

that a good deal of this type of manufacture is placed on the market and this measure will help to ensure that the public are sold a product of high quality. I hope the opinion expressed by members of the Bootmakers' Union will be acquiesced in by all the Governments, and that when this Government proclaims the Act it will be able to state that it is uniform throughout Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay—in reply) [12.19]: This legislation is uniform among all the States and the query raised by the member for Pilbara as to the uppers of a boot or shoe is answered in the regulations which specifically deal with that question. I have the regulations before me and I can assure the hon. member that that point is covered in them.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—Short Title.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members will notice that the short title is shown as the "Footwear Regulations Act, 1916." That is a printer's error and to rectify it, I move—

That in line 1 after the word "the" the words "Footwear Regulation Act Amendment Act, 1949, and shall be read as one with the" be inserted.

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

Clauses 2 and 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Repeal and re-enactment of Section 4:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Proposed new Section 4 contains a reference to the outside of a boot or shoe, whereas it should mention the outsole. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 the word "outside" be struck out and the word "outsole" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. today.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 12.23 a.m.
(Wednesday).*

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 28th September, 1949.

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

QUESTIONS.

TOBACCO.

As to Reduction of Goldfields Ration.

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is the Minister aware that the Western Australian Tobacco Trade Distribution Committee has decided to decrease the tobacco ration by 15 per cent. as from the 1st October, 1949, in Kalgoorlie and Boulder?

(2) Does the Minister know whether or not the Distribution Committee used figures based on the population of Kalgoorlie and Boulder in 1948 as the guiding factor, resulting in its arriving at this decision?

(3) Did the committee use the Government Statistician's figures? If not, whose figures did it use?

(4) Does the Minister know—

(a) that there has been a substantial increase of the population in Kalgoorlie and Boulder since the announcement of the increase in the price of gold;

(b) that there has been a large number of prospectors and gold seekers returning to the Goldfields and that the number is increasing daily;

(c) that there has been a number of migrants settle on the Goldfields recently, and that arrangements are being made to accommodate several hundred men in Boulder?

(5) In view of the serious shortage and hardships that will be caused to the community of Kalgoorlie and Boulder by the suggested reduced ration of tobacco, will the Minister take the necessary steps to have the whole of the circumstances reviewed with the object of having the 15 per cent. ration restored?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) For the 1940 figures the source was the Government Year Book for 1941. The figures for 1948 were taken from the records of the number of ration books issued in November, 1948.

(4) (a) No; (b) No; (c) Yes.

(5) Yes.

COAL.

As to Geologists' Report on Eradu-Irwin Area.

Hon. A. L. LOTON (for Hon. L. A. Logan) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many geologists were employed on the Eradu-Irwin coal area?

(2) How long were they employed on the area?

(3) Has their report been received? If so, will it be made available to members?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Three.

(2) Five months (approximately).

(3) The report is in course of preparation. When it is received, copies will be made available to any members desiring same.

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [2.39]: With the main portion of the Bill, I am in accord, but there are one or two matters that I think might be varied or improved. One to which I propose to confine my remarks relates to Clause 10, which provides that where a servant or agent is apprehended for having under-sized fish in his possession, notwithstanding that the employer may be apprehended and fined, a charge may be laid against the servant or agent for having the fish in his possession. That makes possible the imposition of a rather severe penalty on a person who may have no knowledge of the position. Proposed new Subsection (4) of Section 24 reads—

In any prosecution of any person for an alleged offence against the provisions of this section, it shall be no defence for him to prove that he is only the servant or agent of the owner of the fish concerned or is only entrusted for the time being with the fish by such owner, but the servant or agent and the owner shall each be liable.

Then it goes on to say—

(5) If the person charged, being a servant or agent, proves that at the material time, the fish were in the same state as that in which he received them from his employer or principal, and at the material time he had no knowledge that the fish were of a less length than that referred to in Subsection (1) of this section, he may, notwithstanding that his employer or principal has himself been convicted and fined, recover from the employer or principal the amount of any penalty for which he may have been convicted in respect of the charge, together with the costs . . .

And so on. Those who have seen fish being carted from the coast to railheads or to canning works will know that the usual custom is for the fisherman to bring in his catch, sort it into boxes, put some ice on top of it and a piece of bessian, and nail it down. Then an ordinary carrier, or perhaps one of his neighbours, will take pos-

session of the fish and, for a small consideration, cart it to the railway station or the cannery, as the case may be. Under the Bill, the man carting the fish is liable and may be fined. It is true that the Bill provides that—

Where a servant or agent is so convicted, the court of summary jurisdiction may suspend the operation of the conviction for any period not exceeding three months so as to enable the defendant to recover the amount of the fine and costs from the employer or principal.

That is all right; but the sting in it, in my view, is that, while the employee or agent may be able to recover the amount of the fine and costs, a conviction is recorded against him. It is easy to realise that no carrier would stand over the fisherman while he was sorting the fish into the box. A person could carry fish on two or three occasions and be stopped by an inspector each time, and some undersized fish might be found in the consignments.

The man might be prosecuted on each occasion, and, although later he might recover from his employer the amount of the fines and the costs, his convictions would be mounting up. Then there might come a day when a more serious case would arise in which he was implicated, and the court would say, "This man has a list of convictions against him." Consequently, I would like to see the Chief Secretary add a proviso at the end of Subclause (6) to the effect that where an agent or a servant recovers from his employer the amount of a fine and costs, no conviction shall be recorded against that agent or servant. I think that is fair. If the law says it will recognise that he is not guilty insofar as making provision for him to recover the sums in which he has been mulct, it should go a little further and say that no conviction shall be recorded against him. That is the main objection I have to the Bill, and I trust the Chief Secretary will assist in that regard when the measure is in Committee.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [2.45]: From what I can gather, members will agree to the second reading of the Bill, but I would like to refer to some of the matters that have been raised. I am afraid that Mr. Mann has not read the Act because, as it stands—and it is

not being altered except to give relief to what I might call the innocent conveyor of these undersized fish—

Hon. W. J. Mann: Only up to a point.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Act says that if any person shall, without lawful authority, have in his possession or on his premises or in any boat fish that are undersized, he shall be liable to a penalty. All the Bill provides is that if a man has undersized fish in his possession and is a servant or agent of the owner, he can recover from the owner any fines and costs imposed on him. That cannot be done at present.

Hon. A. L. Loton: But a conviction will be recorded against him.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is done now. If in Committee any member thinks it wise to move an amendment to the effect that it shall not be an offence for one to have undersized fish in one's possession, we can deal with it.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That would make the thing ridiculous; we do not want that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am trying to point out that the law at present—and it is not being altered by this Bill—is that if a man has in his possession fish that are undersized, he will be liable. All this Bill does is to say that if, being caught with such fish in his possession, a man is only the servant or agent of the owner, he may recover from the owner fines and costs imposed upon him.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is no objection to Mr. Mann's proposal that no conviction shall be recorded.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I said that if anybody likes to move that there shall be no conviction recorded if one is found with undersized fish in one's possession, it can be considered. That is what it amounts to. But every person who is found with undersized fish in his possession will immediately say he is the agent for someone, and for someone whom we can never find. I will not discuss the practicability of the proposed amendment until it is before the Committee. Mr. Fraser suggested there would be difficulty over the returns, but there again I feel that members have not properly read the Bill. At present the law provides that persons licensed under the provisions of the Act

shall furnish the returns. They do that at present, and there is no difficulty about it.

Hon. G. Fraser: If it is already in the Act, why put in it again?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are trying to make it easier for them. The Bill states that the information "may" be required. It is for the purpose of obtaining uniform statistics of the fishing industry throughout the Commonwealth, and the information is required for the C.S.I.R.O. At present the wording is "shall" and not "may."

Hon. G. Fraser: Then all the Bill does is to alter "shall" to "may"?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, and it sets out in more detail what information may be required. Members need not fear that the measure will be detrimental to the industry. Its effect will be quite the contrary. Mr. Fraser mentioned trout fishing and I would point out that nearly all the trout in the streams have been acclimatised by, and in one sense belong to, the society that put them there. In such streams there are likely to be found also carp and perch, which can be caught on the hook, and it might be difficult to prevent lads fishing with bent pins, and catching trout. The society has done a wonderful job and I think we should give it the protection it seeks. These streams have no importance as commercial fisheries, their value being only from a sportsman's point of view. It is in that direction that the provision is required.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 24:

Hon. W. J. MANN: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (6) a proviso be added as follows:—

Provided that where an agent or servant succeeds in recovering from his employer the amount of fine and costs in which he has been mulct, no conviction shall be recorded against him.

I think the intention of the amendment is clear. It will protect innocent persons against having their names placed on the police records and having convictions registered against them for something they are almost powerless to prevent.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment is meaningless. Subclause (6) states "Where a servant or agent is so convicted . . ." He has to be convicted before he can recover any fines or costs from his employer.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I am asking only that the conviction be not recorded.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is contradictory. No legislation can cancel a conviction. That can be done only through an appeal court or by action of the Governor.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The Chief Secretary has not read the Bill properly, either. Under Subclause (6) the operation of the conviction may be suspended.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the operation of the conviction, and not the conviction itself.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Chief Secretary is splitting straws. I thought I had made the amendment quite clear. Surely if it can be suspended—

The Chief Secretary: The operation is suspended, not the conviction.

Hon. G. Fraser: What are the words you propose to add?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I propose to add a proviso that where an agent or a servant succeeds in a case and the fine and costs of which he is mulct are refunded to him, no conviction shall be recorded against him.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am in sympathy with Mr. Mann's desire but I realise, with the Chief Secretary, that there is some doubt as to whether the words he proposes to add will achieve his object. The main thing he seeks is that the conviction should be waived, and I do not think his amendment will do that.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Well, move another amendment; I am only desirous of achieving my object.

Hon. G. FRASER: A man must be convicted before this other action can be taken. If he is successful in litigation and some-

thing can be done to wipe out that conviction, well and good; but I do not think the amendment as it stands will achieve that. However, I cannot, at the moment, suggest a way out of the difficulty.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I suggest that the word "expunged" could be used. If the fine is recovered, the conviction could be expunged from the record.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	7

Majority for .. .	7
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AYES.

Hon. J. M. Cunningham	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. G. W. Miles

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. W. R. Hall	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 13—agreed to.

Second Schedule:

The CHAIRMAN: I draw members' attention to the following corrections which will be made to the schedule, subject to the approval of the Committee. The following are the alterations proposed:—

(a) In line 10 substitute the word "Planipora" for the word "Planiprora."

(b) Strike out the closing bracket in line 21.

(c) In line 33 substitute the word "Panulirus" for the word "Panuliris."

(d) In line 34 substitute the word "pelagicus" for the word "polagicus."

(e) In line 36 substitute the word "Penaeopsis" for the word "Penaeapsis."

