Legislative Council

Thursday, 16th September, 1954.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

DAIRYING.

As to Artificial Insemination Experiment.

Hon. C. H. HENNING asked the Minister for the North-West:

Referring to the statement made by the Minister for Agriculture at the South-West Conference in Bunbury on the 3rd September that an experiment in artificial insemination would commence in a small way next year on the property of Mr. R. B. Lefroy at Waterloo—

(1) Was the Minister aware at the time of making the statement that the experiment was being privately conducted?

(2) Was permission sought from Mr. Lefroy to make the statement?

(3) What, if any, interest has the Government in the experiment—

(a) financially;

(b) otherwise?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There appears to be some misunderstanding in the report in "The West Australian" of the 4th September. The notes from which the statement was made by the Minister for Agriculture read as follows:—

> Approval has been given for the purchase of materials for the construction of bull yards at the Wokalup Research Station and some provision has been made for funds for premises, but up to the present a final decision has not yet been made regarding details of a scheme. However, a decision has been made to endeavour to commence a small artificial insemination scheme in time for the next insemination period in 1955.
>
> An application for the importation of 100 c.c. of deep frozen bull semen from Great Britain for use on the property of R. B. Lefroy at Waterloo has been submitted by the South-West Co-operative Dairy Farmers and it is expected that a permit will be granted by the Director General of Health.

The notes have subsequently been reported elsewhere correctly.

(2) As the activities of Mr. Lefroy in connection with artificial insemination are not confidential, no permission to mention his activities appeared to be necessary.

(3) From the answer to No. (1) it will be seen that the financial interest of the Government is in the scheme to be established at the Wokalup Research Station. The Government is interested only generally in the activities of Mr. Lefroy, who is to be commended for his practical interest in this matter.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

As to Alteration of Lighting.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

Will he give consideration to altering the lighting in this Chamber as has been requested previously?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Yes; I will give thought to that matter. In fact, I will make some inquiries to ascertain how much progress has been made following the questions previously asked by the hon. member.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Potato Growing Industry Trust Fund Act Amendment.

2, Criminal Code Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [2.24] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has a dual purpose: firstly, to increase the composition of the State Electricity Commission to provide for a representative of the commercial consumers of electric power; and, secondly, to amend the method of selection of the representative on the commission of the employees of the commission.

At present, the principal Act provides that the State Electricity Commission shall have seven members. The Minister is given the power to nominate three of these members, one to represent metropolitan consumers of current; one to represent consumers from the rest of the State; and one to represent the employees of the commission. The remaining four members are the Under Treasurer or his deputy, and three persons who must be corporate members of either the English or the Australian Institute of Electrical Engineers.

In 1947, as a result of overtures from the Chamber of Manufactures, Mr. J. F. Ledger, president of the chamber, was appointed in place of Mr. Gough to represent the metropolitan consumers. The Chamber of Manufactures is now asking that the industrial and commercial consumers of current be given direct representation on the commission, and its request is supported by the Chamber of Commerce. The Government considers that these representations are well founded.

A very large proportion of the power generated in the metropolitan area is used by industrial and commercial interests, and the Government is not unmindful of the assistance and co-operation given by these users during periods of emergency. In view of the amount of current used industrially and commercially, the Government considers these users are entitled to a representative on the commission. If this is agreed to, the representatives of the metropolitan and country consumers can concentrate on the problems of the smaller consumers, such as the householders.

The Bill proposes that the representative of the commercial consumers shall be nominated by the Minister from a panel of three names submitted by the Chamber of Manufactures and supported by statements from that chamber and the Perth Chamber of Commerce that both chambers acquiesce concerning these names.

The other amendment deals with the manner of appointing the representative of the commission's employees. At present the principal Act provides he shall be nominated by the Minister. It is considered it would be preferable for the Minister, in this case also, to be given a panel of three names from which to select a representative. The Bill provides that the panel shall be submitted to the Minister by the secretary of the W. A. Branch of the A.L.P. which is the organisation most closely associated with employees in Western Australia. This would enable the selection by the Minister of a man known to possess the necessary attributes and experience for the position, as will also be the case with the commercial consumers' representative. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [2.28] in moving the second reading said: The proposals in this Bill, which are of a machinery nature, have been recommended by the Master of the Supreme Court and have been approved by the Chief Justice. Their object is to facilitate and assist in the administration of justice.

The first amendment provides for the inclusion in the Act of interpretations of the terms "Master" and "Registrar" of the Supreme Court, and also seeks the provision of a deputy master and a deputy registrar. While the principal Act, in Section 155, provides that there shall be a Registrar, Master, and Keeper of the Records of the Supreme Court, the need for deputies for the Master and Registrar was overlooked, as also was the necessity for a definition in the Act of these terms. As a result, neither the Master nor the Registrar has the authority to delegate even the simplest of his duties.

No deputy registrar has ever been appointed; and the Deputy Master, who is assistant to the Master, derives his authority from the Administration Act and the Lunacy Act only, and this seriously restricts the ambit of his duties. The volume of Supreme Court business is increasing quite rapidly, and it is most inconvenient that the Master and Registrar are prevented, through the shortcomings of the parent Act, from delegating suitable duties to an assistant.

The second amendment seeks to overcome difficulties which are being caused by the fact that the present system of arranging sittings of the Supreme Court in a circuit district is too cumbersome and does not allow for the prompt alteration of dates when necessary. It is most desirable that there be a less rigid system which would give the judges better control over the number, times, and places of the sittings of circuit courts. For instance, for the sake of convenience, it may be considered expedient to hold a sitting of the Supreme Court at Kalgoorlie at a time when the High Court visits Western Australia. Members will appreciate the fact that courts and other rooms are required for the High Court judges and their staffs. If one of the Supreme Court judges could hold hearings of cases in Kalgoorlie at that time, it would make his rooms available for use by the visiting judges.

This, however, is not the main reason for the amendment. With the growth of the State and the gradual shifting of the balance of population in country districts, the need for the establishment of other circuit courts may soon arise; and the judges should be in a position to decide

periodically the number of sittings warranted each year by the business in a circuit district.

