

road-rail system of passenger transport; second, immediate major improvements be made in the omnibus system so that some form of regular public transport is available seven days a week; third, with improvement in the rail system, gradual re-orientation of omnibus services towards express services and feeder services to the rail system.

To accomplish these aims the committee proposes: first, a full commuter service from Wollongong to Sydney with an average speed of 40 miles an hour for express trains and 30 miles an hour for all-station trains; second, more and comfortable suburban trains with skip-stop and express services; third, relocation of the Lysaght station to enable workers' trains from the south to use the Coniston loop; fourth, quadruplication of the rail line from Thirroul to Port Kembla; fifth, extension of the Wollongong transport district to Shellharbour and Kiama municipalities; and sixth, the existing private omnibus operators should either amalgamate or be taken over by a semi-governmental corporation.

The plan estimates the cost of public ownership of buses to be from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000. On the other hand, subsidizing an amalgamated comprehensive private bus service would entail a capital grant of \$750,000 and an annual operating subsidy of \$180,000. The necessary rail improvements would cost from \$14,000,000 to \$20,000,000 over a twelve-year period. These costs are high, but as an alternative let me quote the final paragraph of the regional development committee's report:

The alternative to the public transport proposals—continuation of the increasingly heavy dependence on the automobile—is extremely costly. Not only will continued dependence upon private transport be very costly but, after the expenditure of tens of millions of dollars, no progress will have been made. Roads will still be overcrowded and the area will still have no adequate system of public transport.

I commend the committee's report to the consideration of the House.

Mr MORRIS (Maitland), Minister for Transport [10.39]: I am glad that the honourable member for Kembla has raised this matter and dealt at some length with the splendid report of the Illawarra Regional

Development Committee, which I have had the opportunity of perusing. I commend those people responsible for its preparation and all sections of the community in the entire Illawarra region, including Wollongong-Kembla, for the support they have given to the committee. The report is being studied by officers of the Department of Transport and the Department of Main Roads, and I hope that certain announcements will be made in due course.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 26 February, 1969

Vacant Seat—*Barton v. Armstrong and Others*—
Printed Question and Answer—Questions with-
out Notice—Aborigines Bill (second reading).

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.28 p.m.

The Prayer was read.

VACANT SEAT

The PRESIDENT: I have to announce that, in accordance with the provisions of the eighth section of the Constitution (Legislative Council Elections) Act, 1932–1961, His Excellency the Governor has been notified that the seat of the Hon. Alexander Ewan Armstrong became vacant before the expiration of his term of service by his expulsion and the declaration that his seat is vacant by the House on 25th February, 1969, which notification has been duly acknowledged by His Excellency.

I have further to announce that an entry regarding the expulsion on 25th February, 1969, has been duly made in the Register of members of the Legislative Council.

BARTON v. ARMSTRONG AND OTHERS

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER (Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Vice-President of the Executive Council)

[4.42]: So that the document may be readily available, I move, pursuant to Standing Order 20:

That the document I laid upon the table on 25th February, 1969, being a copy of an opinion by Mr J. P. Slattery, Q.C., on matters arising from the cross-examination of Alexander Ewan Armstrong in *Barton v. Armstrong and Ors* to the Crown Solicitor, be printed.

Motion agreed to.

PRINTED QUESTION AND ANSWER

CENTRAL RAILWAY BUS TIMETABLES

The Hon. L. E. SCHOFIELD asked THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL—(1) Are the buses on the route from Central railway to Circular Quay failing to run to timetable? (2) On the arrival of the Flyer from Newcastle, does a bus usually leave Central railway for Circular Quay shortly before passengers are able to get to the bus stop? (3) Is it correct that on the arrival of the 3.36 p.m. Newcastle Flyer on time on Tuesday, 26 November, 1968, passengers waited sixteen minutes for a bus on this route and when one did arrive a number were required to stand? (4) If the answers to the foregoing are in the affirmative, will the Minister confer with the Minister for Transport with a view to ensuring that in future these services are run to suit the convenience of the public?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER replied—(1) The route 417 bus service operates between Central railway (railway colonnade) and Circular Quay from approximately 7.40 a.m. until 11.00 p.m. on all days of the week. Because of the variation in traffic conditions that occur from day to day in the inner city area particularly during the main shopping hours, it is admitted that it is not always practicable for the timetable to be observed strictly. However, during these times buses are timetabled at intervals of approximately five minutes and minor variations from the timetable do not usually cause undue inconvenience to intending passengers.

(2) On Mondays to Fridays the express trains from Newcastle are timetabled to arrive at Central at 9.25 a.m., 3.36 p.m. and 7.12 p.m. In the case of the 9.25 a.m.

and 3.36 p.m. trains a bus is timetabled to depart a few minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the trains. In all three cases buses are also timetabled to depart four minutes after the scheduled arrival time of the trains. Checks have indicated that the four-minute interval is usually sufficient time for passengers to alight from the train and walk to the bus stop.

(3) It is correct that on Tuesday, 26 November, 1968, there was an interval of about sixteen minutes between the arrival of the express at 3.36 p.m. and the departure of a bus from the colonnade. On this occasion the bus which was due to operate the 3.40 p.m. journey became defective with gear trouble and the bus scheduled to operate the 3.45 p.m. lost about seven minutes on its trip through the city to Central because of traffic congestion. The break in the service could have accounted for some passengers being required to stand on departure of the bus from Central.

(4) The operation of government bus services to meet the convenience of the public is regarded as a matter of primary importance and the efforts of the Commissioner for Government Transport and his staff will continued to be directed towards achieving this objective.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WATER CONSERVATION

The Hon. H. J. MCPHERSON: I ask the Vice-President of the Executive Council a question without notice. Is the Minister aware that because of a serious water shortage in the Berriquin irrigation district, which existed from 26th December, 1968, to 15th January, 1969, 25 per cent of the crops, particularly rice, were threatened with complete failure, and that, in fact, two complete rice crops died from lack of water? Is the Minister aware also that, in spite of a statement from the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission that there was no truth in the rumour of a water shortage and that the Hume Dam was 89 per cent full, farmers' requests to local officials of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission for their allotment and entitlement of water, previously ordered, were largely ignored by those local officials

for a vital number of days until a telegram to the chairman of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission resulted in water being made available the next day—seventeen days after the shortage was reported? Is the Minister further aware that the capacities of the channels in the reticulation system were this year seriously depleted by the neglect of some official in the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission or in the Department of Conservation to order Acqualine, the weed killer necessary to clear the channels of weeds? Will the Minister confer with his colleague the Minister for Conservation and request the establishment of a full inquiry into all aspects of the Southern Riverina irrigation districts, having particular regard to (a) elimination of mal-administration; (b) proper distribution of available water and efficient maintenance of the channels; (c) forward planning for enlargement of the system, including additional storages on the River Murray; and (d) the eventual elimination of the anomalies that now exist in the region between areas and districts, and the possibility that such defections in the water supply will not recur?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I am not aware of the details raised in the lengthy question in relation to water conservation matters, but I do know that, generally, in the past three or four years, the staff of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission in all parts of the State have done a wonderful job despite the very severe demands that have been made upon their time and services by the extreme drought conditions that have obtained in the State, largely throughout the whole of that period.

The Hon. H. J. MCPHERSON: I agree with this, generally.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I know, also, when one talks about forward planning for the enlargement of the system, including additional storages on the River Murray, that this is something that could well have been undertaken many years ago in this State. I know that at the present time, for the first time in history, there is a twenty-five-year water conservation plan, which I hope will result in the elimination

of the kind of shortages that occur now in many parts of the State during drought periods.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: You hope you can achieve it in under twenty-five years?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: It is a plan to see that in the next twenty-five years all the rivers of the State will have some major storage. As I said, this is something that could have well been done years ago. With regard to the details contained in the honourable member's question, I shall confer with my colleague the Minister for Conservation and obtain an answer for the honourable member.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: I wish to ask a supplementary question. We have been told that the Minister for Conservation has a master plan for the damming and interlocking of all our rivers. Is it possible for members of this House to have a copy of that master plan?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: The master plan was given publicity a couple of years ago. I shall ascertain whether copies are available and whether they can be supplied to honourable members who want them.

