

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 9th December, 1947.

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

QUESTION.

SUGAR.

As to Inadequacy of Supplies.

Hon. W. J. MANN (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

Is the Government aware—

(1) That an acute shortage of sugar, golden syrup and treacle is being experienced in the south-western portion of this State?

(2) That storekeepers have been informed that the delay in delivery of sugar quotas is due to shortage of railway trucks?

(3) If the allegation in (2) is correct, will the Government take action to overcome the railage difficulty?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Considerably more sugar has been distributed from July to November, 1947, (both months inclusive) than in the same period of last year. At times some delay is inevitable in delivery, but every effort is being made, and will continue to be made to equitably distribute sugar throughout the State.

July, August, September and October, 1947, show a decrease in supplies of golden syrup and treacle imported into this State, mainly owing to industrial troubles in the East.

(2) No.

(3) The company concerned will not load open wagons but demands the supply of covered vans. During the two weeks ended the 4th December, 74 vans were ordered of which 64 were supplied.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th December.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [4.38]: There have already been many able speeches delivered on this Bill, Mr. President, and I do not propose to traverse the ground already covered, but wish members clearly to understand that I believe a big mistake has been made by the Government in bringing down the Bill at this stage. I agree with other members that our railways are in a bad condition, but they are not the only railways in Australia of which that can be said. After this harvest is over I think it will be found that the Western Australian railways can handle a harvest as well as can any other railway system in the Eastern States.

Hon. A. L. Lorton: With the aid of motor transport.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Motor transport is being used in the Eastern States, also. I had hoped the Government would make the alterations necessary to bring our railways up to date and enable them to handle the traffic offering, but instead of that it has appointed a Royal Commission. I agree that the Royal Commission was necessary, but before it has had time to report its findings the Government has brought down this Bill, the purpose of which is to set up a directorate consisting of people without any qualification to run such an important public utility as the State railway system. I consider that in a big business concern like the railways, where £27,000,000 is locked up in assets, it requires for a start a very good business head who also knows something about the running of the railways from the financial aspect, and he should be given

some freedom to obtain the necessary funds. The Commissioner of Railways has been prevented from getting the requisite funds to maintain the railways.

We must not forget that for eight years he has been unable to do anything of a substantial nature in the way of maintenance. The party in power during the depression was chastised by its successors for having allowed the railways to fall into a very bad condition. There was an excuse for this and during the war, it was impossible to get essential materials, because they were diverted to war purposes. Not only that, but the Commissioner of Railways was seconded to the Commonwealth to assist in controlling railways throughout Australia for the movement of troops. All those factors ought to be taken into consideration.

The public can be very critical, but after all we are men of commonsense capable of weighing carefully whether criticism is justified or not. I believe that a great deal of the criticism is not justified. When the new Government took office, it was not to be expected that Ministers would be able to rectify everything in five minutes. Much has to be done before a Minister of the Crown can acquire a full realisation of the duties and familiarise himself with all the details of his department.

I think the Government acted wisely in appointing two men, who have qualifications and a knowledge of railways, to assist in determining what may best be done to bring the railways up to date. If I am permitted, I should like to mention some evidence given by an official before the Royal Commission. That evidence bears out the views I have expressed and which I think are well-known. Departments, through the Minister, frequently approach the Treasurer for funds, but evidently in this State the Under Treasurer determines whether the money shall be made available for utilities or not, and apparently the Treasurer himself has very little say.

Frequently Ministers have put up minutes which have been turned down by the Under Treasurer. It is of no use blaming the Commissioner if he has been unable to get the necessary money to bring the railways up to date or maintain them in a proper state of repair. If he is to do these things, he must have money. Further he must have

labour. Since the war, labour has been very scarce for such works as railways.

Hon. A. L. Lorton: Why?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I cannot answer that question. I know how difficult it is to get men for work on farms.

Hon. A. L. Lorton: That is different.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is not altogether different. Not only do we need fitters, turners and engineers, but we also require men to go out and work on the railroads. Quite a lot of difficulty is experienced in getting men to undertake the maintenance work on the railways. I do not blame the Commissioner, and, even at this late hour, I hope that the Government will not proceed with the measure, because it will not help one bit to restore the railways. I say that very definitely.

Let us examine the proposals in the Bill, which are designed to revive or restore the system. We are to have two railway men, presumably—it is hard to say—and then we are to have a representative of the primary producers or the Farmers' Union.

The Honorary Minister: No, the primary producers.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is the Farmers' Union of Western Australia (Inc.).