The amendment proposes to allow the Chief Justice—or, in his absence, the senior judge—to fix the times for the sittings of circuit courts each year by a rule of court made specially for that year, in much the same way as the High Court announces annually its fixtures in the different States for the ensuing 12 months. Other days can be specially appointed by the Chief Justice as necessity demands.

A further proposal in the Bill is to give the court wider control over execution process against goods and land. The principal Act does not specifically direct how land seized under a writ of fieri facias must be sold, but the inference is that it must be sold by auction. To clear members' minds I would like to explain that a writ of fi fa, as it is commonly called, is a writ of execution directing the sheriff to whom it is addressed to levy from the goods and chattels of the debtor a sum equal to the amount of judgment debt and costs. The sheriff makes a seizure and institutes a sale by execution. If, for any reason, the land is unsold at an auction by the sheriff, it is very doubtful whether there is any authority in the court to order a sale by public tender. The proposal in the Bill would overcome these doubts.

Another amendment seeks to give a more effective remedy than the writ of sequestration to enforce a judgment or order directing payment of money into court. A writ of sequestration is a form of process directed by the Supreme Court to two commissioners named in the writ, empowering them to enter upon the lands and sequester the rents and the goods of a person in contempt for disobedience of a decree or order of the court, and to keep these rents and goods until the defendant clears his contempt.

The failure to pay money into court is contempt; and the only way it can be enforced is by way of sequestration, because the principal Act prevents the arrest of a person for non-payment of money, except in very special cases, or by judgment summons process under the Debtors' Act, which does not apply to orders for payment into court. The use of the writ of sequestration is an archaic and cumbersome procedure, which is completely unsuitable for present-day conditions. Apart from this, it is an expensive procedure.

The Bill proposes to substitute a writ of fi fa for a writ of sequestration. Under a writ of fi fa, the land or goods can be seized and sold in the first instance, and the proceeds paid into court by the sheriff to await the court's order. The ultimate effect would be the same, but the procedure would be far more expeditious and less costly. The proposed amendment would be similar to the provision in the Divorce Code which enables a writ of fi fa, under which a disobedient party's land and goods can be sold, to be used instead of the writ of sequestration, the sheriff paying the proceeds into court to satisfy the court order.

The last amendment is the result of a request from the Prime Minister that State legislation be amended to define more clearly the Australian consular officers overseas who are empowered to perform notarial acts. The present definition does not include many Australian officers overseas who perform consular functions, and in the Bill it is widened to suit the Commonwealth's requirements. A similar amendment has been agreed to or will be introduced in each of the other Australian States. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [2.36]: This matter has occasioned great concern among war service land settlers in this State for the past few years. They felt that under the conditions of their leases and future tenures they were not receiving a fair spin, which seemed to be indicated by the legislation introduced and the results brought about in the past few years. Now we are getting near a reasonable basis upon which tenures are granted to war service settlers. I do not find a great deal to criticise in the Bill, except Clause 6, which states—

> Notwithstanding the provisions of the Land Act the Governor is authorised to grant tenures on such terms and conditions as he thinks fit for the purpose of carrying out the scheme.

I do not know whether an attempt has been made in the Bill to get over those conditions which are subject to Commonwealth-State agreement. It appears to be so. The section in the 1951 Act covering tenures reads—

> Notwithstanding the provisions of the Land Act to grant tenures upon such terms and conditions as are not inconsistent with the provisions of the agreement and as are approved by the Commonwealth.

There is no special reason why similar words could not be included in Clause 6 of the Bill. There is a big difference between the terminology of the 1951 Act and that of the present Bill. In fairness to settlers, this particular clause should be subject to agreement between the Commonwealth and State, as it was in the

parent Act. I would ask the Minister who introduced the Bill to give consideration to this matter when he replies. If he considers it fair, which I do, then the clause can be amended in Committee.

Beyond that, I have to point out that the original scheme provided for war service land settlers to be included in one-unit properties, developed and valued as one-unit farms. Since then, owing to various machinations by both the State and Commonwealth, a large number of properties have been developed as projects and will be valued on a project basis. Many settlers who come under this category find themselves in a very awkward position. A settler under a project such as Mt. Many Peaks, who is energetic enough to do certain work for himself, such as root picking, scrub bashing, etc., gets no credit for it. Another settler under the same project may be fortunate enough to get similar work done by the War Service Land Settlement Board, but he does not have to pay for it: the cost is added to that of the project. One man does the work for himself, and the other has it done by the board. In my view, and in the opinion of the settlers, this is not a fair method to carry out the provisions of the scheme. It would be fairer to add to the property of a particular settler the cost of any development work done by the board and not spread it over the whole project.

Another aspect is that some of the earlier settlers were placed on land which was to a considerable extent under production. However, in the case of repurchased estates and farms which were allotted to settlers, the possibilities of making good within a few years were bright, in view of the good prices ruling for primary products from 1950 onwards. They had not only developed properties to work on, but also had the advantage of good prices. On the other hand, the settler who was placed on country developed from virgin land had greater difficulties. I have had a fair amount of experience of pasture development in the South-West. Without fear of contradiction, I say that before a reasonable income can be derived from a property developed from virgin country, at least three years must elapse. It would take at the very least three years, if not more, to develop virgin country into pasture land which can carry enough stock to give the settler a living. Even then, it would only be a fair living.

Hon. C. H. Henning: It would probably take five or six years.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I agree. The situation is that settlers go on to properties as allottee caretakers, after which they are granted leases as perpetual leaseholders; and from that time they have to pay rentals on their properties and meet their commitments.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The Mt. Many Peaks settlers were placed in this position 12 months too soon.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is the situation. In their present state of development, the settlers cannot possibly meet their commitments which fall due a year or more after they first go on their properties. The Government should give great consideration to extending that period up to three years in which rentals will not fall due for payment. By that I do not mean that rentals should be charged and accrued; the rentals should be waived entirely for a period of three years to allow the properties to be developed to such an extent that the settlers can meet their commitments. This is not an unfair request.

