and in the Manjimup area there is only one allocation and one applicant. In the heavily timbered areas of the lower South-West, there were 88 locations made available for civilian settlement covering an area of 17,805 acres, and there were no less than 204 applicants for those blocks. I mention this to indicate how much the Government is trying to throw open land. There are always far more applicants than we can satisfy at the present time. Looking at it from the long-term point of view, it is a good position to be in.

Next, I would like to say a few words in regard to migration to indicate that this is not being overlooked by any means. The total number of British migrants to arrive in this State under the assisted passage scheme has now risen to 21,256. Included in this total are 1,357 child migrants who have been brought out by various institutions. Also included in this figure are 710 persons who travelled under a group nomination scheme covering workers for the Kwinana Oil Refinery. The number of nominations lodged during the current year totals 907 and covers 2,169 persons.

The State is responsible, under the agreement, for the reception and transport expenses of migrants and their baggage from Fremantle to their ultimate destinations. If the necessity arises, the State also provides free accommodation for a maximum period of seven days at the Point Walter immigration hostel. The State also contributes one-third of the cost of buildings and furniture required for accommodating additional children. It is anticipated that extensions to existing buildings together with new buildings, will involve the State in the payment of £16,000 during the current financial year.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [7.55]: I would like to comment on the remark made by the Minister that applications for land in the agricultural areas still continue. I was very interested in the Minister's further remark that there were surplus applications for land in the lower South-West, in the electorate which I have the honour to represent. The Minister is well aware of the area of land near the Scott, Donnelly and Lower Blackwood Rivers.

In 1945-46, when the Wise Government was in office a soil survey was made of this area, comprising, I think from memory,

130,000 acres. That survey was made by the C.S.I.R.O. Mr. R. Smith, who was then with the C.S.I.R.O., prepared a brochure, which I have before me, on the soils of the Margaret and Lower Blackwood Rivers. It was intended at one time to develop this area. In view of the fact that the soil survey proved that this land is equal to the best dairying land in the State, I trust the Government will give consideration to opening up this area. Some of it is in the Minister's own electorate.

The Minister for Lands: I know where it is.

Mr. BOVELL: Although there is some valuable timber in that area, I believe we must extend our dairying industry to an area where there is an assured rainfall. The annual average rainfall is 50 inches and with the type of soil it has been proved to be, I feel the Government would be well advised to proceed with this long-delayed scheme of developing the lands in the Scott, Donnelly and Lower Blackwood Rivers area.

The soldier settlement districts in the dairying areas are progressing fairly satisfactorily at the moment. The Minister knows we had some difficulty with failures—not caused by the settlers themselves—for reasons which the settlers could not overcome. I refer to the tobacco venture in the Karridale area. The Minister has visited that district on several occasions, and I would like to say now that most of these settlers are satisfied with the outcome of their representations, and the Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth authorities, has rehabilitated them into other avenues of agriculture.

I would like to emphasise the need for further development in the dairying district, particularly in the area I have mentioned. There is no necessity for me to enumerate the possibilities because, as I have said, part of the district is in the Warren electorate, represented by the Minister for Lands, and a small portion of it extends into the Vasse electorate. It has an assured rainfall and the soil has been surveyed and proved to be equal to the best dairying land in Western Australia. With the demands the Minister said are continuing for agricultural land even in the dairying districts, I believe it would be a very wise course for the Government to develop the land to which I have referred. I have mentioned the matter on a number of occasions since I have been in this Chamber, but I feel that the notice of the Government must again be drawn to the great potentialities which that land has for dairying purposes.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [8.0]: I listened with some interest to the Minister, and particularly to that section of his remarks concerning the release of land for civilian settlement. I am glad to note there

has been a great improvement in that direction in recent times; because last year it was a source of considerable complaint by myself that decisions on these subjects were so long delayed, and it appeared to people interested as though, in consequence of that delay, the department had resolved to maintain a complete blanket over the area reserved, which was very substantial and the greater part of which is in, or in close proximity to, my electorate. However, as I have said, there has been a substantial improvement, and I have no doubt that the policy being pursued will result in a maximum of satisfaction to those interested and bona fide parties.

Then, of course, there is the question of war service land settlement projects to which the Minister referred. Here again, the greater number of them are to be found in the Stirling electorate. We have the Frankland River area, the development of repurchased estates, and other projects at Kybalup, Riversdale and Bokarup on which a considerable number of farmers will be accommodated. Then we have the whole of the Rocky Gully and Perillup areas, westward of Mt. Barker, where a very considerable number of persons are now resident and where, despite many difficulties and the need for removing the cause of a good number of problems, there are fairly bright prospects for the future. We have Jarramongup and Carracerup to the east of Ongerup, where, as far as I know, no farm has been allotted, but where undoubtedly an excellent job has been done by the War Service Land Settlement Board, mainly, I would say, through the energy and activity displayed by Mr. Cameron, the supervisor.

Then, to the east of Mt. Barker, is the South Stirling project, which shows signs of becoming a very satisfactory settlement, but which at present is being sadly hampered by lack of water. I understand that lack has militated against the allocation of properties that are available for development. However, there are nine or ten settlers actually on the project, who have been there for 18 months or more, and, given normal rainfall—which has been missing during the last 18 months, and the absence of which has militated badly against conserving water supplies—I have no doubt those properties that are occupied, and others that will be occupied, will turn out to be quite satisfactory.

It is therefore apparent that, scattered over that considerable area west and east of the Great Southern line, ranging up to 50 lines west and 100 miles east, there is a great variety of climatic, soil and rainfall conditions, and, therefore, a considerable diversity of production. I think it can be safely said that all those areas I have mentioned permit of almost every kind of agricultural development which is

carried on in the greater part of the State. For example, the Jarramongup area is regarded as suitable for cereal growing and particularly barley, oats and wheat, in that order.

The area to the west of Mt. Barker would be very suitable for cattle, fat lambs, and crossbred sheep. Turning back to the South Stirling area and, to a lesser extent, the Jarramongup area, merino sheep will prosper very well, as they have done in the adjacent country; and in the new area which the Minister referred to, and the bulk of which is also in the Stirling electorate, while some portions of the land should be looked at again by the Minister before he undertakes their development, the major part is capable of being used for mixed farming on a fairly reasonable scale. So it is quite obvious that a tremendous amount has been done by the War Service Land Settlement Board in that area, and that a considerable number of war service settlers will be placed on farms there.

I suppose I have met all those who are there already at various places; and, in the main, I would say that they are people who will do their best to overcome the problems that face them and make a success of the holdings with which they are provided. I have no doubt a small percentage will fall by the wayside. I do not think that can be avoided. But that number can be minimised, I am certain, if officers of the War Service Land Settlement Department will consider what I might call the psychological aspect of some of those settlers.

As I understand the situation, once a settler is placed on a property under lease conditions, he is entitled, within certain general limitations—which are obvious to him because of the soil, climatic and other conditions prevailing in the area—to carry on his farming operations, broadly speaking as he thinks fit, and not to be dictated to by departmental officers. There are some people who, because they resent what I have referred to as “being dictated to,” instead of doing their best to make a success of their properties, by their peculiar psychology do just the very opposite.

I have a feeling, based on a considerable acquaintance with some of those people, that the methods being used by the Land Settlement Board—or, to be more accurate, by some of its officers—are not those which are conducive to extracting the best from some of the settlers concerned. I have recently had some discussion with senior officers here in Perth on one or two aspects of that matter; and I think that if more attention is paid to it, the number of misfits will, in the ultimate, be greatly reduced.

All of these projects are going to work out to what, I suppose, will be one of the greatest land development propositions

Western Australia has ever seen. I well remember that in 1937, before the last war, I endeavoured to induce the then Minister for Lands and Agriculture to undertake some development in the Rocky Gully area with a view to throwing open for selection at a nominal figure certain portions of that district, there being, of course, no war service land settlement scheme in contemplation at that time. It will be remembered that that area had, to some extent, been the subject of an unemployed relief proposition during the period of the Government of Sir James Mitchell, between 1930 and 1933; and a substantial area of land—I think 13,000 or 14,000 acres—had been cleared, a great many roads had been made, culverts had been provided, pastures put down and fencing erected in certain parts.

Then Sir James Mitchell went out of office, and the incoming Government abandoned the project altogether. The result was that the cleared land became overgrown; the pastures, while they continued to grow, in the absence of superphosphate began to dwindle; the culverts went to pieces; and the expenditure of possibly £100,000 showed every prospect of being entirely wasted. It was then that I tried to induce the Minister for Lands of that day to do away with the clause that prescribed that if a man wanted land there he had to pay £2 10s. or £3 per acre for it, and that was supposed to be the value of the improvements. I tried to have the land thrown open for civilian selection at a nominal figure, and development encouraged on a much larger scale.

However, nothing was done, and the war intervened. Still nothing was done of a major nature until my colleague, the member for Toodyay, took over the office of Minister for Lands and Minister in charge of war service land settlement. It was then that plans were prepared for the development of Rocky Gully, Wokalup and Riversdale, an area of land at South Stirlings and one or two other projects in Western Australia. What the War Service Land Settlement Board is doing today, and what the Minister for Lands is doing, through that agency, is to carry out plans that were laid down by the Government of the day in which the member for Toodyay was Minister for Lands—plans in the implementation of which very considerable progress was made at that time. Unquestionably, what was done gave a very considerable spurt to war service land settlement in Western Australia, because advantage was taken of the opportunities that were afforded for development of districts with a reasonably certain rainfall, and where there were considerable areas of cultivable land within easy reach of a suitable port and with good climatic conditions.

Of course, that foresight is bearing fruit today. While I admit that there will be difficulties and a few misfits among the

large number of settlers who will ultimately be placed in the various areas, I am satisfied that the whole project will turn out to be of considerable advantage to the settlers and to the State. The regrettable part about it is, I suppose, that some of the heavily timbered districts are what might be called two-generation country. It is unlikely that the first settlers will be able, in the number of years that they will remain there, to make the success of the proposition that they would like.