PARKING AT GOSFORD

Major the Hon. H. P. FITZSIMONS: I wish to ask the Leader of the Government a question without notice. Will the Minister ascertain from his colleague the Minister for Transport whether he is aware that there is no parking space now available on the eastern side of Gosford railway station, which is the terminal for a large tourist area? Is the Minister aware that the whole area has been declared either non-standing or non-parking? Is it a fact that hundreds of people, particularly elderly folk, are forced every day to use this particular entrance, which is indeed the only entrance to the Gosford station? Is it a fact that, following the placing of the new parking signs, no facilities are available at this point even for deliveries of suitcases and other things from trucks? I ask the Minister to ascertain from the Minister for Transport why this has been done, and to consult his

other colleague, the Minister for Tourism, to see whether some commonsense arrangement can be made.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I shall certainly consult my colleague the Minister for Transport. I know that restrictions of this kind would adversely affect tourist activities in the Gosford district. On the other hand, it seems to me that this could also be the responsibility of the local government authority in the Gosford district. I shall ask my colleague whether he will confer with the local authorities on the question asked by Major the Hon. H. P. FitzSimons.

BEACH POLLUTION

The Hon. P. M. M. SHIPTON: I ask the Minister for Child Welfare and Minister for Social Welfare whether it is a fact that during the Christmas vacation our beautiful beaches, of which we are so proud, were polluted by oil dumped from ships and by effluents from the shore. What are we going to do about this, in order to preserve our beaches?

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: The question seems to be in two parts. The first part relates to the dumping of oil from ships, a matter that is the subject of an international agreement. It is difficult to locate ships responsible for breaches of the agreement. I know that our northern beaches were polluted by oil over the Christmas period. Pollution in Sydney Harbour comes within the administration of the Maritime Services Board, which polices this problem stringently. The other part of the honourable member's question was in regard to sewage. I shall refer this aspect to my colleague in another place, the Minister for Health, and I shall make his reply available to the honourable member in due course.

RAILWAY STRIKE

The Hon. R. C. PACKER: I ask the Deputy Leader of the House whether he will confer with his colleagues in another place, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Labour and Industry, Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism, with

a view to his making a ministerial statement in this House so that honourable members may debate the appalling breakdown that seems to have occurred in communications in this State between members of the railway unions and the Commissioner for Railways. I ask the Minister to bear in mind that on both sides of this House there is a considerable body of experience and knowledge. I ask the Minister also whether he will agree to a debate in this House on the important issues involved in these strikes that are causing continuous unrest and are disrupting essential public services. If the Minister is willing to make a ministerial statement on this matter, will he comment in it on whether he considers that federal arbitration procedures have been satisfactory and whether an arbitration court beyond the power of this State might have had more to do with the cause of this dispute than the actions of either of the two parties involved in it?

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: I shall do as the honourable member suggests and refer this matter to the Hon. E. A. Willis and the Hon. M. A. Morris. It is causing the Government grave concern. I agree with the honourable member that the basic problem stems back to the work-value decision of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and the flow-through resulting therefrom. I am sure that the honourable member will have noted the short statement made yesterday by the Minister for Transport that in his opinion the procedures of the Commonwealth arbitration court in relation to threatened strikes and stoppages work too slowly. I shall refer this matter in particular to the Minister for Transport and I will give the honourable member a further reply as quickly as I can.

BEACH POLLUTION

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I ask the Leader of the Government whether he will inform the House what action, if any, has been taken by the Government to eliminate or reduce to a minimum the very serious pollution of our northern beaches by sewage, particularly Manly and Queenscliff.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I understand that following publicity about pollution at Manly in particular last week, the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, which is responsible for the disposal of effluent at sea, is considering an alternative proposal to the one that was planned in regard to the length of pipe and pumping stations or works associated with the board's development in that area. I do not know the exact details of the alternative proposal, but I shall obtain them and make them available to the honourable member as soon as I can.

The Hon. H. D. O'CONNELL: Following the question just asked by the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill, I ask whether the water board has announced that new treatment works at North Head have been almost completed and as a result the effluent will be reduced to a much finer state? Will the Minister agree that the board's announcement avoids the principal problem and amounts to sweeping that problem under the carpet so that it is out of sight and out of mind, although the danger to the public still remains?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: Let us forget effluent for a moment. The problem comes back to the fact that a most unhappy financial relationship exists between the Commonwealth and the various States of Australia. Lack of finance available to this State has caused this Government and previous governments to institute a system of works priorities. If the Government had enough loan funds available to do work of the type that is needed in the area mentioned, it would do it. Unfortunately the necessary finance is not available. The money that is allocated to the Government has to be divided among many essential services. Great demands are made on our limited resources for the construction of hospitals, schools, and roads as well as the provision of water and sewerage services. Lack of finance is the basis of the trouble.

The Hon. R. C. PACKER: Electricity undertakings have also to be constructed.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: That is so. The important fact that must be borne in mind is that it has become necessary to institute a system of priorities for develop-

ment works. All stops must be pulled out in an attempt to obtain larger loan allocations and revenue grants from the federal authorities. When those extra funds become available the Government will be able to solve many problems, including the one mentioned in this question.

DOUGLAS FIR

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: I ask the Minister for Child Welfare and Minister for Social Welfare whether Douglas Fir has been compared with *Pinus radiata* in planning our reforestation programme. I have been given to understand that Douglas Fir is being neglected in this planning. Is not Douglas Fir an extremely valuable timber, even though it takes twice as long as *Pinus radiata* to mature? If it grows better on better quality land, in view of its value as a national asset, could the Forestry Commission be requested to consider including the planting of Douglas Fir in its reforestation programme?

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: Douglas Fir is a much more valuable timber than *Pinus radiata* which is the principal softwood grown in New South Wales. Although the Forestry Commission has made numerous experiments with the planting of Douglas Fir in New South Wales it has not yet found an area in which this timber will grow suitably. Certainly the rate of growth would appear to make it an uneconomic proposition. By contrast, in New Zealand where conditions are moister Douglas Fir grows extremely well. This type of timber needs moist conditions. The Forestry Commission is still experimenting with this species but so far without success.

EMPLOYMENT: ROLLING STOCK INDUSTRY

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: On 28th November, 1968, the Hon. R. B. Marsh asked whether I would investigate the potential threat to employment in the New South Wales rolling stock industry, occasioned by competition from overseas manufacturers of rolling stock such as ore waggons. As promised, I have had this matter looked into and I believe that the situation which has given rise to concern

on the part of the honourable member and the local rolling stock industry is the letting of contracts to Japanese manufacturers for the supply of ore waggons for use on one of the major iron ore projects in Western Australia.

The matter is, of course, one which is primarily bound up with Commonwealth trade and tariff policies, and I understand that it has already been taken up with the appropriate Commonwealth authorities by the Railway Rolling Stock Manufacturers Association. At this time therefore, there appears to be little that can be done to further matters at the State level. However, I have arranged for my department to maintain a close liaison with the local manufacturers on the matter and the honourable member may be assured that the Government will lend every possible support to the local manufacturers in their efforts to remedy the situation.

BREATHALYZER TESTS

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: On 11th December, 1968, Major the Hon. H. P. FitzSimons directed a question to me on the possible increased demand for taxis and private hire cars following the introduction of breath testing. This question was looked at by the Taxi Advisory Council prior to the introduction of the breath testing legislation. The council concluded that, although a large number of taxi cabs are not operated during certain hours, particularly late at night and in the early hours of the morning because of the lack of patronage, should such a demand arise as was suggested in the question, it can be met by those taxi cabs. Also, seventy-five additional taxi cab licences were issued only recently. Though it is considered that the issue of further licences would not be warranted at this stage, the honourable gentleman can be assured that the position will be closely watched.

FLUORIDATION

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: On 21st November, 1968, the Hon. C. J. Cahill asked me a question on fluoridation and the report on this matter that was accepted by the Government in 1963. Copies of

this report have been considered by the Royal commission on fluoridation in Tasmania and, I understand, by the health departments and other departments of each State in Australia. The then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, quoted extensively from it in the debate in the federal Parliament, and I am informed that it has also been the subject of some discussion in other countries. Dr M. Flynn, Chief Medical Officer, Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, informs me that he has received no communication whatsoever from any overseas scientist or from Sir Arthur Amies questioning the accuracy of any part or whole of the report. As a reasonable period of five years has now elapsed for the receipt of complaints, I have no reason to believe that the report was unfair to any person to whom reference was made. I would add that a study of Dr Flynn's report, in relation to those parts of the report which refer to statements by Sir Arthur Amies, indicates that these statements are not taken out of context nor are they put in such a way as to give "an erroneous impression".

VICTORIAN MILK

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: On 3rd December, 1968, the Hon. P. M. M. Shipton asked me a question regarding Victorian milk being sold in the southern part of New South Wales. The Minister for Agriculture has had inquiries made through his department and the New South Wales Milk Board, and it is true that milk from Victoria is sold in New South Wales along the border, especially where large towns are situated. There is no State law which prevents such sales and it is extremely doubtful, because of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, whether any legal restriction of this kind could be imposed. There is no movement at present by Victorian interests to attempt to capture the milk trade in the south of this State, although at the moment there is a dispute between the Victorian Milk Board and a dairyman operating from Albury in the selling of milk in the northern areas of Victoria.