The whole idea of the war service land settlement scheme was to settle returned servicemen on farms where, from the time they took over, they could meet their commitments. We do not want to see a recurrence in this State of what happened after World War I when soldier settlers found they could not meet their commitments, and that their debts were accruing, and walked off their properties. I do not contend that a similar occurrence could take place today; but if there were a recession in the price of primary products, it could happen. It could quite easily happen that settlers would be forced to walk off their properties, especially those who took over holdings developed from virgin country. I ask the Government to consider that aspect and see what can be done to help those men.

The Minister for the North-West: Are the blocks allotted to settlers before being productive?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I believe so. Mr. Logan would know.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Twenty-two have been allotted.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Those properties are not in a fit state to give a return that would enable the settlers to meet their commitments, nor will they be for the next two or three years, and an accumulation of debt could be piled up which would take years to clear off. We do not want that to happen, and the Government would be well advised to ensure that it does not happen.

The Minister for the North-West: I do not think that occurs.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Minister should make sure. I believe it could occur. Perhaps the Minister could obtain some information on the point and advise us when he replies to the debate. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. F. R. H. Lavery, debate adjourned.

BILL—CROWN SUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th September.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [2.47]: The Minister, in moving the second reading, gave us an interesting outline of the trend that has taken place over the centuries respecting the right of citizens to sue the Crown. He explained that a long time ago, the maxim that the King could do no wrong really meant that when the King was involved, the rights of the subject to sue him on any claim were practically negligible. Over the centuries, wisdom has prevailed; and we are aware of the fact that at present, if an individual has a claim against the Crown—or, in other words, against the Government—he can proceed under the provisions of the Crown Suits Act. The Bill proposes to amend that with the object of easing the existing restrictive conditions.

Until 1947, the amount a citizen could recover against the Crown under the provisions of the Act was limited to £2,000. In that year, Parliament in its wisdom removed that provision so that there is now no limitation to the amount. Certain restrictions still exist with respect to the notice that must be given in the event of an individual having a claim and intending to pursue it, and also in regard to the time in which such a claim must be made in the court. Speaking from memory, I think that notice has to be given within three months, and the action has to be commenced within 12 months.

That is a rigid provision, and in no circumstances can relief against it be given. The Minister pointed out that it was conceivable—and experience had shown—that on occasion there were cases where these restrictive limitations could impose and had imposed hardship; and the purpose of the measure is to liberalise the provisions. A person who has a claim against the Crown may not postpone it indefinitely; he has still to give notice and must commence his action within a specified time, which I think is 12 months; but under other provisions, those periods may be extended in certain deserving circumstances. This is about all that the Bill proposes. It is another step toward the liberalisation of man's rights even against the Crown.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th August.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [2.53]: The provisions of this Bill aim at exempting from the operation of Section 46A of the Act "an implement used or to be used in agricultural or horticultural pursuits while such implement is being driven, used or towed on any road in a district or sub-district outside the metropolitan area."

The Traffic Act Amending Act of 1950 by Section 46A. provided that no vehicle having a greater overall width including the load than 8ft. shall be licensed and driven on the road, with a proviso that, with the permission of the Minister given on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police and under such special circumstances and conditions as may be set out in the permit, a vehicle having a greater overall width including the load than 8ft. may be licensed and driven on any road.

Following complaints from the Police Traffic Office and also suggestions from a road board that there was no power to take any action against a person towing an overwidth vehicle, the Act was amended again in 1953 to make it a penalty for any person to drive, use or tow any vehicle on a road without a permit.

Numerous complaints were received from farmers and other organisations pointing out the inconvenience caused by having to get a permit through the Commissioner of Police, with the result that special consideration was given and a traffic regulation was framed whereby the Minister authorised local authorities to issue the permits for a period of six months covering the using or towing of a vehicle up to a width of 10ft. This period should, of course, cover the usual seeding and harvesting. The regulation was published in the "Government Gazette" of the 23rd April, 1954, and was numbered 203 F (1) and (2).

It was later found that, whilst a penalty was provided for the driving of a vehicle without a permit, no penalty had been provided for the towing of a vehicle without a permit as a result of which, by "Government Gazette" of the 21st May, 1954, a further regulation, 203F (3) was promulgated making it a penalty to drive, use or tow a vehicle with a greater overall width than 8ft. unless a permit was issued in accordance with the provisions of Section 46A of the Act.

As members know, Regulation 203 F (1) and (2) has been disallowed by the Legislative Assembly, but Regulation 203 F (3) still stands. As a consequence, a most unsatisfactory position has been created whereby any person who drives, uses or tows any implement over a width of 8ft. without first obtaining a permit is immediately liable to a penalty. This position is unsatisfactory enough, but the Bill introduced by Mr. Jones will make confusion more confounded, as I shall explain.

The Bill seeks to exempt from the provisions of Section 46A any implement used or to be used in agricultural or horticultural pursuits while such implement is being driven, used or towed on any road. Agricultural pursuits, of course, include the clearing and tilling of the soil; while horticultural pursuits include the cultivating of gardens, including the growing of flowers, fruit and vegetables.

If the amendment is agreed to, any person will be able to move an implement of any width in any part of the State, excepting the metropolitan area, without the provision of any lights, safety precautions or safeguards, and without the necessity of obtaining a permit.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I have an amendment on the notice paper to deal with that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would enable a person to tow an overwidth implement irrespective of its width, from Bunbury to Nornalup and through all the towns en route. It would enable agents to hawk agricultural implements around the State, the metropolitan area excepted, for the purpose of demonstrations, without any precautions for safety being taken.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That would be a bad blue.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: These implements, if the Bill is successful, will not be vehicles; consequently there will be no provision for lights. The conditions I have pointed out would be covered by third party insurance provided the towing vehicle was licensed and insured. If is therefore easy to imagine the terrific traffic hazard that the Bill would create, because the danger to the travelling public would be enormously increased and could quite easily affect insurance claims and premiums themselves.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It could.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A bulldozer is an implement used for agricultural pursuits, and so contractors could, at will, move overwidth bulldozers around the State, the metropolitan area excepted. Hay-balers, harvesters and other implements could be towed from Mundaring to Esperance irrespective of width and without any safety precautions being taken. I am glad that Mr. Barker is listening, because he needs a lot of education on these matters.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I have not seen the light yet.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill, as framed, would apply not only to implements owned by a farmer but also to any implement intended to be used for agricultural or horticultural pursuits, irrespective of ownership or occupation. We were told that the main object of the Bill was to allow a farmer to move an implement from one side of a road to the other. Yet on examination, the measure would cover every implement outside the metropolitan area having to do with agriculture.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: It would be impossible.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would not be impossible for any vehicle up to 16ft. or 18ft. in width to be so used, because it has been done.