But those who hold on—I believe the majority will—will find that their sons and daughters will, in most cases, have excellent properties just as has happened in the group settlement areas where many difficulties and problems had to be dealt with, and where there were some misfits. Nevertheless the group settlement scheme has undoubtedly proved to be a great blessing to the South-West and, indeed, to the whole of the people of the State on account of the increase in production of the very necessary commodities that it affords us. I wish the war service land settlement project complete success.

In closing I would say that I think there is a great deal too much delay in giving the settlers who are already on lease a satisfactory account of what are known as their final valuations. Every now and then one hears complaints on that score. I do not think there is anything sinister about it so far as the intention of the Land Settlement Board is concerned. That does not enter into my head, but it does enter into the heads of those who have not got their final valuations. They want to know the reason for this curious delay. I commend to the Minister the idea of making a special effort to have the valuations cleared up. By so doing I am satisfied he will settle the minds not only of the present settlers but also those who come after them. I trust the Minister will give the matter his early attention.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [8.19]: I understand that under this vote it is permissible to talk on matters of agriculture.

The **CHAIRMAN**: Yes, generally, on the Minister's department.

Mr. NALDER: I would like to recommend to the Minister that more money be made available for research into salt-affected lands. This State today faces one of the biggest problems that has come before it in its history, and that problem is salt encroachment on much of our fertile agricultural land. A person who travels through almost any part of the State must be alarmed to find that hundreds of thousands of acres of our choicest land are being adversely affected by salt encroachment.

What can be done? Experiments have been carried out. I remember reading some few years ago of an experiment made by a farmer in the wheat belt. He did some deep ploughing and worked the land during the summer. He was able to introduce on to the top soil some types of grasses which, at that time, appeared to be a part answer to the problem. In the last few years, however, we have heard nothing more about it. Although I do not think that during the past two or three years the salt has claimed many more acres than previously, yet it is still a serious problem.

I ask the Minister to do all in his power to make investigations, not only within the realms of his own department, but to find out what has been done in other States and other countries in the way of tackling this problem. It has been said, and I think it is generally agreed, that the clearing of such a lot of country has been the cause of the problem. Whether that is the case has to be proved.

The Minister for Housing: There is no other case.

Mr. NALDER: Salt is found to be rising in gullies, the back country of which is composed of nothing but the forests that have been there since the country was first known. No clearing has been done, yet the salt is rising. That argument, I think, can therefore be discounted.

The Minister for Housing: No.

Mr. NALDER: Whether clearing in other parts of the State has caused the water table to rise and bring the salt to the surface, I do not know, but that may be the case. Associated with this salt problem is not only the matter of so much wasted land, but the question of water. Many dams and wells that were sunk years ago have now gone salt. People who have a water problem and who engage water borers to put down bores—hundreds of them have been sunk—have found only salt water, which is of no value for stock. These two problems are associated one with the other, and every effort should be made by the Department of Agriculture, and the Minister as its head, to carry out all possible experiments with pastures that are able to withstand salt, because some do withstand it more than others. Experiments might be made to find out whether the problem can be reduced to a minimum, and to ascertain whether some portions of the country can be prevented from being menaced by it.

MR. WILD (Dale) [8.24]: I draw the Minister's attention to the parlous state of the poultry industry, and I ask him to provide more money for the research station at Herdsman Lake. I do not know of any primary industry in the State that is more difficult to manage because of the delicate state of the article that has to be

marketed, plus the fact that over 50 per cent. of the produce has to be sent somewhere out of Western Australia.

In recent months, as the Minister knows, the market in England has collapsed, and many of our eggs were involved in a big shipping strike there. Some of the eggs had to be sent to Germany where they brought a lesser price than was anticipated to be forthcoming from the English market. In addition, the cost of poultry food has gone up so that the average poultry farmer, apart from those who are well-established, finds he is next door to bankruptcy. Many of them in my district and in the Fremantle area, Hamilton Hill and the Canning electorate—all districts in the vicinity of Perth—have been forced to sell their flocks and go out to work, so that we are slowly losing what was, and should still be, one of our major primary industries.

At the present moment the producer is getting for top grade eggs, 4s. a dozen less 11d. for stabilisation and administration costs. He gets 3s. for his second-grade, and 2s. for his third-grade eggs, all of which returns are subject to the 11d. deduction by the Egg Board. The result is that very few poultry farmers are receiving an average price of 2s. 6d. a dozen for their eggs. Recently in this State we had, from the economic research people in the Eastern States, a small delegation looking into the costs of the industry. To look into the costs of the poultry industry is just the same to inquire into the costs of milk, butterfat and so on. It is difficult to arrive at what is the real cost of production of a dozen eggs. One can safely say that, because of the high cost of food and the low price of eggs, it is physically impossible at present for many men to stay in the industry.

Mr. Lawrence: How many poultry farmers have sold out?

Mr. WILD: I would not know the figure except that I can say that every day when I move through my electorate, I run into one or two men who have been forced to send their pullets into the co-op. or one of the firms at the markets.

Mr. Lawrence: I was referring to Hamilton Hill.

Mr. WILD: I would not know of any in that area because it is outside my district. I have no doubt that there would be many there, the same as there are in the Gosnells and Belmont districts, who have had to take their flocks to slaughter because they could not keep them going. Only yesterday I had a conversation with an Anglo-Burmese gentleman who has been in the State for only 7 or 8 years. This man came here with a good few thousand pounds and he set himself up with a very nice property at Armadale. I would have looked upon him as being a reasonably good farmer, and he said: "I

just could not afford to keep the birds. Last week I sent 2,000 pullets to the co-op. for slaughtering." For those birds he received a little less than 10s. which would not return to him the cost of the food to bring them up to that stage of their life.

Men like that are going out of the industry every day of the week. When I am asked: What is the answer? the only reply I can give is that we all have to farm better; and the people to whom we look to tell us how to improve our farming methods are those in the poultry section of the Department of Agriculture. My experience of those fellows is that they are doing an excellent job. I do not know of any officer who is more sincere or who takes a greater interest in his work than Mr. Morris, who is in charge of the poultry section, but the man must have money if he is going to do some research.

The Minister for Lands: There are pilot farms, plus advice that is going out all the time. You can give good advice, but you cannot make people take it.

Mr. WILD: That is true, but I do think that there are many farmers who are following the advice given by Mr. Morris and his officers. I know a number of the poultry farmers to whom the Minister refers, and even those men, with the best knowledge given to them by departmental officers, are having a struggle to make ends meet. I repeat that we must endeavour to farm better and produce more eggs per bird. Statistics show that in this State on a reasonably well-managed farm we average something like 160 eggs per bird per annum. Members can see that if we could raise that to 184, it would return an extra 5s. per bird per year.

The Minister for Agriculture: They are doing that on the pilot farms.

Mr. WILD: That is what we must do. Conditions are different in England and America, of course, but in the U.S.A. they will hardly keep a bird that does not produce 300 eggs per year. That is difficult for us to visualise, but it is true according to the statistics.

Mr. Andrew: The hatcheries are largely responsible in not using the correct grade of eggs.

Mr. WILD: In this State, right from the hatchery to the grower, we must do something to raise the standard of the birds. We must farm better and learn to use alternative feeds. Those factors, collectively, could help the industry reassert itself.

Mr. Andrew: I know some of the hatcheries are not selecting their eggs properly.

Mr. WILD: That is so. Members know that only the week before last a measure was brought down to ensure that the hatcheries are pullorum tested. Of course,

the basic requirement for a good bird is a good egg, which must come from good stock. By starting on that basis and farming well, we should ultimately secure a bird that will produce the maximum number of eggs. The department is doing a good job, but I cannot see how we are to attain the objective—it is not in sight at the moment—unless we follow the lines I have suggested. We must endeavour to produce a bird that will lay more eggs and we must provide for alternative feeds to be used.

Members who take an interest in the industry know that for many years it was said that without bran and pollard we could not carry on, but research has shown that other grains such as barley, whole wheat and oats are very useful. Many farmers are now using up to 80 per cent. whole wheat. That type of research cannot be done by the individual farmer because he lacks equipment and capital. The research station at Herdsman Lake lends itself to this work, but requires capital. I wish to emphasise the necessity of looking after this important industry and I hope the Minister will devote as much money as possible to the poultry section of the department in order to carry out further research in the interests of the industry.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [8.35]: I wish to deal with the activities of the Department of Agriculture in the North-West. In that part of the State the department is doing an excellent job in many respects and particularly in relation to pastures and the re-establishment of herbage on stations. It is introducing new grasses and herbage and is helping in many ways to rejuvenate the spinifex which in numbers of places has been badly depleted.

The research station at Carnarvon could be improved greatly in many directions. The establishment there of a small laboratory capable of carrying out soil analyses and analyses of water as regards total salts and individual salts—not just common salt—would do much to further agriculture in the Carnarvon area, where we must secure the greatest possible production per acre. It has been proved that that area will yield a large return per acre and I know that if a minor deficiency in the soil were discovered and corrected, the return would be greatly increased.

The soil has shown a deficiency in certain areas along the Gascoyne River and the country itself is patchy. I repeat that if a deficiency—even only a small one—were discovered and remedied, much larger crops could be produced from the same area as is under cultivation today and that, in turn, would secure a much larger yield from the present water supply and thus build up the district average without the use of extra water.

A laboratory such as I have mentioned could assist with other agricultural problems in the North. For instance, it could determine the poisons that affect stock and could investigate many other matters, a service which would tend to build up agricultural production in the North. Another question that must be determined in the near future is whether the high watering rate customary at Carnarvon tends to leach the land to such an extent as to reduce production.

