

# Legislative Council

Wednesday, 2nd November, 1955.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Police Benefit Fund Abolition Act Amendment.
- 2, Cemeteries Act Amendment.
- 3, Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment.
- 4, Mining Act Amendment.
- 5, Parks and Reserves Act Amendment.
- 6, Medical Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 7 Honey Pool.
- 8, Swan Lands Revestment.
- 9, Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment.

## QUESTIONS.

### CROWN LANDS.

#### *Availability for Pastoral Purposes.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is it correct that all Crown lands within the State have been withdrawn from selection for pastoral purposes?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, can he give the reason for such withdrawal?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Government is giving consideration to a closer settlement policy in pastoral areas.

## FREMANTLE HOSPITAL.

### *Exchange of Land.*

Hon E. M. DAVIES asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) With reference to the proposed new hospital at Fremantle, what action, if any, has the Government taken to complete the arrangements with the Fremantle Council for the exchange of 40 acres of land at Hilton Park for certain small lots of Crown land?

(2) Is he aware that after a review of probable requirements in 1965 it is revealed that approximately 670 general beds will be required at that year?

(3) Will he expedite the securing of the land with a view to plans for the new hospital being prepared?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) This is a matter which is being investigated by the Public Works Department, and early finality has been requested.

(2) The department is aware that there is an increasing shortage of hospital beds in the Fremantle area.

(3) Yes.

## POLICE FORCE.

### *(a) Resignations.*

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

How many resignations took place in the Western Australian Police Force during the years 1952, 1953 and 1954 respectively?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

In 1952 there were 34 resignations; in 1953, there were 43; and in 1954, there were 59.

### *(b) Sergeant Kendall's Position.*

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many times has Sergeant Kendall been passed over for promotion since the Police Royal Commission?

(2) How many times has he been forced to appeal?

(3) What has been the full cost of these appeals to the department?

(4) What representation has Sergeant Kendall had on the Selection and Promotional Boards?

(5) Has he objected to such representation? If so, why?

(6) Has he ever been forced to withdraw his appeals? If so, why?

(7) How many inspectors comprised the Promotional Board on the 27th and 28th October, 1955?

(8) Who is the chairman of the board?

(9) How many inspectors gave him a strong recommendation for promotion to the rank of Third Class Inspector, and how many members of the board spoke highly in his favour for such promotion?

(10) Was it a secret ballot?

(11) Were the full notes of evidence and discussions recorded? If not, why not?

(12) Does the chairman of the board act as judge and jury, or does he vacate the board room during such discussions?

(13) Is it recognised that Sergeant Kendall with his overall police experience is one of the most efficient and qualified members of the Police Force?

(14) Is it a fact that he is highly regarded and respected by the majority of the Police Force, and by the public generally?

(15) Have his seniority in service, qualifications and efficiency fitted him for promotion over many junior officers?

(16) Have any of the members sitting on the Promotional Board been charged by Sergeant Kendall with any misdemeanour, and convicted?

(17) If the Minister for Police has not sighted the papers dealing with Sergeant Kendall's grievance, will he do so, and, in the meantime, instruct the Acting Commissioner of Police to withhold the approval of the last successful applicant for promotion until an inquiry has been held?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The hon. member would be better informed on this question by perusing the relevant Police Department papers on this matter, and arrangements will be made accordingly, if he so desires.

(2) Covered in answer to No. (1) above.

(3) There has been no cost to the department, other than the lost time of members of the force having to attend Appeal Boards.

(4) No member of the force has any representation on the Selection Board, which comprises the Chief Inspector as chairman, and two senior inspectors; nor has he any representation on the Appeal Board, which comprises the Commissioner of Police, as chairman, and all commissioned officers of the force other than the District Officer from Broome and the members of the Selection Board.

(5) This is answered by No. (4) above.

(6) No. It is not possible to force any appellant to withdraw an appeal; nor was this possible under the provisions of the Government Appeal Board.

(7) Twenty-three.

(8) The Commissioner of Police.

(9) I have no record of the actual numbers, but I should say the majority of those present agreed as to his efficiency. But they also agreed that Sergeant Sunter was

equally efficient. The argument, in discussion, then ranged around the fact that the two officers were equally efficient, but that Sergeant Sunter was the senior 1st Class Sergeant to Sergeant Kendall.

(10) No. Show of hands.

(11) No. Brief notes of the proceedings are taken by the staff sergeant for record purposes, and these can be made available to the hon. member at the office of the Minister for Police.

(12) No. The chairman remains in the board room and takes part in the discussion but has only the same voting power—i.e. one vote—as any other commissioned officer.

(13) He is recognised as an efficient officer and has qualified for promotion, which he could no doubt receive in the normal course of seniority.

(14) I cannot answer that question.

(15) Answered by No. (13) above.

(16) Yes. In 1949 certain members, who were then non-commissioned officers and were members of the Police Union Executive, were charged with a technical breach of the Royal Commission Powers Act for action taken by the general secretary of the union in regard to the suspension of Sergeant Kendall from the union.

(17) The Minister sighted papers dealing with Sergeant Kendall's grievances some time ago but as the Act provides certain procedure through the Selection and Promotional Boards which have been followed in the last appeal lodged by Sergeant Kendall, he is not willing to withhold the approval of the last successful applicant for promotion until an inquiry has been held.

## **BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.**

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

## **BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (Suburban) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: At the outset I wish to explain that the Bill was introduced in another place by a private member and I have been requested to present it here. In doing so, I propose to explain the details of the Bill, and, at the conclusion of my remarks, to repudiate one of its clauses. The object of the measure is to amend certain sections of the Administration Act.

If the Bill is passed, it will delete the word "curator" from the Act and insert in lieu the words "public trustee". At one time the curator was a public officer, but he is no longer in existence under that title.

The Bill seeks to clarify the position of intestacy. Provision is made that the specified sum shall not be applied in relation to the value of the estate as at the

date of death for the purpose of calculating the fractional shares of beneficiaries, including anyone entitled to the specified sum. It is considered that the specified sum, being a set figure, should be regarded as a straightforward legacy and therefore deducted from the net value before any fractional shares are arrived at for the future distribution of the estate.

Further provision is made in the Bill as to how any income derived from an inter-state estate prior to distribution, shall be distributed. It is suggested that the spouse should receive 5 per cent. of the specified sum, and that the remainder should be distributed according to the fractional shares to those of the next of kin who are entitled to it.

The interest of minors is dealt with in the Bill, which provides that the governing factor in the court's decision regarding the use of a minor's interest in an estate for his maintenance and education shall be the minor's share and not the whole value of the estate, it being considered that £5,000 is the least amount which, when invested, will produce sufficient income for the purpose of maintenance and education.

Expense is avoided in regard to applying to the court in the case of obvious necessity—for example, the necessity to mortgage an estate to pay death duties, and funeral and administration expenses. That section of the Act will be amended to coincide with the principles already provided in the Act regarding the sale or mortgage of estates for these purposes. Also contained in the measure are two consequential amendments to two other sections. These have been included for the same purpose.

The amount of £1,000 is raised to £3,000 where letters of administration may be applied for where the deceased resided 50 miles or further from Perth. This is already the departmental policy, and it will bring the position into line with the provision in the Federal Estate Duty Act; namely, that in arriving at the final balance of an estate there shall be deducted from the gross value of the estate, in addition to all other liabilities of the deceased at the date of death, such amounts as may be due for Federal income tax, including all amounts of such tax that might be assessed under Section 101A of the Federal Income Tax Act.

Hon. H. K. Watson: What is the position regarding Federal income tax that is due but not assessed?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: At the moment I could not accurately answer the question. Is the hon. member referring to an estate which has not been completed from the point of view of its income, and therefore the income has not been assessed?

Hon. H. K. Watson: No, where the income tax assessment has not been received before the death of the testator.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Where it has been assessed but the assessment has not been received or paid.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think the present Act provides for that position. If there is any question that the hon. member would like to raise in that connection, I shall make further inquiries in regard to it.

The clause I wish to repudiate is one which was actually inserted in another place on the motion of the Premier. The clause as it now exists gives relief in respect of certain duties; but because of the way it is framed, it gives relief only to the widow. Personally I think that undesirable, and when the Bill is in Committee, I propose to move to have the clause struck out so that the situation will revert to what it is at the present time.

The mover of the Bill in another place included a provision which the Premier moved to delete, and he inserted this clause in the Bill in its stead. Although it is desirable to give the widow relief, it is undesirable to provide that only she shall have relief. A mother or children might need this relief; therefore it would be better to revert to the present position rather than exclude them from such relief.

The position of service personnel based in Malaya, Korea and other places is dealt with by replacing the words "Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act" with the words "Repatriation Act" to bring it into line with the Commonwealth statutes. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. Jones, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. E. M. Davies in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 8—Section 63 amended (partly considered):

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I wanted to clear up a small point in regard to this clause. An amendment came forward after the Bill was printed, and it was too late to have it inserted in the measure while it was in the Legislative Assembly. So the amendment was forwarded here for insertion. The only point at issue is this: At present, if a pensioner remarries and then dies and leaves a widow, she is not able to receive any benefit from the fund. This amendment will rectify that position, but it does not state that it is mandatory. It will depend on the circumstances of the widow as to whether a pension will be paid.

It often happens that a man, after his retirement, remarries. I was going to say that there ought to be some provision for

the children of a marriage such as that, but I think I would be a super optimist to suggest it. The amendment is designed to give some assistance to the widow of a pensioner where the remarriage has taken place after retirement. Therefore, I move an amendment—

That after the word "Fund" in line 35, page 3, the words "; and is further amended by adding after the word, 'marriage' being the last word in Sub-section (3), the passage 'unless it appears to the Board that in the particular circumstances of the case the operation of this subsection will result in hardship in which case the Board may direct that the pension shall be paid and effect shall be given to the direction.'"

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The position is as the Chief Secretary pointed out. But a man who remarries after retirement may have a family, as often happens. It seems strange that no provision was made for such circumstances when the Act was passed, and this amendment will rectify the position. I would like it made obligatory, but I suppose we can rely on the representatives of the trustees of the fund to see that the widow and any children receive the benefit to which they are entitled.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: If a person remarries after retirement and then dies, does his widow, in the event of her remarriage, receive any pension?

The Chief Secretary: No.

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

Clauses 9 to 12, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

## **BILL—UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL, TEACHING HOSPITALS.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.55]: This is a necessary Bill, introduced because of the projected establishment of a medical school. However, I am not completely enamoured of one or two clauses in the measure. Provision is made for those hospitals which are declared public hospitals, for those set up under the lunacy and mental treatment Acts, and for those which have not a board of management of their own.

There is one clause about which I, and a number of others on the honorary teaching staffs of hospitals, would like an explanation. I refer to Clause 4 (a) (iii), which reads—

The appointment of members of the medical staff of the Faculty of Medicine ipso facto as members of the honorary staff of the hospital.