I take it that the Committee endorses the corrections.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—APPROPRIATION (No. 2).

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT (NOTIFICATION OF TRANSACTIONS).

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.9] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is being introduced to ensure that the Land Purchase Board is aware of all farming properties that are being placed on the market. The Government considers this essential in order to assist the War Service Land Settlement Board in obtaining properties, and it is intended that the measure shall operate until the 31st December, 1951.

The Land Sales Control Act passed last year enabled a continuation of this control which was actually an extension of the Commonwealth National Security Regulations which were prolonged since 1946 under the transitional provisions of the Defence Act. In that Act special recognition was made of the claims of former members of the Defence Forces to purchase properties suitable for farming, and there is little doubt that this provision has enabled a much greater proportion of ex-Servicemen to be placed on properties than is the case in any other State. This is clearly indicated in statements by the Commonwealth Minister in charge of War Service Land Settlement.

While the policy of this Government is to pursue the development of Crown Lands as far as possible, the purchase of partly-developed properties, particularly in the wheat and sheep areas, is essential. The purchase of these properties will ensure a continuity of allotment of properties to ex-Servicemen, pending virgin areas being developed to a stage ready for settlement. The Government has provided that the application of the Land Sales Control Act giving priority to returned Servicemen for a period up to six weeks for the purchase of properties through the Land Settlement

Board shall be continued to the 31st December, 1949, when the Land Sales Control Act will lapse.

It is the desire of the Government to ensure that the Land Purchase Board shall be aware of all suitable properties which owners may wish to sell and that a reasonable period shall be given to the board in which to make essential inquiries before the Government is involved in any purchase and to negotiate with the owner or his agent. The Bill provides for a maximum period of six weeks, although the Land Purchase Board undoubtedly will be able to give a decision on the majority of properties before this time has expired.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Does the Government expect to get a lien over the land?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The Bill is quite simple and has been designed to cause as little inconvenience as possible to vendors, purchasers and the commercial public. As the Land Purchase Board is interested only in suitable properties, the Bill excludes all properties which have little chance of being regarded as suitable for ex-Servicemen. Provision is made for all properties below 150 acres in area in the South-West dairying districts to be excluded, as well as any property in the wheat and sheep or oat-growing and sheep districts below 1,500 acres. There is no question of the price being controlled and if the Land Settlement Board is unable to come to an agreement within six weeks after the property has been offered to the board, the vendor is then at liberty to sell in any other direction. The Land Purchase Board has acquired 410 properties to a value of £2,318,415 during the last three and a half years which will subdivide into approximately 560 farms. It is hoped that the Bill will enable a continuation of the purchase of properties, particularly in the wheat and sheep areas. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It is hardly fair to ask members to deal with the Bill without their having a chance to look through it.

The Chief Secretary: Move to adjourn the debate.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [3.19]: I have perused the Bill and am satisfied, as the Chief Secretary said when moving the second reading, that it involves only a slight alteration. That alteration is that one member, instead of being appointed by the Minister, shall be elected by the interested people. Although the alteration appears to be simple, it might mean that the board may not function as effectively in the future as it has in the past.

The board comprises six members and this alteration means that three will be directly elected by the producers, two will be appointed by the Minister as consumers' representatives, while the sixth will be a person nominated by the Minister. To use the words in the present Act in Section 7, Subsection 3(d), that person "shall be a person nominated by the Minister who is not engaged or financially interested in the business of purchasing or selling eggs and who shall be the chairman of the board."

I admit frankly that according to the Act the producer-representative appointed by the Minister had, under the terms of paragraph (a) of Section 7 (3), to be a person who was interested commercially—otherwise financially—in the production of eggs. But I draw the attention of members to this point: He was then appointed. By this change he is to be elected. Therefore, if he does not do what he is told by the producers he is likely to lose his seat on the board. That is the difference between his being appointed and being elected. I do not desire to see the board reach a stalemate and this is possible if the proposal in the Bill is agreed to. I would like the Chief Secretary to inform members what the constitution of the present board is and what the position is with regard to voting. Has the chairman at present a deliberative as well as a casting vote? If not, there is likely to be a stalemate.

The Chief Secretary: One of the members of the board may be absent.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is that possibility, but I question whether any of them would be absent if an important decision had to be reached. I hope the Chief Secretary will be able to give the House the information I have asked for, as I fear the board may have some difficulty in carrying on its business. I support the second reading.

The Chief Secretary: I am sorry I have not the information, but I will endeavour to get it by the time we deal with the Bill in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 7:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have had a hurried glance through the previous Act and cannot find in it any reference as to whether or not the chairman has a deliberative as well as a casting vote.

Hon. A. Thomson: I presume the chairman would have a casting vote.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot find any reference to it.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

MOTION—HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION, DISTRIBUTION AND FINANCE.

As to Inquiry by Royal Commission Withdrawn.

Debate resumed from the 2nd August on the following motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop:—

That this House requests the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and make recommendations upon—

(a) the administration of hospitals throughout the State, both governmental and committee-controlled, as well as private institutions;

(b) the distribution of hospitals throughout the State in relation to public requirements;

(c) the effect of Commonwealth legislation and price fixation upon hospital finances and maintenance.

HON. SIR FRANK GIBSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.28]: Some time has elapsed since Dr. Hislop moved this motion and I was under the impression that the Government had decided not to proceed with it, particularly as a council had been appointed to do in some measure what Dr. Hislop desired should be done. The thanks of all members and all citizens of the State who are interested in the treatment of the sick are due to Dr. Hislop for introducing the motion, which I am sure will receive unanimous support. During the years that he has occupied a seat in this Chamber, he has been consistently seeking improvement in the conditions under which those in need of hospital treatment are cared for.

Not a session has passed that Dr. Hislop has not referred to the need for greatly improved facilities in our hospitals. His voice has been almost a solitary one, crying in the wilderness of unconcern. I venture to say that there is no-one in the State with a greater knowledge of what is necessary in hospital equipment or amenities than the hon. member. Many years of valuable honorary service in the wards of our public hospitals, and almost as many on the board of management of the Royal Perth Hospital have provided opportunities which, with his own special professional knowledge, have given him the practical experience which enables him to speak with authority on the conditions under which our hospitals, both public and private, are managed and how these conditions can be improved.

Those of us who have taken an interest in hospital management know there is much need for improvement. Some 25 years ago I was chairman of a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the conditions of the hospitals of the State—with special reference to those in the agricultural and Goldfields areas. We found a very sorry state of affairs—buildings unsuitable, staff short, equipment lacking and, on the professional side, an almost insuperable difficulty in consulting other professional men, a facility greatly to be desired and which is

available to patients in any hospital in the metropolitan area. Certain recommendations were made. I do not know how many of them were adopted. What I do know is that today, as far as our community hospitals are concerned, there is little improvement in the amenities available.

If the motion is carried and the commission suggested by Dr. Hislop appointed, it does not necessarily follow that all its recommendations will be dealt with immediately. What it will do will be to establish a base plan which will, in the course of a few years, greatly improve the conditions existing today. To establish regional hospitals, equip them with the mechanical and technical appliances required and the highly qualified professional staff necessary, will take time and cost a lot of money. Of recent months we have heard a lot about a free medicine scheme. Of course it is not free, if by that one understands that it costs nothing. It is free only in name.

Many times I have expressed the view that the Commonwealth Government would have conferred a greater benefit on the general health of the community had it made available for the improvement of hospitals, the provision of pre-natal and post-natal clinics, and support for the fight against tuberculosis, the money which this free medicine scheme will cost under the present proposals. All we will do will be to create a large number of medicine addicts, who will be very little better for the physic they swallow, instead of rearing a generation who, when it reaches old age, will need very little of the medicine which the Commonwealth Government is so anxious to give it. Dr. Hislop referred to the charges made for hospital accommodation. I personally have had some experience of them. They are such that to a man in receipt of a moderate income the problem of meeting them is a serious one. Whether they are too high or not I am not in a position to say.

The commission, if appointed, could inquire into the matter of charges. We all know that costs have risen greatly; that nurses' salaries have been increased—not before this was justified. The figures quoted by Dr. Hislop yesterday were surprising to me. That 15 per cent. of the outpatients at the Royal Perth Hospital were immigrants is astonishing, and indicates that

sufficient care is not exercised in choosing those who are accepted as future Australian citizens. The fact that so many of them are patients suffering from T.B. in Wooroloo supports this view. Hospital costs are now terrifically high. The cost of the Royal Perth Hospital is alarming, and the annual costs amounting to close on £500,000 must cause great concern. Everywhere hospitals are being sought.

Quite recently I accompanied a deputation to the Minister for Health from the local authorities in the Midland Junction area for the purpose of seeking his support in the securing of a site for a hospital in that district. Such a hospital is urgently needed and must be provided in the near future. In Fremantle we have a hospital with 196 beds. They have not been used to their full capacity, owing to the difficulty of securing staff, both professional and domestic. As members know, this hospital, or the greater part of it, is obsolete and quite unsuitable for modern hospital work. A few days ago I called on the secretary. His office is in a building erected over 100 years ago. In this same building are women's medical wards. It requires no great imagination to know how unfitted they are for the purpose to which they are put.

Only a small part of the hospital at Fremantle is of modern construction, and, making a guess, I should say it will require £500,000 to erect a suitable and modern building. I found that the cost per bed amounted to almost £500 per annum. The estimated cost for the current year is £105,000, of which salaries and wages will absorb £85,000. The minimum charge for a single bed ward is 17s. 6d. per day—the maximum permitted by the Prices Commissioner. Maternity hospitals are needed urgently, and, as Dr. Hislop has mentioned, a petition dealing with this phase of hospital work has already been presented to the Minister. The commission, if appointed, could deal with all these matters. It is my earnest hope that the motion will be agreed to, the commission appointed, and the hospital position in Western Australia raised to a status of which we can all be proud.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [3.35]: I support the motion which is similar to the one I placed on the notice paper last year. There must have been some need for it,

as it has been brought up again. I stress the point that when I was on a trip through my constituency, I saw what the hospitals have to put up with because of lack of accommodation and nursing staff. I commend Dr. Hislop for bringing the motion forward. He is a man who has a knowledge of what is occurring in the metropolitan hospitals and, I suppose, those in the rest of the State. He went to America some time ago and returned with valuable information. The Government should publish a report of what he saw there so that it could be available for the benefit of the State generally.

There is need for some sort of inquiry. At Kalgoorlie the intermediate ward has been closed for a few years. It would perhaps be useful if it were handed over to the other organisation which is operating in that centre, and which has a full nursing staff. At the maternity hospital in Kalgoorlie I think there are three trained sisters where usually there are seven. I have heard many complaints about the labour ward being close to the other wards. It is not a good thing for a young mother, who is expecting, to hear, prior to being confined, what is taking place.