While the research station at Carnarvon has done a good job in relation to bananas, it has done little in regard to the smaller crops such as cucumbers, beans, melons—which are a new line this year—tobacco and other quick growing crops. There are many other directions in which it could help to increase the incentive for the people along the Gascoyne River. Great assistance could be given to officers of the Department of Agriculture stationed in the North by the provision of an efficient library.

The Gascoyne Research Station possesses no technical books for the assistance of its officers. It would be of great value to all the officers of the department in the North if a reference library were established at Carnarvon or a number of smaller reference libraries placed throughout that part of the State, dealing with the various sections of agriculture covered in the individual areas. The North divides itself up in such a way that a series of small reference libraries would be quite practicable. I commend that suggestion to the Minister when he is reviewing his Estimates and the whole set-up of agriculture in the North. I would ask him to make a thorough investigation of the activities of the department there by making a tour of the North-West and seeing what goes on there and what is required by the department in that portion of the State.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [8.40]: The first subject I wish to discuss—I am not sure whether you might have to correct me, Mr. Chairman—relates to the need for geological assistance to farmers who are seeking to bore for water. A farmer who applied to the Government Geologist for such assistance said he was told there was no staff available, and it seems to me that as this is a matter which comes directly under the Minister for Lands and Agriculture, rather than the Minister for Mines, he might be able to assist in this regard and see that provision is made for geological assistance to farmers who are endeavouring to secure supplies of underground water.

The Minister knows that the number of stock to be carried depends in many instances to a great extent on the supply of water available. He knows also that

boring for water is expensive and particularly so in certain areas of the South-West where the solving of the water problem is sometimes regarded as being relatively simple. A great deal of money can be expended with little result in boring, and I am sure that geological assistance would provide the farmers with more inducement to spend money on boring as it would relieve them of the necessity of having to try to divine water—which many people believe savours of witchcraft.

As the Minister knows, this question was raised at a recent South-West conference and I have had representations made to me by farmers since then—quite apart from any discussion at that conference—for the services of a geologist to be made available by the department in order that they might secure some guidance as to where water could be expected to be found economically by boring. In some instances negative information can be useful and if a farmer were told he was in an area where there was little chance of securing water by boring, that information would be of value to him. I would like the Minister to go into the question with the Director of Agriculture, and the Government Geologist, Mr. Ellis, in order to see whether the matter could be investigated further and assistance along the lines I have suggested made available to the farmers generally.

The next matter I wish to discuss is the amount of £3,000 shown on the Estimates for the artificial insemination of cattle, which I assume would be dairy cattle. This is a matter that is of considerable interest to dairy farmers. I ask the Minister whether the initial steps taken in this matter will be in the dairying areas. All dairy farmers are very anxious to see this scheme initiated, even on a small scale, to ascertain if the beneficial results that have been obtained in other countries can be obtained here. I wish to know whether the Minister has made some efforts to obtain the serum for this season. However, the amount of £3,000 seems to me rather small to spend for the initiation of a service of this nature. As a result of the discussions that have taken place on the matter, dairy farmers are expecting something definite in the way of practical application of artificial insemination.

The Minister for Lands: The amount is enough for this year.

Mr. HEARMAN: It is all very well for the Minister to say that. I want answers from the Minister to such questions as: How far will this amount go? Is it to be expended purely on experimental work? Is artificial insemination to be conducted only in the one centre? How many cattle will be dealt with in any scheme? What bulls are to be used? That is the information I am seeking.

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member will get it later when it is available.

Mr. HEARMAN: As long as I do, that will be all right. I want to make quite certain that the Minister does answer the questions that I have asked because earlier in the evening he made no reference at all to the points that I have raised.

The Minister for Lands: Which points were they?

Mr. HEARMAN: Those that I raised during the debate on the Soil Fertility Research Bill. I asked what were the results of the research conducted by the Department of Agriculture.

The Minister for Lands: That was not included in the Bill. I referred to the Institute of Agriculture and the department.

Mr. HEARMAN: I only hope that in this instance the Minister will indicate how far he expects the scheme for artificial insemination will advance this year. The amount of £3,000 does not seem to be very great when one considers that it may be necessary to build suitable yards, and no doubt some staff will have to be employed. In a scheme of this nature I am also well aware that a charge will be made and that is another point that the Minister can very well cover. He can indicate what the charge per animal is likely to be.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [8.51]: Whilst I was in England I visited a research station that has been established for the artificial insemination of cattle and the cost of establishing it was from £7,000 to £10,000. The bulls that were used for the purpose were valued at 400 guineas or 500 guineas each. In England today they are artificially inseminating 1,750,000 cows every year and in the next two years they hope to be treating approximately 3,000,000.

One of the most important exports from our State is baby beef. We have been training the farmers in Western Australia to breed the right type of cattle because unfortunately during the war period such a practice was not followed. However, what has deterred many farmers from carrying out this policy is that a bull of high quality, which would be suitable to serve his cows, would cost a very high figure.

The quickest way to bring our cattle up to a high grade is by means of artificial insemination. Why we have waited so long to make such an advance, I do not know. Before long, the farmers in my area will be purchasing cows from the South-West and artificially inseminating them with serum obtained from a high quality bull.

The Minister for Lands: It is only intended to build the yards this year.

Mr. MANN: For the past 25 years every Government that has been in office has starved the Department of Agriculture for

finance. Unfortunately this department has been regarded by all Governments as being of minor importance, but, in fact, it should be recognised as one of the major departments. Australia is only maintaining the prosperity that she is enjoying at present because of the high returns we have been receiving from our exports of primary produce, not only from Western Australia, but from every part of the Commonwealth.

The Leader of the Opposition may smile, but when he was in office, he, too, starved the Department of Agriculture. Now, apparently we are merely going to build the yards that will be required for this scheme, but that is not enough. It will be necessary to obtain the services of highly qualified technical officers and this will require the expenditure of many thousands of pounds.

I now want to deal with the question of pig production. Much comment has been made on the low prices for pork and bacon that are being obtained at present. The reason for that is that the market overseas has been over-supplied. Nevertheless, I am satisfied that in Australia we are producing a very fine type of sow from both the black and white breeds. Many farmers, however, have been buying a mongrel type of sow and boar which tends to reduce the quality of our pork and bacon. No farmer should be permitted to use a boar for breeding unless the animal has been passed by the Department of Agriculture as being fit for such a purpose. There are too many mongrel boars being produced by farmers today. I am firmly convinced that it will not be long before the mongrel class of pig will gradually disappear and those who breed the right type of pig cannot go wrong. In the past the prices for bacon and pork have been too high and people have, for that reason, lost their taste for this meat. Nevertheless, the production of pigs will be increased if the quality of the sows and boars are improved.

In the eastern part of Beverley a most serious problem is facing the State. Today the Avon River is very highly salted. The salt emanates from the lakes area. I am wondering how we can effect a remedy for this problem. I know that the soil conservation branch of the Department of Agriculture has been investigating the incidence of salt in various areas, but we could go further and obtain the services of highly trained technical officers from overseas.

Whilst I was in Holland recently, I noticed that vast strides had been made in dealing with the incidence of salt. Large tracts of land have been reclaimed from the sea and the salt problem has been overcome. The Victorian Government has been asked to import an officer to handle the problem in that State.

There is no doubt that in Western Australia the salt problem is becoming more accentuated daily. It would pay the Government to bring out a highly qualified man to investigate the problem, and no doubt he could render us valuable assistance.

We live very parochially in Australia and when one goes further afield one realises that there are men in other countries with vast knowledge that could be put at our disposal. Many European countries are able to afford the services of the best agricultural brains in the world. If a conference is called in Rome, London or Berlin, it is attended by men from all parts of the world, including America. As a result of those conferences solutions to many agricultural problems are often found. Following on that information, many countries obtain the services of these highly qualified men to deal with the problems that exist in their areas. The salt problem is a most serious one and I suggest to the Government that it should bring out an expert from Holland—even if it costs £10,000—and give him the opportunity of solving this problem.

Many members try to improve their knowledge by reading, but it is only by contact with other men overseas that the required knowledge is gained. Whilst at Cambridge in England, I had the pleasure of attending a field day which was held at that centre and which was attended by young farmers who were advised on how to grow root crops and grain crops and how to improve their knowledge of all phases of agriculture. The Department of Agriculture has had many fine officers in its employ, but unfortunately a great number of them have left the department for other fields. It would pay tremendous dividends not only to Western Australia, but to Australia as a whole to send some of our officers in the Agricultural Department overseas for experience.

I hope the Government will increase the vote for this department. It does seem tragic that not more money is made available to encourage and retain the expert men in this State. I hope the Government will make every attempt to hold these fine, conscientious officers in the department, particularly the men of science, who have done a tremendous amount of work in this State and have solved the cause and treatment of many of the diseases among the stock.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [9.1]: I join with the last speaker in paying tribute to the work done by officers of the Agricultural Department. There is no question but that they have been responsible for the greatly increased wealth of Western Australia, brought about by their research work and enthusiasm. Earlier this evening the Minister for Railways raised a doubt as to what the cost

of producing a bushel of wheat would be. He said he was not prepared to accept the figure of 12s. 7d. a bushel as the cost. I am not a wheatgrower and cannot express an opinion as to the average cost of the production of wheat. We know there are some very efficient wheatgrowers, and others not so efficient.

Mr. Nalder: It will cost very much more than 12s. 6d. this year.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The member for Katanning is a practical farmer and he considers it will be more than 12s. 6d. The cost of 12s. 6d. for growing a bushel of wheat seems to be very high. It makes me wonder how this State can compete with the other wheat exporters of the world. Of late there has been a brighter tone in the wheat market overseas, and in the interests of this State generally I hope that will continue.