That means that where a hospital is declared to be a teaching hospital, the managing body of the hospital, or the Minister, whoever it may be, may enter into an agreement with the University Senate in relation to the appointment of members of the Faculty of Medicine as members of the honorary staff.

What does "ipso facto" mean in that clause? Does it mean that they are to be appointed as members of the honorary staffs of our hospitals without any election by the electoral body, simply because they hold a position on the Faculty of Medicine? That could disrupt considerably the honorary staff. It is more than likely that members of the honorary staff of the major hospitals will have appointed members to the Faculty of Medicine. But I think it should be left to the honorary staff, or the managing board of the hospital, to make an agreement with the University Senate in relation to the appointment of members of the medical staff of the Faculty of Medicine as members of the honorary staff.

If members of the faculty are regarded as suitable persons for the honorary staff, the honorary staff will obviously accept them as members. But I can visualise a position where a member of the faculty may not, of necessity, be a person who would fit in, even with his specialised medical knowledge, with the honorary staff of a hospital. Even if he did, this provision will take away from the hospital board, and the honorary staff, a good deal of their autonomy in regard to the appointment of honorary staff.

Appointment to the honorary staff of hospitals is something prized by members of the profession; and to be told that members of the faculty can automatically become members of the staff, will undermine the authority of the board of management of a public hospital. I think it would be better to leave out the words "ipso facto"; and when we go into Committee, I shall move accordingly.

The Chief Secretary: Do you think you would achieve your objective by striking out those words?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes; they do not mean anything except that members of the medical staff of the faculty, if the words are left in, will automatically become members of the honorary staff.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: By virtue of their office.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes. Even though a member of the faculty may be qualified, he may not, through some personal difficulty, be able to become a member of the honorary staff.

The Chief Secretary: I suggest you might have another look at it, because I feel you would leave the same meaning if you took those words out.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: All it means is that without it they come to an agreement.

The Chief Secretary: To appoint some of them.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I think it would be still subject to agreement even with "ipso facto" in.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest the hon. member continue his speech, and the Chief Secretary can reply if he desires.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: There is also an interesting point in Clause 5 of the measure—namely, that if the teaching hospital is established under the Lunacy Act, or under the Mental Treatment Act, the advisory committee shall consist of a person nominated by the Senate; one nominated by the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Western Australia; the Inspector General of the Insane or a person nominated by him; and a medical practitioner nominated by the Minister who will administer the Act. But when it comes to the teaching hospital, then this committee shall have on it a person well versed in hospital administration.

What is the difference between the two? If a person well versed in hospital administration is necessary in one case, then he should be necessary in the case of a teaching hospital established under the Lunacy Act and the Mental Treatment Act. I contend that if it is required in one, it should be required in the other; or if it is not wanted in the other it should be taken out of both. I understand that this provision was added in another place. It is probably wise to have on this advisory committee somebody who is well versed in the administration of hospitals; but as I have pointed out, if it is wanted in one case it is surely required in the other, because the one in which it is left out is the departmental hospital.

I should say that we should put in the qualification of being well versed in hospital administration as it relates to both types of hospital or leave it out altogether, because if it were only designed for the appointment of honorary staffs to teach medical students it might not be necessary. But a man of Mr. Griffith's standing, for instance, would be invaluable on the advisory committee from the point of view of advice. I see no reason why this qualification should not be put into both rather than one.

I would now like to refer to Subclause (5) of Clause 5, which reads as follows:—

The Minister may request the advice of the appropriate advisory committee on any other matter related to the provisions or operations of this Act and thereupon the committee shall consider the matter and give to the Minister a written report of their advice upon it.

The Bill seeks to provide facilities for teaching medical students. That is all it seeks to do. This is regarded by some as being too embracing a clause, particularly when it seeks to give the advisory committee power to investigate a number of things which are outside the scope of the Bill. We feel that Subclause (5) could be left out because we must realise that we also have Subclause (4) which states—

The advisory committee shall as soon as practicable after receiving notification of the proposal from the Minister, consider the proposal and give the Minister a written report of their advice on the proposal.

All the proposal considers is the question of training medical students within that hospital. Why enlarge on it and say the committee can give advice on any other matter relating to the provisions or operations of this Act? As I have pointed out, we feel it is too embracing.

In referring to Clause 7, I would like to ask what regulations are required in such an Act. All we are doing is to appoint an advisory committee and ask it to report to the Minister on the facilities necessary for teaching medical students within that particular hospital. One must realise that, in the main, apart from the salaried officers of the departmental hospitals, the only staffs on these teaching hospitals will be honorary; they are not to be paid. Yet we find that the members of the advisory committee are entitled to such remuneration, leave of absence, travelling and other expenses as are prescribed by the regulations.

It seems a bit difficult to me that the persons who are appointed will be either salaried officers or members of honorary staffs, and they are now to be entitled to remuneration under the regulations; while the actual teaching is to be done by men who are honorary, have been honorary for many years, and will continue to be honorary for many years—probably at least until the present regime of hospital payments is altered by some other means. Accordingly, there are one or two points of this Bill which deserve consideration.

Finally, I would ask whether it is thought that one member of the medical staff is sufficient on the advisory committee to give adequate advice. In a big hospital where teaching is being carried out—and it is, of course, hard to visualise a big hospital without a board of management—there will be many facets of medicine and surgery being taught; and it is possible that one person may not be sufficient to give the advice necessary. I feel that on this advisory committee advice on both the medical and surgical sides is essential, because they are so different in their requirements and so different in their approach to training. It would be better to increase the representation of the honorary medical staff to two, because in that

way a broader outlook would be brought to the advisory committee's investigations and findings than would be the case as the Bill stands at the moment.

I seriously stress, therefore, firstly, that the Chief Secretary give thought to the elimination of the term "ipso facto" and what it means, because I do not believe—and there are a number with me who do not believe—that there should be anything automatic in the appointment of honorary staffs to the hospital. Secondly, there is the question of whether the hospital administrator is needed in one or both of these types of advisory committees; thirdly, the representation of the honorary medical staff in a broader sense; and, finally, whether remuneration to these members is required. I can understand the provision for leave of absence and travelling allowance and so on, but I doubt very much the necessity for remuneration. In the main, the whole of the teaching of these medical students will be carried out by persons who hold honorary office.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West—in reply) [5.10]: Dr. Hislop raised a point in connection with Subclause (5) of Clause 5, which gives the Minister certain powers. He also mentioned Subclause (1) of Clause 5, where a teaching hospital has not a managing body. The Minister is allowed to exercise certain powers conferred in Subclause (4) of Clause 5. Under that subclause, he has power to give a written notification of the proposal to the appropriate advisory committee which shall, as soon as possible after receiving the Minister's notification, give a written report in connection with it.

I cannot see any objection to Clause 5, because there may be something on which the Minister would require advice from the advisory committee. While I suppose that in the ordinary course of events he would make that request to the committee, even if Subclause (5) were not included, it would, I feel, be far better to leave it in the Bill so that the Minister would be provided with statutory right to do it.

I would ask Dr. Hislop to look seriously at the question of striking out "ipso facto", because I doubt whether he would achieve what he desires by deleting the expression. The same interpretation might be put on the clause with or without those words. I will, however, give consideration to the points raised by Dr. Hislop, and will reply to them in detail in the Committee stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## **BILL—UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Fraser—West—in reply) [5.12]: The Government's decision to support the creation

of a medical school as part of the University of Western Australia was made after considerable research by a Government committee of investigation as to whether such a school was warranted in this State as part of the university training available to students desirous of making the medical profession their career.

The committee recommended that a medical school could be started at an approximate cost of £300,000; and after consideration by the Government, it was agreed to make a Government contribution of £150,000 towards the capital cost of creating a suitable school which would enable medical students to undertake the three years' pre-clinical training in the University of Western Australia and the three years' clinical training in local hospitals approved for that purpose.

It was estimated by the Public Works Department that it would take approximately 18 months to two years to carry out the necessary building operations at the university and the approved hospitals; and, in consequence, the £150,000 required for the Government proportion of the capital cost was not required in a lump sum and is being provided by three instalments of £50,000 at six-monthly intervals.

The Bill provides for the university obtaining this capital sum; and six months after the last £50,000 of capital is made available, the Government will start to make repayments of the £150,000 by 30 half-yearly instalments, which will include principal and interest. I think Dr. Hislop was worried that there was no guarantee by the Government that this repayment would be made.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: No. I criticised it as not being the handsome gesture you thought it was.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: I think it is a handsome gesture. The money will be available whether it is paid in a lump sum of £150,000, or whether it is paid in three moieties of £50,000 each.

Hon. H. Hearn: Or leave it to posterity to pay.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: I do not know about that, because the amount would be paid over 15 years. However, it was done, and it represented a move forward. If we had had to wait until the whole of the amount of £150,000 could be made available in one year, I do not know that we would have been as far advanced towards the establishment of a medical school as we are. One of the problems through the years has been to finance such large expenditure in the one year. Now an attempt is being made to arrange the finance so that the financial standing of the medical school will be good.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: How has the £100,000 been found for the Alexandra Home?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is another question, and I find it unwise to deal with many questions at the one time. However, I can say that the £100,000 will not be provided in one lump sum any more than will the £150,000 for the medical school.

Hon. H. Hearn: And you are mortgaging the future?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Does not every Government do that? Does not the hon. member do it in his business? Had he not done so, he would not be in the happy position he occupies today. Do not 90 per cent. of the people mortgage the future when they buy motorcars or necessities for the homes? That system has grown up through the years, and we are not making any unusual departure on this occasion.

The method of borrowing funds for capital works is a standard method by which road boards, councils and other local bodies raise money for capital works and provide for its repayment. In addition, I might add that a number of other important buildings has been financed by the university, and the Government is repaying over a period of years the capital cost of those buildings. For the information of members, these repayments are provided for under University Buildings Acts No. 37 of 1930, No. 50 of 1931, No. 4 of 1938, and No. 43 of 1952.

If we are mortgaging the future—though I do not admit that we are—who is going to benefit from the establishment of the medical school?

Hon. H. Hearn: I am not quarrelling about that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Future generations will derive the benefit. The same principle applies to local authorities; they raise money to build halls and construct roads and so forth because those works will be of benefit in the future.

Hon. H. Hearn: What has posterity done for us?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall not go into that. I have pointed out that this method is not at all new so far as the university is concerned. Quite a number of the buildings would not be in existence if this procedure had not been adopted; and I do not think anyone would complain of what has been done, any more than people in the future are likely to complain of what we are doing.

Concern was expressed by Dr. Hislop as to the ability of the Government to pay the university, in addition, the running costs amounting to approximately £160,000 each year. For the information of members, I point out that the £100,000 will be a revenue charge and entirely distinct from the £150,000 required for the capital cost of providing the school. The £100,000 payable each year will be provided from revenue funds and will increase

the annual grant payable by the Government to the university. Members will realise that the annual costs of running the university have increased considerably, but the increased costs have been provided by the Government by means of an appropriation of revenue by Parliament each year through the annual estimates.