On the Milk Board taking over distribution of milk within the city of Wagga some years ago, the Victorian interests who were

marketing in the city at that time discontinued doing so, but remained selling milk in Riverina areas outside the board's control. Dairy Farmers Co-operative Limited, Albury, supply milk to their Canberra plant for market milk purposes and some manufacturing milk to Sydney. The raw milk is drawn from farms in New South Wales and Victoria. Farther along the Murray at various times milk companies trading from Victoria have attempted to go into the larger adjoining Riverina towns, such as Deniliquin, but have eventually withdrawn as the trade was unprofitable. Recently a new pasteurized milk cartoning plant has been installed in the premises of the Berriquin Co-operative Limited, Finley, from which milk is distributed along the adjoining Murray Valley in New South Wales and the factory is also supplying milk to the town of Portland in Victoria through Murray-Goulburn Dairy Company, which is the holding company for Finley and Portland factories. Within the last month the Bairnsdale Co-operative Dairy Company, Victoria, has opened a milk depot and dairy products store at Eden on the New South Wales south coast in direct competition with the Bega Co-operative Dairy Company, Bega. It may be seen from the foregoing that trading at this stage is a two-way process and there is no evidence that Victoria is capturing the milk market in the south of the State.

WATER POLLUTION

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: On 25th September, 1968, the Hon. H. D. O'Connell asked me a question without notice concerning the standard of water supplied in the Sydney water board area. I have obtained a lengthy report on this matter from the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, which reads as follows:

From the investigation which has been made in the light of the question asked by the Hon. H. D. O'Connell in the Legislative Council it is clear that there need be no apprehension regarding the general quality of water supplied by the board. It is, of course, a fact that at times sections of any supply system suffer from discolouration and certain complaints must be expected. However, in recent times there has been no significant increase in the number of complaints received

by the board and there is no basis for any belief that there is widespread dissatisfaction with water quality.

Complaints concerning the board's system can usually be classified into two categories:

- (a) Those which occur once or twice a year as a result of increased consumption or a main break, which usually affect widespread areas or zones. Flushing operations also cause discolouration, but not over large areas.
- (b) Persistent complaints from persons whose water services are connected close to dead-ends of mains or in the vicinity of dividing valves where build-up of sediment, etc., may regularly occur.

Complaints under (a) normally occur when the consumption rises significantly after a long period of relatively low demand. The increased velocity of flow disturbs silt or corrosion products inside the pipes, causing a general deterioration in quality of supply, which depending on the condition in the main, may vary from very slight to severe discolouration. The latter condition is usually associated with a large main break. Such discolouration is normally only temporary and the supply reverts to normal within a day or at the most two days.

Complaints under (b) from persons served by dead-end mains are dealt with by regular flushing, which is carried out to the limit of the Board's resources. Where feasible, action is taken to provide link mains, thus eliminating dead-ends, and to create a circulatory supply system with a reduced need for flushing.

In addition to these special measures, the board is engaged on a programme of cement lining all water pipes and fittings, which is designed to overcome any general problems which might arise both as regards pressure and quality of supply. As well, reservoirs are being roofed to prevent pollution by birds, atmospheric dust, etc.

When all these works are completed considerably improved conditions should be evident at most of the present trouble spots, but it is expected that dissatisfaction will be expressed by persons who find that although the supply is satisfactory for all other purposes, the operation of washing machines still presents difficulty. In this regard the board's experience has been that certain types of washing machines have a rinsing action which makes the garments act as a filter. This causes a staining which would not be evident if traditional methods of rinsing were used.

To sum up, recently received complaints of difficult water supply conditions arise from the same factors as have caused such complaints over the years and cannot be attributed to fluoridation.

PARKING METERS

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: The Hon. H. D. O'Connell asked me a question without notice on 20th November, 1968, about the installation of quarter-hour parking meters in Martin Place, Sydney. I have obtained a reply from the Acting Minister for Transport which shows that at a meeting held on 10th December, 1968, the parking advisory committee for the city of Sydney approved of an application by the Council for the City of Sydney for permission to install parking meters on the northern side of Martin Place between George and Phillip streets. The introduction of the parking meters should result in an improvement in traffic conditions. The demand for kerb space in Martin Place is at a premium and observations have revealed that motorists under existing conditions have a tendency to overstay the period of time permitted. However, with the installation of the meters, enforcement of the restrictions will be facilitated. Motorists should experience no difficulty in identifying the quarter-hour meters as they will be clearly sign-posted at the extremities of the restricted areas and on each meter stem. At the present time motorists are confronted with half hour, one, two and four-hour meter parking and it is anticipated that the addition of quarter-hour meter parking will not present any difficulties.

The honourable member mentioned also parking meters at Mascot airport. I find, however, that this particular question comes under the control of the Commonwealth Department of Civil Aviation. Accordingly, our federal colleague, the Hon. R. W. C. Swartz, M.P., Minister for Civil Aviation, has been asked to examine the points raised by the Hon. H. D. O'Connell.

NASAL CANCER

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: The Hon. F. W. Bowen asked me a question without notice on 4th December concerning nasal cancer in woodworkers caused by continuous inhalation of certain types of wood dust. I have communicated with the Minister for Health and also with the Minister for Labour and Industry, Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism. I wish to advise

that the Minister for Health says that his department has not had its attention drawn to any cases of adenocarcinoma arising from the inhalation of wood dust in the timber industry. The Division of Occupational Health of the Department of Public Health has already taken action to determine whether a problem exists in New South Wales. The registrars of the ear, nose and throat out-patients' departments of a number of major hospitals have been requested to take a careful occupational history in all cases where adenocarcinoma of the nasal spaces is diagnosed. These hospitals will advise the division of any cases where exposure to wood dust has occurred, together with advice concerning the total number of cases of adenocarcinoma in order that any increased incidence in the wood-working industries might be determined. The Minister for Health does not believe in these days this problem will be as evident as it was in pre-war days, due to the excellence of house-keeping and exhaust ventilation which most furniture manufacturing companies have installed. For this reason it is not felt that a survey into all wood machinists in New South Wales would be warranted as it is almost certain that available facilities for a medical survey would be inadequate to make early diagnosis possible before symptoms have developed. He believes that the above approach to the ear, nose and throat departments of major hospitals will give the information which is required.

The Minister for Labour and Industry, Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism advises that no cases have been reported to his department of this type of occupational disease. Inquiries made of the Division of Wood Technology, Forestry Commission of New South Wales, and of the Manufacturers' Mutual Insurance Limited, disclosed a similar lack of the incidence of this disease being reported resulting from exposure to wood dust. The Chairman of the Workers Compensation (Dust Diseases) Board advised that there were no cases of nasal cancer referred to in his board's report for 1967-68. The article referred to by Mr Bowen which appeared on 8th June, 1968, in the *British Medical Journal* indicated that most cases of nasal cancer

were the result of long exposure to wood dust during an earlier period when exhaust ventilation systems on woodworking machinery were not commonly used.

At the present time in New South Wales the greater majority of woodworking machines are fitted with exhaust ventilation systems which apart from providing a clean atmosphere and comfortable working conditions also are of value in promoting good housekeeping in the factory and economic disposal of waste and assist in quality control of the product. Section 41 of the Factories, Shops and Industries Act, 1962, as amended, has provision for the removal of dust generated in a factory and departmental inspectors are actively engaged in the enforcement of this legislation.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: On 20th November, 1968, the Hon. Margaret Davis asked a question concerning the provision of facilities in home units to allow the safe cleaning of windows. Safeguards for the cleaning of windows are provided in the regulations made under the Scaffolding and Lifts Act, 1912, as amended, where windows cannot be cleaned safely from inside the building or are not within 12 feet of the ground or other safe working area. Regulation 82 requires that where windows cannot be cleaned safely as mentioned above, buildings shall be equipped with anchors for safety belts or other approved safe means shall be used to ensure the safety of the window cleaner. It is the responsibility of the owner of each building to provide these safeguards. "Other approved safe means" include the use of boatswain's chairs and light swinging stages. Many buildings now being constructed are fitted with windows which can be cleaned safely from inside the building, some of the windows being of the reversible type. This form of construction is greatly reducing the hazards associated with window cleaning. However, investigations by departmental officers disclose that some buildings are being erected without inbuilt facilities for the safe cleaning of windows.