I would ask the Minister if his advisers can express an opinion as to what it will cost to produce a bushel of wheat in Western Australia, and also what is the average cost for producing 1 lb. of wool. I know those costs would vary very considerably in different parts of the State. In order to obtain a practical figure of the cost of wool production, it would be necessary to separate the State into zones, and to ascertain the cost from the various zones.

The Minister for Lands: The cost of production of wheat, struck about three days ago, was 12s. 7½d. per bushel, and, taken to the nearest penny, it would be 12s. 7d.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: This is valuable information. When it comes to wool, I am told that the average cost of production is 5s. a pound.

Mr. Mann: That is the Victorian cost.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That was the information I got from the wool men in this State. Wool is the greatest exportable product from this State and brings in and maintains our overseas credits. If there is a great drop in the price of wool, there will be serious trouble.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The average price of wool today is about 5s. 6d. per lb.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I was coming to that. The Minister gave us the average cost for producing a bushel of wheat. At the recent wool sales in Adelaide, the average price of wool was 5s. per lb. If our cost of production is 5s., it appears to me that the State will face a very serious economic situation. As far as I can see, the woolgrowers, the wheat farmers and the primary producers generally will have to face increased costs. In my opinion, the recent decision by the Arbitration Court which increased margins will have the effect of raising the basic wage and, of course, that must have an effect on costs.

Naturally, I am aware that the Arbitration Court knew this when it delivered its judgment and no doubt all those factors were taken into consideration. Having done that, it gave its judgment to increase the margins for skill. Unfortunately, there is very little we can do about the price we receive for our overseas products. I say again that we are facing a serious economic position. If the cost of producing a bushel of wheat is 12s. 6d., and the cost of producing 1 lb. of wool is 5s., then we are faced with a difficult position with rising costs.

The Minister for Lands: Those costs of production include a fairly substantial allowance for management. The farmer is not starving on 12s. 7d. a bushel for wheat.

The Minister for Railways: It is a bit over-loaded on capital investment. The land is valued at about £50 an acre.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Nothing like it.

The Minister for Railways: What is the value of the land for the production of wheat?

Hon. A. F. Watts: From £6 to £10 an acre, according to the location.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I would ask the Minister who is largely responsible for the agricultural policy of Western Australia, to make this information available. I agree with the Minister for Railways that we do not want a fictitious figure. The Minister is right to a certain extent when he said that there is a tendency to overload the capital costs. I think that occurs.

Hon. A. F. Watts: If the Minister for Railways had to pay the bills of a wheat-farmer for one year, he would know how much they made.

The Minister for Railways: I have too many bills of my own to worry about others.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Deputy Premier knows the difficulties and the anxieties which Governments are caused when it comes to a question of finance. Governments always face anxiety, in good as well as in bad times. It is necessary that we should be able to look ahead. If we are to plan our programme for the future on a sound developmental basis, and if we are to carry it out, then we must have some idea of what the national income will be. That is difficult because we do not know what the overseas price will be from month to month, although we have some idea. For that reason the cost of production figures should be made available from time to time to the public.

The same should be done for the production of one gallon of milk. That would not be so difficult because the dairying industry is confined to a small area of land and, generally speaking, all the land is

about the same value. Some are in the irrigated areas and some outside, but not so far apart.

The Minister for Lands: We must remember that some of the expense of running a wheat farm goes into sheep-raising.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is so. Some wheat farmers raise sheep as a sideline, and it has been a very valuable sideline.

Mr. Norton: Some farmers raise cattle and pigs as side-lines.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I agree. There is much optimism in this State at present, but as the Minister knows, in the main Western Australia is a primary-producing State and its prosperity depends on the success of that industry. Bearing that in mind, the Minister certainly administers a most important department because he is the one most vitally concerned with the success and advancement of agriculture. On several occasions I have thought of asking him a series of questions in regard to production costs, but I did not know whether he would be able to give the particulars. He did tonight tell us about the cost of wheat production, and I shall be glad to hear, if not tonight then at some other time, about the cost of production of other primary products. Looking through this vote, there are a few matters I would like to refer to.

With regard to the vote on research stations, I was going to ask about Woodstock and Abydos stations but find that they have been included under the North-West Division. The vote for this item in 1953-54 was £168,403, but only about £97,000 has been spent. Why was such a large amount of money left unspent, some £71,000? Some of the members who have already spoken referred to the need for more research work. I again pay tribute to the work done by the Agricultural Department on the amount of research which it has so successfully carried out, but the unspent sum of £71,000 appears to be very high. This was provided for most important work. If the Minister has any information available, I shall be glad to receive it.

The vote dealing with soil conservation is given as £5,550 whereas in 1953-54 it was £8,000 odd, but only £4,741 has been expended. Here again, reference has been made to the importance of this work and, apart from erosion, mention has been made of the salt content of land. This is worrying me personally to some extent because I can see encroachments of salt on portion of my property. I do not know why it should occur. I shall see some of the agricultural advisers and ask their opinion.

Sometimes I have heard it said that this is due to too much water on the land, insufficient drainage, the clearing of too

much timber, and other reasons, but I am also told that there are certain edible grasses that will grow in salty patches. The salt problem is not confined to Western Australia; it occurs also in other parts of the world and is receiving the attention of agricultural scientists in many countries. I should be glad if the Minister could give us any information about soil conservation generally.

There is a small item dealing with subsidies for the purchase of bulls. The vote last year was £200, and of that amount only £32 was expended, and £200 is the estimate for the current year. The amount is infinitesimal, and as only £32 was spent, I take it that the department did not receive applications from producers for this money. I think I am right in saying that this subsidy applies to the purchase of dairy stock.

Meat production is considered to be one of the long-range forms of primary production that can be regarded as safe. The world is said to be short of meat and we can look forward to an export market for a very long time. Of course, we have to face very keen competition from such countries as the Argentine, while in Britain there is an enormous production of beef and every possible effort is being made continuously to improve the breed of stock. I was going to ask the Minister whether he would favourably consider the provision of a subsidy for some of our beef producers.

Let me make reference to the northern areas of the State. Some of the cattle-raisers there are not by any means wealthy, but that great area, as the Minister knows, is mainly devoted to cattle-raising and will be so for a considerable time. Largely, the meat produced in that area is exported. Some of it comes south to the local market, but, owing to the restricted shipping space, only a limited quantity can be brought down here. The Minister knows that if we are successfully to compete on the export market, our beef must be of good quality. The basis on which it is paid for is quality.

The northern area is a difficult part for the breeding of good stud stock. Difficulties have to be faced there that do not prevail down here. One might take a valuable bull to the North and it becomes tick-infested. Tick fever follows, and it is easy to lose the beast. Other problems confront stock-breeders in the North that do not affect breeders in the south. We have seen fit in the past to subsidise the dairying industry to a considerable extent. If it is right to help producers in the South-West, by the payment of a subsidy, to get good stock, something should be done to assist those in the northern areas who need help.

The Minister for Railways: It is the consumer that needs a subsidy.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister should not be too unsympathetic.

The Minister for Railways: I know what people are paying for meat, and some of it is of poor quality.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That may be so. There is need to improve the quality of all our meat, and particular attention should be paid to that portion which is exported. There has been a substantial drop in the price of beef, particularly during the last few weeks, and the price of pork has shown a steep decline.

The Minister for Lands: The price to the consumer has not dropped.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not going to defend the high prices charged in the shops, but I know from practical experience that there has been a big drop in the prices of beef and pork. I am not a grower of pork, but we know that the price has dropped.

The Minister for Works: See how useful a little price control would be now!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The newspaper reports that in Victoria price control of meat has been removed. However, I do not wish to get into an argument on that point, but the Deputy Premier knows that when either Federal or State Governments controlled meat prices, it was not very successful.

I wish to say a few words about another item which deals with weed control on Crown lands. The vote is £1,000, and the expenditure last year was only £573. Weed growth on Crown lands is very extensive. One weed particularly occurs to my mind at the moment, and that is Cape Tulip, which is a bad weed and can and does cause loss of stock. I do not want the Minister for Railways immediately to take offence when I tell him that along the railway lines there is a fair growth of Cape tulip. The Agriculture Protection Board rightly says to landowners who have Cape tulip on their properties, "Get rid of it, and we give you a certain time to do it." The board is justified in adopting that attitude.

This weed is found at York, on the Swan and in other parts of the State, but that is no reason why we should allow it to spread. It is a curse that greatly reduces the productivity of the land and, while I appreciate that the Railway Department has a very great mileage to look after, I think it should devote closer attention to eradicating this weed than is given to it at present. I am pleased at the opportunity to mention this to the Minister, and I hope he will discuss the matter with the officers responsible for the railway track and reserves, and see whether more cannot be done to eradicate the weed. The amount provided on the Estimates seems to be very small and, what is more, the amount

spent has been very much smaller. I suggest that the Minister should have a look at those figures.

I wish to make some reference to the work of the Agriculture Protection Board. Here again, one can express appreciation of the good work that is being done by the board and the enthusiasm of its officers. A few years ago, I, with the Minister, was a member of a Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the problem of vermin and noxious weeds. At that time, I expressed the opinion—and many of the witnesses endorsed it—that the prosecuting of land-owners, who did not comply with the instructions of the Vermin Board in the matter of the destruction of vermin, and the eradication of noxious weeds did not get us very far, but where the Vermin Board stepped in, after the farmer had failed to carry out its instructions, and did the work, and made a charge for it, the results were very much more effective.

The rippers which the department is providing and which may be hired by farmers are doing valuable work. I had an opportunity of seeing rippers in action and was amazed at the work of which they are capable. Even in timber country, where rabbits had lots of cover, the rippers were able to get in, push the timber aside and rip up warrens, and thus they must have got rid of a tremendous number of rabbits.

I hope that the cost to the farmers of hiring these rippers will be kept as low as possible. I do not expect the Government to provide them at a loss. The farmers could benefit greatly as a result of their operations and as far as possible the hiring should be kept to the lowest possible figure. I do not think the department wants to make a profit out of them; if it can cover expenses, that should be satisfactory.