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think I know more about the Bill than does the Honorary Minister. Who is to represent the primary producers? Where are they going to select a man for this high and distinctive position? They are to select somebody who must know something about railways, and I am very doubtful whether a qualified man can be obtained. A man who is in business will probably say that his time would be far better occupied in looking after his own farming operations. We have had experience of trying to find men we thought were qualified to look after soldier settlers and settlers under the old Agricultural Bank and found it very difficult to get the right men. Now we are to take a man from the Farmers' Union and set him up as an expert on railways. Then we are to ask the several unions to submit a panel of names from which a selection will be made. It will be a case of Eua, Dena, Dina, Doh; they might pick a good one or a bad one.

The Minister for Mines: The Government will probably ask you to select one!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is something I would not attempt. I would not dare to say that I would be qualified to do so, and I throw that back at the Minister because I believe he would be as little qualified as I am to make the choice.

The Minister for Mines: Who said I am going to make the choice?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The choice might be made by Cabinet or by the Minister for Railways. Very little information has been given by the Minister and all we can do is to surmise who will make the selection. I presume it will be Cabinet, and the Minister for Mines will doubtless be present to assist in making the selection.

The Minister for Mines: Do not you think that Cabinet is competent to do that?

Hon. G. Fraser: The panel from the unions will all be good men.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Perhaps. On the other hand the unions might choose men they would like to get rid of. It is a good way to shuffle somebody off, but I hope that will not occur in this instance. From these outside sections, it is proposed to appoint men to manage our £27,000,000 worth of railway assets. We might get from the railways a good man who would be most useful. But that does not make me concur in the view that it is a wise plan to take even one of those outside men. The third member is to be a financial genius from the Terrace. Probably he would be very useful, if we could get one to accept the appointment. I do not know whether it is to be a full-time job.

When introducing the Bill, the Minister did not seem to know whether it was to be a full-time occupation or whether the directorate would meet from time to time. How many men on the Terrace would be prepared to give up time to an odd job like this, when they would probably know very little about railway construction or running or finance or the carriage of goods? I regard that as an expert's job. There was once a very great economist selected to run a merger of railways in England. He is well-known to Sir Hal Colebatch and I will not mention his name. He was

here on one occasion. He told me this story: He said that when he took over this very important position, he knew little about railways. So he went to a friend and said, "I have accepted under pressure the responsibility of chairman of directors of a big railway merger. I want you to advise me. Do you think I will be able to acquire enough knowledge even in two or three years' time to feel justified in having accepted it?"

The friend said, "You have a very good brain and you know a lot about economics. I should say that probably you will know something about railways in two or three years' time. They are a pretty big problem and there is no doubt that the organisations concerned are facing that problem today in asking you to join the directorate. I will tell you a quick way to obtain knowledge. Become a member of Parliament and in three months' time you will have all the knowledge of railways and everything else that you need to have." I think that is what the Government is trying to do in this case. It is trying to get men to acquire knowledge to run the railways without any further ado. These three men must be merely ciphers; yet they will be in a majority on the directorate. I cannot understand any Government appointing a board like this.

When the present Commissioner was appointed, I drew the Government's attention to the fact that I thought he was a very good engineer but that we wanted a business head. I do not think £2,000 a year is sufficient to pay a man who has under his control assets totalling over £27,000,000. In fact, it is very small pay. I know men in the Old Country would get considerably more than that. Those are some of the reasons I object to the legislation. One would have thought the Government would have the decency to wait until it received the report of the Royal Commissioners.

The Minister for Mines: I asked you this afternoon to get the adjournment of the debate, and you said you would.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I wish the Minister to be fair to me.

The Minister for Mines: Pardon me, Sir Hal Colebatch intended to get the adjournment and—

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will make that right with the Minister. I could not do any more. When the Minister came to me I thought I was asked to speak before Sir Hal and that Sir Hal was going to obtain the adjournment when I sat down. I looked across at Sir Hal and he shook his head.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: I thought you were going to speak.

The Minister for Mines: I asked you to get the adjournment, and I thought you said you would.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I thought the Minister was referring to the tramways Bill.

The Minister for Mines: This Bill and the tramways Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Had I known that, I would have been glad to do it. I was forced to speak against my wish, because my notes on this subject are not quite finished. I would be prepared to sit down now if I had the Minister's assurance that the Government will hold this measure up until it receives the report of the Royal Commission. If the Government would do that, I would be happy to sit down, because I think that is the right thing to do. I shall assist to give effect to the Royal Commissioners' views. I believe those two men are very competent, more particularly the gentleman from South Africa. I have a great deal of confidence in his ability and knowledge of railway matters; and, in consequence, I think that we should avail ourselves of the help he is prepared to give. Just recently, money has been available and the Government has bought some oil fuel engines. I am not sure, but I suppose they are cheaper to run than those operated with coal.