The other States of Australia have medical schools attached to their universities, and the establishment of a medical school as part of the University of Western Australia will not increase our university's costs above those of the other States. In consequence, the Commonwealth Grants Commission will recognise this additional expenditure, and will not impose any penalty when assessing the annual disabilities grant payable to us.

The salaries payable by the university to its professors are reviewed by the Senate from time to time, and the salaries proposed to be payable to the professors of the medical school are approximately the average payable to similar professors in Australian universities.

A question was asked by Dr. Hislop as to what is to become of the funds raised by the university—the body conducting the appeal—over and above the amount of £150,000 required for the contribution towards the capital cost. The appeal for funds for a medical school is in good hands when left to the control of the University Senate. This body represents a reasonable cross-section of men in the community, and I have no doubt that whatever surplus results from the appeal will be carefully used by the Senate in the promotion of medical science and practice for the benefit of the people of the State in general. There are two medical men on the Senate—Dr. Le Souef and Dr. Ainslie—and we may rest assured that they will watch the interests of the medical school.

Many matters raised by Dr. Hislop have nothing whatever to do with the scope of the Bill before the House, which is simply to authorise payment to the university by the Government of its proportion of the capital cost—namely, £150,000—over a period of years in a manner similar to the repayment of other loan expenditure incurred by the university for the construction and equipment of the necessary buildings to enable the arts and sciences to be taught at the university.

I may mention that the examinations will be set, not by someone locally, but by the professors, perhaps of the Sydney University this year and the Melbourne University next year. Thus other universities in rotation will have a say in setting the examination papers. In all these matters there will be guidance by the Senate, and we should have faith in those men to continue to do the good job they have done in the past.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

**BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT  
INSURANCE OFFICE  
ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

**HON. H. HEARN** (Metropolitan) [5.26]: As the Chief Secretary rightly said when moving the second reading, this question has become a hardy annual. The book that I hold in my hand contains records of the speeches made last year for and against the Bill that was then before us; and I am hoping that it will be possible to bring some fresh information to bear on the arguments, particularly as the Chief Secretary used 34 typed pages of notes. I think that was a very good effort on his part; but, in a much shorter speech, I hope to be able to cover the ground and give some answers to the case he presented.

In the beginning, we ought to take our minds back to the essential principles contained in the Bill. We have to recognise that between the Government and other parties in this House, there must of necessity be a sharp division of opinion on certain basic principles. Those basic principles form the difference between the parties. We know that it is one of Labour's objectives to extend State trading and the power of the State wherever possible. Some members might go further and say that supporters of Labour are attempting to implement the principles of socialism.

Be that as it may, we come back to the fact that the Government appreciates its duty to its platform by bringing down on every occasion and at every opportunity measures designed, at least, to give more power to State trading concerns. After all, we are dealing with the State Insurance Office as a State trading concern. Therefore I believe that even the Chief Secretary would not expect those who do not belong to his party to agree with him that the time has arrived, apart from any other consideration, for us as supporters of private enterprise to forget our principles and assist the Government in widening the franchise of the State Insurance Office.

We have to bear in mind that in a Bill introduced into this House on a previous occasion, life assurance was included; and in another Bill—I mention this to show the tendency of the times—there was a provision to grant the State office a monopoly of a certain phase of insurance. Thus it is fair to assume from the standpoint of people who believe in free enterprise that gradually but relentlessly the Government is moving to extend the operations of every trading utility that it can.

When introducing the measure, the Chief Secretary said, "There is a persistent public request for the extension of State insurance activities." I wish he had brought some evidence to support that statement. It reads all right; but I have taken the trouble to look at some of the figures, and I am not sure that on the results achieved by the State Insurance Office, the statement of the Chief Secretary, that every day and every week there was an immense demand for State Insurance Office activities, was quite correct.

To begin with, let us examine the workers' compensation business. In the year 1938-39 the State Insurance Office wrote £292,484 worth of workers' compensation business, and the private insurers wrote £232,909 worth. In 1948-49, the State Insurance Office wrote £309,040 worth; and the private insurers, £479,939 worth. In 1952-53—these are the last figures where a full year's operations are available—the State Insurance Office wrote £474,605 worth of workers' compensation business; and the private insurers, £723,231 worth.

**Hon. F. R. H. Lavery:** How many private insurers would there be in opposition to the State Insurance Office in that period?

**Hon. H. HEARN:** In the State there are approximately 79 insurance offices.

**Hon. F. R. H. Lavery:** That would be 78 to one.

**Hon. H. HEARN:** Yes; but I am referring only to a statement by the Chief Secretary that there was a persistent clamour from the public for an extension of the activities of the State Insurance Office. It will be noted that before the war, in 1938-39, the State Insurance Office was writing a larger volume of such business than all the private insurers, but has failed to hold that position.

As compared with 1938-39 the State Insurance Office had increased this section of its business—in 1948-49—by £16,556, which is 5.7 per cent.; and by 1952-53, by £181,121, which is 62.26 per cent.; while the private insurers showed an increase in 1948-49 of £247,040, an increase of 106 per cent.; and by 1952-53, £499,322, an increase of 214.38 per cent. So I suggest that, if anything, the State Insurance Office is not getting its share of this business, and I therefore cannot understand the Chief Secretary's claim that there has been a persistent public demand for an extension of State Insurance Office activities.

**Hon. C. W. D. Barker:** What is there to be frightened of in letting them do business?

**Hon. H. HEARN:** Then we come to the nine pages of his second reading speech where the Chief Secretary gives the enormous—these are his own words—the enormous, colossal and unjustifiable



profits of the insurance companies. Whoever wrote that speech, I believe it was written for a specific purpose, in order to put up a good case; but, by and large, I do not think it is altogether truthful.

In his selection, the Minister has taken about 20 companies, out of a total of approximately 200; and on the surface, it appears that he has picked all those that apparently pay high dividends, while ignoring all the other factors that must be taken into consideration when examining the earning capacity of an insurance company. In the first place, all these companies are old established, having been founded as long ago as 1720 A.D.

The Minister for the North-West: But not in Australia!

Hon. H. HEARN: That is so. But after all, we are dealing with their funds.

The Minister for the North-West: And they are dealing with ours.

Hon. H. HEARN: I will mention the companies quoted by the Chief Secretary and give the year in which each was established. The Caledonian was established in 1895, the Commercial Union in 1861, the Economic in 1901, the Legal and General in 1836, the Licence and General in 1890, the London in 1720, the New Zealand in 1859, the Northern in 1836, the Norwich Union in 1797, the Phoenix in 1782, the Provincial in 1904, the Prudential in 1848, the Royal in 1845, the Royal Exchange in 1720 and the Yorkshire in 1824.

If we could get an appreciation of the value of money in the days when those companies commenced business, and in the period through which they travelled in the days of the gold standard, I do not think we would be surprised at the reserves that they have built up, bearing in mind that the essential principle of insurance is always to treat the reserves generously because one cannot get stability without plenty of reserves in a business such as insurance. It is quite natural to suppose that in the long intervening years of successful trading, and by following a conservative policy such as is vital to successful underwriting, these companies should have been able to build up considerable reserve funds.

Another factor completely ignored by the Chief Secretary is that the majority of the insurance companies take not only fire, accident and marine business, but also life assurance; and so their results cannot in any way be compared with the results of their Australian offices which, with one exception, write general business only. So we see that, throughout the years, these companies have operated on a world-wide basis; and that in every case, with one exception, they have dealt with life assurance as well. In spite of that, in order to bolster the case for the State Insurance Office, the Chief Secretary talks of the

enormous profits made by these companies, in comparison with what has been done by the State Insurance Office.

As we examine these balance sheets, we find that they invariably disclose—they are proud of it, because it is essential for the stability of insurance—an amazing array of gilt-edged investments, flanked by an equally amazing list of reserves, just as they should, because it is the business of insurance companies to be the very embodiment of unshakable financial stability. The practice of quoting profits and dividends as a percentage of paid-up capital is most misleading as it ignores the existence and significance of reserves.

If we could bring it down to an ordinary, everyday illustration, it is surely tantamount to saying that if I have £100 in the savings bank and get interest on it, but leave the interest in the account I should not receive any interest on that next year. After all, the reserves of a company belong to the shareholders, inasmuch as the directors of the company in their wisdom place those moneys in reserve to strengthen the fabric of the company; and, of course, the reserves come from the profit made by the company in its operations.

Notwithstanding the blitz which many members in this House and another place have made on profits, I think they should state the position fairly; but to quote the results of an insurance company's business simply on its issued capital, having no regard to the many years of its existence, its world-wide ramifications, and the reserves which have been put on one side, is not stating the position fairly.

If one takes the reserves into account, one invariably finds that, for all their wealth, these insurance companies are not making any more profit than an ordinary industrial undertaking would. After all, we must recognise that reserves are an accumulation of undistributed profits—profits which shareholders were entitled to withdraw as dividends but which, as I said before, the directors in their wisdom left in the company.

If the policy of a company is to accumulate reserves by retaining part of each year's profits, it is obvious that particularly those insurance companies which go back to 1750 have had a great chance of building up reserves. If a company put aside £50,000 or £60,000 a year as reserves over that period that, with the added interest on investments, would at least give the ordinary superficial observer of the balance sheet an idea that the company was profiteering.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You would probably find that in a great many instances the reserves are considerably more than the paid-up capital.

Hon. H. HEARN: In many cases that is so. Insurance companies, in the main, are old in years, and have therefore built

up reserves such as I maintain are absolutely vital to the stability of those companies. Recent balance sheets of four leading Australian insurance companies provide an interesting study. The average age of these companies is 92 years; their paid-up capital totals £4,500,000, and their reserves £6,500,000—the point Mr. Watson was making—and the latter represent an average accretion of £73,000 per year over the 92-year period.

If dividends are quoted as 15 per cent. on paid-up capital, for example, a consideration of the reserves might alter the figure to 6 per cent, which is a very different matter. It is also highly significant that 45 per cent. of the profits are derived from income on investments. Thus the highly skilled operations of risk taking, with ramifications extending all over the world, produce only a little more than half the profits of these four companies; and that, in a general sense, forms the pattern of the history of the insurance companies which we have been told are fleecing the public. On present market values, the shares in the majority of the companies mentioned by the Minister would yield no more than could be expected from an ordinary industrial investment—and not as good as some of the industrial investments which have been revealed in the figures given during the last few years.

When introducing the measure, the Chief Secretary, who is highly conscious of the necessity for insurance companies to be sound, said—

It is felt that a concern such as an insurance office must have absolute freedom of investment of any funds available, as obviously the greater the amount of interest improves the financial position of the company, and undoubtedly redounds to the benefit of the public.