The work of the Agriculture Protection Board constitutes a very big problem, apart from the rabbits, which are the cause of tremendous loss to this country every year. It would be interesting to know—if the figures could be ascertained—just what the loss is. Where the rabbits in the Eastern States have been exterminated, it was stated that production had increased by £200,000,000 in a year. Millions of rabbits were exterminated. It is estimated that eight rabbits eat as much feed as a sheep, but the trouble is not the feed they eat so much as the amount they foul and the disease thus caused amongst stock. The Agriculture Protection Board is carrying out a most important work and doing it most effectively.

Apart from rabbits, vermin exists in other parts of the State. The other day, I met a gentleman who had just returned from the Kimberleys. He had no interests there, but had been to the North for a holiday, and he said, "If you do not get rid of the wild donkeys up there, the country will not be of any use to anyone."

They are breeding at a rapid rate and, of course, are reducing the carrying capacity of the country. In the early days donkey teams were used in those areas in much the same way as camel teams were used on the goldfields. But the donkeys have been turned out over the years and have bred rapidly. The Minister might have a look at that problem. I do not know whether this aspect would come under the new Department of the North-West or whether it would come under the Department of Agriculture. I would be glad if the Minister would make inquiries to see if anything can be done in regard to it. It has been suggested, and I think with justification, that ammunition should be provided at a reasonably cheap rate—at the same rate as it is supplied to rifle clubs. In the interests of the country I think this should be done.

The Minister for Lands: Some time ago we were successful in getting the sales tax on .303 ammunition considerably reduced. That helped a lot.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. Yet another curse in parts of the State are the kangaroos which also greatly reduce the carrying capacity of the country. Kangaroos eat the best of the food and there are thousands of them. A man rang me the other day—and I told the Minister about it—and asked about starting a business exporting kangaroo tails to Britain. The idea is that the tails should be made into kangaroo soup. If he can start such an industry I hope assistance will be given to him because the kangaroos are a pest and if some use can be made of them it will be all to the good.

I do not propose to say anything more. We have other vermin such as grasshoppers and they all help to reduce our national wealth. The Vermin Board is engaged on most important work. Its members are enthusiastic and I only hope that money made available for the eradication of vermin will be spent.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [9.33]: I noticed no mention of milk in the report of the Department of Agriculture.

The Minister for Lands: I am not going to sit here all night.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You ought to complain. I have listened all night to you and other members speaking on Estimates.

Mr. MANNING: I am sorry the Minister went out because I wanted to address a few remarks to him.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I am sorry he said "I am not going to sit here all night."

The Minister for Works: I will listen on his behalf.

Mr. MANNING: I hope the Minister, when he replies, will give an answer to some of the queries raised. I refer particularly to the problem of low-standard

milk. We have a position where dairymen are being repeatedly prosecuted for supplying under-standard milk.

The Minister for Railways: So they should be if they supply it.

Mr. MANNING: But the dairymen are not receiving any technical advice, of any value, to assist them to overcome the problem. I noticed in the report of the Milk Board, which was presented to Parliament, that some mention is made of a tightening up and that there will be more prosecutions against those supplying under-standard milk. Apparently there will be some inquiries made into the problem. But the point I want to raise is: To what extent has the Minister interested himself in this problem and what inquiries has he made in regard to the position? Does he agree with the attitude of the Milk Board in launching continual prosecutions against those who supply under-standard milk?

The Minister for Works: I take it you are referring to the amount of solids-not-fat in the milk?

Mr. MANNING: That is so. I have not mentioned adulterated milk. I have no brief for the man who waters his milk. But I am concerned about the number of dairymen who are being prosecuted for supplying milk that is below the required standard of 8.5 solids-not-fat and 3.2 per cent butterfat.

The Minister for Railways: That is equal only to the lowest standard in Australia. Cows that will not give milk of that standard should be sent to the abattoirs.

Mr. MANNING: I want to know what investigations the Minister has made to satisfy himself about this problem. I would not like to think that he was sitting back and allowing these prosecutions to take place without taking some interest in ensuring that the departmental officers, or the officers of the Milk Board, were making some investigations into the problem. There could be a number of reasons why the milk is below standard. It could be because of seasonal or climatic conditions. There is probably an answer to the problem. The hours of milking also have an effect.

The dairyman is required to have his milk ready to be picked up by truck at a certain hour in the morning. The milk truck goes through at about 8 a.m. and in the afternoon at 5 p.m. If a dairyman milks at 5 o'clock in the morning, and he is milking a decent sized herd, he has to start milking again at 2.30 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It is common knowledge, and it is a fact, that the quality of the morning milk, because of the longer hours between milking, is far below the quality of the evening milk in both solids-not-fat and butterfat standards. Owing

to the shorter hours between the morning and night milkings the milk is of a higher quality.

But I understand that the Milk Board samples only the milk from the morning milking and it could be that a dairyman is supplying milk of a good quality and up to the required standard and yet because of the Milk Board's tests being taken on the morning milk, he could be charged and prosecuted for supplying under-standard milk. If a dairyman has to meet all the requirements of the organisations concerned, and get his milk ready to be picked up by the trucks, one milking could be below standard while the other was above it. I want to try to glean from the Minister what steps the department is taking to find out why the milk is below standard. Have the departmental officers inquired into the problem and do they think that the Milk Board tests are fair? Do seasonal conditions, such as we have had this year, play a big part. I think the Minister should answer these queries. I intended to speak on artificial insemination but as two speakers have adequately covered that aspect, I shall take note of what the Minister has to say when he replies.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [9.40]: At this stage I do not intend to try to answer all the queries that have been raised on such a variety of subjects. But I want to assure the members who have spoken to this debate—and I thank them for their contributions—that I shall have copies of their speeches sent to the sections concerned to see if there is anything worthwhile in them. I really mean that because when I was sitting opposite I always felt that when I spoke on the Estimates nobody took any notice of it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You were listened to with rapt attention.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is the right of a private member—it is his only opportunity to speak on a specialised subject—to have some notice taken of what he says.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—The Rural and Industries Bank, £5; Agriculture, £543,600; College of Agriculture, £47,596; Agriculture Protection Board, £22,739—agreed to.

Progress reported.

[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]

BILL—PARKS AND RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th November.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [9.43]: I can appreciate to the full what the member for

North Perth desires to do by the introduction of the Bill. There is no difficulty at all in understanding the requirements laid down in the measure. But, apart from the merits of the suggestion in regard to the proposed aquatic centre in King's Park, I think the other portion of the Bill is far too restrictive when the really splendid service being given to the public by the King's Park Board is considered. It has rendered this service over many years and if I were a member of the board and a Bill such as this were passed by Parliament, I would be inclined to wonder why I had been elected.

Mr. Hutchinson: The member for West Perth is upset.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would wonder whether it was a question of planting flowers or trees or mowing lawns, or whether the board was responsible for the policy and development of the whole area. There is not the slightest doubt that a great deal of misconception exists over King's Park. As far back as the 12th July, 1871, it was clearly intended that this wonderful park of ours, approximating some thousand acres, should be dedicated for the purpose of a public park and a recreation ground.

Apparently there has been some opposition in the metropolitan area to a suggestion that an aquatic centre be built in the park and I can well understand how this can come about. It is very easy for different progress associations and parents and citizens associations and other bodies who have enough work of their own, to take umbrage after a seed such as this has been sown in their minds. It is an easy matter to stir up public opinion and eventually for a Bill like this to be brought before Parliament asking the Legislature for an extension in regard to certain facilities in King's Park the provision of which has been accepted since 1871 as the prerogative of the King's Park Board.

During the period 1892-1893 Sir John Forrest broke away from the conception which was in the minds of some people that this park should for all time remain in its natural state of flora, by granting leases to Hale School, to the tennis club and to the bowling club.

Hon. C. F. J. North: They are all leases.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, those concerned are tenants at will and the lease can be terminated on reasonable notice being given. The idea of keeping this park for purposes of recreation is one that has been long established in the minds of the people of Western Australia. I do not think we should insist that questions like the building of an aquatic centre or the setting aside of an area for a music shell or another area grassed and lawned and set aside for cultural purposes, should come before Parliament merely because the King's Park Board intends to charge a small entrance fee. I do not think it is

right and proper that we should deal with it in that manner. I think we should defeat the Bill in its present form. It would be bad enough if we amended it to reduce it to the point of seeking parliamentary approval to discontinue the building of an aquatic centre. I think that would be taking out of the hands of responsible men a function which normally belongs to them.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The board only manages for the Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The position is similar to a number of our other boards inasmuch as the Minister who is in control cannot indicate what he wishes to be done with the park; he cannot of his own volition on behalf of the Government order the board to take certain action. But if the board takes any action of which the Minister or the Government does not approve, he can prevent it. In the short time I have been Minister the members of the board have approached me on a number of occasions; they do so because they feel it is right and proper that the Minister of the day should be aware of what is going on. The Under Secretary for Lands tells me that they have always done that. Accordingly the Minister and the Government of the day are always au fait with what the King's Park Board proposes to do.

Mr. Court: The board is not for a fixed term; it can be changed at any time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. The Minister, through the Government, can completely change the board if operating in the public interest.

Mr. Hutchinson: Can you say now what is your view concerning the construction of an aquatic pool at King's Park?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would prefer to state that at a later time, though I am quite willing to do so now. However, I do not think it applies to the Bill. Our duty is to determine whether the King's Park Board should operate and function properly, or whether Parliament should take out of its hands its normal work. If this Bill is passed, and the provisions it contains concerning the application for an aquatic centre are accepted, that would be the proper time for me and others to discuss the matter.