We know the Government is confronted with shortages of building materials. The commission would say what hospitals were required, and, although it might be hard to get the necessary materials, the inquiries would probably bear a lot of fruit. Last year I said that certain matrons and nurses suggested that a change of matrons every two years would help to get more nurses into the hospitals. The Under Secretary for Health recently went to Esperance where there is an eleven-bed hospital. We have had as many as 22 patients in that hospital at a time. Since the Under Secretary was there he has cancelled the plans and specifications that we had, and is getting new ones drawn.

The commission suggested in the motion might do something better for Esperance. At Norseman we generally have a full staff of sisters. The mine assists the hospital by giving a refund of the lighting charges. The hospital pays the light and heating account at the end of the month, and the money is refunded.

The Chief Secretary: I thought that was a close secret.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I do not think so. That shows that with a few extra amenities the employees feel assured that they will be working at a decent hospital with a good nursing staff, which is what is required. The Coolgardie hospital last Monday week had to ask the Kalgoorlie Government Hospital to send two nurses to Coolgardie immediately to carry on the night shift. An elderly woman was obtained to assist the house staff. That position arose because the girls walked out. The matron was doing a 24-hour shift. The amenities there are deplorable. The night nurses sleep with the other nurses. They have no washing facilities in their rooms. They have to go to the maternity ward to wash. There is no hot water system. There is a stove with a hot water urn on it, and that is how the staff gets the hot water.

Southern Cross has a decent sort of hospital, but it is scattered, which means a lot of walking for the sisters in conveying the food to the patients, and in patrolling the wards. A Royal Commission might suggest something to overcome those troubles. At Merredin the nurses quarters are all together, and the amenities are not what they should be. There is a lot of trouble at Lake Grace. The same thing applies at Ravensthorpe. When I was there the hospital was closed because it was not possible to get nursing staff. We saw where it was proposed to take over a certain property at Fremantle for a maternity hospital. We heard members of another place saying that that the hospital facilities at Fremantle are not as good as they should be. Therefore, there is room for a Royal Commission, or some inquiry, to go into the whole matter and see what can be done for the better hospitalisation of our people, and whether some assistance can be given to our nursing staffs.

The Government might investigate the possibility of changing matrons around or else an increase in the wages of nurses, and the provision of better amenities. It has been suggested to me that nurses could work under a similar system to school-teachers. That might be one way of overcoming our difficulties. The motion moved by Dr. Hislop, if carried, will provide assistance to the Government in overcoming

these problems, and might bring about a better system for hospitalisation. I support the motion.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [3.47]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion so ably moved by Dr. Hislop. If members will glance at the terms of the motion, they will see that it desires the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the administration and distribution of hospitals. Those are most laudable objectives. The health of the community is of vital importance to the nation as a whole, and I consider this Parliament has been most fortunate to have the advice and assistance of one who has become almost a world-wide authority on medical services. Dr. Hislop has practical knowledge of the hospitals of this State. On more than one occasion he has impressed this House with the importance of the prevention of sickness and the necessity for giving more attention to the health of our people.

I am sure that if this State had had the benefit of the findings of a Royal Commission, such as is suggested in the motion, the appalling and costly blunder of the Royal Perth Hospital would never have been contemplated by any Government. The appointment of a panel of doctors to assist the Medical Department can, and will, render useful advice to the community, but, acting in an honorary capacity, their advice is, and always will be, subject to departmental ideas and controls. We all know the difficult position of any Minister who dares to run counter to the departmental viewpoint. From the findings of a Royal Commission a definite policy could be laid down and it would be not only helpful to any Minister or Government but it would also educate people regarding the proper methods which should be adopted to meet the future hospital needs of this State.

Let us take Dr. Cook's report which appeared in today's issue of "The West Australian." I will refer briefly to his opening remarks. He stated that we have archaic and unco-ordinated methods of health and medical administration involving dissipation of effort, frustration of endeavour and inordinate delay in execution. Then he points to the anomaly of hospitals. He said—

The anomaly had developed that the well-to-do, who financed the old public hospitals by voluntary subscription, must, when ill, be content to pay for hospital accommodation less elaborate and in many cases less satisfactory than that which they had provided free of charge for the indigent.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The well-to-do didn't do all that either; most of it came from the working people.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Then Dr. Cook went on to say—

Demand for beds. The formulation of a comprehensive policy for the provision of beds in both private and public hospitals in the metropolitan area could no longer be delayed.

It is several years since Dr. Hislop first drew the attention of both the Government and the public to this drift. Here is a public statement by the officer in charge that the position in the metropolitan area has become so bad that the provision of more beds cannot any longer be delayed. The maternity hospitals are in an appalling state, and we find that in 1939, in the metropolitan area, there were 402 beds, while in 1949 the number has dropped to 319 beds—that is, 83 beds less than were available in 1939. In 1943, the total number of beds for general accommodation was 1,765, and in 1948 the number had dropped to 1,605, or 70 less for the metropolitan area alone, despite the fact that we have been increasing our population. If the Government and Parliament had taken the advice submitted by Dr. Hislop, both the State and the sick would have been in a much happier position than they are today.

We have much for which to thank the Lotteries Commission in this direction. Large sums of money used to go to the Eastern States, but since the introduction of the Commission that money has remained in Western Australia and has been of advantage to our charitable institutions. When the measure to set up the Lotteries Commission was introduced, there was a good deal of harsh and adverse criticism. Statements were made that it would do away with the help of people who were giving freely. As far as we know, there are very few wealthy people in this State who are in a position to give enormous sums of money to erect hospitals. I do not know of any person or voluntary organisation that would be able to raise as much money for public

hospitals and charity as has been provided through the efforts of the Lotteries Commission.

When the new Royal Perth Hospital building was started, I think the interest and sinking fund payments were guaranteed by the Lotteries Commission. At present, the Commission is erecting premises at Canning Bridge for aged women. Those premises are being built and financed by the Lotteries Commission and, when they are completed, I understand they will be handed over to the administration of the Medical Department. I congratulate the Lotteries Commission on providing decent accommodation for aged people, and I hope that at a later date, on land adjacent to those buildings, they will be able to provide similar accommodation for the old men and pioneers of Western Australia. Sixty acres of land has been set aside for the purposes of those buildings.

The provision of cottages and rest homes has been a serious problem for old people, and, in my opinion, previous Governments in particular have been remiss in not making provision for the care of aged pioneers of both sexes. Until this work was put in hand by the Commission, nothing had been done. With a view to seeking some information, I asked the following questions in the House:—

(1) What is the estimated cost of buildings now being erected at Canning Bridge making provision for the housing of aged women?

(2) How many buildings are being erected, and for what individual purpose are they to be used?

(3) Is provision being made for women able to look after themselves to have a separate and individual room?

(4) Are separate cottages being provided to enable married couples to end their days together?

(5) Is it the policy or intention of the Government to make similar provision in country areas, thus avoiding aged people having to sever themselves from friends and relations?

The reply I received was—

(1) £175,000.

That will be money well spent in caring for these people. The reply then went on to state—

(2) (a) Nine.

(b) (1) Nurses' quarters. (2) Hospital for the bedridden and those requiring constant supervision. (3) Block for those capable of

attending own needs. (4) Three duplex cottages. (5) Administration quarters and kitchen. (6) Recreation hall, and (7) Laundry.

In reply to my question as to whether the Government intended to make suitable provision in country areas, the answer was "No." I have represented country constituencies for many years and I would like Dr. Hislop to add a clause to his motion for the provision and consideration of housing old people in country districts. If cottages or accommodation could be provided for these people in the country districts they would be able to remain near their friends and relatives.

The country people are entitled to the same consideration as that extended to those living in the metropolitan area. It is wrong that men who have lived useful lives in the country areas should be compelled to go to the Sunset Home, and the same thing applies to the women folk. I see no reason why country homes, under such organisations as the Silver Chain Bush Nursing Scheme, could not be built in the country areas. These institutions could be assisted by the local authorities and the big-hearted people of the district. The Government could also assist and foster a spirit of self-help.

Sitting suspended from 4.0 to 4.20 p.m.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have shown that so far no provision has been made for the establishment of homes in the country areas for aged people. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government on having removed from the administration of the Health Department what I have always considered a very serious and unjust blot. Prior to the inception of the Lotteries Commission and the assistance it has since rendered, country districts had to provide half the cost of any new hospital building, the Government making available the balance. That arrangement did not apply to the metropolitan area.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It applied to Fremantle.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The people residing in the metropolitan area were privileged to have their hospitals erected entirely free of cost to them. It stands to the credit of the Government that it has removed that anomaly and placed country hospitals on the same footing as those erected in the

metropolitan area. In view of the fact that the Lotteries Commission is spending over £200,000 in providing a home for aged women—it will be money well spent and will cater for a longfelt want—I had hoped that some tangible support would be given to the provision of cottages, rest rooms or hostels in country areas where old people might be accommodated.

I had hoped that with the help of the Government, local governing authorities concerned and people who, as I previously mentioned, take a deep interest in movements such as the Silver Chain Bush Nursing Scheme, something of the sort would be accomplished and that financial assistance would be rendered in that direction. Under existing circumstances, owing to conditions over which their families may have no control—it may be due to lack of accommodation or shortage of finance—old men and women are forced to come to the metropolitan area and enter institutions here. To my mind that is a sad reflection upon the christianity and the spirit of charity that is supposed to imbue us in the present enlightened era. It is a very sad reflection on the present generation.

Whether we like it or not, we cannot avoid growing old and should recognise our duty to make better provision for aged people. It has been stated that the occupant of one of the homes provided by that organisation is a man who actually suggested the inauguration of cottage homes in times of affluence many years ago, but who afterwards fell upon evil days. Many are the heartrending cases of mothers having to leave the families they reared and enter a home for aged women or seek accommodation in a rest home.

I strongly support the appointment of a Royal Commission. I consider that Dr. Hislop more than once has pointed out to the House the course that ought to be followed and had his advice been adopted, we would have been in a very much better position today. I believe that the findings of a Royal Commission would prove beneficial not only to the Government of the day, but also to future Governments. The distribution of hospitals throughout the State in relation to public requirements is a matter imposing a most important duty on the Government and calling for a decision.

Frequently there occurs a certain amount of inter-town jealousy and possibly hospitals are provided at three or four centres, whereas, under co-ordinated effort, an efficient hospital could be provided to serve the whole area with greater efficiency. In saying that I am not casting any reflection on the admirable work done by the small country hospitals. I urge members to pass unanimously the motion so ably moved by Dr. Hislop.

HON. H. A. C. DAPPEN (Central) [4.29]: I was prepared to support the move for the appointment of a Royal Commission on the administration, distribution and finance of hospitals, but since the announcement that the Government has already taken action in the matter and the fact has been published that it has already appointed a council to do this work, an inquiry by Royal Commission does not now seem to be so necessary. No more time should be lost in formulating a general plan for hospitalisation services in *this* rapidly growing State; for the demand, especially with our own natural increase in population and the influx of migrants, is continually growing.