I wonder whether we have considered what history has taught us concerning insurance commitments; the liabilities and the catastrophes that can draw heavily upon the whole insurance structure of the world. Of course, the classic instance is the San Francisco earthquake. In the destruction of that city it was found that the greater part of the insurance was held by Britain; and the stability of the British companies, and their ability to meet their commitments, led to the foundation of what has been one of the greatest forms of business between Britain and the United States. Today the British insurance companies are respected in the United States because, following that catastrophe, they were able to meet their commitments when some of the American companies could not.

Another major disaster occurred in 1953, when the whole of General Motors went up in smoke. There was a 50,000,000 dollar loss. If any insurance company or body of insurance people are taking those

risks, even allowing for reinsurance, that reinsurance can only be of value provided there is a strong financial organisation accepting the business. Therefore, instead of being so nervous and critical of these profits, we should say that unless we have an insurance company with reserves, and unless it is making money, the position could be very serious from the point of view of a person who suffered loss by fire.

In this Bill there is a clause dealing with the local government insurance pool. That was discussed in another place. I would point out that under Section 7 of the State Government Insurance Office Act, it was obligatory upon the State Insurance Office to pay to the Treasury the same amount of money as it would have paid in tax on the surplus of the local government pool.

For the information of those members who may not know, I would point out that the State Insurance Office is acting in the capacity of controlling local authorities' insurance by way of a pool. On good authority, I understand that it is a separate fund, and at the end of the year any profits that are made are returned to the local authorities who subscribe to the pool.

Before I deal with this clause in the Bill, I would like to ask: What would happen if we had a major catastrophe in any section of our State? I would like the Chief Secretary to give an answer in his reply to the debate. The position today is that the State Insurance Office collects the money from the local governing bodies with, I think, the exception of Perth and Fremantle City Councils. After it has paid all its losses, the office returns to the local governing bodies whatever profit is left.

The Minister for the North-West: That is co-operative.

Hon. H. HEARN: Yes. But what is going to happen if we have a catastrophe—which we could easily have—and find that thousands and thousands of pounds are to be paid out, which would be more than what the local governing bodies have contributed? That is what I would like the Chief Secretary to answer. I presume that ultimately the taxpayer will be called upon to meet the loss.

The Chief Secretary: We will answer everything.

Hon. H. HEARN: In another place, the point was made that unless the local governing bodies were in the pool, they could not expect to get that rebate; and, for some reason or other, the Government has included a clause in this Bill dealing with that phase. It was the opinion of some people that never at any time were the local governing bodies liable. In short, the State Insurance Office should never have paid that money into the Treasury. So the advice of solicitors was

obtained and finally the matter was taken to Mr. John Hale, Q.C., and this is the answer he gave—

The writer yesterday afternoon conferred with Mr. Hale and on the assumption that the above accurately describes the method of operation of the pool he answered the questions asked as follows:—

- (a) The excess of premiums received through such a pooling scheme over losses paid and administration charges is not profit or income for the purposes of Section 7 (7) of the existing Act and should not be included in the amount upon which the equivalent of income tax is calculated under that provision.

So there was no need to insert that clause in the Bill; and if the local governing bodies are keen, they should endeavour to persuade the State Insurance Office to refund that money they have not received over the past years.

The Minister for the North-West: Queen's Counsel do differ.

Hon. H. HEARN: Yes. But before this matter was submitted to a Q.C. it received the attention of three leading solicitors in the city; and they were of the unanimous opinion that there was no need for this clause in the Bill, and that never at any time were the local governing bodies liable for the money that was paid into the Treasury.

A very glamorous picture of the New South Wales State Government Insurance Office was presented to us by the Minister. He mentioned that that concern paid bonuses to its policy-holders in addition to the reserves it had accumulated; but he omitted to say that it had made a loss of £771,695, as disclosed in the August, 1955, issue of the "Insurance and Banking Record."

The Chief Secretary: I knew you would supply that information.

Hon. H. HEARN: As a matter of interest, if we review the overall trading of the Government insurance offices in Australia and in New Zealand, we find that the aggregate loss made by them as at the 30th June, 1954, was £608,752.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: How did they make up their deficiencies?

Hon. H. HEARN: In this regard I again quote from the "Insurance and Banking Record" and submit the following details of the position as at the 30th June, 1954:—

	Loss. £	Profit. £
Victoria Government Accident Office	35,810	
Victorian Government Motor Car Office	96,103	
N.S.W. Government Office	771,695	
New Zealand—Fire Office	21,684	
New Zealand Accident Office		8,540
Tasmania—Government Office		61,000
Queensland—Government Office		247,000

So from those figures it can be seen that the overall loss of all these Government offices was £608,752. In regard to Queensland, I would remind members that that State has the monopoly of workers' compensation insurance. However, if one studies the rates that employers are paying in Queensland, it will be readily understood why the Government Insurance Office in that State has made this profit.

There are many other aspects of the Bill that could be discussed; but as there will be other speakers, I feel that they should cover the ground. I now want to work back and mention how I started. I come into this House as a believer in private enterprise.

The Minister for the North-West: Very private.

Hon. H. HEARN: Often I was not in accord with my party colleagues in regard to their attitude on the question of Government utilities and the interference by the Government in private enterprise. I believe that anything a Government does in the way of business cannot be done as efficiently as private enterprise can do it.

The Chief Secretary: What are you frightened of then?

Hon. H. HEARN: The State Insurance Office in this State—or, for that matter, in any other State—has a tremendous advantage over ordinary insurance companies. For example, consider the enormous amount of business that must go to the State Insurance Office in this State from all the Government utilities. Everything they can put through the State Insurance Office naturally goes there. That business finds its way to the State Insurance Office without any question whatsoever. Therefore, the cost of securing that business is infinitesimal in comparison with the costs incurred by ordinary private insurance companies which have to send inspectors and travellers out to secure new business.

Under no circumstances can anyone say that a Government concern can operate and work in fair competition with private enterprise. The State Insurance Office has done a remarkable job in regard to the insurance scheme for schoolchildren. A similar scheme was commenced by some of the private insurance companies in the secondary schools; and with commendable foresight the State Insurance Office approached the Parents and Citizens' Association to inaugurate a comprehensive insurance scheme for schoolchildren, and today it is a wonderful success. However, I want to point out that a similar scheme is in operation in the Eastern States, with exactly the same rates, which is handled by a private insurance company.

The Chief Secretary: But they would not look at it here.

**Hon. H. HEARN:** I will give the reason why the private insurance companies could not look at it here. By the time they could go into this scheme, the State Insurance Office had secured the bulk of the business offering in the principal educational centres. All that would have been left to the private insurance companies was one or two secondary schools. It is an axiom in insurance that the more the risk can be spread, the cheaper the premium becomes. The State Insurance Office has done a good job; but in exactly the same way, a private insurance company in the Eastern States has done the same.

**The Chief Secretary:** My information was that the local companies would not come into the scheme.

**Hon. H. HEARN:** The Chief Secretary should investigate the position, and he will find that that is not quite correct. As I said at the beginning, this Bill cuts right across the principles which I was elected to Parliament to protect; and because of that, I am going to vote against the second reading.

**HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.59]:** I will speak briefly on the Bill. We have had similar measures presented to us on four or five occasions previously, and I will raise the same objection to this Bill that I raised against the others that were considered by us in the past—namely, that the cost of any disaster that will occur in this State will be met from public funds, for the simple reason that the capital is not behind the State Government Insurance Office. As I told members before, half of the capital of that office belongs to the silicosis fund. It is not to be used for normal insurance business. I for one would object very strongly if it were used for that purpose. If that office had huge resources available to meet heavy losses in case of a major catastrophe, then I would support the extension of the business. I would not place any public funds in jeopardy.

**The Chief Secretary:** You want the private companies to have a monopoly.

**Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** It is not a monopoly. I am saying that any big pay-out for losses would fall on the public of this State. It is not fair to ask the public to accept that responsibility and to use public funds which should go to other avenues.

**The Minister for the North-West:** How did the private insurance companies commence?

**Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** With private capital which was built up over the years.

**The Minister for the North-West:** They started from scratch.

**Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** They took great care of their risks.

**The Minister for the North-West:** You will not allow the State Government Insurance Office to do the same thing.

**Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** The State Government Insurance Office will reach the stage where it will get a monopoly in certain lines of insurance. The Minister himself admits that. As the Government proposes to make the State Government Insurance Office a monopoly trading concern, run on the same lines as other State trading concerns, I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

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

## BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [6.31]:** As the Chief Secretary said, this is a small Bill; but there is one reason for its introduction, and one only; it was conceived in the minds of Labour Party members. What the Labour Party hopes to gain from it I cannot understand.

**The Chief Secretary:** We do not want to gain anything, but to give people their rights.

**Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** The Chief Secretary said its purpose is to give people their rights. If there had been a great outcry in this State for the right to vote at Legislative Council elections, then the Bill before us would have been justified. But let us look at the overall position.

**Hon. C. W. D. Barker:** Have a look at the justice of the principle involved.

**Hon. N. E. BAXTER:** I shall refer to the justice of it in a few minutes. Let us look at the overall position. Take the number of people who are eligible for Legislative Council enrolment and the number of those who enrol voluntarily. I refer to those people who, of their own accord, without being approached by any interested party, obtain enrolment cards, fill them in, and return them to the Electoral Office. The percentage is very small. It would not be more than 20 per cent. of those eligible to be enrolled.

As members are aware, the majority of enrolment cards received at the Electoral Office are obtained from organisations or from individuals who make personal appeals to electors to be placed on the roll. Each political organisation has endeavoured to build up the rolls by approaching those eligible. If there had been a huge outcry for this Bill, there would be nearly a 100 per cent. enrolment for the Legislative Council. The fact is that there is not.

**Take my own province:** The possible enrolment is 15,000 to 20,000. In a territory of 22,000 square miles, fairly well settled—and some of it closely settled—there are fewer than 7,000 on the roll out of a possible 15,000 or 20,000. That shows how

great the outcry is to enlarge the franchise for the Legislative Council. At present, the qualification for Legislative Council enrolment is a very minor one. When one considers the amount a householder has to pay in rent annually—£17, or 6s. 7d. per week—

The Minister for the North-West: Does a householder have to pay that?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: No. A householder whose rental is valued at 6s. 7d. a week is eligible for enrolment. That is how broad the franchise is. Yet an attempt is being made to broaden it and make a farce of the whole position by bringing in the wives of householders who have to pay the small sum of 6s. 7d. per week in rental value. If this legislation would do the State any good, and if there had been a great demand by the wives of householders and freeholders to get on the roll, I would have agreed to the Bill. But what are we doing? We are creating a situation where organisations are chasing people to get them on to the rolls; and, after they have been enrolled, chasing them to vote.