When complaints are received concerning unsafe window cleaning, they are promptly investigated by inspectors of the department to ensure that the requirements are being implemented. It is usual when the complaint is well founded for inspectors to require the use of light swinging stages or other approved safe window cleaning equipment. Invariably it is found that safety measures have not been incorporated in the building. There is no doubt that the hazards of window cleaning can be drastically reduced if the designs of buildings to be erected are required to include provision for the safe cleaning of all windows and the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Highways has been asked for his assistance in this regard. Also a letter has been sent to the New South Wales Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects drawing attention to the lack of safe cleaning facilities being found in some buildings and asking for its assistance by ensuring that buildings are designed so that all windows may be cleaned safely.

ABORIGINES BILL

SECOND READING

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT (Minister for Child Welfare and Minister for Social Welfare) [5.4]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In recent years attitudes towards Aborigines have changed considerably throughout the Commonwealth. There is a vast reservoir of goodwill now existing towards the Aborigines and individuals or groups of people are looking for a way in which their Aboriginal fellow citizens can be helped. This fact emerged clearly at the Commonwealth referendum held in May, 1967, when there was an overwhelming vote in favour of the Commonwealth Government having concurrent powers with the States in relation to Aboriginal welfare. It should be borne in mind, however, Mr President, that sensing the changed attitude of Australians towards Aborigines, especially in the State of New South Wales, this Parliament set up its own joint committee consisting of members of the Government and the Opposition from

both Houses in December, 1965, to enquire into and report upon the welfare of Aborigines in New South Wales with particular reference to (a) the education and housing of Aborigines, and (b) the legislative or other proposals necessary to assist Aborigines to attain an improved standard of living.

The joint committee travelled extensively throughout the State in the course of its enquiries and, being anxious to secure the views of the Aborigines themselves, interviewed some 2,000 persons of Aboriginal blood both individually and collectively. While the inquiry was under way, the Government did not idly await its report but stepped up its expenditure in the field of Aborigines' welfare. Following the referendum the Commonwealth Government set up a Council for Aboriginal Affairs under the chairmanship of Dr H. C. Coombes and the States were asked to submit proposals to the Commonwealth with a view to securing Commonwealth financial assistance. In July last year, the Chief Secretary attended a conference in Melbourne together with the Ministers responsible for the welfare of Aborigines from other States. This meeting was also attended by the Prime Minister, who advised that Commonwealth finance would be made available to the States particularly in the fields of housing, education and health. I am pleased to advise, Mr President, that for the financial year 1968-69 New South Wales has been allotted by the Commonwealth a grant of \$775,000. Of this amount, it is proposed to apply \$525,000 for housing, \$200,000 for education, and \$50,000 for health. The Government of this State will, of course, continue to provide finance at least to the same degree as in the past.

It might be said that Aboriginal welfare in New South Wales is now entering a new era. Emphasis in the new legislation has changed from welfare to a fostering of self-reliance and independence for the Aboriginal people. The bill now before the House arises from the report of the Select Committee of Parliament to which I referred and whose recommendations the Government has largely accepted and now seeks to implement. The bill repeals the present Aborigines Protection Act, 1909, as

amended, and abolishes the Aborigines Welfare Board and the welfare services formerly provided by the board will come under my department's administration. A director of aboriginal welfare is to be appointed and an Aborigines advisory council of nine, consisting solely of Aborigines, including at least one woman, will be set up. Of the members, six shall be elected by the Aborigines themselves and three shall be nominated by the Minister. Elected members will, therefore, form a majority on the council. This council will advise the Minister on matters relating to Aboriginal affairs in this State.

The assets and liabilities of the present Aborigines Welfare Board are to be transferred to the Minister for Child Welfare and Social Welfare who, on the request of the Minister for Housing, may transfer to the Housing Commission any land or land and improvements for the purpose of their being made available to Aborigines. To enable Aborigines to secure some tenure over any portion of an Aboriginal reserve that they may wish to develop, provision is made for a lease to be given to either an Aborigine or a group of Aborigines. If desired, Crown land including reserves may be granted to Aborigines by arrangement with the Minister for Lands. To eliminate the necessity for special regulations governing reserves and the actions of Aborigines upon them, provision has been made for reserves to be public places for the purposes of the Police Offences Act and other Acts. The Minister is also authorized to make loans to Aborigines for the purchase or erection of homes and for the acquisition of furniture.

In respect of the abolition of the Aborigines Welfare Board, Mr President, I should like to pay tribute to all those who have given devoted service as members of the board notwithstanding the many calls made on their personal and professional life. In recent years the responsibilities of the members of the board have considerably increased with the provision of more finance for housing and the introduction of new policies, particularly in the field of education from the pre-school to the adult education levels.

Turning now to the detailed provisions of the bill, clause 1 contains the short title, citation and commencement provisions. As the necessary regulations to provide for the election of members of the Aborigines advisory council and the council itself may take some time, a provision has been made so that other provisions of the Act can be brought into operation as soon as possible. Clause 2 sets out the definitions of the various terms used in the Act. Clause 3 will repeal all the existing enactments relating specifically to Aborigines, namely, the Aborigines Protection Act, 1909—and the six Acts subsequently passed amending that Act. Clause 4 provides for the dissolution of the present Aborigines Welfare Board and that members of the board who hold office immediately before the appointed day shall cease to hold office.

Clause 5 will enable the Governor under and subject to the Public Service Act to appoint and employ a Director of Aboriginal Welfare and such other officers and employees as may be necessary for the administration of the Act. Clause 6 constitutes the Minister administering the Act—that is, the Minister for Child Welfare and Social Welfare—a corporation sole under the corporate name “The Minister, Aborigines Act, 1969” and provides that the corporation shall have perpetual succession and an official seal. This clause also contains the usual provisions included in legislation constituting bodies corporate to enable the corporation to purchase, hold, grant, demise, dispose of and alienate real and personal property and do and suffer all such other things as a body corporate may by law do and suffer. Clause 7 transfers all the assets—including real and personal property—liabilities, etc., of the Aborigines Welfare Board to the corporation. It also provides that all wards of the Aborigines Welfare Board under the Acts to be repealed shall be wards admitted to State control under the Child Welfare Act.

Clause 8 will permit of the establishment of an Aborigines Advisory Council of ten members consisting of the Director of Aboriginal Welfare and nine Aborigines appointed by the Governor, being persons resident in New South Wales. The director shall be the chairman of the council and

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preside at all meetings but shall not have either a deliberative or a casting vote. As previously mentioned, six of the members appointed by the Governor will be elected by the Aborigines themselves and three will be appointed on the nomination of the Minister. The term of office of the Aboriginal members will be three years but on the expiration of his term of office a member will be eligible for reappointment.

At this stage, I might indicate that in Committee I propose to move an amendment to this clause to provide for the payment of fees to the aboriginal members of the council. The bill as drafted provides that no fees or remuneration shall be paid to those members in respect of their services on the council other than allowances at such rates and in such circumstances as the Governor may from time to time approve for expenses incurred for conveyance, subsistence and loss of income while upon or travelling upon the business of the council. During the debate in another place a number of members suggested that provision be made for payment of fees to members of the council and the Chief Secretary promised that this would be considered. An examination of the matter disclosed that the existing provision is of the type of stock provision inserted in legislation relating to appointment of members of statutory bodies. In fact, it is almost identical with the provision in the existing Aborigines Protection Act relating to the members of the Aborigines Welfare Board. The Government appreciates, however, that there is a distinction between members of boards who usually occupy high positions in the community, for example, in the public service, and the aboriginal members of the Aborigines Advisory Council. In the circumstances, it is considered that it would be proper for the members of the Council to be paid fees for their services and the amendment to which I have referred will make the necessary provision.

Clause 9 sets out the duties and functions of the Aborigines Advisory Council which will be to report to the Minister on such matters relating to Aborigines as may be referred to it by him and advise the Minister on matters relating to Aborigines. Clause 10 will permit of the making of

regulations relating to the election of members of the council and provides that such elections shall be conducted by the electoral commissioner or his nominee. Clause 11 is designed to enable the corporation to acquire property by purchase, exchange, gift *inter vivos*, devise or bequest, or by way of lease and also provides that where the corporation acquires any property subject to a special condition to which it has agreed, that property shall not be dealt with except in accordance with the condition. Clause 12 relates to the sale or lease of land vested in the corporation other than lands reserved under the Crown Lands Acts. The corporation will be empowered to cause buildings to be erected on land and sell or lease the land and any buildings thereon to Aborigines or for the benefit of Aborigines. The clause provides that the terms and conditions of any sale or lease under this clause shall be as determined by the Minister and, in the case of a sale, the terms and conditions may provide for the payment of any balance of purchase money to be made by instalments or to be secured by a mortgage on the land sold.