While I am concerned about a plan for the proper organisation of medical services for the whole community, I feel I should once again press for some attention to be given to the provision of a new hospital for the Geraldton district. Whether it is a regional, a district, or a base hospital or any other type of institution does not matter. What is important is that it is high time this district, which is so far away from the metropolitan area, should receive some attention.

The old hospital was built in 1887 and is in itself something of a museum piece. The old operating theatre has to be seen to be believed. I often go to the hospital on various missions, and I can assure members it is always a relief to get away from it on account of the feeling of depression it engenders. I ask members to imagine the effect it must have on the patients. I am sure it is only the Florence Nightingale spirit that keeps the matron and sisters at work in that hospital when there are so many other hospitals, better equipped and with better staff amenities, to which they could go.

A regional hospital has been promised for Geraldton; the land has been reserved, and a contour survey completed. But even if the drawing up of plans were put in hand at once, it would probably be two years before the job could be commenced. If we could only have a declaration of an intention to make an early start on the building, some satisfaction could be voiced. Years ago I suggested that the old hospital should be turned into an aged people's home. It is rapidly becoming that now, without the amenities I envisaged at the time. That is just another reason why a new hospital should be commenced as soon as possible. Being 300 miles from Perth, the town is thrown very much on its own resources; and the people, often divided on other matters, are unanimous in their demand for a new hospital.

I am satisfied that a council set up on the lines announced by the Government would thoroughly investigate the needs of the whole State and would indicate a plan of campaign which would do justice to the State's requirements in a general way. While I would originally have supported the motion, I do not see any need for it now in view of the Government's announced intention. I therefore propose to vote against it.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South) [4.35]: Despite the somewhat belated announcement that the Government intends to do something in this matter, until I know something more definite or Dr. Hislop decides to withdraw his motion, I intend to support him and to stand or fall on whatever he decides. I believe that no man in Western Australia is more qualified or competent to voice concern on the matter of hospitals in this State than he. I think I am voicing the opinion of most members when I say that; and the fact that Dr. Hislop chose this time to reveal his perturbed state of mind in connection with the matter, is sufficient indication to me of the importance of my supporting his motion.

The concern of members representing various parts of the State is evidenced by the monotonous regularity with which we read in local papers reports of their visits to hospitals in their districts. Some of these reports appear to be rather censorious and we often find letters in reply from members

of hospital staffs published in the papers indicating that they have the feeling that the interest shown by their parliamentary representatives and statements made as to what they have seen on their visits, are something in the nature of a reprimand of the management. We know, of course, that that is not intended and never has been.

Growing concern is experienced by members at the conditions they observe when visiting hospitals. Some have been brought up to date but others have not. When comparisons are made, one cannot help but feel very grave concern at the prevailing conditions, which appear to be drifting, despite the money spent and the good work already done by the Government. Progress in that respect is probably being retarded either by what might be called red tape or simply through ignorance of the position in certain districts. A searching inquiry, such as is recommended by the motion, would bring to light causes for the harmful and injurious halting of work that needs to be done.

Not long ago I had occasion to visit the Merredin hospital, and I had a long talk with the matron. She said she was working 24 hours a day and snatching a minute or two of sleep whenever she could. She requested headquarters to supply additional staff, and I understand the reply she received was, "Put a bed on the verandah and let the doctor sleep on the job." That sort of thing is not conducive to a happy staff; and I think that an inquiry such as has been suggested would indicate directions in which assistance could be given in overcoming shortages such as that.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Surely we do not want a Royal Commission for that.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I do not suggest that a Royal Commission should be appointed for that purpose alone. That is just one instance. There are hundreds of other places where there are similar shortcomings which warrant an inquiry by a Royal Commission.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You and I are good enough judges of that sort of thing.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Probably; but that is only one point. I am concerned about the position of some of my constituents of Kalgoorlie who are suffering

the after-effects of last year's poliomyelitis epidemic. We know the good work Dr. Hislop undertook in connection with that matter. Large sums of money were raised in order that something might be done, but what has been achieved up till now? I had occasion to visit the Infectious Diseases Branch today and what I saw there was responsible for the questions of which I gave notice this afternoon. I would like to have had the answers to those questions before speaking on this matter: but unfortunately the debate on this motion was resumed earlier than I had expected.

Some of the discoveries I made at the hospital were rather startling. Last year at the peak period of the epidemic, over 300 patients were receiving treatment. At present there are still 15, excluding out-patients. Of those 15, five need the saline bath treatment. I understand that is given generally in the early stages of the disease, and later on it is not quite as important but is still beneficial. At present the patients receiving it have to be taken by ambulance, accompanied by the physiotherapist, to Hollywood. They leave the hospital about 1 p.m. and arrive back at 4.30 p.m.

All that waste of time could be avoided. It was intended to install a bath at the Infectious Diseases Branch. The work was begun some months ago but nothing further has been done. We were told that the bath had to be purchased from the Eastern States and that it would arrive on a boat which reached Fremantle a few days ago. However, the boat has come and gone, and there was no bath on it. Could not something be done about that? If we had an inquiry, we might ascertain the reason for the delay in the arrival of equipment such as that.

Twelve months ago we were all in something of a panic about the poliomyelitis epidemic. Now that the outbreak has died down and there has been less publicity given to the matter, apparently our concern has abated. But an epidemic is occurring once more in the Eastern States and in America, and it will be recalled that our outbreak was preceded by epidemics in those places. We have no reason to believe that the same thing will not happen again. I understand that the disease runs in cycles of three or four years, but it is

not three years since the previous outbreak in the Eastern States, and we could have another visitation here.

At present two wards—20-year-old structures—have been converted for use by poliomyelitis patients. There are two solariums or sun rooms, kitchen equipment and quarters for the physiotherapist and occupational therapist. Those rooms are only partially covered on the outside walls and that has been the position for months. The patients must have exercise and at present they are climbing, with all their harness and equipment, over an uneven board floor. There is no provision for them to exercise on the grass outside the building, but they have to walk backwards and forwards along a covered archway, over rough boards on which it is uncomfortable to tread even when one is in good health. That is all that is provided for them.

A request was made for a lawn on which they could exercise, which would provide more pleasant surroundings for them, but nothing has been done in that regard. Instead of that there are scraps of timber and so on scattered around on the ground. Within 20 feet of the main ward where these helpless patients are lying, there is a portable circular saw screaming all day long. It is driving the staff mad, and the unfortunate patients simply have to put up with it.

Among my questions I asked about roofing for the new wards. Portions of them have been roofed with galvanised iron, and Goldfields members in particular well know what a galvanised iron roof is like on a hot day. The ceilings are simply asbestos beneath the galvanised iron. In the actual words of the staff and patients, in hot weather it is a little hell. Many of the patients cannot even raise their hands to fan themselves on a hot day or to pull the rugs over themselves in cold weather. In view of the peculiar circumstances surrounding the inmates of these wards, everything possible should be done to see that they are provided with every comfort and convenience.

It is no use saying that tiles are hard to get, because, as is well known, galvanised iron is also very difficult to procure. We should go ahead and provide whatever type of roofing is most suitable for this hospital. Fortunately the staff there is adequate for

the present number of patients. The staff includes occupational therapists, physiotherapists and ordinary nursing staff. Until a short time ago the nursing consisted of a visit twice a day to cheer the sick people up and the feelings of the patients at that time were terrible. Now the sister in charge has instilled some discipline in the wards and the position is much better.

Padres now visit the patients and the treatment generally is much improved. All of this could be reported on by an inquiry such as Dr. Hislop seeks. The plaster room at this hospital, where splints are made and plaster is cast on the limbs of the patients, consists of a little Army tent, the walls of which are about three feet high. It contains a bench and a rough couch that is used by the patients, and every drop of water used for the plaster has to be carried there by the nurse from the nearest tap some distance away. The position there, as in many other places, is bad. I was asked to make inquiries into this particular matter, and have done so.

Before leaving this subject I would revert to the matter of saline baths. At present three or four of the patients at the Infectious Diseases Hospital need such baths and if the hospital had its own facilities in this direction all the patients could have regular dips and would benefit by that treatment. Instead of that, neither the time nor the equipment is available there, and only those that most need this form of treatment can have it. Even then their baths must be very short, because of the limited time available when they are taken to Hollywood. I must also mention the inadequate storage space provided for the belongings of patients. Their various possessions, and pieces of equipment that are used in the hospital, are hanging here and there all over the place.

One portion of the ward looks like a junk shop. I am told that that is the physiotherapy section. Horizontal bars and other equipment are all crowded together. Undoubtedly the facilities for the treatment of these patients will be good enough when finished, but at present the position leaves room for vast improvement. We on the Goldfields have particular reason for concern over the poliomyelitis question, because Kalgoorlie is the first major stopping place

for travellers from the Eastern States, where the disease is again reaching epidemic proportions.

I have no doubt that in due course the usual safeguards will be put into operation and that no-one will be allowed to contact the people arriving on the train. Nevertheless, Kalgoorlie is still the first major stopping place for trains from the East and in that area we are greatly concerned about the introduction of poliomyelitis. Now is the time to do something about it, instead of waiting until cases are coming in from all over the State, crowding out the hospitals with 300 or 400 patients at a time.

The Ravensthorpe district has been mentioned, and at one time South Province members represented that district, but under the new distribution of seats that will not be so. However, I have received, from interested people in that area, communications about hospitalisation, and they have every reason for concern. They are a long way by road from any hospital, and have been promised a new hospital for many years. Their position is peculiar, in that the department will not allow any work to be done on the present unused dilapidated building until they have a matron to take charge, and they cannot get a matron to go there until they can provide suitable quarters, and so on.

We can do nothing about it because the board simply says, "Find somebody to go there and we will then do something," and our reply has to be "We cannot get anyone to go there until the position has been improved." I hope some answer will be found to this problem. Despite what has been said about statements by the Government as to what it intends or hopes to do, I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.55]: In view of the remarks made by so many members, I do not feel it is necessary for me to go to any length in explaining the Government's position. Dr. Hislop, in moving the motion, stated that he did not suggest that the Royal Commission, if appointed, should be other than a fact-finding one. I have explained to him the reason why this matter has not been dealt with

earlier, and I believe he is satisfied with the explanation I gave. In moving his motion he thought that a plan should be formulated for future hospitalisation in this State.

There have already been a number of inquiries and reports on this subject, including one by Dr. Le Souef and another by Dr. Hislop himself, in connection with modern trends in hospitalisation. These reports have been duly considered. As members are aware, a hospital planning committee was set up during the last term of the previous Government and some members of that committee were senior members of the medical profession. The plan was approved by the previous Government and adopted by the present Government.