Hon. L. Craig: Much dearer.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The information I have does not bear that out.

Hon. L. Craig: It is so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the figures given to me are pretty accurate. According to these figures a certain class of steam engine runs three miles for a dollar and a diesel runs five miles. With the scheme for converting coal into gas and using a turbine it is anticipated that the distance will be 12 miles.

Hon. L. Craig: Where is that report from?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: America.

Hon. L. Craig: Fuel is cheaper there. It costs more in Western Australia.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What does coal cost in America?

Hon. L. Craig: I do not know.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Well, we are anticipating that coal used on the same basis may be cheaper. I only know what appears in this engineering magazine, which points out that we have still a long way to go in the use of fuel in railway engines. I believe it is true that we still know very little about the matter. We have been accustomed to using coal without attempting to discover whether we are deriving the best use from it. If this method of converting the coal into gas and using turbine controlled by electricity is brought into effect, we will probably be able to lessen the cost considerably and to employ Collie coal without any fear of bush fires. But we want somebody with a knowledge of these things. It is no good asking laymen to study them.

Reading "Hansard," and listening to the Minister, I could not find that he gave any justification for the appointment of three laymen to this directorate; nor did he say whether they were to be employed full time or how much it was expected they would be paid. Yet they are to have control and over-riding authority over the two professional men. I cannot understand anybody agreeing to that, any more than I could understand a farmer getting a man who was selling fruit out of a barrow to run his farm for him. The individuals appointed to this directorate must have some qualifications. While the men proposed are probably experts in their own calling, it would be very unwise to hand the railways over to them, and for that reason I cannot support the Bill. The Honorary Minister will say that this is one of the things on which the Government went to the country. The Government may have done that.

The Honorary Minister: You are making a good guess.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I thought the Minister would tell me that. The Government started very well by getting experts to advise it. But before the experts have

time to decide upon their recommendations, the Government rushes in where angels fear to tread and starts to anticipate their findings. I am not afraid of the electors. I will take on any of them in the East province and fight this issue if a fight is wanted—

Hon. G. Fraser: I guarantee they did not go to the country on that.

The Minister for Mines: Before you hear the Commissioners' report?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: On whether the Government is right or wrong in introducing this legislation at this stage. I know what the people in the country say. Nothing can be done without money. There is not a great deal of money on the Loan Estimates to put all these ills right. The sum is a small one compared with what is required. It is therefore not proposed to do much this year from Loan funds. I am sorry the Government has introduced this Bill.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Do you think it should leave the railways as they are?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The first necessity is finance and the second is to get the men to do the work that is required. I think the Government has ordered some engines which will be delivered round about the year 1949. These three outside men and the two railway men on the directorate cannot alter that position. I cannot see that the Bill provides anything helpful. If Mr. Roche will tell me how three outside men are going to assist, I shall be glad to hear his remarks. Perhaps the hon. member will give us something informative if he is supporting the Bill.

The Honorary Minister: The hon. member has already spoken.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not hear much of his remarks. Things cannot be altered just like that, by a wave of the hand.

Hon. H. L. Roche: A start must be made somewhere.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the present Commissioner were given money and the necessary men he would effect the alterations required.

Hon. A. L. Loton: He had a chance to get both.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think the hon. member read the report that appeared in this morning's paper.

Hon. A. L. Loton: I read what the Under Treasurer had said.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I know what happens. If the Under Treasurer cannot find the money one cannot get it. I know all about that from past experience. A public servant cannot get what he wants in the way of money for works. That can only come through the Treasurer himself or a Minister with the consent of the Treasurer. Departmental heads have put up many propositions to their Ministers. These have been sent to the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer has sometimes sent a note back "no funds available," or "re-submit in a month." It is all a question of finance and labour. If both these things were available I think the present Commissioner would do all that is necessary to bring the railways up-to-date. It would not do any harm to send the present Commissioner abroad for awhile. Some time ago, in the initial stages of our road works, we sent our engineer abroad and he came back with new ideas. Western Australia stands out in the matter of its roads, due to the trip that official made. We keep the railway Commissioner here all the time. All we do is to harass him by criticism and starve him for want of money.

The Minister for Mines: Who is criticising him?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill is a criticism of him. It provides for the appointment of three outside men who are presumed to be better than is the Commissioner for the carrying out of the job.