Clause 13 will permit of the leasing of reserves under the Crown Lands Act or parts thereof to Aborigines or for the benefit of Aborigines notwithstanding the terms of any reservation of the land. When the bill was under consideration in another place some concern was expressed that the provisions of this clause providing for the leasing of aboriginal reserves to Aborigines or for the benefit of Aborigines were too wide and could possibly lead to the leasing of land to a non-aboriginal. Similar concern was expressed in relation to clause 17 which provides for the granting or other disposition of aboriginal reserves or portions thereof to Aborigines or for the benefit of Aborigines. Amendments to both these clauses were suggested but these were not proceeded with upon the Chief Secretary undertaking to give consideration to the proposals to ascertain whether some provision could be made to meet the situation.

The amendment proposed in another place provided for notice of any proposed dealing with an aboriginal reserve to be published in the *Government Gazette* setting forth the mode of such dealing and for a

copy of the notice to be laid before both Houses of the Parliament within one month of publication if Parliament was then in session, or otherwise within one month after the commencement of the next session; also that either House might declare by resolution within one month that it did not assent to the proposals, in which case no further action could be taken. As promised by the Chief Secretary, this proposal has been given careful consideration but for a number of reasons the Government feels that amendments in the form proposed would be impracticable. For example, there is often the question of third parties, such as a mortgagee, a creditor or some other person who may acquire an interest in the land in question in return for finance. I think honourable members will appreciate that where a reserve is being leased, granted or otherwise disposed of for the benefit of Aborigines, there would arise cases in which it would be necessary for the person obtaining the land to arrange finance by way of mortgage.

The fact that the proposed lease or granting of the land had to lay on the table of each House could result in considerable delays in completing the transaction; also mortgagees and other persons would face considerable difficulties in establishing whether the title to the land was satisfactory. This contrasts with the position in regard to transactions under other Acts, for example, the Real Property Act, where provision exists for a certificate of title to be issued by the Registrar General which is conclusive proof of title. No such machinery exists for aboriginal reserves, and after careful consideration the Government is unable to accept the amendments as proposed. However, the Government appreciates that the principle behind the amendment has considerable merit, although it was certainly not the intention of the Government that these reserves should be disposed of to non-aborigines and I am unable to envisage any cases in which this would occur. As an alternative, which I hope will be acceptable to honourable members, I propose to move amendments to clauses 13 and 17 in Committee, with the object of providing that the cases in which aboriginal reserves may be

leased, granted or otherwise disposed of for the benefit of Aborigines but not to Aborigines, shall be as prescribed by regulations.

Clause 14 vests the control of reserves in the corporation except to the extent that any such reserve is leased to an Aboriginal or for the benefit of Aborigines. For this purpose the corporation is deemed to have been appointed trustee of the reserve under the Public Trusts Act. As trustee, the corporation will have the power to make rules and regulations for the care, control and management of such reserves under the provisions of subsection (2) of section 26 of the Crown Lands Consolidation Act, except for certain of those powers which are inappropriate, for example, relating to meetings of trustees, or unnecessary, such as ensuring decency and order upon the reserve. Under the bill, these reserves except where they are leased to Aborigines will be public places for the purposes of the Police Offences Act and any other Act and there will, therefore, be no necessity to make specific rules or regulations for the securing of decency and order thereon. Clause 15 will enable the corporation to erect buildings on reserves or to permit Aborigines to whom a reserve or part of a reserve is leased, to erect buildings thereon in accordance with such terms and conditions as may be approved.

Clause 16 will permit of the Minister making grants of money for the benefit of Aborigines and loans to Aborigines for the purposes of acquiring a home or furniture or to make additions, alterations or renovations to an existing home and for the securing of any loan by means of a mortgage or bill of sale. Clause 17 is concerned with the disposal of reserves. In this clause provision is made, subject to arrangement with the Minister administering the Crown Lands Acts, for the disposal of reserves or portions of reserves by way of grant or otherwise under the Crown Lands Acts to Aborigines or for the benefit of Aborigines. Clause 18 provides that the Minister may arrange with the Minister for Housing for the acquisition of land for the housing of Aborigines by the Housing Commission of New South Wales. Clause 19 will enable the Minister and the corporation to make use of the facilities or of the services of

officers or employees of any government department or statutory authority by arrangement with the appropriate Minister. Clause 20 will establish a special fund entitled the Aborigines Assistance Fund in the Special Deposits Account at the Treasury. All moneys acquired by the corporation by gift or bequest and the income from all investments acquired by the corporation will be payable into the fund. Moneys in this fund may be applied for the benefit of Aborigines in such manner as the Minister may from time to time direct.

Clause 21 will require the Minister to submit every year a report to Parliament on the working of the Act. Clause 22 will enable the corporation to appoint a person for the purpose of legal proceedings that might be instituted or prosecuted by the corporation. Clause 23 provides for the making of regulations and in particular will permit of the making of regulations relating to the election of members of the aborigines advisory council and meetings of the council. Clause 24 is of a consequential nature, the object being to omit the reference to the Aborigines Welfare Board in the Attachment of Wages Limitation Act of 1957.

I feel sure that if the bill is accepted the Aborigines in this State will be assisted to take their rightful place in the community. I mentioned earlier that there is a vast reservoir of goodwill existing in the community towards Aborigines and every encouragement must be given for this goodwill to be displayed. On the other hand, the aboriginal people themselves will have to show that they can be worthy members of our society and display a determination to succeed in this role and take advantage of the assistance available to them and their children. Honourable members will note that no restrictions are placed on the aboriginal people in this bill but provision is made to a greater extent than previously for them to be assisted to take their place as responsible members of our society. I feel sure that with the co-operation of the aboriginal people, together with the practical help and assistance of both the Commonwealth and State governments, the Aborigines will indeed enter a new era of equal

citizenship with the rest of the community. I commend the bill to the House for its favourable consideration.

The Hon. E. G. WRIGHT [5.23]: The Opposition does not oppose the bill, in which there are many features that are to be highly commended. The Minister said that, as a consequence of the recommendations of a joint parliamentary committee, the bill was brought into being. He traced the terms of reference of the committee, explained the clauses of the bill, and related them to the recommendations of the select committee. It is true that many of the recommendations of the joint committee are incorporated in the bill. We are grateful for this, but I am concerned that some of the recommendations of the committee are not incorporated in the measure. I know that, in reply, the Minister will say that it is unnecessary to incorporate them in the legislation, and that later they can be implemented by departmental action or by regulation. This is so, but I shall enumerate the particular items and should like to hear the Minister say specifically that these recommendations will definitely be implemented. It is all very well to say that these things can be done departmentally, but we want to make sure that they will be done.

The joint committee was set up by this Parliament in December, 1965. Four members were appointed to it from this Chamber. Dr the Hon. R. A. A. F. de Bryon-Faes and the Hon. Eileen Furley, who replaced the Hon. Lloyd Sommerlad, were the representatives from the Government side of the House. The representatives from this side of the House were the Hon. Evelyn Barron and myself. The committee travelled thousands of miles, interviewed, individually, 107 witnesses, and collectively about 2,000 Aborigines on reserves. Further, the committee read many submissions from various organizations. We visited not all but many aboriginal stations and reserves in New South Wales when taking this evidence. The committee sat and deliberated on the evidence, sorting out the good from the bad. From the best of the evidence that was submitted, certain recommendations were made and submitted for the consideration of the Government. Every

recommendation was given very thoughtful consideration. We did not submit some suggestions to the Government because we thought they were impractical; others were not submitted because we thought that they were too costly and could not be met by the finances available. However, the proposals that we thought were practical and could be financed by the State were included in our recommendations.

To give some idea of the work performed by the joint committee, which brought down the report that was the basis of this bill, I shall have to give a short explanation. I expect that all members have seen a copy of the committee's report, but having in mind the duties of honourable members and the other work they have to perform, probably not all members have read every word of the report. I am not suggesting that I intend to give a complete resumé of what is contained in it, but I shall refer to the matters in the report that were not mentioned in the other House by the Chief Secretary or by the Minister this evening in this Chamber. The committee was informed that a census taken by the field staff of the Aborigines Welfare Board revealed that there were 15,440 persons of aboriginal blood in New South Wales, made up of 127 full bloods, 6,807 half-castes, and 8,506 lesser castes, which included an admixture of aboriginal blood. Of the total about 6,000 reside on aboriginal stations and reserves. The figures do not include residents in the metropolitan area of Sydney, where it is estimated about 15,000 reside. It is obvious, therefore, that the aboriginal problem in New South Wales basically concerns persons with an admixture of aboriginal blood.