So that the Government will have the best advice available to it, a health council has been set up with the Commissioner of Public Health as chairman and doctors possessed of specialised knowledge in every department of medicine as members. These men have been selected by the B.M.A. It is intended that this body shall constantly consider the hospitalisation problems of the State. It will be kept informed of and in touch with all our medical problems and will therefore at all times have a full knowledge of the State's needs in this regard.

The relevant facts are already known and what is now required is the best advice on how to act on those facts. It is submitted that the State Health Council will be a body competent to deal with such matters. It will be able to bring more ability and greater knowledge to bear on the subject than could a Royal Commission. I therefore cannot see any good purpose that could be served by the appointment of a Royal Commission.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.58]: I commend Dr. Hislop for moving his motion, but I am sorry I cannot support it because, as stated by the Chief Secretary, those concerned in the Government service, members of hospital boards throughout the State and a great number of medical men who are keenly interested in hospital planning, already know what the position is.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do they know the position in the country?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Even if it were possible at present to provide the necessary hospitals we could not find the requisite medical staff. Hospitals all over the State are short of medical men and even greater than that is the shortage of nurses. I am surprised that no attempt has been made to seek out from among the displaced persons arriving in this State, those with medical or nursing skill. The department has sought nurses in the Old Country, but I would like to see an endeavour made to use the services of skilled migrants who have come to this State. Many of them would not be able to pass the examinations laid down in this country, but their qualifications would enable them to help in this direction.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They are using some of them now.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It must be infuriating for those who take an interest in our hospitals to read in the Press of medical men coming to Australia from overseas and having to work as orderlies and so on in various parts of the Commonwealth. The B.M.A. is not altogether clear of blame for the position in which we find ourselves. We all know that the position is aggravated by the shortage of nurses, doctors and domestic staffs. A further fact which contributes to the trouble is that in view of the high rents that can be obtained, owner-matrons of maternity hospitals have been converting their institutions into flats, because they are thus assured of an easier means of living. That is one of the reasons why we are so short of maternity hospitals in the metropolitan area. This debate affords members an opportunity to speak on hospitals. I think the late Hon. S. W. Munsie was extremely keen to plan for the hospitalisation of this State, and he was the first to initiate the regional planning of hospitals.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He did not get much further than that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: He made some progress, and even in this morning's paper an announcement was made by the Government of the start of a new hospital at Pinjarra, which is part of the regional plan, and those who have taken part in hospital work—and I have done my share—will realise the difficulty that successive Governments have been faced with. This debate gives me a chance

to say something about the Fremantle Government Hospital. I would like the Minister for Health, through the Chief Secretary, to make an announcement as to the future of that hospital. As I have mentioned, they are in trouble there. The Fremantle people are very uneasy about the lack of information as to the future of their hospital. I know that it can be converted into one of the best, outside Perth, which could possibly be built in that district.

With the removal of the old immigration home, which must go eventually, and the sooner the better, there will be ample room for the erection of a new women's medical ward. The community ward, which should be extended, has been a great boon to the public of Fremantle and country residents as well. Half the cost of that extension was raised by the local residents. Mr. Thomson made a great mistake when he said that the country people were the only ones that engaged in collecting funds for hospitals. For many years, Fremantle people were besieged with appeals for money for the building of that institution. The Fremantle hospital can be made into an ideal institution.

At the rear there is ample room on rising ground for the erection of a modern convalescent hospital. That is not my idea. That was a proposal put up some years ago by the then Medical Superintendent, Dr. Ken Aberdeen. That ground is Government-owned, and there is plenty of it. I would like the Minister for Health to make an announcement of future policy. It has been rumoured that someone in the department has suggested that the present site of the hospital is not suitable for extensions. I am emphatic that if that is the view, it is a very wrong one. I know a great deal of money will be involved, but it would be of interest to Fremantle people if an early decision could be made so that we shall know what the plans are for the extension of that building. I want to see it extended on modern lines on the present site, because it is one of the best that can be found in the district.

I think that the move for a Royal Commission would be a waste of money and I am surprised at the motion being moved in its present form, because if there were to be a Royal Commission the only possible commissioner that should be appointed would be a judge of the Supreme Court. It would

not be wise to appoint anyone below that standing to inquire into such a comprehensive subject as this motion postulates.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Would it not be better to appoint an oversea medical man?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No. I have a great admiration for doctors, but I am not very impressed with their judgment once they go outside the ambit of their profession.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Like lawyers.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Bakers are the same.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Doctors make very poor businessmen; that is my opinion. My experience, which extends over a quarter of a century, has taught me that the bulk of medical men—I am not decrying their splendid work in the community—once they get involved in a business proposition, have no idea of the value of money, which they waste in thousands. I do not wish to convey a wrong impression in this Chamber of my opinion of doctors, because I have a high admiration for the wonderful work they have done in public hospitals and the excellent service they continue to render to the community. The appointment of a Royal Commission would be futile, because the information that is sought on hospitalisation for this State is already in the possession of the Public Health Department.

Hon. A. Thomson: Well, why does it not do something?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: How can it do anything? Firstly, we must provide homes for the thousands of people who are urgently in need of them. By that means we will get to the source of the problem, because nothing fills hospitals quicker than mothers, fathers and children being crowded into tenements under bad conditions. Therefore, when we get down to business and basic facts, we would be helping the hospitals by reducing the number of patients that enter them if we first of all provided homes for the community. To overcome that obstacle, it is absolutely necessary that the people who are homeless should be provided with dwellings and at the earliest opportunity attention could then be given to the erection of new hospitals and the enlargement of the present ones. Although sympathetic with the objects which Dr. Hislop seeks to attain, I think the carrying of this motion would be a mistake, would mislead

the public and would result in a great deal of time being wasted to ascertain facts which are already in the possession of the Health Department.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.10]: I will begin by endorsing the sentiments expressed by other members who have spoken, and by applauding the sincerity animating Dr. Hislop when he introduced the motion. His interest in the topic is well known to all of us, and I am sure we appreciate his object in submitting the proposal. However, Mr. Gray has struck a note which appeals to me, and that is that first things must come first, especially in these difficult times. If we can house people properly and decently, I believe we will do something to save the necessity for a greater number of hospitals or the enlargement of existing ones. I realise that we must have up-to-date hospitals and continue to improve them, but I cannot see that we need a Royal Commission to tell us what is required to be done.

Surely the Department of Public Health is staffed by people who have made proper research into the subject and who have the intelligence which high officers in a department such as that should possess. For instance, they ought to know that in Kalgoorlie we have an intermediate ward. Off-hand, I cannot tell members the extent of the accommodation that would be available in that ward, but it has been closed for some considerable time. We anticipated that there will be an immediate growth of population on the Goldfields, particularly in small places such as Mt. Monger, Broad Arrow and other mining centres which have no hospitals, and patients from such places will have to travel to Kalgoorlie when they require hospital attention.

It is obvious to me that we shall have more acute hospitalisation problems on the Goldfields than we have experienced in the past couple of years. I do not want any Royal Commission to tell me the reason for that, because it is too obvious; there are not the nurses to staff the wards. Mr. Cunningham visited the Infectious Diseases Hospital today, and I wish to applaud him for his interest, because I am sure that the information he was able to give us this afternoon

has been of considerable benefit to all of us. Surely the Department of Public Health is well aware of the facts which he outlined.

We do not need a Royal Commission to clear up matters such as that. I will not labour the subject further except to remind the House that last night several members who opposed a measure which had in mind the appointment of one inspector laid great emphasis on the expense that was to be involved, and here we are asked to carry a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission to report on facts which are well known to all of us and which, I believe, are well known to the Department of Public Health.

I believe that if we pass a motion such as that under discussion, we should do so in all sincerity, feeling that something would be achieved. But to carry the motion would be merely a pious expression. It would certainly give us the opportunity to say that we voted for the appointment of a Royal Commission but in my opinion we would be almost misleading the public if we passed it. For these reasons, while I applaud the general motives of those who have voiced grievances, I feel it my duty to oppose the motion.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.17]: I join with other members in expressing appreciation of the informative speeches delivered from time to time by Dr. Hislop relating to health matters. I think we all realise the great necessity for providing hospitalisation for the people of the State. I certainly agree that country districts are entitled to proper hospital facilities. I also agree that proper facilities should be made available in areas where large numbers of people are domiciled.

We have just completed another section of the Royal Perth Hospital, with its fine appointments and facilities. It is an institution in which we can all take pride. Nevertheless, we must realise that it is necessary to establish hospitals in the various zones of the State. Whilst I am pleased at all times to listen to Dr. Hislop on the question of hospitals, I feel I cannot support his motion because, as he has said and as the Chief Secretary has intimated this afternoon, one of the purposes of the Royal Commission would be fact-finding. A council has already

been constituted by the Government which is in a position to ascertain the various facts contributing to the condition in which we find our hospitals today.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do you think that council will call evidence?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The evidence is available, should the council desire to get it. I could give that body some facts and figures relating to the Fremantle hospital. Facilities are available for these facts to be ascertained and therefore I cannot agree that it is necessary to appoint a Royal Commission for that purpose. I think we would all concede that the hospitals throughout the State are in a very sorry plight and that any Government, irrespective of Party, would take steps to remedy the position if it were possible to do so.

Whilst we all agree that the condition of our hospitals today is bad, there are one or two reasons that I think cannot be accepted, because my association with this question has led me to believe there is no co-ordination between the Treasury, the Health Department, the Public Works Department and the Tender Board. Many of the disabilities could be overcome if there were some co-ordination between those various departments. The Fremantle hospital is the second largest institution of its kind in the State. It was pointed out this afternoon that the Geraldton hospital is an old building, but I point out that portion of the Fremantle hospital is over 100 years old, as has already been mentioned this afternoon by Sir Frank Gibson. That portion consists of the administrative offices, the operating theatre, the x-ray room and the women's medical ward, as well as the bedrooms and sitting room for the doctors.

For a long time past it has been constantly necessary to draw the attention of the Health Department to the condition of the Fremantle hospital, which provides for the needs of the people living in an area extending from Rockingham to Claremont. It also takes a number of country cases and shipping cases. It is urgently necessary to overcome some of the difficulties of that institution. We have had much trouble in endeavouring to secure sufficient nursing and domestic staffs. At one time we were deeply concerned at the prospect

of having to close two wards because we could not obtain sufficient medical staff. I do not know that anybody is to blame.

There is a shortage of nurses and domestic staff. We might overcome the domestic staff problem by offering the girls higher remuneration, which they are able to obtain at hotels where their conditions are much better than they are at the hospital. Possibly consideration could be given to that aspect. We have been able to get a doctor to accept an appointment now and again, but, as I have already said in this House, young doctors will not go to Fremantle if they have a chance of getting on the staff of the Royal Perth Hospital. Until such time as a medical school is established in this State we shall have trouble in securing our medical staff.