The Minister for the North-West: That applies only in your electorate.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Members representing metropolitan provinces do not have to chase around the countryside. If they had as large a district as some of the country provinces to cover, they would have a very big job on their hands. When 80 per cent. of those who today are qualified for enrolment appear on the rolls, that will be the time to decide to widen the franchise by giving wives of householders and freeholders the right to vote. By no stretch of imagination can it be said at present that there is any justification for widening the franchise. The aim of the Bill is adult franchise for the Legislative Council.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What is wrong with that?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There is a lot wrong with it. There is this wrong with it: We shall finish up with two Houses of Parliament elected by the same electors, and one House will be a duplicate of the other. The aim will then be to abolish one House and operate with one only.

The Minister for the North-West: Follow the example of Canberra.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Or follow Queensland!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If members think we should follow Queensland, then they should bring that about.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I for one would support the abolition of one House. I declare it now: This House is a waste of public funds.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: You want to abolish this House?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I object very strongly to an interjection of that sort: That this House is a waste of public funds.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Of course it is!

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It is incumbent on the hon. member to withdraw that statement. This House is by no means a waste of public funds. It gives protection not only to business people but to the workers whom the hon. member is supposed to represent. If he looks back over the years, he will see that this House, in workers' compensation—

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill before the House.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I was attempting to do that. Even if I have to get away from the Bill, I must object to any member casting a slur on this House.

The Minister for the North-West: He is entitled to his opinion.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: He may be; but he is not entitled to express it in this House.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You want a restriction on freedom of speech?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I say again emphatically that when members opposite can assure me that there are 80 per cent. of eligible voters on the roll of the Legislative Council, that will be the time to consider this Bill, which seeks to widen the franchise to include the wives of householders and freeholders. At present, it is a complete farce. The Bill is introduced for political reasons, and I cannot at this stage support the second reading.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [6.12]: This Bill can be considered from two angles, one being the demand for an amendment to the Act.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: To the principle.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I can make my own speech. I do not want anyone to give a second reason. I defy any member to convince me that there is any demand for the Bill, outside the political party supporting it.

The Minister for the North-West: I have repeatedly heard a demand for a wider franchise.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I say there is none. I have had more years of experience in electioneering than the Minister.

The Minister for the North-West: In a particular area.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I was Leader of the Opposition for nine years in this State, and my own electorate played a very unimportant part in those days. I have travelled from the north right down to the south of this State electioneering.

The Minister for the North-West: Only once on electioneering.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: During that period, there has not been a demand for an alteration of the franchise of this House. Some members come to this House with the high ideals of making their position more important and attempting to bring in new ideas that are unacceptable to the electors generally.

The Minister for the North-West: To bring in democratic ideas.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If we pass this Bill, the womenfolk will be compelled to vote. Even today, when there is compulsory voting for the Legislative Assembly, it is most difficult to get the women to vote. Members have manned polling booths and kept records of those who have voted, and they have sent cars for those who would not come voluntarily.

For my part, I do not want to see people being forced to do something against their will unless it be in the interests of the country. The present occupants of this House, the voting power, and its high standards, should not be interfered with. I would change some of the present members forthwith if I were able to do so, but I would not change all the members from the Labour Party. I think most of them have an intelligent outlook. But unfortunately, in the party room, someone may suggest new ideas; and, because more than half of those present are in favour, the rest, like a mob of sheep, have to follow.

The Minister for the North-West: Does not that apply in the Country Party?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This legislation will not do any good. All it will do is duplicate the vote of householders.

The Minister for the North-West: Whom do you consider the most important in the household?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That has nothing to do with the Bill, which refers to the widening of the franchise for the Legislative Council; and all that it will achieve will be to give an extra vote to a household.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

*[The Deputy President took the Chair.]*

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [7.30]: I have listened closely and with much interest to what members have said concerning this Bill. It is not merely a matter of whether people want this to happen—and I think they do—but there is a principle involved which is very important. As many people have said, qualifications for the franchise for this Chamber are not very severe. An occupant of

a house with a rental value of £17 a year can secure a vote; and on today's values, that is not much.

But the point is that the spouse of the occupant of such a home has done her share and has stood by her husband through thick and thin to help him to obtain that stake in the country which enables him to vote for the Upper House; and in those circumstances, surely she is entitled to participate in the benefits he enjoys. Surely she is entitled to share his privileges!

Hon. H. Hearn: Do you share everything with your wife?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes, everything! That is the most important factor to which consideration should be given. A man enters into a partnership with his wife. She stands by him in everything. She is one of the main influences in enabling him to secure a stake in the country. Why should she not therefore share in the vote available through his having that stake?

It has been said that it is necessary almost to force people to be enrolled; and members have stated that if we could get 80 per cent. of the people on to the roll, they would be willing to accept this measure. I would point out to members that in the North-West 100 per cent. of the people who are entitled to be enrolled have their names on the roll, and we do not have to force them to enrol or to go to the poll. We get one of the highest percentages of votes in the State.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: There are only a handful of people there.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Possibly. But whose fault is that? We have been fighting for the development of the North for years. Whose fault is it that we have only a handful of people in that area? It is not ours. Everything we try to do for the benefit of the North is knocked back.

Hon. H. Hearn: By your Government.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Our Government has done more for the North than any Government which has been in power. But that is getting away from the issue. This Bill is intended to give a vote to the wife of the occupier of a house or the wife of anybody who is qualified to vote for the Legislative Council. It is a fair thing to ask for, and I intend to support the Bill.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [7.35]: This measure may be, as Mr. Baxter said, a hardy annual. The hon. member also said it was the policy of the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Labour Party. That is so. It is the No. 1 plank of our platform; and in order that nobody will be in any doubt about the matter, I would point out that that plank provides for compulsory enrolment and compulsory

voting for the Legislative Council in a manner similar to that applying to the Legislative Assembly. I might answer Mr. Baxter further by adding that this is sought with a view to bringing about the ultimate abolition of the Council.

I interjected tonight, probably rather rudely; but my interjection was sincere. Mr. Baxter challenged us to say what members of the Labour Party would do with this House if the party had a majority here.

Hon. H. Hearn: Possibly the same as was done in New South Wales.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The time has not yet come. We have not a majority in this House.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: And you are happy about it, too.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The hon. member is.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would ask the hon. member to keep to the subject matter of the Bill.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The subject matter of the Bill so far as I can interpret the measure—and I think I have as much understanding of it as any other member of the Chamber—is the enlargement of the franchise for this House.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: The broadening of the franchise.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Very well, the broadening of the franchise, seeing that I have to be educated. When members challenge what the Labour Party is trying to do in this regard, I assure them that I stand here with a clear conscience, and have no hesitation in repeating what I said on the public platform before I was elected, that when the time comes—and it is not here yet; and all this is going down in "Hansard" and I have never yet refuted anything that I have been reported in "Hansard" as having said—I will be glad to move for the abolition of this House, because I feel that this House is a waste of public funds.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Mr. Deputy President—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Will Mr. Lavery please resume his seat?

Hon. H. K. Watson: The Standing Orders provide that no member shall reflect upon this House. I submit that for any member to say that this House is a waste of public funds is to make a reflection on the House, and the statement should be withdrawn.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr. Lavery.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I do not wish to show any disrespect to members. I was referring to the position of this House with respect to legislation. Perhaps I am a little one-eyed—

Hon. H. Hearn: Only a little?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Perhaps I am a little one-eyed when I fight for the right of the wives of householders to have a vote in respect of the election of members to this place. But I realise that in the 50-odd years that this House has been in existence, it has never had a Labour majority. Even if I have to be ordered from this place tonight, I shall maintain that at no time has a Labour Government had control in this State, but it has been subject to the whims and wishes of those who have been in opposition to it. I say that the time has come when we must—

Hon. H. Hearn: So you think that this Bill would secure the Labour Party a majority?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The time has come for us to put up some fight to broaden the franchise for this House. The whole of the opposition to the Labour Party's policy in that regard is due to the fact that, if it were given effect to, the voting power of those in opposition to the Government would be affected.

Over a long period of years—in fact, ever since 1915, when I was quite a lad—I have always worked at Legislative Council elections; and as far back as I can remember, the aim has been to have returned as many Labour members as possible so that at some time a Labour Government might be in control of the State instead of being in control only of the Legislative Assembly. Our hope has been greatly to improve the franchise so that the whole of the people of the State, and not just a section, would have a vote for this place.

We are at present celebrating Education Week, and I have had the privilege of attending three official openings during the last three days. I have heard the Director of Education speak of the education of the people, and how it has evolved from the days prior to the turn of the century. Surely the people of this State have become better educated with regard to what is required in the Legislature of this country! If they feel that they have not sufficient voting power, who are we to say that the franchise should not be broadened?

I would not have spoken on this matter had it not been for the challenge very rudely thrown out by Mr. Baxter regarding the policy of the Australian Labour Party. I am very proud that this matter is the No. 1 item on the platform of the party, and I declare myself here and now in favour of it. I know I am wasting my words, and that before the Bill was printed it was the intention of some that this measure would never pass this place. That, however, does not prevent me from having the right to express an opinion on behalf of my electors. I would wish for the Bill to be passed, but I know that it will not be.

**HON. J. D. TEAHAN** (North-East) [7.43]: I cannot see anything wrong with giving the wife of an elector already enrolled the right to vote.

**Hon. J. McI. Thomson:** Does this Bill do that?

**Hon. J. D. TEAHAN:** Yes. It is said that there is no demand for this right on the part of women. We do not know what the demand is. There are many matters in respect of which there is no apparent demand, but for which a demand nevertheless exists. For instance, we do not have men and women demanding to be able to speak on the Esplanade or the Domain or in Hyde Park. However, each and every one of us would vote for the right of any person to speak at those places, and would jealously preserve that right, just as we would seek to preserve the right of free speech.

There may be no demand by women for the right to vote for the Legislative Council, but there is nothing wrong in giving them that right. It has been said that the wife is only a duplicate voice of her husband. I am certain that is not correct.

**The Chief Secretary:** It is the other way round is it not?

**Hon. J. D. TEAHAN:** Yes. Sometimes it can be said that the husband is the duplicate voice of the wife. In many homes the wife is the manager. Sometimes husband and wife jointly manage the home. How many businesses are jointly controlled by husband and wife? The wife has as much right to make a choice as the husband.

If we study certain elections that have taken place in Western Australia in recent months, we can see that women have the right to vote and be candidates. I can mention one—Dorothy Tangney. I have heard many women say, "No matter what my husband thinks, I will vote for a certain lady." There are other women prominent in Western Australia, but I will not mention their names. Members know who they are. They have their opinions and their followers. While we may say there is no apparent demand, there is no harm in giving people the right to vote by allowing them to be enrolled. As the vote is voluntary and not compulsory, I suggest that we let them have the vote if they so desire. I intend to support the second reading.

**HON. G. BENNETTS** (South-East) [7.46]: A Bill similar to this is introduced into the House each year in an endeavour to bring about a fairer control of this Chamber. In my opinion the Bill does not go far enough. I would like to see compulsory voting brought in.