Hon. H. L. Roche: You do not think the railways are open to criticism?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not say anything was not open to criticism. The railways can be criticised, but let us be fair and constructive in what we put forward. I heard the hon. member criticise the railways but have not any complaint to make against that. Trains run late; we all know they do. I remember the Minister for Railways of that day saying that the man who ran his train late was paid overtime but the man who ran it to time received no extra pay. I do not know how we can "compel" the men today. It is a question of other than railway men. The position is very serious. It is easy to say here what we would do.

The Minister for Mines: Exactly. Very easy. .

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: When we have the opportunity to do something we do not offer a great deal in the way of help. I speak from experience. The wisest plan for the Government would be to tie up the Bill and bring it along next session. Meanwhile it will be supplied with the necessary information by the Royal Commission. We should ask the Minister for Railways to assist the Commissioner for Railways in every way by providing him with money and men. Rollingstock cannot be imported from overseas today. The Commissioner is not to blame. Farmers find themselves in the same position with regard to plant. They cannot renew their machinery because it is not available. Tractors and everything else are in short supply. The problem is universal.

Hon. H. L. Roche: There are worse farmers than are found in Western Australia.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Our railways are not the worst in the world.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Look at tonight's paper.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not care about tonight's paper. If I read an article and think it sound I will accept it. After all, it is only the opinion of one man. I do not allow newspapers to determine my viewpoint, neither do I want them to express my views for me. It is not my intention to annoy the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: I am not annoyed -- only amused.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think I possess some commonsense and perhaps members who are interjecting will take that to heart. I want to learn from those gentlemen, the gentleman who has come from South Africa and the one who has come from Sydney to assist us. Members who are interjecting want to rush in and make alterations now.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Rush in where angels fear to tread.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. It would be worthwhile to wait a little longer. We might then be able to do something for the good of our railways. Outside of South

Australia all the railways in the Commonwealth are in a bad way. When I was in Melbourne a little while ago I travelled on a branch line in order to compare the service with ours, but the train ran 4½ hours late.

The Minister for Mines: Is there a Commissioner there or a board?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A Commissioner is in charge, but a sensible Government is in office in that State.

Hon. A. L. Leton: Who was responsible for that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The people. I am sorry the Bill has been brought down and that I shall have to vote against it. I must endorse the remarks of those members who have made very much better speeches than I have on this subject.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [5.10]: There are only two main points about the Bill. There is the provision for a directorate and the other which ensures that the accounts are audited by the Auditor General. All objections to the measure must revolve round those two points. I find it difficult to understand the opposition to the Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: Why did you appoint a Royal Commission?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Latham made a good guess. I intend to refer to the policy of the present Government Party on the occasion of the last election. If Mr. Latham, Mr. Craig and Mr. Simpson had any objection to that policy we would have heard about it, but I do not remember hearing anything against the proposal to establish this directorate.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Nor did I know that a Royal Commission was to be appointed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It has been the policy of the Country Party for years to set up a directorate to control the trams, ferries, buses and railways, to take that control from the Commissioner and establish it in another form. I will read some extracts taken from the Policy Speeches delivered at the last election. The Country and Democratic League had this to say—

Our policy still is that a directorate consisting of a railway expert as chairman, a representative of the railway unions, of com-

mercial interests, and of primary producers should control railways with the greatest possible measure of independence and a general manager responsible to it. Parliament and the Ministry should control questions of policy. A separate but similar management should be provided for the metropolitan tramways and allied services. All such services can and must be speeded up. The tramway system must be provided with extra terminals in addition to that at East Perth to remove the present congestion.

The Liberal Party's policy was—

As a branch of transport, the State railways will be under a directorate having the greatest possible measure of independent control, on which a railway expert will be chairman of directors, and other directors will be representative of railway unions, commercial interests and primary producers. Under the railway directorate will be a general manager of our railway system. We intend to have a separate board of management for metropolitan tramways and allied services instead of continuing them as at present under the control of the State Railways.

I read these extracts to show that the two Parties were in accord in regard to this policy. It has been the policy of the Country Party for many years. It is not new.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was never my policy when I was Leader of that Party. That is under six years ago.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not sure of the number of years. This goes back to the time when Hon. A. F. Watts was Leader of the Party. At any rate, it was prior to the last election. The fact is that it was the policy on the hustings at that time. We have heard nothing from the members I referred to who are now opposing the Bill. I wonder whether Mr. Latham, who said that criticism of the railways was not justified, has been satisfied over the years with the deal the country people have received from the system. Even today with our comparatively small crop the railways cannot handle it and we propose to bring to the seaboard 8,000 bushels per week. Yet Mr. Latham says there is no room for criticism!

Hon. C. G. Latham: Can you alter it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: We are making a big attempt to do so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why have you not altered it since the 1st April?

The HONORARY MINISTER: What a ridiculous question to ask!