As I have said, the attention of the Health Department has been drawn from time to time to the requirements of the Fremantle hospital. As a matter of fact, the department was asked to make provision for bedrooms for the medical staff, so that they could live adjacent to the hospital. Unfortunately it is not possible to make such provision at present. A committee was formed some years ago and it made certain recommendations which I understand were conveyed to the Health Department. There has, however, been no plan or blueprint prepared of improvements to the hospital; consequently there can be no proper planning of additions for the purpose of housing the staff. As I said, there is very little co-operation between the Treasury, the Health Department, the Public Works Department and the Tender Board and this necessarily causes great delay.

*This debate has given members the opportunity to place before the Government such facts as are in their possession. I therefore think that the council which has been set up by the Government will, in turn, have these facts placed before it. I trust that ere long our hospitals will be put on a better footing. Whilst I appreciate Dr. Hislop's motive in introducing the motion, I feel that no good purpose would be served by appointing a Royal Commission, as the council appointed by the Government could ascertain all the necessary facts. I oppose the motion.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.27]: We have listened during the debate this afternoon mostly to statements by members in regard to hospitals in their provinces. I do not think that such statements come within the ambit of the motion. For many years past we have been hearing a great deal about public health and hospitalisation; I believe there has been more talk on those two subjects than on any other. Mr. Gray referred to what Mr. Munsie had said on this question. In those days there was the opportunity to do something, but a great deal has not been achieved. Whatever the fate of the motion—I do not know that I shall vote for it—I think the Government has stolen Dr. Hislop's thunder. I pay him the compliment, however, of saying that I am sure, had it not been for his initiative, enterprise and energy, this question of hospitalisation might still be drifting as it has been for years.

Hon. A. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not think anyone can say that the administration of the Public Health Department has given complete satisfaction. On innumerable occasions we have had complaints not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the State, from the north to the extreme south. Some of the complaints have been serious. Coming to more recent times, I recollect that Dr. Hislop provided the State with a valuable report on his observations in countries where public health and hospitalisation are in a more advanced stage than here. That was two years ago. This Government has allowed the report to remain in the pigeon-hole and has refused, as far as I know, to take any notice of it. That is not playing the game. When a member of the Legislature—of either House—who is specially gifted by training and experience to submit a treatise on a matter of vital importance, the least the Government can do is to have it printed and circulated.

The Chief Secretary: You cannot get the printing done.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is a lame excuse.

The Chief Secretary: It is so. "The West Australian" was doing ours a little while ago.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If the Government submitted its printing to private tender, it would be done very quickly. One of the departments we might have an inquiry into is the Government Printing Office, but that is getting away from the point. I am surprised at the Chief Secretary's making such a puerile excuse.

The Chief Secretary: I did not think you would be surprised at anything I said.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not know what was in Dr. Hislop's mind—I can assure members I have not had two minutes' conversation with him on the motion—to cause him to move it, but I assume that early in the session he felt, seeing his report had been pigeon-holed, it was time to take further action. If members will read the motion, they will not see much to complain about in it. Some of the speeches have been certainly wide of its terms, the first of which is that it asks for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into and make recommendations upon—

The administration of hospitals throughout the State, both governmental and committee-controlled, as well as private institutions.

Surely there has been room for a long time for an inquiry into the administration of some of the hospitals. If we are to accept what we hear in the city and the country, there has for a long time been ample need to make inquiries in that connection. Although time and again this session the House has risen before ten because of lack of business, this motion has been allowed to stand without attention. We ought to object to that kind of thing. I do not know just what the Chief Secretary would reply to that, as he is not here. I might say in passing that I think this House is entitled to the presence of a Minister in his seat when a debate is in progress, even though it is on a private member's motion. It is not courteous to find the ministerial bench empty when a private member's motion is being discussed.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The Chief Secretary might have had to go out.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Well, he has had a pretty bad time this afternoon because he has been out of his place quite a number of times.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Your turn might come soon.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Perhaps. It seems that any attempt by a member to secure an inquiry into the administration of the permanent head of some department immediately brings upon the member concerned, if not ridicule, something akin to it. I cannot help thinking that if we knew all the circumstances surrounding this matter, we would find that there has been some such feeling. I believe it is the duty of every member who feels he can contribute to the welfare of the State, to bring the matter forward. I think, too, it is the duty of the Government to take cognisance of what he says. There is nothing that the Government can be particularly proud of in having allowed the motion to remain until the dying hours of this Parliament, and to have dealt with it then by means of the meagre reply that was given today.

I am satisfied that the action of the Government in appointing the State Health Council has been hastened by the motion. Although I applaud Dr. Hislop for his action, I do not think we can get any further by passing the motion. If I thought we could, I would vote for it. I have voiced my impressions. I am of the opinion that Dr. Hislop might well, after having heard the views expressed by members, withdraw the motion. I do not think anything will be gained by passing it because I am perfectly satisfied the Government will not take any notice of it.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan—in reply) [5.34]: I assure the Chief Secretary that I am quite satisfied with the reasons he has given me for the delay in bringing the matter before the House. I do not feel the slightest bit hurt about it. All I am here for is to do what I consider to be my duty in connection with the public health of the State. I have done it previously and I shall continue to do so. I am, however, rather dismayed at the scant reply given to what must be one of the most important features of our community life. I do not for a moment think that the Government has answered the question of the appointment of a Royal Commission by appointing the State Health Council. I suppose there is really a certain amount of feeling that I might be in a difficult position were I to

criticise the State Health Council. There are numbers of things I feel I can reply to on this motion, and I propose to do so.

There has been a suggestion by some members that if we pass the motion for a Royal Commission we might mislead the public. Nothing is further from my mind than to mislead the public. What I think is happening is that those members have misled themselves. I have no intention of trying to mislead either them or the public. I thank the members who spoke about me in such laudatory terms, but I do not ask for that sort of thing. However, I do not like to hear a member make such remarks, then add the word "but" and refer to only portion of the motion as a reason for not voting for it. This is not to be only a fact-finding commission, but one to make recommendations on the facts.

Let us take one fact that would probably come out very rapidly because it seems, in the last 24 hours, to have become most important in our hospital organisation. I wish to quote from the report of the Commissioner of Public Health which was yesterday laid on the Table of the House. It is at variance with the reply given to me by the Government, which assured us that all was well. I think it is the duty of those members who said that the department would know all the facts to consider the words of the Commissioner for Public Health, Dr. Cook, who said—

No forward step towards efficient re-organisation of the hospital system was taken during the year. On the other hand the anomalies and embarrassments associated with the increasing disparity between existing hospital organisation and current requirements became increasingly acute.

This disparity stems in an early divergence and prolific subsequent growth of hospital needs from the tardily developing administrative system rooted in the economic and social soil of a bygone era.

All does not sound well! It is quite obvious that all is not well when one reads the opening remarks of the Commissioner. Apparently I am no longer a voice crying in the wilderness. Under the heading "Administrative Inadequacy," he mentions a number of the things that my proposed Royal Commission would ask for, because he says—

One cannot escape the conclusion that effective health administration is seriously impeded and the extension of activity into new fields largely frustrated by the outmoded and irrationally devised establishment of the department.

In the past, the apotheosis of the lay administrative officer and the traditional reliance upon him to determine the scope and design of the department, have developed a structure which, though doubtless in harmony with Treasury and Public Service preconceptions, is ill-adapted for its avowed purpose and alien to technical requirements.

Those are the facts that would come out if the Royal Commission that I have asked for were appointed. Among other things, it was these facts that I wanted to elicit and it was following upon these facts that I wanted some alteration in the whole system. Especially is this so when the Commissioner says that he can do nothing and he cannot get anywhere because of the outmoded system. Just let us turn to the final words used by the Commissioner in his report. There we will see the mental struggle which that officer is having. In concluding he used these words—

Notwithstanding archaic and unco-ordinated methods of health and medical administration involving as they do dissipation of effort, frustration of endeavour and inordinate delay in execution.

Those are the words of the Commissioner. Yet members of this House are quite satisfied to make the statement, "Surely the department knows the facts and will act upon them." There are the facts.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You did not finish that quotation.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Does the hon. member want me to finish it?

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Yes, I think you should because you left it in the air.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The whole quotation is as follows:—

Notwithstanding archaic and unco-ordinated methods of health and medical administration involving as they do dissipation of effort, frustration of endeavour and inordinate delay in execution, the health of the State as measured by vital statistics, attained during 1948 a standard never previously achieved in Western Australia and one comparing more than favourably with the achievements of other States.

It may reasonably be expected that re-organisation by permitting a more intelligently planned and better co-ordinated assault upon disease, would effect an even more rapid and

substantial reduction. If this be so, delay in re-organisation must be at the cost of avoidable ill-health and death, and time devoted to considering the impact of change upon established administrative conventions must be purchased with human lives.

That is a fairly strong statement and I should think it cannot make happy those people who state that anything which finds out facts and makes recommendations upon them is not worth while at the moment. We must view this matter entirely in the light of what the Commissioner has stated and realise that this is not something which has grown up with this or any other Government.

I wish to make it clear that I have never used the question of health in this State on a political basis. I moved for the appointment of a Royal Commission when the previous Government was in office and I have moved for the appointment of a Royal Commission now that the present Government is in office. If there is anything that ought to be above politics, it is the health of the people and I am not interested in the political colour of the Government which is in power at the particular moment. However, I hope that eventually, if I live long enough, this archaic system will go west. Until such time as we do get somewhere we are just going along with a Commissioner writing reports such as this. It was because of this very system that we lost Dr. C. L. Parke, probably one of the finest public health administrative brains in the world. He just could not stick it and he left us. Now, after some three years, we find the new Commissioner making exactly the same statement—he cannot get anywhere because of this archaic system. Therefore, I think there is need for a full inquiry into the hospital situation of the State.

Let me answer just one or two statements made this afternoon. We have been told that there is a shortage of doctors and a shortage of nurses and, therefore, they are reasons which we must accept for any delay which may take place in the provision of proper hospital administration services. That is not so, if we really get down to the basic facts behind the shortage. There is no shortage of medical men in the metropolitan area, but there is a shortage of medical men where the conditions are hopeless. Young men who are looking for further experience and teaching will not

go to the Fremantle hospital under the present conditions. The only way that the Fremantle hospital will obtain staff is by paying much higher salaries to the men concerned so that they can do a year or two of work there and go elsewhere for further experience. Today, that type of man is limited in numbers.

In the old days it was recognised that if a young physician wanted experience he either went to an institution where the teaching was of the highest grade and the pay was on the lowest rank, or he went to an institution where the pay was the highest and where he could save sufficient money to gain further experience elsewhere. Those facts must still be faced. There was an occasion where I accepted a post, many years ago, at the Manchester Royal Infirmary. The salary was £50 per annum and I had to find my own board and lodging. However, I was very glad to accept that post because of the experience I gained. This shortage of doctors and so on will have to be faced in the same way.