**Hon. Sir Charles Latham:** You can move an amendment to that effect.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** Everyone would then be compelled to vote for the Parliament which represents the country. That would be just as fair to one party as the other. Why should we be frightened of compulsory voting?

**Hon. Sir Charles Latham:** We introduced it.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** If this House was wiped out, the State would be saved £100,000 a year.

**Hon. H. Hearn:** It would be a great disappointment to you.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** No. I earned my living before I came here, and I could do it again.

**Hon. J. McI. Thomson:** You were younger then.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** Perhaps. But I would not be frightened to go out and do some good healthy work again. The money saved could be well spent on hospitals or institutions for the aged people, or some similar project. Mr. Lavery said that we have never had a Labour Government although Labour has been in power.

**The Chief Secretary:** Not in power; in office.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** Whatever is passed in the Legislative Assembly is challenged and thrown out in this House. Unless legislation is suitable to the Liberal and Country Parties, it is a waste of time passing it. I am surprised at members debarring their wives, or the wives of property owners or the men who pay the rent, from having the right to vote. I heard one member say the other night that insufficient Press publicity is given to what takes place in Parliament. That is because the people are debarred from voting, and they take no interest in it.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** That is not correct.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** One member said that some time back he had a newspaper in which a page was devoted to the speeches made in this House.

**Hon. H. Hearn:** That was before you came here.

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** Not before I came to this State. Today not a line is given to the proceedings in this Chamber. The House is considered not to be important, but useless. It is useful only for the destruction of any policy which the Labour Government puts up.

**Hon. H. Hearn:** What rot!

**Hon. G. BENNETTS:** I am surprised at members voting against the measure. When I saw the Bill on the notice paper, I thought I would see members rushing in to support it so as to give to their wives and relations the right to vote. One member said there was no demand for this



legislation. I know that during the recent elections we were asked whether we would vote to abolish the Legislative Council.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: What did you say?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I said I would. I would vote for its abolition tomorrow. If it is good enough for anyone to live on a pension, it will do me.

Hon. H. Hearn: You can retire at any time.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I get my living from the salary I receive here; I am not like some other members who have a big income as well. With me it is one man one job.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the hon. member to keep to the subject matter of the Bill.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: If everyone in the House was on the same footing there might be a different outlook and the womenfolk might be given an equal right to vote.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [7.50]: I am at a loss to understand some of the reasons given by members for not supporting the measure. I can recall that when the Liberal and Country Parties were on the hustings in 1947, it was stated by them that if they were elected to govern they would broaden the Legislative Council franchise. The Liberal-Country Party coalition Government brought down a Bill after that election, so that it could say to the people, "We made a promise and we brought down a Bill, but the Legislative Council refused to pass it." But they did not say who the members of the Legislative Council were. When the Bill came here, the very people who subscribed to the policy put forward on the hustings, voted against it.

Subsequently, when Bills were introduced by the Government I have the honour to support, we were told that if they had been introduced in this Chamber they might have had a chance of receiving support; but because they were introduced in the Assembly and sent here, they were not given support; or that was the reason given for not supporting them. The present Bill has been introduced into this Chamber by the Chief Secretary, who is the Leader of the House, and all it provides is that the wife of a freeholder or householder shall be entitled to be enrolled on the Legislative Council roll, and may, if she so desires, exercise a vote in the Legislative Council elections.

The argument has been raised that these women will be compelled to vote. Members say they do not believe in making the vote compulsory. The Bill provides nothing of the sort; it merely gives these women the right to be enrolled and to exercise the vote if they so desire. There is no compulsion.

We have listened to a great deal of debate during which all sorts of reasons have been advanced as to why the Bill should not be passed. We have heard it said that it has been introduced merely for political purposes. The member who made that remark must be imbued with political bigotry; otherwise he would not make the suggestion.

The State is divided into ten provinces, and in those provinces there are people of all political complexions. They are freeholders and householders, and when they go to the poll, their vote is taken by means of a secret ballot and no one knows how they vote. To talk about the political advantage that would be obtained is ridiculous. We ask that a responsible section of the community—the wives and mothers of the families of the State; and be it remembered that the family life of a country is the basic foundation of the country—shall have this right. Yet members continue to deny them the right to be enrolled and exercise a vote.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the person who is standing in the Gallery to resume his seat.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: We have listened to a lot of reasons given by members tonight but no tangible reason has been put forward in opposition to the measure other than that members have said that it will be compulsory for people to go to the poll. I have already pointed out that that is not so.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Who said that?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: It merely gives them the right to have their names placed on the roll and to exercise the vote if they so desire. I am at a loss to understand why members should object when the only thing we are doing by the Bill is to give to a responsible section of the community the right to have a say in the legislation that is dealt with in this House.

On motion by Hon. R. F. Hutchison, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—BANK HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [7.58]: I wondered whether the Minister moved this item forward because he had a gallery for the occasion. If so, I compliment him.

The Chief Secretary: I always like to meet the requirements of people.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I wish the Minister would meet the requests I put up on behalf of my electors. I am not going to hesitate to say that I disagree with the Bill, and the reason is that it seeks to give something to a favoured few. I

have the greatest respect for the bank officials generally, but I say they have the easiest work of any service that I am aware of.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: How would you know that?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am perhaps not as unintelligent as is the hon. member.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: How would you know?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do know. I happen to have some friends in a bank, and frequently they leave the bank at four o'clock in the afternoon because they have by then completed their work. I am aware that many others are less fortunate and have to work their full hours.

The Chief Secretary: I know many people who play golf during the afternoon.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They are a privileged few. I hope the Chief Secretary is not one.

Hon. H. Hearn: He is hoping to be.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know that we should pick out one section of the community. The banks and bank officers serve a useful purpose in the business affairs of any country. If we are going to allow the banks to close, then let us do the job completely and close all the business houses. I remind members, and the listeners in the gallery, that every time we do this sort of thing, we depreciate the value of our money. Let us understand what wealth is. It is not money paid out to people, but the production of the soil and the manual work of the individual. The more we work and the more we produce, the wealthier we become.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Some of us.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: After listening to the hon. member's speech last night, I am not the slightest bit interested in her interjections. Those who wish only to enjoy themselves, and are not prepared to work and produce, are of little use to this country. I have had experience of it and I know what I am talking about. Had it not been for the people who went out into the back parts of Western Australia with me in the early days, to carve out a future for this State, we would be in a much worse position today.

Do not let us forget that in those days people did not obtain much help from the banks. The struggle was severe. Immediately the markets drop—and they are dropping today—the people suffer. In those days people were earning only a few shillings per day; whereas today they are earning pounds.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You do not want to see those days again.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not. But I do not like to see people wanting to do less work for more money. When that happens, the State suffers; and if there is one section of the community which ought to know that, it is the bank officials. They are here tonight to listen to the discussion; and I hope my few remarks will make them realise that they are the people who ought to have some thought for the future welfare of our country—a lot more thought than they seem to have. This country, which has only a small population, offers the best opportunities in the world. I have travelled a good deal, and I do not know of any other country which offers more opportunity for the teeming millions of Chinese, Japanese, Indians and Indonesians.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I agree.

*[The President resumed the Chair.]*

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Those people would like to take over this country; I am as sure of that as I am that my name is Latham.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I have been telling you that all the time.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Then I hope the hon. member will do his best to ensure that we attract to this country a population of our own kind; and see that those people are given an opportunity of providing for themselves and for the wealth of this country.

The Chief Secretary: If the banks close on Saturday mornings those people will not come here!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We will not attract the right type of people if we hold out as a bait the idea of fewer hours of work and more money. These bank people are not helping the country by not wanting to work on Saturday mornings.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Are they going to work fewer hours because of it?

Hon. J. D. Teahan: They will work the same hours.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know from friends of mine in banks that if they complete their work by four o'clock they go home, because there is nothing else to do. This Bill is not a Government measure. It was brought down by a private individual.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: He hopes to go back to the bank.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes; if he is readmitted, he will join the bank after the next election. I want to impress upon the people of this country that we are not going to help Western Australia by having fewer hours of labour and by doing less work for the country. Probably this speech sounds like a lecture to members. But I have grown old in the service

of this country, and I am anxious—and I hope everybody realises it—to make sure that everyone is aware of the great responsibility he has to this country today.

When I was a young fellow, we had a population of a little over 200,000 people in this State; and by a gradual process, we have built it up. Today we are envied by all other parts of the world. Many people in other places are struggling to get a crust to eat. We are educating the representatives of those countries because they are sent to our university. Those representatives are returning to their own lands and telling the people how the women and children here do not have to go out to the paddy fields and plant rice. No one can tell me that these people are not sufficiently intelligent to be able to educate the masses of their country and to build for the day when they will be able to come here and we, with our small population, will not be able to hold them off.

Western Australia is worse off than the other States because of its isolation. What was going to happen when the Japanese were advancing day after day during the last war? I was a member of a deputation which represented the Government of this State—although I was in Opposition—and we were sent to Canberra to interview the Prime Minister and to ask him to arrange for some defence for Western Australia. If it was not forthcoming we had no earthly hope of holding our State.

We are misleading these young people. We are making them believe that by having easier times, more enjoyment, more pleasure, and more money to spend they are doing good for themselves. They are not. They are not doing any good for themselves or for the country, and I appeal to the public generally to appreciate that fact. We do not have to work long hours as was the case when I was a lad, and when the Minister was a lad. We did not have a 44-hour or a 48-hour week.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: We do not have to live with that forever.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Things have changed since those days; but let us consolidate as we change. We had a diatribe from Mrs. Hutchison last night about all the poverty in this State. What makes poverty? I have tried to explain it. It is simply that we produce goods and are unable to sell them. We have to distribute the wealth among the people; and I beg members to have a saner outlook and remember that we have a great responsibility. Surely to goodness our men did not go away to fight for this country with the idea that we should carry on and eventually hand it over to someone else!

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Some of the bank officers went too.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know they did. I do not want people to be led astray. The people of this land must be prepared to work so that we can hold this country for our future population. A little while ago, the Minister said that a Bill might be introduced along these lines. It was carried in another place by one vote. Another place might be called an elective House, or the House of the people; but this House has a different standard from others—

The Chief Secretary: So we have found out.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: —inasmuch as we have the property qualification.

Hon. H. Hearn: The Chief Secretary would like to stay here.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This House represents the stability of the State, the wealth of the State—

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It represents about one-third of the people.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: —the properties of the State, and the industries of the State. Legislation introduced here is given careful consideration, and we can boast that this State has some of the best industrial legislation in Australia. We are in advance of other States of the Commonwealth; and I ask these young folk in the banks—I am sure the older ones do not want this Bill, unless the Minister is right, and I am wrong—to realise what they are doing. Whenever I have been to see a bank official I have always done so when the banks were open.