The 6,000 residents on aboriginal stations and reserves were the main concern of the committee, for it was here that the living conditions were at their worst and employment at its lowest; these are the places where aboriginal children in the main were denied the opportunities available to their white neighbours. The proposal in the bill to do away with stations and reserves as soon as possible is to be commended. The accommodation on them is not worthy of a decent society and the sooner we are rid

of them the better. When committee members visited the stations and reserves and asked the residents questions about living conditions invariably the Aborigines replied that they would welcome the opportunity to live among the white community in houses furnished to a reasonable standard. The only exceptions in this respect were elderly Aborigines. Many of them prefer to stay on the reserves. They were born on them, reared on them and went to school on them. They feel that they cannot now fit in with the new society and live among the white people in town. They do not want any interference with their usual way of life. Although these people are in the minority I am sure that the Government will ensure that their wishes are acceded to. Most of them are elderly and have not much longer to live.

Although the Minister outlined to the House the terms of reference of the joint committee, I remind members that the most important of them covered education, the housing of Aborigines and legislative or other proposals necessary to assist Aborigines to improve their standard of living. Invariably Aborigines who were asked for comments on any amendments they would like to have made to legislation to improve their living conditions, replied that they wanted better housing and better education for their children. After taking considerable evidence on these matters the committee made these recommendations on housing:

(1) The New South Wales Government approach the Commonwealth Government seeking its participation in a Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement for Aborigines.

(2) Pending such Agreement the Commonwealth Government be approached, as a matter of urgency, for a \$ for \$ subsidy for Aboriginal housing.

(3) All present and future housing be the responsibility of the Housing Commission of New South Wales. The Housing Act, 1912, as amended, and the Housing Act, 1941, as amended, and other relevant Acts, be amended if deemed necessary.

(4) No further houses be constructed on Reserves new set apart for Aborigines except on town blocks.

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The Government intends to get rid of all the shanties on reserves. Responsibility for constructing houses for Aborigines is to be transferred to the Housing Commission, and no doubt this will include the construction of houses on town blocks now owned by the Aborigines Welfare Board. The committee's recommendations continued:

(5) All future houses erected be of at least Housing Commission standard as provided for the rest of the community.

(6) Rents be calculated on a rental rebate system similar to that applying within the Housing Commission of New South Wales.

(7) A short term furnishing loan at low interest rates be made available, if required, to Aborigines moving from sub-standard housing into homes administered by the Housing Commission. Such loans to be administered by the Housing Commission.

(8) Normal Housing Commission policy should be adopted so far as rental commitments and furniture loan repayments are concerned.

(9) The Aboriginal home loan scheme, presently administered by the Aborigines Welfare Board, be expanded and more widely publicized. This scheme to be administered in future by the Housing Commission.

The adoption of the committee's recommendations on housing will ensure that Aborigines will have wide scope to obtain a house from the Housing Commission or to have a cottage built on blocks now owned by the Aborigines Welfare Board. They will be able to rent a house, or buy one outright if they desire, or obtain a loan from the Government for this purpose. Although this is one matter that is not covered in the bill, I am sure that the House would wish to know what is foreshadowed in this respect.

The provision of homes by the Housing Commission will give Aborigines a new sense of responsibility. When they were given accommodation by the Aborigines Welfare Board they did not accept this responsibility, which no doubt contributed to a sum of \$72,259 being owed to the board in the form of rent. I have no doubt that aboriginal residents of Housing Commission dwellings will be well aware that as tenants of the commission they will have to pay their rents or face the consequences, like everyone else.

Education of Aborigines was one of the most important matters dealt with by the joint committee. This aspect was referred to by most of the witnesses examined by the committee. One of the purposes of educating Aborigines should be to ensure that they attain social and economic equality with the rest of the community. It is obvious that any action taken to improve the education standard of these people will fail unless their housing conditions are also improved. Committee members were appalled by the home conditions of many aboriginal children. Some of them had to attempt to do their homework in two- or three-room shacks by the light of a kerosene lamp or by candlelight. Meanwhile three or four brothers or sisters would be playing noisily around them. Is it any wonder that few aboriginal children have attained the scholastic heights of their white schoolmates?

Many witnesses examined on this subject stated that pre-school kindergartens should be a basic requirement for young aboriginal children. It is certain that the provision of these kindergartens will lay the foundation for the advancement of Aborigines. Evidence was given also that any attempt to improve the scholastic attainments of aboriginal children will depend upon effective adult education. Unless the parents of these children are aware of the value of education, they will not encourage their youngsters to attend school regularly or to progress at school. Therefore, education of adult Aborigines will play a most important part in assisting the aboriginal people to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. These aspects of education are not covered by the bill, but I agree with the Minister that they could be covered by regulation or by departmental action.

This House should be reminded of what the joint committee thought about the important subject of pre-school kindergartens. On page 9 of the report the committee said:

9. Your Committee had the opportunity of visiting pre-school kindergartens conducted by the Save the Children Fund at Armidale, Greenhills, and Three Ways Bridge and when in Moree inspected the Daughters of Charity pre-school kindergarten. This is a particularly

impressive pre-school centre and the Committee has nothing but admiration for the way in which Sister Brendan and her staff are handling the situation there. This centre is also most fortunate in having a medical clinic attached which is attended on a voluntary basis by two Moree doctors. Sister Brendan was emphatic that the buildings, fittings, and teaching aids of pre-school kindergartens for Aboriginal children should be the best available. With this view the Committee concurs.

10. Having observed the excellent work being carried out by the Save the Children Fund and the Daughters of Charity in this field your Committee is of the opinion that if the highest possible standards are to be achieved and maintained, it is imperative that adequate additional finance be made available. The task of providing pre-school training in all centres with a concentration of Aboriginal population appears to be beyond the resources of the Save the Children Fund, religious and other voluntary organizations.

11. Your Committee is firmly convinced that pre-school kindergartens are a basic requirement for Aboriginal children and is certain that, in this field, will be laid the foundation for the advancement and progress of Aborigines. The question arises as to the method of financing and staffing pre-school kindergartens. It appears that the policy of the Education Department is that pre-school training for children generally is not necessary and, therefore, that Department does not provide these kindergartens. It is true that the Department does provide a subsidy of \$130,000 per annum to the Kindergarten Union of New South Wales whose main work is done in the metropolitan area. The Aborigines Welfare Board has assisted the Save the Children Fund to build and equip pre-school kindergartens in some country centres and the Department of Education subsidizes the salaries of the teachers at those kindergartens.

That is an outline of what the four existing pre-school kindergartens are doing. The committee also went into the matter of cost, and I believe that the Minister should be able to say not only that consideration will be given to the committee's recommendations, but also that the Government will provide pre-school kindergartens on aboriginal reserves at the earliest opportunity. It is not fair that the provision of pre-school kindergartens should be left to private institutions.

The committee dealt also with the matter of adult education. I leave aside primary and secondary education, for the reason that one by one schools for Aborigines are being closed and the children from reserves are taking their place

beside white children in the various towns of New South Wales. It is not much use educating the young if what they learn at school is destroyed when they get home. Therefore the committee recommended on page 12 of its report in relation to adult education that—

(1) Adult education be developed offering training and advice in:

- (a) The advantages to be derived from the best possible education of Aboriginal children.
- (b) Parent participation in pre-school kindergartens and Aboriginal Family Education Centres.
- (c) Social behaviour, hygiene, home management and care, family management and baby health.
- (d) Leadership.

(2) The activities of the Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Education be expanded.

It is essential for those matters to be attended to. The parents of the children involved should be taught the rudiments of the functions detailed by the committee.

Notwithstanding the importance of education, it is disappointing that no specific mention of this recommendation by the committee has been made in this debate. I am not suggesting necessarily that it should be dealt with in the bill but I do think that honourable members are entitled to know what the Government intends to do about the education of Aborigines generally, from the pre-school kindergarten stage to the point of adult education. If Aborigines are given good housing and their education is neglected, all the efforts of the committee and of the Government will be as nothing. Education is the main factor in raising the standards of Aborigines. Wherever the committee asked what were the most important factors required for uplifting Aborigines, education and housing were mentioned first or second. The Government should state definitely that something will be done in respect of this recommendation by the committee.