When it comes to the question of the shortage of nurses, we have not here, or even in Australia, yet made any move towards establishing the new era of nursing training to which I have referred so often in this House and one which would naturally come within the scope of administration and conduct of hospitals. I have been accused of wanting to spend money because of the setting up of what was termed a costly Royal Commission. But my object is to try to save money.

Hon. A. Thomson: The findings of the Royal Commission would undoubtedly give ideas for the saving of money in administration.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Whether there has been any real wisdom in spending of money in the past, I do not know. If members go past the King Edward Memorial Hospital they will find that a vast building for nurses' quarters is in the course of construction. I would like to know whether any real, serious consideration was given to the question of permitting those nurses, who are now all trained nurses before they go to that hospital, to live outside as is the custom in so many oversea countries.

If it had been so, it is possible that we may have been able to use the money and the bricks which are now going into the nurses' home for the provision at least of space for new maternity beds. Has the whole thing really been studied on that basis? I do not know, but I think we are entitled to be told. It is possible that the Government may consider it is essential that the nurses should live in so that they can give adequate attention during their training. But, they cannot be on duty all the time and, taking the question of transport, it is possible that probably some, if not all, of those nurses could have slept out. This is dealt with fully in the report which I brought back to the Government two years ago.

Let us take again the question of Pinjarra, which curiously, was the place I picked out in the report I made, as the first centre to use as a trial for the establishment of a regional hospital. I would like to know whether the hospital at Pinjarra is to be along the lines of the ideas which I gave in the planning for this area, or whether it is simply a replacement of the old Pinjarra hospital. No statement has ever been made as to what constitutes a regional or sub-regional hospital. Is this new hospital to be one that will provide pathology and x-ray departments so that people in that district need not come to the metropolis for so much of their treatment, or is it to carry on and replace something that has been there in the past? If the money is to be expended, and expended rightly, on a sub-regional hospital, then this hospital should contain all that it is intended to contain in a sub-regional hospital. We do not know.

We are simply told that the first sub-regional hospital is to be erected and tenders have been called for and have now closed. It is no use contemplating a regional hospital system, in which Pinjarra is the centre, and then go and spend a large sum of money on the outskirts of the region, which would be roughly Yarloop, where a sum of £20,000 is contemplated in the re-erection and restoration of that hospital. If there is a sub-regional hospital somewhere, there must be a surrounding area which it will serve. What is it, and where is it? I want to know exactly where we are, especially when we are planning to spend a considerable sum of money.

The cost of a Royal Commission would be negligible compared with what we might possibly save.

There is one further point I would like to bring up and that is about the very laudable attempt on the part of the Lotteries Commission to provide homes for the aged, on the banks of the Canning River. But what relationship has that to the crying needs of the Home of Peace? What relationship will it have to the need of these people when they get sick—because they will when they become old? Is there to be another hospital unit in the area or are the people to be brought to the Royal Perth Hospital and placed in the old wards?

I agree with Mr. Davies when he said that there appears to be little co-ordination and I agree with him also that the only way to get co-ordination is to have a hospital commission which will spend its time investigating these problems and meeting the needs of the people. I am surprised, for instance, that it was ever necessary for a petition from 8,000 people in Fremantle to ask a department that knows all the facts—and for the petition to be presented to Parliament—for the erection of a maternity hospital. Apparently, since this petition was presented, there has been a move to buy a hospital in Fremantle, but it took 8,000 people to get something started. We should have an organisation which is constantly looking to the needs of the people.

It has been suggested by some members that my thunder was stolen by the appointment, by the Government, of the State Health Council. I do not want to decry the work that these gentlemen will do, but the document which I received, as to the possible duties of these men, is not exactly identical with the list of duties that they will carry out as laid down in the Public Health Commissioner's report. These are of a much wider nature. Let us take for example No. 3—

The initiation of State public health and hospital legislation as may be necessary from time to time to establish the health and medical organisation on a sound basis.

During his speech, Mr. Gray said that he had great faith in people so long as they kept to that in which they were trained. So have I.

I have no intention of giving advice on any medical subject with which I am not au fait. I have always accepted advice given to me when I know that the people proffering it are thoroughly skilled in that particular task. However, I do not believe in accepting information when I know that the people giving it are not thoroughly skilled in that particular branch. From what I know of the members of the State Health Council, not one of them has ever administered a large hospital. Therefore I do not think those members can give much advice about the standardisation of hospitals, or the equipment in hospitals, or the administration of hospitals—because not one of the members of the council has ever had experience in administering a hospital. I would not attempt to give the Commissioner of Public Health advice on certain matters.

I believe that what is necessary is not the State Health Council as constituted at present but a similar body that would work from a plan that was formulated by experts. It would see to it that the plans were converted into practice. In the report I submitted to the Government on regional hospitals, I suggested the appointment of committees from the profession that could be called upon to give advice on certain phases. I suggested they should tender advice as to what scope of surgery should be performed in sub-regional or regional hospitals, the x-ray work that should be carried out at particular hospitals, how the various services could be integrated and so on.

In that way men skilled in the work they were doing would be able to give advice on the problems that confronted those implementing the plan. I believe that the State Health Council must eventually end in what we have been asking for, namely, a permanent health commission. I shall read to the House what it is proposed the Health Council shall consider. The headings include—

(1) Discussion of and recommendations regarding factors of morbidity and mortality.

In their work in that respect the members of the council are to inquire into the reasons for sickness and the cause of death.

(2) The organisation of medical practice both in its preventive and therapeutic phases.

(3) The initiation of such public health and hospital legislation as may be necessary from time to time to establish the health and medical organisation on a secure basis.

(4) To serve as a liaison body between the Government and the medical profession.

(5) To give the medical profession an effective voice in health and medical organisation.

(6) To serve as a co-ordinating body organising the medical profession in public health and medical practice within the State.

Every member of the State Health Council, with the exception of one, who, I understand, is to retire soon, is a busy man in practice and at least two of them live 200 or 300 miles away from the metropolis. It is suggested that this council shall meet once a month. That means that once a month these men will be able to consider giving effect to the requirements under the whole of these six headings.

I believe the time must come—obviously it will be very soon—when this work will not be done by an honorary council but must be undertaken by a full-time commission. I believe a Royal Commission could very well inquire whether this council could deal with any such plan as I contemplate, or whether it would be better to appoint a full-time commission. I do not think for one moment that the appointment of the State Health Council has stolen my thunder. It could very well do so if the council, in a very short time should produce a scheme for the whole of the planning and administration, on a long term basis, with regard to the hospitals of this State. I still maintain, however, that there are men available who would be able to go into our problems, advise us, and tell us the road we should travel.

I have drawn the attention of the Government to the possibility that the services of a man like Dr. Graham Davis, who, as I mentioned previously, is recognised throughout the United States of America as a world-wide authority on hospital planning, might be made available to this State. I also indicated that in all probability the cost would be negligible. If the State could have had made available to it the services of that man, he could come here and spend some time with us, see what our needs are, and set out a long-range plan that we could pursue. If that were done, we would then have an administration to look forward to, of which we could be proud.

As I emphasised when I moved the motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission, one of the wisest things that the American Federal Government had said to the States there was, "You shall not have any money unless you have your planning first." The man I refer to is the head of the Hospital Section of the Kellogg Foundation and has already surveyed two or three of the American States and Canada. A man of such world-wide reputation could render help to the State that would be most valuable.

With regard to the motion under discussion, I shall not make it difficult for members to vote either for or against it. I believe that, irrespective of whether it is agreed to or rejected, we shall see no Royal Commission appointed. I trust in view of what I have said, I have made it clear to the House that things are not happy. Further, in view of the suggestion I have made that we should approach this man of world-wide reputation in hospital matters, I trust the Government will itself take action along the lines I have indicated.

This is not a political matter, but it is one in respect of which I feel deeply and keenly. If something is done along the lines I have suggested, it will go far towards rectifying the position that is disclosed in the report we have received from the Commissioner of Public Health, and remove the responsibility that attaches to the Government and to the Health Department. I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [6.9] in moving the second reading said: This is a rather lengthy and somewhat important Bill, but no new principles are embodied in it. The object is merely to amend and correct various matters that experience with the operation of the Act has shown require attention. Members will remember that early in the session Mr. Watson placed a Bill before the House to rectify a number of anomalies and errors in the parent Act. Many of those matters are dealt with in the

Bill I am now presenting. I do not think I can help by going over the details of the amendments, but when the measure is dealt with in Committee members will be able to get the fullest information they need in that respect. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 59:

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I ask the Minister for an explanation of the clause. We have had experience before of Bills to amend principal Acts passed comparatively recently. Possibly we shall have the same procedure next session when another Bill will be introduced to amend some measure we have passed hurriedly this session. Members have not had an opportunity to look through the Bill which the Minister has submitted to us in a speech which did not last for three minutes. I again voice my objection to the suspension of the Standing Orders which results in members being asked to deal with Bills hurriedly and without any proper opportunity to look through their provisions. I see that co-operative companies are mentioned in the clause and I remember the discussions we had some sessions ago when amending the Companies Act.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 10 to 27—agreed to.

Progress reported.

**BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
TRANSPORT BOARD
(VALIDATION).**

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.36] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to validate certain appointments that have been questioned. Legal opinion is each way, but apparently the predominance is that the present appointments are not valid. I think members are aware of the fact that certain

members of the board were appointed in February last, and that the Act provides for their appointment for a definite term of three years, whereas they were appointed for only six months.

At the end of six months, another board was appointed, and questions have been raised as to whether the board appointed in February should not continue for three years or whether, in fact, it had been legally appointed at all. The question that arises is whether what the board did during that period was correct, and if any of its actions should be challenged in a court of law, a lot of complications might result. The Bill provides that anything done during that period shall be deemed to be valid and, furthermore, that the present board appointed in August shall be valid for the three years. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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 passed.

**BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT
(No. 3).**

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [7.40]: Having perused the Bill, I feel that although it is necessary to support the second reading on account of the clauses dealing with the extension of time for burning off on railway property, there are one or two points in the measure with which I am not in agreement. It has always been my opinion that if a person conforms to the law he should not be deemed guilty of committing an offence. This Bill proposes to reinsert in Section 8 of the principal Act the following subsection:—

(4) Notwithstanding that permission is granted as aforesaid, nothing in this section shall be deemed to relieve any person from liability for any actionable damage sustained by any other person in consequence of the burning operations carried out pursuant to such permission.