Hon. L. C. Diver: And it will continue to be done, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To pass the Bill in its present form would be very dangerous. I had another lot of notes—unfortunately I came without them—which showed the reasons why we are opposing this, and what advantage has been taken of it, because farmers were able to do it until last year when the amendment against towing was placed in the Act.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: The regulation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. There was an instance where a police patrol had to be provided to conduct some implement from around Williams, Collie, or Darkan to Narrogin.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Who paid for the patrol?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The State paid for it. That is the sort of thing that has been going on, and it will still be permitted if the hon. member's amendment is carried.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You mean if the Bill is carried.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, if the amendment to the Act is carried.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Yes; but would not your proper approach be to let the Bill pass the second reading and amend it in Committee?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think so. Generally, I take the attitude that no matter how bad a Bill may be, it should be allowed to pass the second reading so that we may discuss it further in Committee.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: If it suits you, that is your attitude.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have often said that.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Let us take your advice on this occasion.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What is the difference in towing with a permit?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The difference is this: If a person has to get a permit, certain precautions will have to be taken.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They would still have to be taken without a permit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But if no permit is required, there is no one to say what precautions have to be taken.

Hon. L. C. Diver: What about the amendments on the notice paper?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I might discuss them at some other stage.

Hon. H. L. Roche: But you could not, if we did not agree to the second reading.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I might relent to the extent of not opposing the Bill at the second reading. But I think it would be wasting the time of Parliament to allow it to go into Committee, because it has no redeeming features.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Let it go into Committee and give it a chance.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have already told members that the Government will be introducing a further amendment to the Traffic Act; it will be introduced in the Assembly next week.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: To cover this phase?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It will not go as far as the hon. member and a number of his colleagues desire, but it will cover this phase. I told members that much when I spoke on the disallowance of the regulation. I would like to hear some justification of this Bill from some members who are in favour of it.

Hon. L. C. Diver: You will get it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I want an unbiassed justification.

Hon. L. A. Logan: We will give you that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not want a biased opinion. I want to know from an unbiased person why a farmer should be given rights on the road that no other person in the State can get.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: If you were a farmer you would know.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not care whether a vehicle is a harvester or any other type. If it goes on the road, irrespective of whether it is taken there by a farmer, or a politician, or anybody else, it is dangerous to the travelling public. I want to know why, if a farmer takes such a vehicle on the road, it will be less dangerous than if anybody else takes it there.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: If a person gets a permit, will it make the vehicle any less dangerous to other users of the road?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No; but if a person has to get a permit, that will ensure that the precautions set out are taken. At least, if it does not ensure that they are taken, the person applying for the permit will be told what precautions have to be observed. If farmers are allowed to take vehicles on to the road whenever they like, and travel as far as they like, without a permit, there will be no indication that they have any knowledge of the precautions that must be taken.

I do not care whether it happens in Wyalkatchem or Fremantle; once an overwidth vehicle is taken on to the road, there is a danger; and there is a greater danger from a vehicle being towed than from an ordinary overwidth vehicle. I think members will agree with that. If a person is travelling along the road and he sees an overwidth vehicle approaching, he knows just how wide it is, and what he has to do to avoid it. But if one vehicle is towing another, it is a different story altogether. In most cases one meets traffic of this kind at the most awkward parts of the road.

Hon. H. K. Watson: How often would you meet that sort of thing in distant country centres?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is remarkable how often.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Paddock to paddock, for example.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: How many farmers would be pulling their vehicles from one side of the road to the other?

Hon. L. C. Diver: The vast majority.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: How many would be pulling implements from one paddock to another paddock some miles away?

Hon. L. C. Diver: Very few.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: They would not have to bring their vehicles through Perth.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No one ever suggested that they should bring them through Perth; the metropolitan area is exempt.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the Chief Secretary not to carry on a conversation with members behind him.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry. I thought I was answering some points that were being raised by way of interjection. I have not heard one member who has discussed that aspect. I admit that I may be prejudiced about this; I will go that far.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The trouble is you do not know anything about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I want to be sure that because it is a farmer who is bringing a vehicle on to the road it is less dangerous than if I took a vehicle on to the road.

Hon. H. L. Roche: I would not like to be near it if you did.

Hon. J. D. Teahan: Could it be made safer if we limited the distance?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: An accident could occur anywhere. A vehicle can be taken 100 yards or 100 miles along a road; but once it goes on to the road, it is a definite danger.

Hon. C. H. Henning: Do you want a man with a red flag walking in front?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. We want to ensure that some precautions and safeguards are taken.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Can they not be put in the Bill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We want to ensure that certain safeguards are taken; and when a person applies for a permit, he will be told what precautions are laid down and have to be taken. When a person applies for a permit to take an overwidth vehicle on to the road, he must place a sign on the front or back of the vehicle, notifying the oncoming traffic that he is driving an overwidth vehicle.

Hon. H. K. Watson: There is nothing to stop you placing such a provision in the Bill.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: The amendments provide for that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; but the plea when it is not done will be that of ignorance.

Hon. H. K. Watson: There would be no excuse.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know that ignorance is no excuse; but at the same time, if we say that a person must make application for a permit, he will be advised, at the time he applies and the permit is issued, what precautions must be taken. There are other vehicles—it is all according to the width—which have to carry signs and have other vehicles preceding them at a distance of 100 ft. or 100 yds.

Hon. H. L. Roche: And they do not do it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; they do.

Hon. H. L. Roche: No; they do not—at least, not all of them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is done in cases that require it.