Hon. H. Hearn: The Minister was talking about business tycoons.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The banks are open to the public at 10 a.m. and close at 5 p.m.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They close at 3 p.m. to the public.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In my young days all calculations had to be done by the brain, but in these days they are done by mechanical means.

The Chief Secretary: That is why the workers should get greater benefits.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Will the banks reduce their staffs when they introduce these mechanical calculators? Every day there are advertisements for people with industrial or scientific knowledge. People who work in the banks are highly educated, and they could fill those positions. Today we are not able to advance as we ought to do because the banks are overstaffed. Let some of these people attend the university and qualify for some of the highly-paid positions that are advertised.

Do not let us mislead people; do not let us think that we in this State are wealthy, more particularly today when we are about to have a recession. We should not make any mistakes; I am quite sure about the statement I make.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You have been saying that for three years.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know that we have some of last year's wheat, and some from the year before that, which we have not been able to sell.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is true.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This year it looks as though we will have a record harvest. That wheat is still not sold. It is worth £ s. d. if we sell it; but if we do not, and it lies in the bins, it is worth nothing. That is where the money to pay these people comes from. I beg them to remember that they are extremely lucky to be in their present position; there are many in other parts of the world who are much less fortunate. Only recently I returned from England, and Saturday morning is the busiest time of the week for banks in the City of London and elsewhere.

The Chief Secretary: Friday night used to be the busiest time here.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know that; but we do not want to work all the time. In Tasmania, all shops used to be open until 11 o'clock at night. But I do not think we should cater for the public to that extent. I think business houses should be open at reasonable hours. I have been to the savings bank on a Saturday morning—I understand that another savings bank is to be started soon—and I have found it to be the busiest time of the week for that bank. I ask members to go there and see for themselves. People who are paid on Fridays bank their money on Saturdays, and I think we should commend these people for their thrifty habits.

In the paper this morning, I noticed that in many States bank deposits have been reduced. But in Western Australia they have increased, and we want to encourage that thrift. What will happen if people are not able to bank their savings?

I do not want to cast any reflection on Parliament, but a betting Bill was passed, and s.p. betting shops are now legal. They are a wonderful attraction to some people who are easily tempted. I do not know whether they bet in a moment of weakness; but it seems to be an attraction for some—it attracts them like honey does flies. I had something to say about poker machines and I cannot understand why people put shillings into them. Some must try their luck. I cannot understand it; but if people had an opportunity to bank their pay on Saturday mornings, less would be spent on betting and so on. I should say that more banking

transactions are carried out on Saturday morning now than on any other two days of the week.

The Chief Secretary: What have you done for enjoyment all your life?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have enjoyed myself by serving the State for 33 years.

The PRESIDENT: Order! People in the gallery must remain silent.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I hope that for the last few years of my life in this House, my contributions to debates will be of some benefit to the State. This is not a question to be laughed at.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: The people of Western Australia are grateful to you.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Some of them are; I know that.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: A lot of them are. That is why you have been here for so long.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Probably I have as many friends as any other person in Western Australia. It is not because of what I say, but because of what I do. I hope I shall continue to have that friendship.

While I am anxious to give the young folk as much pleasure as they want, they should not ask for something in excess of what it is possible for this State to contribute. We must accept our responsibility in building this country, and there is only one way we can do so, and that is by work. It cannot be done by refusing to give the people a service that they want; and the people in this country want that service on Saturday morning, just as those in any other country of the world require it. Some members have spoken about Tasmania and the conditions that apply there. We should not emulate the bad habits of other States and countries, but we should continue to lead the way in our legislation as we have done in the past.

Today the young people are most fortunate, inasmuch as they have modern accounting machines to help them in their work; it is not necessary for them to check figures over and over again as was done in the past. My message to the young people is: Be content; service counts more than anything else, whether a man be an engine driver, a tractor driver, or in any other vocation. We must build our structure from that foundation until the State itself is built solidly enough to be able to withstand any attacks that are made from outside. The freedom of this country is a most valuable possession; and that possession is given to every one of us.

Hon. J. D. Teahan: Is this a mission to the nation speech?

**Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM:** Not at all. It is merely to tell these young people and old people that they are today carrying the responsibility, and they must continue to shoulder it. They will not be able to do it by saying that they want more free hours for enjoyment. Today we must consider what service we can render to the country, so that we can build it up and advance; so that we will not be the object of jealousy of other countries by having a great area with a small population.

There is a problem ahead of the country; and I ask the young folk to give a little thought to its future and to the responsibility they are carrying in its building. I do hope that they will not look back with a pang of regret if the day should come—and I hope it never will—when we are serfs of the people of other countries whom, I regret to say, we look upon as being inferior to ourselves.

I cannot support the Bill, because I do not think the time is opportune to ask for this consideration. I would again request the young folk to carry a little more responsibility, and to join with us in giving some solidarity to this State.

**HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban)** [8.19]: I have listened to Sir Charles Latham with interest, and I propose to support the Bill. It is not a party measure. I support it because I will support anything that helps us towards a better way of life. The fact that the bank officers are asking for Saturday morning off is setting an example. I hope they will achieve their end, and that the House will accept the measure.

The situation will adjust itself as it did when the shop assistants first asked for early closing on Friday night. I well remember the outcry there was at that time, when people said, "We cannot live without Friday night shopping. The housewives will not be able to get in their goods; and the world will become chaotic if the shops are closed on Friday night." The shops were closed on Friday night, and there is more order and ease to be found now on that night.

I was in Tasmania for a few months and I found that everything there closes on Friday night. I also found that there is far more happiness and enjoyment among the families in that State. It is possible to plan to go out; there are better gardens; and people indulge in all sorts of activities that promote the good of the community.

It does not matter how old-fashioned Sir Charles Latham likes to be. I have kept on telling him that we live in a changing era. What is the good of science and the brains of man if, after inventing machines to make work lighter, we are

to refuse to permit a certain section to enjoy the fruits of those inventions and have more time off?

There are more things than merely working in a job. We work for a livelihood; and if science is able to make things easier, surely the ordinary people—who cannot enjoy certain things which are secured through wealth—should be permitted this small amenity! It would be for the good of the nation generally, quite apart from the angle of earning one's bread and butter.

I have gone through the same times as Sir Charles Latham. I remember occasions when one had to work from morning to night; indeed, as long as one had an ounce of strength, one was required to continue to work. I have often seen my father come home and be too tired to enjoy a meal. I do not desire those days to return. I do not think it is necessary to work longer hours to build our nation. Shorter hours and more amenities in the community will provide better living, and I will continue to support anyone that promotes that thought.

There are many different categories of workers who enjoy a five-day week, and that is all this Bill seeks to provide. We will be told that while the shops open on Saturday, the banks must open. A start must be made somewhere; and when anyone makes that start, I will support him. Mr. Baxter suggested that the measure sought shorter hours. That is completely false.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** It is not. You tell me how they are going to do it in five days.

**Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** How do other avenues of employment do it?

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** They do not.

**Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** A reference was made about the difficulty of workers being able to bank their money because they are paid on a Friday night. What is wrong with being paid on Thursday, as is done in Tasmania? It would then be possible for them to bank their money on Friday. If businesses were open till 2 o'clock on Sunday morning there would still be people coming in requiring something. This will make life orderly, and these people are entitled to it. I cannot see anything wrong with it.

When I was a girl, it was only the bank people, and what we termed the white-collar workers, that were able to play tennis. It was something set aside for the favoured few. I never learnt tennis; but my young sister was a champion because she went to school and was taught how to play. Would members say that she or I had the better youth? I want everyone to have a good youth, because that is the time one enjoys oneself, and it is

that which leads to the making of good parents and citizens, and enables one to meet the inevitable responsibilities associated with family life. Overtime is not paid on a daily basis except on Saturdays from 12 o'clock and on Sundays and bank holidays.

One of the wildest statements I can remember hearing, was made by Mr. Diver. He referred to the bank clerks as the aristocrats of the white-collar workers. I wonder why there should be these social divisions at all. We could not live without the rubbish man coming in to collect the rubbish; and somebody must wash the decks in the navy. There is dignity in labour, and there is nothing wrong with that.

Hon. L. C. Diver: What is wrong with my statement?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The hon. member said that the bank clerks were the aristocrats of the white-collar workers, with no economic training; which I thought was in very poor taste. He also said that they joined the banks in order to be bank managers; to sit with their feet under a desk and dictate without any conscience to the poor hard-working farmer. The farmer works for himself and pleases himself as to what he does.

One of the demands for this Bill stems from the loss of status. Nearly all the white-collar workers work five days a week, and have caught up with the bank clerks on the question of holidays, pensions, etc. Until recently, bank officers had one week's holiday per year more than other workers. This has been caught up with.

The idea of Mr. Diver that bank managers are inexperienced clerks dictating to divinely-inspired farmers is completely false. Bank managers are appointed from bank officers of many years' experience; and that experience is generally gained in many regions of the State. Their function is financial advice, just as that of the farmers is farming. No bank manager would presume to tell a farmer how to plant his wheat; but he would be able to advise him as to how big a crop he should grow. Banks desire financially stable customers, and bank managers aim at preventing farmers doing the stupid things so many of them would do if left to themselves.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: About one-third of the bank employees are women. They are mostly young people; and after a few years, they marry. But there is a large staff turn-over of women because more of them leave to take up jobs in which they would only work five days a week. More of them seek other avenues of employment, than get married. These days the young people are members of

clubs and they go out to play hockey and other sport. It is necessary for them to be on the playing field by one o'clock on Saturday afternoon; and if they do not leave the bank before one o'clock it is not possible for them to arrive in time, which means that they upset the match and are left out of the team. I am sure nobody will say that these young people should not have their sport on Saturday afternoon. Or would they?

Hon. H. Hearn: If work interferes with pleasure, cut out work!

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The ordinary working hours of officers, exclusive of meal hours, shall not exceed 40 in any one week. That is the award. All these people desire is to work those 40 hours in five days.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Whether it is convenient to the public or not.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Mr. Griffith complained that this is a political move, and that Mr. Johnson had written to the Bunbury bank officers saying that Labour was their only hope of getting this reform.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What did they do?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: His complaint is proof of the truth of that statement. Is it only Labour people who are supporting the Bill, or will members opposite vote for it?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You do not know what you are supporting, half the time.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That is not correct.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is correct.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The hon. member is on the spot now.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Not at all.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I say this, and say it advisedly and sincerely as a woman and a mother, that the pressure of life today is causing serious nervous reaction to the people who have to work. There are more nervous breakdowns nowadays than ever before, and the psychological aspect must be considered. In the past, the doctors did not suspect that nervous disorders were associated with the work of the patient, but today we know that there is a close relationship. Consequently, we should do our utmost to relieve workers of unnecessary strain. The machine age necessitates a greater number of hours of leisure to make up for the pressure of work.

There is something more in life than spending so much time in working. The ordinary person now does not know very much about art, but the younger generation will have greater opportunities to study

it. The young men and women who are growing up will know quite well how to employ the leisure that is available to them and how to enjoy life. A country is only as great as its people are happy; and if our people are not contented we cannot expect our country to be great.