It appears to me to be placing a hardship on a person if, after he has received permission to burn off under conditions set out in the Act, he is subjected to liability for damages if the fire should get away. The Bill provides for the repeal of Section 45 of the Act which reads as follows:—

When any person sets fire to the bush, or conducts burning operations or lights or uses any fire in compliance with the provisions of this Act and without negligence, he shall not be liable in damages resulting from his doing so, any law or rule of law to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Bill proposes to repeal that section and to replace in the Act the provision to which I have referred which will make a person liable if a fire he has lit for burning off gets away and causes damage. In the Committee stage I would like the Chief Secretary to give a very clear explanation of what is actually intended. To my mind, what is proposed is not fair to a section of the community who of necessity, on account of the vocation they follow, and in order to protect the country generally, are compelled to do certain burning off in accordance with the regulations and who are to be held accountable in the event of something happening, even though there has been no negligence on their part.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [7.45]: I do not intend to deal with the subject-matter of the Bill but I have risen to point out—and I hope the Chief Secretary will take notice of this protest—that it is most difficult to follow some of these Bills. I have noticed this in the last month or so. It is hard in this Bill, for instance, to gather what sections are being amended—whether they appear in the original Act or in amending statutes passed since. The marginal note to Clause 3 of the Bill refers to the “amendment of Section 8.” That section is to be found in the measure appearing in the reprinted Acts of 1943. When we come to Clause 4 we find that it relates to an amendment of Section 9, but that we cannot fit the proposed amendment into the section appearing in the 1943 volume. It is difficult for members to try to follow Bills under those conditions, especially at this stage of the session when measures are being submitted hurriedly.

Hon. L. Craig: This amendment was in the Act previously and was taken out and it is now proposed to re-insert it.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, I know that an alteration has been made. I am pointing out that Section 8, which it is proposed to amend appears in the 1943 volume but that the amendment to Section 9 does not fit in sensibly with the Section 9 appearing in that volume. Evidently there has been some other amendment.

The Chief Secretary: Yes, in 1948.

Hon. G. FRASER: I suggest that if in the marginal notes information of that description were supplied, members would be able to pick up more quickly the section which it is proposed to amend.

The Chief Secretary: The reference is in Clause 1.

Hon. G. FRASER: I know that the clause dealing with the short Title sets out what Acts are being dealt with, but that does not give an opportunity to members to discover in the relevant statute the section to be amended. If, for instance, the marginal note had referred to the 1948 statute no difficulty would be experienced. We know that the Section 9 referred to in the Bill has to do with burning off till the 24th December but a reference to the 1943 volume discloses that the Section 9 contained therein is not relevant to the amendment proposed.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [7.48]: I was in the same quandary as Mr. Fraser in not being able to follow the various amendments early in the afternoon, but through the good graces of the Clerk I was able to catch up. There was some confusion because we have had two amendments in 1948 and an amendment in 1947 and other amendments were made earlier. In such circumstances a member has to have a pile of statutes in front of him in order to ascertain where amendments are to be made.

The Bill proposes to reintroduce a provision that was deleted from the Act in 1948 and also to extend the time that the Railway Department can have as an open season for burning off. The time is extended from the 24th December to the 15th January. I had hoped some provision would be made to give local authorities more control over the burning off season. It is not satis-

factory simply to have an advisory panel in Perth deciding the burning-off season, as conditions can change from month to month. Two years ago in the lower portion of the Great Southern the burning-off season closed before the grass had flowered, and the result was that there were no firebreaks burned at all. In an early season it may be necessary to end the burning-off season earlier than usual and I hope that in the near future local authorities will be given some discretion in that regard.

Local fire control officers should be given greater powers. It is only with regard to the burning-off of clover land that those officers at present have power to order a man not to light a fire. While that state of affairs continues, the position will not be satisfactory. I know of two occasions on which, in one section of the State, the inhabitants were called out to fight a bush fire in forest country and a man who had a considerable area that had been bulldozed, realising that with the direction of the wind his own property was not menaced, decided to take a risk and light a fire. He did that despite a warning from the local fire control officer, who had sent him a message telling him not to light the fire on that day because, owing to the bush fire that was raging, no help would be available.

When this man realised that he could not be burnt out, but would get a good burn on that day, he lit the fire. It got away and the result was that the people who had been fighting the bush fire for three or four days had to come and help him control the fire that had got away owing solely to his own negligence. It is necessary to have an experienced person in charge of burning off. Even some of the older settlers do not realise that when 200 or 300 acres of dry country is to be burnt off there is considerable danger of not being able to control the fire. Inspections can be made but very often firebreaks of a size that complies with the Act are not sufficient.

It will be of considerable advantage to extend the period during which the Railway Department may burn off in some parts of the State, but in the wetter portions of the South-West I do not think the present extension of time will be sufficient. With late rains in October it will be impossible to burn off in the most southern portions of

the State until long after the date laid down. The result will be that the Railway Department will not be in a position to burn off and thus safeguard its own assets without rendering itself liable to blame.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [7.55]: When introducing the Bill I stated that its purpose was to restore to the Act the provisions struck out by the amending Bill in the earlier portion of this session last year, in order to restore the common law position which is, in effect, that a man is liable for having a dangerous animal on his property if it gets away and does any damage. The earlier amending Bill provided that such a man was liable only if he was negligent. As Mr. Loton has said, a farmer might be warned not to burn off but might still do so. In that case, as the law at present stands, he would not be liable if he could not be proved to have been negligent. If this Bill is agreed to, the result will be that such a man will be liable for any damage caused by a fire that he can be proved to have started.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Then why was that provision removed from the Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say, as I was not in charge of that earlier Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 8:

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Can any further information be given on the proposal contained in this clause?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The reason for this provision being taken out of the Act was that when contractors were engaged on work for the War Service Land Settlement Scheme, large areas were involved and the contractors were not prepared to take the risk involved in clearing contracts unless they had some sort of protection in this regard. That is why the provision was struck out. As soon as it became known

that the established settlers in the areas concerned were liable to be menaced by the actions of irresponsible contractors, it was agreed at two road board conferences that the provision should be reintroduced in order that the settlers might not be exposed to unnecessary risk. The Government is therefore endeavouring to reinsert that provision in the Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 6, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.0] in moving the second reading said: This is a very simple and short Bill and proposes to make two amendments to the parent Act. One is to provide for an appeal against the decision of, or a penalty imposed by, an industrial magistrate, and the other is to give power to the Arbitration Court to fix the date from which any alteration in the basic wage becomes effective. The Act at present provides for only a limited right of appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal against the decision of the industrial magistrate, or the Arbitration Court, in cases where there has been a conviction and either a term of imprisonment imposed or a fine or penalty exceeding £20.

I have had experience myself where there has been a test case taken by the industrial magistrate and although he has been asked to inflict a fine of £20 in order that there might be an appeal he has refused to do so. This was because the matter would, on a technical argument, involve a considerable sum of money in wages, and the fine would not be warranted for the particular offence charged. The issue had an extremely large over-all effect as a test case. There was great injustice caused because one could not go beyond that magistrate. He may have been right or he may have been wrong but one had no right of appeal because he refused to inflict a penalty of £20.

Under the present Act a magistrate cannot decide a matter involving an interpretation. That has caused a great deal of expense in litigation because one had to go to the Arbitration Court, but now it is proposed that the magistrate may deal with it in the ordinary way and from any penalty he inflicts there is the right of appeal under the Act. There is also a further right of appeal from the Arbitration Court to the Supreme Court. Strange as it may seem the appeal at present is to the Court of Criminal Appeal, but why I do not know.

The second amendment deals with the date from which any alteration in the basic wage shall take effect. The Act provides that the annual basic wage shall have effect from the 1st July in each year and remain in force until the following 30th June, subject, of course, to the quarterly adjustments in accordance with the Government Statistician's figures. This is a rather rigid provision, particularly at present when the Commonwealth Arbitration Court is holding a full-scale basic wage inquiry, on which a decision may be given later this year or early next year. Under the present provision in the Act, the Western Australian court would be unable to adopt the decision of the Commonwealth court until the 1st July next.

This does not appear reasonable, and the Bill therefore proposes that any basic wage declaration shall become effective as from the following 1st. July or from such other date as the court declares and shall remain in force until the day on which the next annual declaration comes into effect. On the 27th July last the Legislative Assembly agreed to the basic wage being increased from the 1st July, 1950. The Act is amended to enable the State basic wage to take effect forthwith. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION ACT AMENDMENT.

First Reading.

Introduced by the Chief Secretary and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.5] in moving the second reading said: Members will recall that when the parent Act was passed last year it provided for the appointment of a State board which would act in an advisory capacity to the Australian Wheat Board, and which would appoint one of its wheatgrower members as this State's representative on that board.

The State board, which is known as the "Western Australian Agency Board of the Australian Wheat Board" has seven members, three representing the wheatgrowers, one the W.A. Flour Millowners' Association and one the Commissioner of Railways, the other two being the chairman or director and the manager of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to represent the licensed receivers. All the members hold office for three years as from the 9th February, 1949. The Act provides that the Minister shall select the three wheatgrower representatives from a panel of names submitted by the Farmers' Union, and the persons selected were Messrs. J. S. Teasdale, G. Simpson and W. Huxley. Mr. Teasdale was appointed as this State's representative on the Australian Wheat Board.

The Farmers' Union now advises that their constitution provides for majority grower representation on the State board and for their representatives to be elected by ballot. They ask that the Act be amended to bring about conformity with their constitution. It was understood that this move is being insisted upon by a majority of the Farmers' Union. Actually, the growers have a majority on the board as, in addition to their three representatives, the chairman of directors of Bulk Handling Ltd. must, under the company's constitution, be a farmer.

The present chairman of directors (Mr. W. J. Russell) is also general treasurer of the Farmers' Union. The members of the union realise this but ask that their constitution be conformed to and that they have four direct representatives. They fully agree that they misled the Minister in the first place by agreeing to submit a panel of names and not following out the instruction of their constitution. The Government sees no objection to their request, and

so the Bill provides that the present three representatives of the growers shall remain in office until such time as four persons shall be elected by the Farmers' Union to represent the wheatgrowers, also that the two representatives of Bulk Handling Ltd. shall hold office until the Bill comes into operation when the licensed receivers will be represented by the manager of Bulk Handling Ltd. only.

The Bill also provides that any wheatgrowers' representative shall be eligible for renomination at the end of his term of office and that any reconstitution of the State board shall not affect this State's representation on the Australian board until such time as the reconstituted State board may make another appointment to the Australian board. Although no regulations have yet been made as provided under the Act it may be necessary to do so in the future, and so the Bill proposes that any offence against the regulations may be subject to the same penalty as an offence against the Act, i.e. summary prosecution and a fine not exceeding £100 or six months imprisonment, or both. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [8.10]: There is not much to say on this Bill. As the Chief Secretary pointed out, at the request of the Farmers' Union which believes in grower control, four members of the State board are to be elected and not three as at present. The Farmers' Union desires to have the right to nominate and elect four members to the State board controlling the wheat industry stabilisation plan. The present board stands as constituted until such time as an election is held. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

House adjourned at 8.11 p.m.