In order to bring all of these recommendations to fruition and in order to give proper effect to the proposals contained in the bill, the co-operation of the white and aboriginal communities will be necessary. Where an Aborigine is endeavouring to better his state in life, the white community

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should be only too willing to help him do so. Australians are noted for their hospitality, and I feel sure that this hospitality will be available to the aboriginal people. The first piece of advice that might be given to the white community is to discard from their vocabulary the word "boong" as applied to Aborigines. I cannot conceive of a more offensive name, of a word that denigrates, humiliates and insults the aboriginal people as this word does. If I had my way, use of the word would be made illegal, with appropriate penalties attaching to the offence. The use of the term "mug copper" for a policeman is an offence, and many a person has been charged for using the expression. I cannot see why the same restriction should not be imposed on the use of the word "boong", if for no other reason than its tendency to degrade Aborigines. Those who use the word degrade themselves, of course, but something should be done to restrict its use.

Recognition of the Australian Aborigine by the white community as an equal will be of tremendous help to the rehabilitation of the Aborigines. Many Aborigines have faced racial prejudice, have overcome frustration in this matter, have found themselves regular employment and established nicely furnished homes. They have reared their children well and sent them to school regularly, enabling the children to mix with white kiddies. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that many more Aborigines could do likewise—not all, maybe; some will be found wanting. Some will fall by the wayside, in the same way as white people have done. However, the aboriginal children must be accepted if the Aborigines are ever to attain the standards that we would like to see them have.

An important provision of the bill is the setting up of an advisory council in lieu of the Aborigines Welfare Board. The joint committee found that because of lack of finance the Aborigines Welfare Board had become out-moded and restricted in many of its numerous functions. As a result the joint committee made the following recommendations:

(1) The Aborigines Welfare Board be abolished.

(2) A Director of Aboriginal Affairs, responsible to the Minister for Child Welfare and Social Welfare, be appointed.

(3) The Director shall be responsible for all aspects of Aboriginal Welfare previously the responsibility of the Aborigines Welfare Board and not already allotted to the Departments of Education, Child Welfare and Social Welfare and the Housing Commission of New South Wales.

His duties shall also include:

- (a) Responsibility for bringing to the notice of the Minister any actions deemed necessary for the welfare of Aborigines in New South Wales.
- (b) Liaison with all Departments and Authorities dealing with Aborigines.
- (c) Responsibility for Governmental Aboriginal publications and public relations generally so far as they affect Aborigines.

(4) The Director of Aboriginal Affairs furnish a Report each year to the Minister who shall present it to Parliament.

(5) An Aboriginal Advisory Council be created. Such Council to consist of six Aborigines elected by Aborigines; two Aborigines, one of whom shall be a woman, to be appointed by the Minister for Child Welfare and Social Welfare. The Director of Aboriginal Affairs shall be Chairman.

(6) The duties of this Advisory Council shall include advice to the Director on all steps proposed or desired by Aborigines for their advancement and the expression of the Aboriginal point of view on proposals initiated by the Director.

The Government has increased the number of members of the council from nine, as recommended by the joint committee, to ten, as provided in the bill, and this is an improvement. I was pleased to hear the Minister say that he proposes to amend the bill to provide that members of the advisory committee will be paid a fee. I do not know whether an amendment was moved in another place but a suggestion to this effect was made. The Minister in another place would not accept the suggestion but apparently he has thought better of it and has conferred with the Minister for Child Welfare and Minister for Social Welfare on the advisability of paying a fee to members of the council. Already members of some other advisory committees are paid fees so the proposal will not be unprecedented; it will be something worth while and make members of the council feel that they are people of some importance.

The non-employment of Aborigines is a problem that the members of the committee frequently encountered. Though it is known that many thousands of Aborigines are permanently and gainfully employed throughout New South Wales the majority are in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Some hold responsible positions. In rural areas Aborigines provide the major unskilled work force, especially in the western areas of the State. The problem to be overcome is the placing in suitable employment of Aborigines living on reserves. In this respect the joint committee recommended:

(1) (a) An Employment Officer responsible to the Director of Aboriginal Affairs be appointed.

(b) The Employment Officer be responsible for liaison with Government and semi-Government Departments, Local Government, and private employers with a view to placing in suitable employment all Aborigines seeking jobs.

(2) Pre-employment courses be introduced.

(3) Aborigines be counselled on the advantages of regular employment.

(4) Hostels, where required, be established for single Aboriginal men and women moving to centres of employment.

(5) The Department of Technical Education provide shearing, motor and machine maintenance and other courses which would assist Aborigines to gain employment in country areas.

Here again it is wise that people generally should know what the joint committee has recommended. I feel sure that if the Minister and the Government adopt these recommendations, if not immediately then soon, it will be to the benefit of Aborigines generally. The Minister should be able to tell us that this definite recommendation about their employment will be implemented at the earliest opportunity. The Aborigines feel that they are somewhat handicapped by not being able to obtain employment and the appointment of an employment officer would mean that he could interview representatives of various industries, corporations, factories and so on, be made aware of what vacancies were available, and find the right man for the job. This would go a long way in placing suitable men in employment.

The members of the committee found in their search for information that many Aborigines went to jobs for which they were not suited; as a consequence they stayed only a couple of days. Probably the Aborigine left of his own free will but sometimes he was sacked. The appointment of an employment officer would ensure that a job would be filled by a man fitted for it. The Minister should give serious consideration to appointing an industrial officer or director of employment to help Aborigines obtain suitable jobs. As I previously stated, the Opposition does not oppose the bill but it would like to see all of the recommendations of the parliamentary joint committee incorporated in the legislation. I trust that these will be given careful consideration when the change-over machinery is in working order. Perhaps the Minister in his reply might give the House that assurance.

The Hon. R. A. A. F. DE BRYON-FAES [5.57]: I support the bill. I was happy to be a representative of this House on the joint parliamentary committee which dealt with the matters covered by the legislation, and produced the report which the Hon. E. G. Wright has dealt with so expertly and with such care and thought. Prior to becoming a member of this committee I had not had any close contact with Aborigines. I had never been inside an Aborigine's house or residence and in fact I had never even shaken hands with an Aborigine. Service on the committee was for me a most interesting and educational experience. As the Hon. E. G. Wright pointed out, members of the committee interviewed 107 witnesses, including twenty-five Aborigines. Also, the committee visited and inspected a total of twenty-nine stations and reserves, but naturally, as has been outlined in the report and as the Minister has told the House, we were unable to visit all the numerous stations and reserves in New South Wales. However, there is no doubt whatever that the terms of reference were the correct ones. We had to investigate particularly education and housing, which are undoubtedly the basic requirements of these people. From my personal observations I should say that the Aborigines are a simple, kindly and trusting folk. They are

really no different from white people, except for the colour of their skin and in many instances there is little difference in this. Many Aborigines have whiter skin than some members of this House.

One recommendation of the joint committee was that the definition of Aborigine in the Aborigines Protection Act should be altered. The definition in the Act is:

"Aborigine" means any full-blooded or half-caste aboriginal who is a native of Australia and who is temporarily or permanently resident in New South Wales.

The committee recommended that the definition should be changed to:

"Aboriginal" means any full-blooded Aboriginal or such other person of part-aboriginal blood who is a native of Australia and is temporarily or permanently resident in New South Wales and who chooses to be known as an Aboriginal.

The definition contained in the bill is:

"Aboriginal" means a person who is a descendant of an aboriginal native of Australia; and "Aborigines" has a corresponding meaning.

It can be seen that the definition in the bill is quite different from the definition recommended by the committee. For instance, the committee's definition mentions that the person should be temporarily or permanently resident in New South Wales and, also, that he chooses to be known as an Aborigine. These two factors are left out of the definition in the bill, and perhaps the Minister can give us the reason for this omission.

As I have said, there is no doubt whatever that education is a basic factor in this matter. We met people who, through no fault of their own, had no education. Some of them may have had the ability but they were so dejected and had been so down-trodden and discriminated against that they did not think it was worth while acquiring a formal education. Some children who were being given the opportunity to attend schools to acquire a formal education were being told by their parents that it was not worth while because they would end up in a labouring job or performing some menial task. The committee hoped that its recommendations might overcome some of these difficulties. As the Hon. E. G. Wright pointed out, one way in which we could

make a good start would be by fostering pre-school kindergartens. The honourable member mentioned the places that we visited and how all members were impressed with the pre-school kindergartens. I have in mind the establishment at Moree conducted by the Save the Children Fund, the establishments at Green Hills and Three Ways Bridge, and the establishment at Moree conducted by the Daughters of Charity.