Hon. H. L. Roche: It is not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To say to farmers and contractors who are towing agricultural implements, "You are outside the law of this State"—and that is what this Bill will do—is definitely wrong. So before members agree to the measure, they should give serious consideration to it.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Who makes mountains out of molehills?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Once we break away and give someone a privilege that is denied to the rest of the community—and this Bill will do that—all other sections of the community will want the same privilege. So I want members seriously to consider this measure before they give their consent to its being read a second time.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [3.10]: The idea of introducing this Bill was to make it possible for the producer, in the prosecution of his daily avocation, to carry out certain work which he has to do, without going through all the red tape which departments are trying to place upon him today. Apparently the Chief Secretary's notes were written for him—probably a fortnight ago—and without any consideration having been given to the amendments which were placed on the notice paper three or four days ago by Mr. Jones. I say this because most of the Aunt Sallies put up by the Chief Secretary are knocked over by the amendments on the notice paper.

During his speech, the Chief Secretary tried to make great play about the special consideration given to the producer when certain regulations were made permitting the local authority to grant a permit for six months, to tow or shift a vehicle of up to 10ft. in width. If a person was engaged in horticulture he would probably have a vehicle or implement which was under 10ft. in width. But if a man was producing wheat, he would have few vehicles under 10ft.; the only one that I can call to mind is the tractor. For the Chief Secretary to try to tell us that special consideration is given to the producers just does not carry any weight at all. That is only misleading the House. At present a producer is forced to take out a permit if he wants to shift a vehicle from one paddock to another and, in the process, has to cross a two-chain road.

The Chief Secretary: How often would he take an implement from one side of the road to the other?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Very often. Why does not the Chief Secretary listen to somebody who has had experience? I had a farm with a main road between two of the paddocks, and I frequently had to take an implement from one paddock to the other.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I have a brother who is doing it all the time.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: At certain times I would have to shift it two miles along the road. But because I am producing commodities for the rest of Australia and the world, and shifting a vehicle is part of my work, why should I have to go to the police station to ask for a permit to carry out that work? That is the stupid part of it. And the work has to be done. Whether I get a permit or not, I still have to shift the implement; and it would not be less dangerous if I had a permit from the police station.

The Chief Secretary: All right! Wipe out all the safeguards!

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No. All I am worrying about is that shifting a vehicle is part of a farmer's work; and if the Chief Secretary looks at the amendments on the notice paper, he will find that Mr. Jones has taken the precaution of limiting the

time from daylight to dark. That will obviate the necessity to use the red lights that the Chief Secretary mentioned earlier. Also the amendment will ensure that the Act will cover only district to adjoining district. So it is no use the Chief Secretary talking about shifting a vehicle from Kalgoorlie to Esperance. I was surprised that the Chief Secretary tried to put that over the House.

The Chief Secretary: You should never anticipate what might be done in Committee.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Chief Secretary was most misleading.

The Chief Secretary: When speaking to the second reading you should deal with what is in the Bill only.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The amendments on the notice paper have been placed there by the hon. member who introduced the Bill.

The Chief Secretary: They should not be considered until the Bill gets into Committee.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They must be taken into consideration if they are placed there by the person who introduced the Bill.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They can still be discussed.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Had some other member placed them on the notice paper it would have been different.

The Chief Secretary: Committee matters are not discussed during a second reading debate.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A member can suggest what is likely to take place in committee.

The Chief Secretary: Tell me why the farmers should get a special privilege over everybody else who uses the same roads.

Hon. H. L. Roche: He is the only man who uses that type of implement.

The Chief Secretary: Then why should not everybody who has an overwidth vehicle be given the same privilege?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is a different thing altogether. Such a person would probably be shifting a vehicle once in six months, or once in 12 months.

The Chief Secretary: If he has to shift a vehicle only once in 12 months, it is not a great hardship for him to get a permit.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not talking about the farmer; I am talking about the other fellow. The Chief Secretary is trying to put up another Aunt Sally.

The Chief Secretary: You want to allow the farmer to do it repeatedly; but if the other fellow wants to do it only once in 12 months, you say that he should be forced to get a permit.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Because the farmer has to do it in the course of his daily work. Why should we clutter up our statutes with something that is of no benefit to anybody? Surely, we have enough to do already. All we are trying to do is to put something on the statute book that is of no value at all.

The Chief Secretary: It is on the statute book, but you are taking it off.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The provision on the statute book states that it cannot be done. The producer is already tied down, and does not know where he stands! Might I remind the Chief Secretary that this sort of thing is happening today without a permit being secured. It will happen tomorrow without a permit, whether this becomes law or not.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: He might get pinched.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The farmer will take that risk.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Not too often.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Unless we put a special squad on to watch this, it will never be stopped. It is too idiotic to expect a producer, when he is crossing a road, to ring the police station and say, "I am crossing the road with a 12ft. harvester; I want a permit to cross it." That would be too silly. Let us have a little sense when dealing with a problem like this. I hope the second reading of the Bill will be carried to enable us to include an amendment which will give the producer the right to carry on the work he is doing without being tied by red tape.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [3.17]: I feel sorry for the position in which the Chief Secretary finds himself in having to speak against a measure of this nature. It is obvious that he does not realise what the true position in the country is. The Chief Secretary asked why the farmer should be allowed this privilege on country roads. I would point out to him that, in the vast majority of cases, if the farmer were not there, there would be no roads at all, because there would be nobody else to use those roads. If the Chief Secretary desires to prevent the farmer from using the roads, and is endeavouring to drive him to the city, he is going the right way about it.

The Minister for the North-West: He would not have a vehicle.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: We have a multiplicity of regulations under the Traffic Act, regulations that come under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Police. Many of them are broken within the city boundaries.

Hon. H. Hearn: Parking, for instance.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Many of them cannot be policed by the commissioner. Unless his power is extended 150, 200, or 300 miles from the city, how is it possible for him to police those regulations? It is up to us to be realistic. We should not attempt to impose restrictions if they cannot be

policed. They may be in the Act at present, but I would ask the Chief Secretary to let us have a list of how many applications have been received since this law of having to obtain a permit came into force. I do not know one farmer who has made application, and I do not think either the Commissioner of Police or the Chief Secretary knows of one. That shows the futility of having such a provision in the Act with which farmers have to comply.