At the moment we are only concerned with a body of people who have done so much of their own free will; they do not even get sitting fees—it is a labour of love. I can assure the House that the board has given no undertaking in regard to an aquatic centre. There has been an application from the Perth City Council for such a centre, but the board has asked for a plan and is keen to view the proposition. No determination has yet been made in respect to it. I know that is so because the last time Sir Thomas Meagher came to see me it was to inform me about this particular subject.

There are some 990 acres in the whole of the park area and only 10 per cent. of that area is developed. I believe I am right in saying that for every one person we see going into the natural part of the park, we would see at least a dozen on the small developed area which represents about 90 or 100 acres of the entire park. The reason why they go there is that it is so much more beautiful than that part provided by Nature. In 1948 the board undertook a system of planting trees, indigenous to the district and this has been done over 600 acres, which is an indication that the board desires to retain and preserve for all time the natural beauty of a large area of the park. One of the board's main troubles today is the control of a very obnoxious weed which is going through the whole length and breadth of the 900 acres, with the exception of the portion that is put down in lawns. The board has tried spraying and everything else, but have not had any success.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Is that the veldt grass?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Another great danger the Board faces is that from bush fires. Careless and inconsiderate people are apt to throw matches or cigarette butts down when passing through the park in the summer months. With such a large area of bush it can well be appreciated what a tremendous fire hazard it is. I think the board has the right to set aside an area and make some improvements for the purpose of an auditorium for which I understand some space has been cleared. If there is anything beautiful in the park, it is not what has been created by Nature, but that which has been done by the King's Park Board. For instance, we have the King's Park Tennis Club and the bowling green and the avenues that have been planted.

Mr. Hutchinson: I do not agree with you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would like members to have seen about 30 photographs which I have had taken of all parts of the bush; they would see the disgraceful condition it is in. There are certain times of the year when the wildflowers are out and the park looks a picture. But does the hon. member mean to say that if I paid a guinea to see an international tennis match, it would prevent him from seeing the rest of the park? Of course it would not.

I think the idea of beautifying the park in order to give the people of the metropolitan area facilities they cannot obtain elsewhere, is a very good one. It cannot be done without great difficulty and without encroaching on the rest of the park. The bulk of the people that frequent the

park stay on the lanes and roads and grassed areas. Very few would be seen going into the natural bush. If members wished I could arrange a tour through King's Park to let them see it as it is, and to give them an indication of the good work that has been done by the board.

Mr. Court: Will not the natural bush deteriorate?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The opinion of the board is that it will get progressively worse. In 1948 they endeavoured to control it by further planting of an area of 600 acres. It would be a great pity to prevent the enjoyment of this beauty, and after all if the Minister did not like it he would be responsible, because it would be brought to his notice and if he considered it was against the public interest he ought as his duty to prevent it from happening. Although this Bill has been introduced with the best intention in the world, I think it is a bit astray when it endeavours to control the activities of the board in relation to an aquatic centre.

I would not like to see any action taken which would prevent the board from developing recreational centres if it desired to do so. If it did anything wrong the board would be quickly pulled up, but its record shows that that is not likely. Up to the present the board has not made a false step and I do not think it will in the future. If members consider other parks throughout the world they will not find them dedicated in their natural state; they will find the beauties of nature added to. When our visitors come here, from other parts of the world and other States, where do they go? Do they go to the natural part of the forest? Of course not; they go only to the part that has been beautified.

Mr. Hutchinson: They view it and marvel at it!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is what the roads are for. The warden tells me that hardly ever does anybody go for a walk in the park to have a look at it. That has been the experience over the years. Whatever development is made in any other direction does not take away the right of people to go over at least another 800 acres if they so desire. What we are attempting to do in this Bill is to limit the activities and development of that park by providing that, first of all, such projects must come before Parliament. If we are going to do that, I submit that metropolitan members will be inundated with requests from pressure groups exactly in the same way as occurred with regard to the Betting Bill. All sorts of people, with their own particular views, will want certain things done; and we will have a nice time sorting the chaff from the grain.

I do not believe the real merits of the case can be determined in this Chamber, because of the political repercussions that could occur in certain metropolitan seats. Country members, who have no personal interest, might be the best to deliver judgment on the matter. I would not like to see us reach the stage when this is made a football. Our park is too good for that. I would swear that up till now nobody has had any reason to complain of the activities of the board; and I consider that a Bill of this description, if it were passed, would be an expression of no confidence in the board. That would be not only unwarranted, but too unpleasant to contemplate. I do not know what the board thinks, but I know what I would think if I were a member of that board. At this stage I intend to oppose the Bill.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [10.4]: I listened with interest to what the Minister said. I do not wish unduly to restrict the operations of the King's Park Board, and I agree with the Minister that it has done and is doing a sterling job in the preservation of this wonderful natural asset of ours. However, the personnel of boards, like that of Governments, changes from time to time. Until this Bill was submitted for our consideration, I was under the impression that any proposed major alteration in King's Park would have to be submitted to Parliament for verification or otherwise.

In my report concerning Victoria Falls—and I might say that there is some controversy in Southern Rhodesia about the natural surroundings of the falls—there appears the following:—

A solid sheet of water one-and-a-quarter miles in width crashing into a chasm 355ft. deep at its highest point, would be impressive anywhere. Situated in an environment of tall palms and thick tropical vegetation, it is unforgettable. The principal charm of the Victoria Falls is its unspoiled natural surroundings. Nothing has been added and nothing taken away.

I believe we should preserve the natural surroundings of King's Park. Wherever one goes, especially away from the State, one hears highest praise of the wisdom of Lord Forrest in preserving this 1,000-acre natural park right in the centre of the capital city. The Minister said that the majority of people were to be found in that part of the park that had been laid out with lawns, tennis courts, and parking areas.

The Minister for Lands: You do not think that detracts from it in any way, do you?

Mr. BOVELL: I do not think it does to any great extent; but I do know that if one goes for a walk, on a spring morning or afternoon, through the natural unspoiled parts of King's Park—

Mr. Heal: You cannot do it.

Mr. BOVELL: I have done it.

Hon. A. F. Watts: So have I.

Mr. BOVELL: If one does that, one can find many people enjoying the natural surroundings. I have been accustomed to living in surroundings of natural beauty where native flora is to be found unspoiled. Without reflecting on the members of the King's Park Board, for whom I have the highest esteem, I believe that any proposal for a major alteration to the face of the park should be submitted to this Parliament for consideration. It has been our heritage; it should be the heritage of generations to come.

Reference was made by the Minister to political pressure. As members of Parliament, we all know that political pressure comes from various directions. But I believe that in King's Park we have a natural advantage. We have been endowed with it, and it is our responsibility as a Parliament to see that it is preserved. Perhaps the Bill is somewhat restrictive, but I believe it could be amended in Committee. I support the second reading because I consider it is in the best interests of future generations that we should ensure that King's Park is kept in its natural state as far as possible.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [10.8]: I propose to support the second reading. I disagree entirely with the Minister that the passage of a Bill such as this could be taken as tantamount to a vote of no confidence in the King's Park Board. Let me say straightaway that I believe the board has done an excellent job. I am not acquainted with its personnel of recent times, with the exception of one or two members; but I know that they have done very excellent work in an honorary capacity.

However, Parliament is the supreme authority in this State, from which all other authorities derive their power; and if Parliament chooses to alter or limit the power of any of them, that is well within the ambit of the right of Parliament, and such action can in no circumstances be taken as a vote of no confidence in any inferior authority. It would merely be the expression of the views of Parliament on a given subject coming within the authority of the inferior organisation.

Therefore we have a perfect right, dissociated altogether from any question of a vote of no confidence, to tell the King's Park Board, if we wish to do so, what we think it should or should not do in regard to the area under its control. Let me say again that there is no question of a vote of no confidence in the board, whether the Bill be passed or not.

It is now some 51 years, we are told, since any arrangements were made by the board for the use of any part of this land comprising King's Park for such purposes

as tennis courts, bowling greens, and the like. During all that period, no fresh arrangement has been made.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think there has been.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That is the information we were given. The last year in which any of these arrangements were made was 1903. In the intervening period there has been a considerable change in the conditions and the population of the metropolitan area. More and more the availability of substantial areas of open country, such as King's Park, is becoming less; and in modern times there has grown up an inclination, if space is wanted for the establishment of an Olympic Pool, or a recreational community centre, or an orchestral shell, or something of that kind, to seek it in King's Park. I can appreciate the reasons for that. King's Park is central. Its area is large. In the opinion of people who suffer from a kind of spiritual vandalism, it lends itself to use for those propositions; and in my opinion, the King's Park Board will have an increasing number of such applications made to it.

In my view, the board should be fortified by Parliament through a Bill like this. I am inclined to agree with the member for Vasse that the phraseology of the measure needs some alteration. But I think the board should have an indication from the supreme authority in Western Australia that it knows what it does not want done to King's Park. Somewhat to my astonishment, the Minister practically said that the natural beauty of King's Park was non-existent. He was interrupted by the member for Cottesloe forthwith; and I must say that I cannot agree with that statement either.

More and more in the future such opportunities as the residents of the metropolitan area have of coming into contact, without considerable expense, with the natural fauna and flora of this State, will be confined to King's Park. In my view, instead of encouraging the establishment in King's Park of the type of community facilities to which I have referred, it would be a great deal better if more funds were provided to enable the board to maintain and develop the natural flora existing there. I feel that the member for North Perth is to be congratulated on having submitted this Bill.

The Minister for Education: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I think he is to be congratulated on asking Parliament to accept a principle that I believe we should accept. I am firmly convinced that, unless we take a stand in the matter, within the next half century King's Park will be unrecognisable as we know it today; and those who follow us will regret very

much that the supreme authority in Western Australia—the Parliament of this State—did not take a hand in the matter at the right time. I support the second reading.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [10.15]: I support the second reading of the Bill. As the Leader of the Country Party says, this will get the board out of a jam, for which it might be glad. This could probably start a rush on the land at King's Park, because the population in the metropolitan area is increasing and people will be looking for areas in which to establish tennis clubs, cricket grounds, bowling clubs and so on, and they will all have their eyes on King's Park. We should lay it down that this Parliament does not favour such a scheme and that those who might approach the board or Parliament are to be discouraged. Already certain organisations are using King's Park to the exclusion of everyone else. Only this week the tennis club is conducting tennis sports and unless a person pays 15s. or £1 entrance fee, he cannot go there.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think that is right.