It is amazing how much these people have been able to do with so little help from public or official sources. It is amazing, also, how they get the children to attend. When they arrive in the morning, the children are stripped, bathed and put into fresh clothes. Their noses are wiped, and they are shown how to keep their noses clean. Further, they are given lessons, by practical demonstration, in hygiene. It was said that lack of hygiene was one of the main reasons for discrimination against Aborigines; many people accused the Aborigines of being lacking in cleanliness. The committee had no doubt that pre-school kindergartens are a basic requirement for aboriginal children.

Coming now to primary education, it was patently obvious to us that children who progressed from pre-school kindergartens to primary schools were readily accepted by the other children and by the teachers. The other children did not in any way consider them to be freaks or unusual, and they were able to take their places quite happily and readily among the others. We noted, however, from the observations and comments of witnesses that, because of their background and lack of support at home, many of the aboriginal children were a little backward. They were not used to learning, and received no help at all. This was understandable when one saw the conditions under which they lived—in shanties with earthen floors, with pieces of tin and sacking nailed on for walls, and in some instances with not even a kerosene lamp to provide light. In those circumstances one could understand why the children could not learn. They were given no encouragement to do so.

Of course, one thing was evident—the love that aboriginal children have for sport, in which many excelled. Through sport they

gained popularity. Indeed, this was evident recently in Australia when our grown-up children feted an aboriginal boxer. Any Aborigine who makes a name for himself as a boxer or a footballer becomes a public hero; his colour is forgotten and he is feted. Many handicaps manifest themselves when aboriginal children reach the secondary education stage. The committee's report mentions many statistics, but the basic flaw, whether it be in secondary education or tertiary education, is that the child has no objective in view. If he has no prospects, particularly if his parents have had harsh treatment, it is quite understandable that he will lack ambition. This is matter on which the proposed advisory committee should concentrate. We noted that, once the pre-school and the other education authorities had gained the confidence of the children, after a while the parents slowly came round and were gradually brought into the school activities and sporting life of the children.

There is nothing new or unusual about this. Parents of white children attending schools are usually invited to take an interest in the activities of their children at school. Many of them willingly do so and provide financial assistance to purchase items that are not available through the usual channels at school.

The question of housing Aborigines is certainly a vexed one. When the joint committee visited the various reserves and stations members were appalled by the conditions under which many of these underprivileged people were living. As I mentioned earlier, many of their homes had earthen floors and were infested with flies. Dogs were running about and some diseased cats were noticed. Even mice and rats were observed in proximity to these properties. A piece of sacking over a hole served as a window in some of these dwellings. Cooking would be done in places like that. All occupants would sleep in the one room irrespective of sex or age. In some of the houses the committee visited it was learned that as many as seventeen or twenty people were living in a two-bedroom house. No honourable member could regard such living conditions as suitable for a citizen of this State.

I admit that some people, irrespective of colour of skin, cannot be helped to improve their lot in life, but at least an attempt should be made to help them. I emphasize that some under-privileged white people in our community are willing to live under similar conditions to those that I have described, but this is no reason for any of us to condone it. The main reason why the committee made its recommendations in relation to reserves and stations was to eliminate this blot on our community and to give aboriginal people an opportunity to move into better quality houses in decent surroundings.

Considerable debate ensued among committee members while they were considering this problem on whether people who were unaccustomed to living in decent houses would be able to move into better quality homes and look after them. The committee considered that it was at least worth a trial. After talking to many of these people we considered that they were just as anxious to move into good houses, equipped with proper toilets and sinks, modern stoves and refrigerators, as anyone else in the community. The committee members were anxious to inculcate pride of ownership. All committee members were of the opinion that, although some Aborigines might still remove doors and windows and burn them to provide heat in the winter, many would look after their houses and try to take their place in the community.

Many Aborigines when questioned replied that they wish to live in houses and to have neighbours on either side of them. And rightly so. Generally speaking these people do not wish to live in one of a row of houses occupied by other Aborigines. They prefer to enter into the basic requirement of assimilation by moving into a house in proximity to white neighbours and to take their part in the activities of the local community.

A particularly interesting part of the report that has not yet been referred to deals with the health problems of Aborigines. Careful note should be taken of this aspect of the committee's report. One of the witnesses who gave evidence before the joint committee at Bourke was Dr R. F. Coolican, a well qualified doctor of great

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experience. He impressed the committee with his knowledge of aboriginal health problems. In co-operation with the matron of the district hospital at Bourke he placed before the committee the only statistical evidence on aboriginal health that was forthcoming. His statistics indicate that many pregnant aboriginal woman have a low haemoglobin count. When compared with white mothers, four times as many aboriginal women have blood transfusions. These statistics also showed that the health of Aborigines living on station properties was best, followed by those living in town houses, with the inhabitants of reserves worst. Dr Coolican put forward the theory that, owing to inadequate diet, many aborigines have a very low haemoglobin count and, as a result, the patient becomes lethargic. This condition could account for the poor work record of many Aborigines. In the opinion of the committee inadequate diet could also contribute to the inferior scholastic achievements of aboriginal children.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: When the honourable member refers to stations, does he mean cattle stations and properties?

The Hon. R. A. A. F. DE BRYON-FAES: Yes. The committee refers in its report to aboriginal stations and reserves, but the stations that I mentioned a moment ago are mainly ones on which Aborigines are working, where they are more or less supervised by white property owners.

The Hon. E. G. WRIGHT: Many of them had a matron on the station.

The Hon. R. A. A. F. DE BRYON-FAES: That is true. The significant aspect of this part of the committee's report is that until now no one has thought it worth while to investigate the health standards of Aborigines including the causes of their lethargy, their malnutrition, their poor bone structure, their blood count, and things of that nature. Beyond asking the Minister to pay special attention to this matter, I shall not proceed further with it.

There were queries as to why the joint committee recommended the abolition of the Aborigines Welfare Board. The reason is simple. The committee realized that the

board itself carried out its duties and responsibilities in a reasonable manner, and reported this fact. The board did its best in the circumstances. Obviously the reason why it did not do better was that it had as members too many experts, too many heads of departments, who were engaged in what to their way of thinking were more important duties. They could not devote the necessary time to the affairs of the Aborigines. I am not decrying their efforts or their sincerity. However, if this problem is to be grasped in both hands it is essential to put people on the Aborigines Advisory Committee who have the time to devote to existing problems. Even if they are not as clever or as proficient as some of those who were on the Aborigines Welfare Board, at least they will have more time to devote to the work, and possibly they will achieve more.

I am in complete agreement with the recommendation of the joint committee that those who wish to serve as members of the aborigines advisory committee should be recompensed in the terms of the proposed amendment. All of them will be Aborigines. None of them can really afford to give time without recompense. Again, I would say that the Aborigines who vote members of the committee into those positions will take care to see that the persons they select have a distinctive and personal knowledge of the problems that the aboriginal electors wish to have attended to.

The Aborigines Welfare Board establishments came to the notice of the joint committee. In particular, Kinchela Boys Training Home at Kempsey, Cootamundra Girls Home and a hostel at Dubbo stand out. The Kinchela Boys Training Home tries to inculcate the boys who are taken there with the idea of the spartan life. I do not think that the training the boys receive would do them any harm so long as proper amenities are made available to them to offset the rigidity of some of the training. They come into contact with the normal requirements of home life. They are taken to school and mix with other children; they are given good food and an opportunity to do homework and study. Most members

of the joint committee were impressed with the Cootamundra Girls Home. All of the girls were well behaved, well dressed, clean and tidy; all were occupied and were highly thought of in the Cootamundra area. Some of them left the home and were employed locally. However, it was brought to the attention of the committee that once the girls left the influence of the home and went to the city they came to grief. This brings me back to the matter I mentioned earlier. The Aborigines are simple and trusting. That is why education is a necessity.

The joint committee felt also that too much faith was placed in co-operatives. This is not a criticism of co-operatives. The fact is that the aboriginal participants take too much for granted. They feel that all they have to do is to pay their joining fee and everything else will be done for them. They do not seem to realize that they are expected to pull their weight and join in the production of whatever is being produced. This does not mean, of course, that co-operatives among Aborigines are a failure. It means again that greater education is required to let the aboriginal people know what is expected of them if they wish to participate in a co-operative effort.

The joint committee discovered many organizations and associations that were doing their best to assist Aborigines. It found a few that posed as do-gooders but did nothing. These organizations were playing upon the trust of the aboriginal people and were using them. It is a shame that some of the good organizations with sincere members could not get together with a view to helping the Aborigines much more effectively. Most of these organizations are small, with little potential. If they could merge or even form some sort of union—and I do not mean a trade union—they could possibly do a great deal more for those they are trying to help. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Evelyn Barron.

House adjourned, on motion by the Hon. J. B. M. Fuller, at 6.29 p.m.