Much play has been made about overwidth vehicles. One would think that the average motorist drives along country roads with his eyes shut. There is a responsibility on the driver of every motor-vehicle to be in control of that vehicle. On the country road, especially, a driver does not know what stock may stray out in his path at the next corner; and consequently he should be in control of his vehicle, which would prevent him striking such stock. As a rule, this is uppermost in his mind. Accordingly, if he came upon an overwidth vehicle, he would be in control of the vehicle that he was driving. I would like the Chief Secretary to tell us how many accidents have taken place in Western Australia during the last ten years through overwidth vehicles, as a result of a farmer travelling from one portion of his farm to another.

One would have thought that, when replying to this measure, the Chief Secretary would have had the statistics before him to show the number of accidents that had occurred through motor-vehicles striking agricultural implements on the road, and thus prove conclusively that there was no need for this measure to be passed.

I made reference to regulations which were already appended to the Traffic Act. One that strikes me very forcibly as not being policed is that of permitting overwidth vehicles on main highways within the city boundary or within the metropolitan area. Without fear of contradiction, I would say—and I will take the Chief Secretary on to any highway he might care to nominate, on any of the six nights of the week—that there are vehicles travelling on those roads every night that are ill-lighted and a danger to the travelling public. Until such matters can be straightened and the Commissioner of Police can attend to these and other shortcomings, which are extremely dangerous to the travelling public, let us not bother about such restrictions on farmers.

Every day we pick up a newspaper and find reports of motor accidents occurring on our highways through the circumstances I have mentioned; and someone is generally maimed or killed as a result of these accidents. Do we ever see such reports appearing in the Press in relation to overwidth agricultural machinery? Do we find that they have been responsible for maiming people, or for the loss of life? Yet we have the Commissioner of Police, through the Chief Secretary, wanting to impose further restrictions on people, without any hope of policing the regulations.

The Minister for the North-West: It is in the Act now.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: On a number of occasions, the Chief Secretary admitted that the Commissioner of Police did not want to allow local authorities to have any say on overwidth vehicles up to 10 ft. He wanted to retain that himself. Yet we have the spectacle of his not being able to police the regulations that are already on the statute book. I trust the measure introduced by Mr. Jones will be carried because, if it is not, we will place farmers in the position of having to carry on as they have done in the past.

I am quite certain that the vast majority will not apply for a permit, as the Act requires they should. They will be in the position of immediately becoming liable if, unfortunately, they create a breach of the law by having an accident. This will be so because they will not have obtained a permit. I do not think it is fair or reasonable to place farmers in such a position. The Chief Secretary said that farmers would not require to shift their machines very often from one side of the road to the other, and perhaps only 10 per cent. would require to do so. I am sorry that the Chief Secretary should have such a limited knowledge. What he says is far from the truth. I would say that the vast majority of farmers desire this legislation.

The Chief Secretary: I did not say that.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The Chief Secretary said from paddock to paddock; he now shakes his head.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: How many would there be on both sides of the road?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The vast majority of properties are split by a public thoroughfare. Members of the Chief Secretary's own party who have had experience of wheatbelt conditions know what I am saying is a fact, and for that reason I am certain we shall be successful in having this measure passed.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [3.27]: The Bill introduced by Mr. Jones endeavours to make a practical approach to a problem that has arisen from the desire of the department to limit what it regards as the dangers of the road. The defence the Chief Secretary put up today is typical of the mental attitude of some of the departmental tin gods who have no conception whatever of the practical side of the problems farmers face. Possibly, if the Minister had wider knowledge outside of—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Fremantle.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It would be North Fremantle, I think. If the Chief Secretary had had this knowledge, he would not have allowed himself to be misled by the reply he put up, which was obviously prepared for him; because I feel sure that he himself prefers as a rule to make a practical approach to anything that comes before the House. As Mr. Diver has just said, the present regulations, such as they are, are not being policed. There is far more danger from 8 ft. vehicles that are licensed travelling on main roads—not on side roads, or on roads intersecting farms, but on main roads—without adequate lighting, and at all hours of the day and night, than there would be from farmers moving machinery.

Had the Minister taken the trouble to study the notice paper, he would have seen that Mr. Jones proposes to move certain amendments which would limit to the daylight hours the movement of such machinery as the Bill is designed to cover.

The Chief Secretary: It shows how ill-conceived and inadequate the Bill is.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It is months ago since the Chief Secretary promised us a Bill to amend the Traffic Act, and we have not seen it yet. If I remember correctly, the Bill before us was postponed for two months in order to allow the measure that the Government was going to introduce to see the light of day. It has not come to hand yet.

The Chief Secretary: It was postponed to suit the convenience of Mr. Jones.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It is going to be here this week, next week, sometimes or, perhaps, never! For that reason I think we might as well proceed with this measure for the time being. I would be quite prepared to have it postponed a little longer if the Minister's assurance was worth having—and I trust it is—that the amending Bill will be introduced in another place next week. That would enable us to consider the provisions and make such amendments as would render it practicable.

The Chief Secretary: It will not suit you.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I would sooner consider amendments to a Bill such as that than have a private member's Bill passed. If the Government and those administering this department had been practical-minded and had at heart the interests of people who are forced to convey farm machinery over roads, it would not have been necessary for a private member to introduce a Bill such as this.

The Chief Secretary: This Bill is only sectional.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It is to provide for an industry which is affected. To most people it is an important industry. I can understand that to the Minister it is only sectional, because perhaps one's outlook becomes limited by one's surroundings.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You are only there to grow cheap meat and wheat for city people!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, and under conditions that are as difficult as it is possible to conceive. I would have thought that rather than criticise the Bill in the terms he did, the Chief Secretary would welcome an effort made by a private member to do something in connection with which his own department has fallen down.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—PRICES CONTROL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [3.33]: I intend to support the Bill because I think it is time price control was reintroduced.

Hon. H. Hearn. What for?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Not particularly to annoy people in the furniture trade—or anyone else for that matter. Prices have increased. Proof of that was given in this House during the debate on the Arbitration Bill.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What prices have increased?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: We heard Mr. Logan selecting certain items to suit his convenience.