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

## **BILL—SOIL CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 27th October.

**HON. L. C. DIVER** (Central) [8.32]: Soil conservation is one of the most important subjects we have to discuss. The soil is our heritage. We who use the land are only the trustees for the soil. I do not suppose there is anything more important than the fertility of the soil; and it behoves every farmer—and, in fact, everyone who comes into contact with or has the handling of soil—to ensure that he leaves it for posterity better than he found it.

I speak with a deal of feeling on this subject because I was one of those settlers who went into the wheat belt in 1910. In those days, the land was covered with natural timber and scrub. Since then, I have seen literally millions of acres of the countryside being denuded of the original vegetation. I have seen watercourses when clearing in the minor stage was being done creating a problem that is likely to trouble us for years. I have seen the lighter soils of the wheat belt when the farming was essentially wheat growing, fallowed in one year and cropped the next; and the soil was battered in such a way by foolish and inexperienced people and the land was so friable that the heavy winds that blew periodically caused immense drifts of the surface soil.

About the same time, we had the invasion of the rabbit from the east, and then wholesale fencing became necessary to keep the rabbits out. With the prevalence of dust storms, the soil piled up; and in the following winter, when heavy rainfall occurred, the watercourses were changed for considerable distances.

As most members are aware, the topography of that country is mainly flat, or slightly undulating, and the drift I have mentioned was particularly heavy when the water came down in torrents. With this change in the watercourses, the finer particles of dust, representing tons and tons of soil, were washed down into the lakes and ultimately reached the rivers.

As the years passed and experience was gained, farmers undertook the rotation of crops and then we witnessed the spectacle of grazing occurring. By the introduction of clovers and the growing of huge areas of oats put in for the main purpose of

grazing stock, a large part of our initial trouble from erosion has disappeared. However, there still remain two dangers in the drier areas. One is that farms change hands and are taken over by newcomers who lack the experience of the older settlers, and some of them are inclined to exploit the soil. Though they have been counselled not to adopt certain procedure on light soils in particular, some of them have endeavoured to cash in and get as much return from the land as possible in the shortest space of time, and the procedure that has been adopted has proved to be very undesirable as far as soil conservation is concerned.

Another instance I wish to mention concerns the drier areas. There is a tract of light land that for many years was despised simply because it was not possible to grow a payable crop on it; but with the discovery of soil deficiencies and the use of trace elements, it was found that the land would produce quite payable crops, and with the increase in the price of wheat in the last few years, thousands of acres of this second class land have been rolled and cleared and put under production. Those who are charged with the responsibility of soil conservation should watch the position closely in order to prevent a repetition of the state of affairs that occurred in the early days of settlement in the wheatbelt, especially in the thirties, when farmers were exhorted to grow more wheat, and so much damage was done by erosion.

There is another type of soil erosion that occurs in the areas of heavier rainfall, due substantially to the heavy rainfall, combined with the exploitation of the soil in the days when the districts along the great Avon Valley were producing enormous quantities of wheaten hay. For something like 50 years, the greater portion of that country was worked on a fallow-crop rotation, and was perhaps knocked about even more than the drier belt which I mentioned earlier, because the crops year after year were cut for hay, which was carted away from the soil on which it was grown. No stocking took place to build up the soil, which was consequently denuded of practically every element necessary for growing crops.

It was fortuitous that, coincident with the reduction of the wheat cropping in those areas, the tractor age came upon us, and at the same time the subterranean clover was evolved. It was found that subterranean clover thrived under the soil, rainfall and general climatic conditions which prevailed in the Avon Valley area. The result was that greater stocking took place; and year after year more sheep were carried, until today in those areas the stocking is really tremendous.

We were very fortunate that the time came at last when, with the advent of the tractor and subterranean clover, and

through the heavy stocking of the country with sheep, the soil was able to regain the elements it had lost and perhaps become even richer than it was in its original state. When those farmers now sow cereals they get better yields than ever.

In addition to this, the building up of the soil has meant that the particles hold together; and soil erosion in that area today would have been infinitely worse than it is had the developments I have mentioned not taken place.

As members know, the Soil Conservation Act was passed in 1945, and the Minister for Agriculture has a committee actively engaged in policing soil conservation. The Bill seeks to amend Part 5 of the 1945 Act. It seeks to put more life into the Act and make it more workable, so that the departmental officers and the Soil Conservation Committee will be able to act more readily. I wish the same doctrine could be put into effect in many others Acts, so that our public service could work along these lines.

There is one feature of the Bill, however, that I do not like. Clause 34 states—

An owner or occupier of land who objects to a soil conservation order, or an interim soil conservation order notice of which is so served upon him, may within two weeks of service of notice of the order, appeal against the order to the Minister by causing written grounds of his objection to be served on the Minister, who shall consider the objections and notify the appellant of his decision confirming, varying, or quashing the order.

That may sound all right, but it is a little bit sweeping. In the course of time, many men will occupy the position of Minister for Agriculture, and some of them may not have much knowledge of the subject, with the result that they will be guided by the very officers who have previously recommended that certain action be taken.

Hon. H. K. Watson: The officer concerned will sit pat on his recommendation and decision.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: That is so. Sub-clause (2) of Clause 34 adds the final touch in saying that the decision of the Minister is final.

Hon. A. R. Jones: But he must consult the committee.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Yes; but the committee will have recommended the action taken. In the past 40 years, we have had some Ministers for Agriculture who had very little practical experience of the subject, and some of them had none.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: How can you overcome that?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: When the Bill is in Committee, I will move an amendment seeking to provide that in cases such as I

have mentioned a committee of three active farmers be appointed from the district concerned, a majority decision of that committee to be final.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That would almost make it a family affair.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Mr. Barker is showing how little he understands the subject. If he lived in the agricultural areas, he would realise that farmers such as I refer to have the interests of the soil at heart; and if they were convinced that action was necessary, they would be the first to enforce it. I can recall a local authority being charged with enforcing the regulations for the control of grasshoppers, and they rode the horse with spurs on that occasion, because it was a matter of self-preservation; and that would apply in an instance such as this.

As the Minister said, the vast majority of farmers work in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture in this respect, and it is only the odd man out who requires controlling. It will be on rare occasions only that any appeal will crop up.

Hon. H. K. Watson: But when it does happen, the body which hears the appeal should be both impartial and competent.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: That is the point. It must understand the subject, know the conditions and have the confidence of the appellant so that he will know he has had a fair go.

Hon. G. Bennetts: But the Agricultural Department officers could do that.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Many of these officers come out to advise the farmers; and when they are asked what is the best thing to do, it is very hard to get them to accept the responsibility of making a definite recommendation. I do not blame them for that, as they have not had the practical experience.

A young man asked me how he should treat a certain piece of land, and I gave him my advice, but suggested that he should not take what I had said for gospel but should get departmental advice on it. When the departmental officer went along to give advice, he would give no firm opinion at all on the matter; and I do not blame him for that. These officers carry out certain experiments and know the answer to many questions theoretically.

They know the result of an experiment under certain climatic and soil conditions; yet under similar conditions in another district, the answer may not be the same at all. The key-line method of control was mentioned by Mr. Barker. I read the speech of the Minister for Agriculture when introducing the measure, and he said what the Bill sought to achieve but did not mention how the department was tackling the problem.



I was on a deputation of active farmers from the Beverley district which recently waited on the Minister and the question of experiments with a key-line plan came up. I would have thought the Minister would avail himself of that opportunity to mention the subject, but he did not.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That plan has only to do with water erosion.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Granted. Any-one acquainted with agriculture knows that the key-line plan is a method of loosening the soil to great depth over a large area so that the maximum absorption of moisture can be obtained.

Another point has come to my mind. I have mentioned that the farmers are the trustees of the soil, and I have said that it is our duty to leave the soil in a better state than we found it for the sake of posterity. In this House we have also passed legislation whereby wheat and coarse-grain farmers shall contribute to a fund that will try to make the soil better than it was originally. The Minister, when introducing the Bill, made no mention of the Government making money available on a £ for £ basis as the State's contribution, because everybody realises that we are endeavouring to conserve the soil for our children and their children's children.

I trust that the few remarks I have made on the measure to indicate the attitude I am adopting towards it will meet with the whole-hearted support of the House. With the reservations I have referred to, I support the Bill.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [9.2]: I also support the Bill. I have listened with great interest to Mr. Diver, realising that he is an authority on this subject. My opinion is that we in the North, with the advent of closer settlement almost upon us, must also take great care to preserve the soil. This year, whilst making a tour of the North, I saw thousands of acres on one of Vestey's properties being badly wind-eroded as a result of overstocking. The soil was eaten right out, and it was being blown away with the wind. Mr. Diver never said a truer word than when he stated that we are the custodians of the soil, and I think everyone will agree that the nation's wealth lies in the soil.

The Bill intends to give power to those in authority to deal with those few people who have no regard for soil conservation. The problem today in the wheat belt is not as great as it was. Since the advent of cover crops, and as science has advanced more and more, we have reached the point where we can, to some extent, deal with the problem.

Hon. L. C. Diver: I dealt with that point.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes; but the Government should have some clear-cut plan in order to tackle this problem and to carry out some experiments. I would like to refer particularly to the key-line plan. I was interested to hear Mr. Diver refer to it, and also that he had put it forward to the Minister. It is a plan that is worth studying; and in my opinion some experimental work should be undertaken to ascertain whether we can get the same results as have been obtained in other parts of the world. It is no wonder that we suffer from soil erosion as a result of the action of wind and water and of overstocking.

The Minister for the North-West: And drought.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes, and drought. The day is fast approaching when we in the North will have to give this subject particular attention. If we are to have closer settlement—and I hope and believe that we are—we will have to preserve these large tracts of land which today are being washed away down the rivers. The soil is also being blown away and nothing is being done about it. When the Government considers this important question of the preservation of the soil, I hope it will include that part of the State to which I have referred.

I do not think anyone can object to the Bill. Mr. Diver dealt with the clause to which he objects. I do not altogether agree with him that the decision of the Minister should not be final when an appeal is made. After all is said and done, when an appeal is lodged, the Minister will get in touch with all his various officers in the department. The decision will not be his alone. It will be reached after obtaining advice from experts on the subject.

Hon. L. C. Diver: We have a lot of experts.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: We must acknowledge the experience of a practical man, but I cannot see that it would be any advantage to put three men on a local committee. I must admit, however, that Mr. Diver has lent some weight to his argument that the farmers in this instance are simply protecting their own livelihood and existence.

However, the matter could be left for the Minister to decide without any trouble. He would have the best of advice available to him from the men on the committee, and also from those officers who are trained in agricultural science. If the decision were left to the Minister, I am sure his judgment could be relied upon. With those few remarks, I support the Bill.

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

*House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.*