Mr. BRADY: The bowling club charges fees, and unless a person pays them he cannot be a member. Hale School uses five or six acres of the park as a sports ground. The circumstances are such that the school is probably entitled to that area, but if one school can get such a concession, and if a swimming pool is established there, we will find there is an open go. At the base of the harbour bridge in Sydney there is an aquatic pool right on the foreshore, and alongside of it is a fun alley extending over five or six acres of land. If permission to establish an aquatic pool in King's Park is granted, we will have an application from one of these fun alley committees or companies to establish something of that nature in King's Park, because people get tired of swimming.

They will say it will be for charitable purposes or some other so-called worthy object. Some people have only just found King's Park although it has been here for 50 years. Many industrial workers in the suburbs have not been able to get to King's Park because of the expense and inconvenience of going there. Now the average family in the metropolitan area have a motorcar and can go to King's Park at their leisure to spend a quiet afternoon; and they are entitled to that privilege. What is going to be the position if we have an aquatic pool there. All sorts of people will be flooding into the park, particularly in the summer, at all hours of the day and night. Thousands of vehicles will go through the park as against the nominal number that pass through at present.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you think these people would be entitled to go through there?

Mr. BRADY: Yes, but there are waters to the right, in the sea, and to the left, in the river. It is strange that the only place that can be found for a swimming pool is in King's Park. Just prior to the war it was suggested that an aquatic pool should be established on private land at the base of King's Park. What has happened to that scheme? A company was formed to implement the idea, and if that could be done before the war, it can be done now.

We should not encourage the desecration of this large area by establishing an aquatic pool there. This will only be the start. Other people will be encouraged to go to King's Park. If an aquatic pool is provided there, other organisations, whether they be the marching girls, baseball clubs or others, will be entitled to ask for five or 10 acres of the park, so that at the end of 20 or 25 years we will have no King's Park at all but a gigantic sports ground. I hope the Bill will be passed and that we will not agree to any portion of the park's being transferred as has been suggested.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [10.20]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. Before the Minister made his speech I was in some doubt as to my course of action. I could see some of the dangers that lay along the line of supporting the measure, yet I was to a great extent in sympathy with the purpose behind its introduction. However, my thoughts and feelings were soon crystallised when the Minister made his speech. His words determined me to support the Bill. By his remarks I was made to realise very vividly that the natural beauties of King's Park could well be whittled away by man-made monstrosities in the not so very distant future.

Mr. Lawrence: What are the monstrosities?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: They are those—

Mr. Lawrence: You have used the wrong word.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Not at all. The member for South Fremantle has only to use his imagination.

Mr. Lawrence: You explain your imagination.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: If the hon. member uses his imagination he will realise that the monstrosities will be the aquatic centres, orchestral shells and all the other odd bits and pieces. The hon. member will have an opportunity to say a few words later. Just eat carrots for a while! The Minister's remarks really made me frightened about what could happen to the park. He made me envisage the fact that all sorts of things could be built around it.

There would be a certain amount of indigenous bushland left—he granted that much—but he said there was no real beauty in our natural bushland; that the only part that was beautiful was that which was man-made. That the Minister could make such a statement indicates to me that he has never realised what beauties lie in our bushland.

Mr. Lawrence: You are man-made and I do not think you are beautiful.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I know very well I am not, but that has no bearing on our natural flora, or fauna either, for that matter. I am very sincere in this. I think there is a delight about our natural bushland which is lacking in man-made parks, foreign trees, grassy verges and ordered gardens. I remind the House of a poem that was written by an Australian patriot. Probably every member here heard it during his school days. I refer to the poem "My Country" by Dorothea Mackellar. Members might remember the comparison the author drew between the Australian scene and the English scene. I believe the story behind the poem is that an Australian, of English parentage, goes back to the Motherland and there endeavours to picture some of the differences between the two countries.

Mr. Lawrence: You quote the words.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Recite it for the member for South Fremantle.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Members may remember these lines—

The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens,
Is running in your veins.

Then coming back to the Australian scene, we find the dramatic difference in these words—

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of rugged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.

The whole tenor of the poem is the comparison between the ordered gardens—the man-made scene—as against the beauty of our natural flora. Behind this there is a principle that we must be wary of. I do not care what happens to the King's Park Board. If it feels that this is right, I say it is wrong, and I would like to see Parliament have control over such a board if it wants to whittle away the natural bushlands that are so close to Perth.

The Minister for Education: Does it?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: If the board wants an aquatic centre or an orchestral shell established there, it does. As I said earlier, I was not at all sure that I could support the Bill, but after hearing the Minister's

statement, I was determined to support it, because of what could happen and because of the views he expressed.

The Minister for Education: Do you know if the King's Park Board wants to whittle away the park lands?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, I cannot be sure of that, but the Minister's remarks led me to believe that that danger really exists, and as a result I am expressing my views at the moment. The Minister made several statements to the effect that parks in other parts of the world were not beautiful or necessarily kept in their natural state. Of course, that is entirely untrue. There is that great park in South Africa that the member for Vasse saw—the Kruger National Park—and in addition there is the Yellowstone National Park in the United States. We have our own National Park here.

Mr. Bovell: There is another park of thousands of acres adjoining Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: To think that we can increase the beauty of our park by whittling away the natural flora is just too ridiculous. The board may want an aquatic pool and an orchestral shell, and it may want to take away some other portion of the park, but I do not want any portion of it to be touched. I shall support the Bill, because then it will rest with Parliament to say whether one or other portion of the park shall be excised for any purpose. I hope that the Bill will at least be carried into the Committee stage and dealt with there so that we can protect King's Park against further depredations or the danger of any possible encroachment on the natural flora.

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [10.30]: I am afraid most of the speeches we have heard tonight on this measure have been made by members who view King's Park through futuristic glasses and not in the light of present facts. Unfortunately, Nature has a peculiar way of working, particularly when park lands are surrounded by a city the size of Perth. Our natural flora and fauna do not long survive when tracks are made through park lands. We all know the condition of sandy suburban paddocks in various areas, and I am afraid our beautiful park lands will deteriorate in a short time into a similar condition unless something is done to prevent that happening.

The only way to avoid the complete eradication of the natural flora of King's Park is to consolidate it into a smaller area—a kind of natural botanical garden—and cultivate it as the King's Park Board has already done successfully in the case of the Geraldton wax plant and the kangaroo paws, which have been protected in certain areas. If alien flora, and particularly the African veldt grass, is allowed to

continue to spread, we will lose all the natural beauty of King's Park within a short period of years.

We cannot prevent that unless the natural flora is consolidated in a small area so that Nature's gifts may be preserved in their absolutely natural state. That would require the complete fencing of the area concerned so that no one could walk through it except on paths provided for that purpose. Action would also have to be taken to prevent alien herbage from taking over from the natural flora.

No doubt the King's Park Board has already given this question much thought, and the Minister has intimated to us that it is very concerned about the veldt grass, in particular, although no practical method for its eradication has been found. If we worry about retaining the whole of the present area in its natural state, we will not do the people of the future a good service. I am not altogether happy with the idea of an aquatic centre or an orchestral shell being established in King's Park, but I do claim that a consolidation of the natural flora in a smaller area must be done quickly.

The need for this course is obvious when we consider the progress already made by the stronger growing alien vegetation that has been introduced into the park over the last 10 or 12 years, since the veldt grass was first noticed on the Subiaco side of the park. With the carrying into the park of further alien seeds by birds or by human beings strolling through the area—or by the animals that prowl around—there will be a further spread of growths offensive to indigenous plants and that is a process that we will not be able to hold back. Much of the native flora, such as the banksia trees, is not happy about cultivation, but I feel that the correct action to take would be not to limit the King's Park Board in its activities in placing a preventive circle around the park land. I think if we leave it to the board, it will ably control and consolidate the position.

I believe the advice of Parliament to the board should be for it to consolidate and preserve the natural beauties of the King's Park flora and fauna in a small area capable of being properly maintained in its original state. It would not be in the best interests of the future of the park to support a measure that would limit the activities of the King's Park Board in the way proposed in the Bill. I know certain members have suggested the establishment of aquatic centres in other areas, and I wonder whether the Bill would have been brought forward had it been an orchestral shell that was proposed to be erected on this site and not an aquatic centre.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Oh yes it would have.

Mr. JAMIESON: In that case, I feel the measure might have been brought down by the member for

Stirling, perhaps, and not by the present sponsor of the Bill. I therefore feel that I cannot support the Bill in its present form and I intend to oppose the second reading.

MR. NIMMO (Wembley Beaches) [10.40]: I understand that the Perth City Council has not yet made up its mind about the proposed swimming pool, although I may be wrong in that; but what I am worrying about is whether, if the City Council built a swimming pool in King's Park and surrounded it with beautiful lawns, it would then put up a wire fence around it together with a hessian fence, so that the public could not see inside it. King's Park is one of our beauty spots and is recognised by all visitors to the State as a great asset to Western Australia.

In my opinion, we should preserve King's Park as there is plenty of land elsewhere available for the establishment of an aquatic centre. Naturally, I would suggest that the proposed swimming pool should be built in my electorate, at the foot of Reabold Hill, where there is an excellent natural site for that purpose. As the member for Mt. Lawley said at one time, that particular area is one of the best available sites for a botanical garden, and the soil there would be suitable for such a purpose.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! This measure does not deal with that question.