Hon. H. Hearn: Give us some to suit yours.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Because of a price war, Mr. Logan was able to quote reductions that had occurred in Victoria Park; but the Government Statistician has supplied figures to the court which show that in the last 12 months there has been an increase in the prices of those items which are taken into consideration in compiling the basic wage, to the extent of 19s. 11d. per week. But what about articles that are in use but are not taken into consideration in that way?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Did not the 19s. 11d. include the increase in rent?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: If members want to be honest and permit wages to be pegged, surely they should give the worker a fair go, and do something to bring about a reduction of prices! Mr. Logan went to the trouble to visit Victoria Park. I do not know whether he was particularly fussy about finding out what the prices were, or whether he was trying to get commodities for himself at a cheaper rate. The prices of certain goods which he mentioned have remained static; but those of the great majority have increased; and those that decreased were reduced because local shopkeepers wanted to cut one another's throats.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What about chemists' supplies.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: They are static.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Prices of commodities have definitely increased; and if the basic wage is to remain fixed, something should be done to combat the effect of that. The only way to do so is to prevent increases in prices. There is no indication that prices will fall; there is, on the contrary, every indication that they will rise further. The impact of the increase in rents has not even been felt, and there is every probability that there will be further increases in that connection. Mr. Baxter told us about the position with regard to beer. He said that there had not been an increase in price. Probably the publican has been fortunate and the public have been unfortunate.

On the Goldfields the price of a schooner was reduced from 10½d. to 9½d., a reduction of 1/20th. However, the size of the container was reduced from 8oz. to 7oz., a reduction of 1/8th. There was no increase in the wholesale price. On an 18-gallon cask for which the publican is charged only as if it were a 17-gallon cask, and on which excise for only 17 gallons is paid, the publican thus receives an additional profit of £1 3s. 10d.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Those figures are wrong.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: They are not!

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes, they are!

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Those figures are perfectly correct. What has occurred in the metropolitan area and in some country areas? The breweries have charged the publican an extra 2½d. per gallon, but the publican has passed on the increase by imposing an additional ½d. on the cost of certain vessels. That has been to the advantage of the publican, and it has been something for which the consumer has had to pay. If the publican charges ½d. extra on an 8oz. vessel he is 7½d. better off per gallon.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: When was the increase prior to that?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Very recently.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: No.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Yes. There has been an increase on the part of the brewery and the publican.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Not since 1951.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: What was not?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Schooners of beer.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: The price of beer?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: The price of beer was increased recently in the metropolitan area. I suppose it would be the most unpopular sizes of vessels on which there would be an increase?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: That is what the publican would like us to believe.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I have shown that beer has increased in price. I know that that is not taken into consideration in the compilation of the basic wage. Mr. Diver said that Mr. Barker wanted hides to be controlled. I read in a little paper that is more favourably disposed to the Liberal Party than to the Labour Party that £1,000,000 a year has been lost on hides through bad sorting. If trouble were taken to rectify that sort of thing, hides could be reduced in price. The Government has a responsibility with regard to price controls, and I think that similar responsibility rests on members of this House if they are going to insist on the basic wage remaining static.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [3.40]: In recent months we have had many interesting debates on price control. I would suggest to members that they take themselves back in memory to 1945, just after the war finished. Those people who were away from the country for some length of time came back to circumstances that had to be endured during the war years and for a time afterwards. In that period we could not buy a pound of meat, or a packet of tea, or butter, or clothes, or any commodity whatsoever, without producing a ration ticket.

Hon. E. M. Davies: We still lived.

Hon. H. Hearn: A very drab life.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I was pleased to hear Mr. Boylen make that remark.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: You did not hear Mr. Boylen make it.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I beg pardon. It was Mr. Davies. It is true that we lived; but we lived under great difficulties, as members on both sides of the House know.

Hon. E. M. Davies: What difficulties?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I had no pyjamas for a month because I had no tickets.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Would Mr. Davies like to go back to those days?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We lived under the difficulty of being regimented and controlled. If members on the other side like a state of affairs such as that, the only suggestion I can make is that it satisfies their political ideology. But it does not happen to satisfy my political belief. We recognise that during a war we must have controls and regimentation. We have to

endure regimentation of manpower, and we have to do many things we are told to do and do not like doing. But when peace returns, and production begins to overtake demand, we expect to obtain some relief from the adversities under which we live in a time of control. I suggest that that particular state of affairs exists in this State today, and has done for some considerable time. It is interesting to see that we abolished price control in this State in December, 1953.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Then we got inflation.

Hon. H. Hearn: You had it before then.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Have you just woken up?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think it is obvious that Mr. Barker has only just woken up. We abolished price control in December, 1953; and I venture to suggest that since then free enterprise has had an opportunity to prevail, and it has prevailed. During the period of price control, certain factors were evident. I went to a meeting one day where I spoke to a number of unionists. The subject of week-end work came under discussion, and one man said to me—very sensibly I thought—"We work in the week-ends. Do you think it is all right that we should put in work in the week-ends beyond the time that we put in for our employers from Monday to Friday?" I said, "Yes, provided you do not make yourselves so tired that you cannot satisfactorily perform your job from Monday to Friday." He said, "With the money I have earned in the week-ends I have just bought my wife a refrigerator. Do you not think that is good?" I agreed that it was good; and then I endeavoured to explain to him just what he was doing.

I do not think he should not buy his wife a refrigerator, or that any person should not have as much as he possibly can have in his home, in the way of comforts. But at that particular time, because of price control, manufacturers were producing luxury goods that were not controlled, with the result that people who had the money to buy luxury goods were purchasing them. The supply of essential goods was not available to meet the demand, because the manufacturer had a free market. The result was that the demand was so great that the price had to be pegged in order to avoid exploitation. To those members who are supporting the Bill, I ask: Why is it that of the other States, New South Wales, in particular, is gradually ridding itself of price control? Why is New South Wales decontrolling various items?

Hon. E. M. Davies: You will admit that it still has some control.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes.

Hon. H. Hearn: The other States are all eliminating price control.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do admit that New South Wales still has some controls.

The Minister for the North-West: So have South Australia and the other States.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. Can any member tell me why these States relinquished control of particular items? Nobody appears to know, or seems to want to answer.

The Minister for the North-West: Are we allowed to carry on a conversation across the Chamber?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister for the North-West—

The Minister for the North-West: You may be able to do so, but the President soon quietens us.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister has only to look at "Hansard" of last session to see how many interjections he made when it suited him.

The Minister for the North-West: I am talking about a debate.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am saying—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You asked a question in debate.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so; and to return to the question I asked, and to which I did not get a reply, I now ask: Is it reasonable to suggest that the State of New South Wales will, from time to time, remove control from a particular item because it happens to be in ready supply?

The Minister for the North-West: That was the procedure here during your Government's regime.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes; it was. We said, "Now is the time when all controls can go—

The Minister for the North-West: When we became the Government.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —because goods are in ready supply." When the present Government took charge of the Treasury bench in 1953, there was very little left which was subject to control.

The Minister for the North-West: You kept controls going until only a few months before that.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is true; but as the Minister knows, as various items came into ready supply, the previous Government decontrolled them. I suggest that is the position in the other States—namely, that as goods become readily available the Governments, no matter what their particular colour happens to be—in the majority they are Labour Governments—relieve the people of control on those items.

The Chief Secretary: This is—

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Davies, the Minister for the North-West, and the Chief Secretary all want to say something.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

The Chief Secretary: All I want to say is that this is not a blanket control.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am very glad I waited for the Chief Secretary to interject because I want to read this to him—

> The Commissioner in the exercise of his powers under that subsection may fix and declare with respect to any goods and services that are specified in the Second Schedule to this Act or such other goods and services as may be prescribed by regulation.

The Chief Secretary would expect the House to believe that that is not blanket control.

The Chief Secretary: If the hon. member knew parliamentary procedure, he would know that that is a safety clause which is always necessary.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I know that a regulation can be made and disallowed later by Parliament.

Hon. H. Hearn: It can operate for six months before you get around to disallowing it, though.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so; and the Chief Secretary, who knows so much about parliamentary procedure, knows that too.

The Chief Secretary: When you mention certain articles, you must have a safety clause to provide that any other articles that need protection may be covered.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Let us allow the Chief Secretary his point; but let us realise at the same time, as Mr. Hearn has said, that a great deal of time can elapse between the gazettal of a regulation and the date when it is disallowed.

The Chief Secretary: If it is an amendment of the Act, a great deal of time can elapse before the amendment can be introduced.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I want to deal more particularly with one aspect of price control which, I think, is going to affect a large majority of the people of this State. If the Bill passes, I cannot imagine that the circumstances that I shall relate in a moment or two will not take place; and I do not think it will be to the credit of the Government, or that the majority of the people will be very pleased with it.

The Chief Secretary: You would not worry about the credit of this Government.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Government has so discredited itself that I feel sorry for it sometimes. Members will know that, prior to the abolition of price control in 1953, if a person wanted a house built, the normal practice was that he had an interview with a builder and contractor and left him the plans; and a few days later the contractor would see his prospective client and say that the building would cost so much—perhaps £2,500 or £3,000—and, of course, there would be a rise and fall clause in the contract. The reason for the rise and fall clause was that the builder wanted to afford himself some protection in the case of an alteration in prices.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Caused by the rise and fall in the basic wage.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is interesting to see that at approximately the same time as the abolition of price control, the building contractors started to accept contracts that were not subject to the rise and fall clause. I say, without any hesitation, that as a result of the inquiries I have made amongst members of the building trade, I have been assured that the reintroduction of price control will mean the reintroduction of the rise and fall clause.

The Chief Secretary: They would not get it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There is nothing to stop them from getting it.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: There we have a certain set of circumstances.

The Minister for the North-West: Are you sure you are not confusing this measure with the next Bill?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not confused at all.

The Minister for the North-West: With the rise and fall clause, I mean.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No; I am not.

The Minister for the North-West: I think you are.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am assured by the building trade that the reintroduction of price control will mean the reintroduction of the rise and fall clause, because they do not know what stabilised position the prices will be in.

The Chief Secretary: This will stabilise prices. It will not allow them to flow up and down.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The only thing the builder will be able to do will be to load his price to protect himself. The other important point I would like to discuss is the one I made by interjection when the Chief Secretary was making his second

reading speech. I asked him what method would be employed to fix prices; but he was in the frame of mind at that stage that he did not want to answer. He said he felt sure I would have an opportunity of expressing my opinions on this matter when I spoke on the Bill. I now have that opportunity; and I want to say that one cannot help but admire the Chief Secretary's method of not answering a question when he does not want to. I feel sure, however, that this question must exercise the minds of all members, particularly those who do not favour the reintroduction of price control. The question is: What is the method by which the prices commissioner will fix prices?

Is there to be employed any method different from that used during the period when price control operated in this State? If there is not—the Bill certainly does not suggest a different method—the method to be employed must be plainly and simply a cost-plus basis. Where on earth does such a basis of price fixing get anyone? The price-fixing commissioner would, in the first instance, simply provide a formula upon which manufacturers could operate; and from time to time, according to the cost of manufacture, the prices of commodities would be altered to provide the maximum prices. To my mind that is obviously a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. In conclusion, I do not think the present is the time to be reverting to what we have had to put up with for a number of years in the past. We, who oppose this Bill, believe in free enterprise and a free community—

The Chief Secretary: I hope you will express that view on the next measure.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We believe that the law of supply and demand must prevail. We believe whole-heartedly that it is not the duty of Parliament to interfere with the courts of law or the Arbitration Court. I will vote against the second reading.

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

House adjourned at 4.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 16th September, 1954.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

(a) As to Status of Lecturer-in-Charge "Trades."

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Education:

Is it possible for the lecturer-in-charge "trades" to become principal of a technical education establishment? If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

The position of principal of a technical education establishment is advertised and appointments made in accordance with regulations. Any teacher with the necessary qualifications may apply.

(b) As to Definition of "Related Subjects or Trades."

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Education:

What is meant by "related subjects or trades" in regulation 205b?

The MINISTER replied:

In some courses it may be advantageous to group together those trades or subjects having related subject matter or skill or