Mr. NIMMO: In that area there is a natural site for a swimming pool and the cost of water there would be no greater than it would be in King's Park. One can travel to various parts of the Commonwealth, Adelaide, Melbourne, or Hobart, and see what is happening in the park lands in those centres. At Hobart, the council is taking out bluestone on one side of the mountain, with the result that all the natural flora has gone, yet nobody seems to care. I will fight to keep King's Park in its natural state and would not like to see buildings of any description erected there. I support the Bill.

MR. HEAL (West Perth) [10.42]: As a member of the King's Park Board, I feel it is my duty to give the House my views on this measure. The member for North Perth introduced the Bill in a most capable manner, and I can assure the House that the King's Park Board does not view the measure as a vote of no confidence. Members of the board consider that if Parliament feels it should take over this responsibility, it is entitled to do so, but I assure the House that anything the King's Park Board does is not done hurriedly, as some speakers have suggested.

The board receives many requests during a year for portions of the park land to be allocated for the erection of buildings or for other purposes. At present, in the

park there is a restaurant, which many members of this House visit. Recently, plans and specifications were placed before the board for a new building of increased size to replace the present restaurant. Members of the board visited the site and examined the plans, and rejected them, telling the person concerned what mistakes they thought had been made, and asking him to produce new plans.

Members might recall having seen at the Royal Show a camera-obscura—an aluminium structure fitted with lenses in such a way as to present on a screen the view of anything up to two miles distant. The owner of that apparatus applied for permission to erect the camera-obscura in King's Park. The board, in its wisdom, told him to erect the structure so that they could look at it. He did so, on a site near the War Memorial, where the best views were obtainable; but as soon as members of the board saw it, they decided it would not be nice to have it next to the memorial, and refused that gentleman permission.

I cannot understand why there is so much panic about the proposed establishment of an aquatic centre in King's Park. No decision has been made by the Perth City Council to establish an aquatic centre in the park nor has the board made any decision as to whether it will approve of the plans and specifications submitted by the Perth City Council. The only thing that has been done is the selection of a temporary site by the King's Park Board and the Perth City Council has been advised to submit plans and specifications of the aquatic centre for the board's consideration. That is the position as it exists today.

Mr. Hutchinson: And that is as far as it will ever go.

Mr. HEAL: I do not think so. That is a one-sided point of view. The temporary site selected cannot be seen from the main highway. It will be 17 chains away from the road. It is a pity that the Minister did not bring photographs of the site to the House in order that members could inspect them because I am sure that the site selected, approximately 15 to 20 acres, has no natural flora growing on it nor could it be regarded as a scene of beauty.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It might be a good place to establish an s.p. betting shop.

Mr. HEAL: The hon. member always thinks of the wrong place to conduct betting. I should think that members would consider both sides of the question.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I do.

Mr. HEAL: Not since I have been in this House. However, I am sure the Minister will bring those photographs to the House in order that members may look at them. I doubt whether all members have a full knowledge of the park to fit themselves to give a just decision on this Bill.

I am certain that all members have not been right through the park. It would be difficult for some of them to travel through it unless they kept to the roadways or the bridle paths.

Mr. Bovell: My word, you have not lived in the country!

Mr. HEAL: I have lived in the country for some considerable time. The King's Park Road Board does not have complete authority over anything that is done in the park. All its decisions on any major proposal are referred to the Minister for his approval.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Could the board build an aquatic centre without the approval of the Minister?

Mr. HEAL: If the Minister considers that any member of the board has exceeded his duty he has the right to dispense with his services. Since the park was first established, leases of portion of it have been granted to the King's Park Tennis Club and the King's Park Bowling Club. When those leases were first approved I should imagine that there would have been an outcry against such a step, but I doubt whether any protests or objections to those leases being granted would be heard today.

I am sure that if any member of this House paid a visit to either the King's Park Tennis Club or the King's Park Bowling Club he would agree that it has been an advantage to grant those clubs a portion of King's Park for their purposes. Mention has been made of portion of the park being granted for the establishment of an auditorium or an orchestral shell. In fact, a site has been selected for that purpose which faces Mount's Bay-rd. I do not think members would have much to say against such a proposal if they took some interest in the park itself.

Another suggestion that has been made to the Minister is that a house should be erected for one of the attendants on a site facing the university. At present the superintendent has his house at the main entrance to King's Park and another house is established near the Subiaco gates which is occupied by one of the park attendants. This proposed third house will also be used to house another park attendant. The reason for erecting this house is to establish a link between the three houses so that the occupants of each will be able to maintain a watch over the park to ensure that no fire breaks out, especially during the summer months. In the past a great deal of the natural beauty of the park has been destroyed by fire.

Mr. Bovell: But a fire promotes re-growth of natural flora.

Mr. HEAL: It also retards the natural growth of flora for many years.

Mr. Nalder: The Forests Department burns part of its forests every year to promote growth.

Mr. HEAL: This third house is being built so that a link may be established between the other two to ensure that if a fire does break out it will not get out of control and that the attendants will be on the scene quickly to curb it. The member for Guildford-Midland made some extremely rash statements, in my opinion. He said that the King's Park Tennis Club was conducting a tournament this week and that the entrance fee would be 15s. The hon. member is quite mistaken because that tournament is being held at Subiaco Oval. He also stated that if an aquatic centre were established in King's Park, the park would be crowded with people by day—

Mr. Brady: And night.

Mr. HEAL: That is why the park was established; to attract as many people as possible to it so that they may enjoy its beauty.

Mr. Brady: Do you think Wirth's Circus could obtain a site there?

Mr. HEAL: In my opinion, if nothing were done by man to improve the park, only 10 people out of every 100 that visit there now would be attracted to it. The Minister referred to the original intention underlying the establishment of King's Park. Many people throughout the State, including several members of this House, consider that the man who first thought to establish King's Park in the vicinity of Mt. Eliza did so with the object of retaining that area in its natural state for many years in the future.

I have here a copy of a minute that was forwarded to the Governor at that time by Malcolm Fraser. It is dated the 1st October, 1872, and it reads as follows:—

An area of 432 acres was gazetted as a reserve 11A for a Public Park on Mt. Eliza. Copy of memorandum by the Surveyor General to the Colonial Secretary—

Submitted herewith for the information and consideration of His Excellency the Governor are a tracing and a description for gazetting of land proposed on the suggestion of His Excellency for the purposes of a Public Park and Recreation Ground.

The land occupied by the Poor House and Gardens has been excluded and possibly the Rifle Range might, but that may be done at a later date.

So the original intention of the men who first thought to found King's Park was that the park was to be enjoyed by people for its natural beauty and also was to be used for recreation purposes. I am sure, if the Bill becomes law, that the

board will feel that its work will be curtailed and that it will become more or less a rubber stamp. Mr. Watson, who is the supervisor at present, has a wide knowledge in regard to the duties he has to perform, and if the Bill is carried all that would be required of him would be to act as manager for the park and any major problem would have to be considered by Parliament.

In the past many notable men have served as members of the King's Park Road Board. Sir John Dwyer was a member for many years and today Sir Thomas Meagher, who served as a member for several years, is now president. The board has been in existence since 1896, the members at that time being as follows:—

Sir John Forrest, K.C.M.G., J.P., President.

Hon. J. W. Hackett, M.L.C., J.P.

Lieut.-Col. Phillips, J.P.

G. T. Poole, J.P.

A. Lovekin.

B. C. Wood, M.L.C., J.P.

At present the members of the board comprise Sir Thomas Meagher (president), Sir Joseph Totterdell, Mr. Watson (supervisor), Mr. Baron Hay, Mr. Smith (Under Secretary for Lands), the present Lord Mayor (Mr. Murray), Mr. Stow, who is a prominent business man in the city, and myself.

I have only been a member of the board for a short time but I realise the people of Western Australia are fortunate in having a board comprised of members who are such notable persons. I consider that if the board's powers are taken away, the park will not progress as it should and it will not be used for the benefit of the people generally.

Mr. Hutchinson: You will be able to clear out some of the weeds.

Mr. HEAL: I would like to see the member for Cottesloe up there on a Sunday morning, clearing out some of the weeds. The Minister has invited all members to make a tour around the park and if they accept this invitation, I have been informed that the members of the King's Park Board will make a point of being present at the park when this tour is made.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE DEPUTY PREMIER (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.

Legislative Council

Friday, 26th November, 1954.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Question : Water supplies, as to Commonwealth aid for Wellington Dam-Narrogin main	3275
Bills : Limitation Act Amendment, 3r.	3276
Soil Fertility Research, 2r.	3276
Canning Lands Revestment, 2r.	3278
Public Service Act Amendment, 2r.	3279
Bookmakers Betting Tax, 2r.	3280
Native Administration Act Amendment, 2r.	3280
Betting Control, 2r.	3280
Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment, Assembly's amendment	3296

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Commonwealth Aid for Wellington Dam-Narrogin Main.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Has the State Government made any request to the Federal Government, or the Federal Treasurer, for any payment on work completed on the Wellington Dam-Narrogin main?

(2) If the approach has been made—

(a) When was it made?

(b) What was the reply?

(c) What amount, if any, was received?

(3) Has any approach been made to secure additional financial aid as a result of the high additional cost of the scheme. If so—

(a) When was the approach made?

(b) What was the result?

(4) Has the Federal Government been advised that the scheme is held up owing to the shortage of finance available to the State Government?

(5) What is the total estimated cost to complete the scheme from Wellington Dam to Narrogin?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes. Requests for a recoup of 50 per cent of the actual expenditure are made monthly.

(2) On the 28th April, 1948, the Commonwealth Government agreed to share the cost of the agricultural areas, Great Southern towns and Goldfields water supply scheme (which includes the Wellington Dam-Narrogin main) on a £1 for £1 basis but not exceeding a maximum contribution of £2,150,000. To the 30th June,