Hon. C. G. Latham: Because you cannot do so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We are making the attempt.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is all right.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We are attempting now to set up a directorate in order to alter it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Instead of getting on with the job, you are looking round for boards of management.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We believe, and all members of the Government Parties subscribe to it, that a change in policy regarding the management of the railways is desirable, and we are going on with the job. I ask members who are opposed to the Bill whether they are satisfied with the housing of railway employees. Even in Mr. Latham's time, members of the Country Party had an opportunity to deal with that.

Hon. H. L. Roche: It must have been sham fighting.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In those days attention was drawn by the Country Party to the deplorable state of the housing of railway employees, which was indeed very bad. There is no excuse for it. The Commonwealth Government and the Midland Railway Company have made forward moves in that regard. Only recently I had the good fortune to see what had been done for the railway employees along the Trans. line. I shall not go into details but what I saw enables me to say that the Commonwealth people should be very proud of what has been accomplished. In the houses I saw refrigerators, hot and cold water systems and other amenities, supplied in order to better the housing conditions of the away-from-home railway men. At Coorow on the Midland line I saw some very fine houses put up by the Midland Railway Company.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There are some good ones at Merredin.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot understand why there has not been a greater outcry and more discontent on the part of railway employees in respect of their housing conditions as they exist today—yet Mr. Latham says there is no room for criticism! I know a scheme is being put forward for the construction of 700 houses, but fancy having to think about

that at this stage of the game, seeing that all that was required for the purpose was available many years before the war so that the railway employees could have been provided with housing conditions on a decent basis! Mr. Simpson said that the setting up of a directorate would be the means of creating a first class political row. I have yet to be shown how a directorate consisting of two railway men and representatives of the producers, the unions concerned and the commercial interests—Mr. Latham says that the commercial representative will be a financial expert from St. George's-terrace, but that is not mentioned in the Bill at all—could possibly be the cause of precipitating a first class political row.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: It contains all the elements.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is all the same. We have many boards.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, the Government is run by boards.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not think Mr. Latham did anything to avoid that in his time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not think he did, but we will not argue about that now. Take the Barley Board on which there are two representatives of commercial interests—the maltsters and the Swan Brewery—three producers' representatives and the Government-appointed chairman!

Hon. C. G. Latham: But that is to deal with their own business.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is no row going on with that board, much less a political row. I certainly cannot understand why there should be any political row because a directorate is to be set up representative of varying interests. Surely to goodness, the directorate suggested is desirable. We will have on it two expert officers from the railways, one from the mechanical staff and the other from the transport staff, and a representative of the producers who will not necessarily be a member of the Farmers' Union. Mr. Latham can look at the Bill as much as he likes but the representative is to be selected from a panel submitted by the Farmers' Union. He will not necessarily be a member of the union, although I hope he will be.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Of course, he will be.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Bill does not say so. Mr. Latham is very fond of telling us we do not understand our own Bills. He is making a habit of that, but on this occasion I say advisedly the Bill does not set out that the representative of the producers shall be a farmer, although I hope he will be.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He might be a St. George's-terrace farmer.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I hope not. But at any rate he will be chosen from a panel submitted by the Farmers' Union. Why should he not be chosen that way? Why should the directors' representative of the producers, workers and commercial interests combine against the railway experts on the directorate? The appointment of three such representatives has been described as an unholy alliance. I cannot see why those representatives should combine against the railway directors. Why should they? That is only drawing a red herring across the trail.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Tell us what they will bring into this work.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The idea in Mr. Latham's head is that unqualified people will combine against the railway experts.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not say anything of the sort!

The HONORARY MINISTER: Surely commercial interests should have a right to be represented on the directorate. We know perfectly well how stores despatched from city business houses arrive in the country districts. We know of sugar arriving at country stations with water in the trucks and so on. Surely to goodness the producers have a right to representation on the directorate! We know how they suffered in the past. We know that their stock has arrived at Midland Junction at 5 p.m. having been despatched there for the purposes of sale. That emphasises that the producers have a right to be represented on the directorate to assist in the work of running the railways.

Then again the railway employees are as much concerned as anyone else in the proper running of the railways and have a right to be represented on the directorate. Why

should they not be represented? Surely the employees should be able to bring matters under the notice of the management that otherwise would not reach it! The whole situation will be safeguarded by the railway experts, one of whom may be the present Commissioner of Railways or he may be Mr. Mills. I do not know who they will be, but certainly they will be highly qualified men and I believe they will welcome the assistance that will be forthcoming from the other representatives appointed to the directorate. Is there any ground for believing that the majority of those representatives would combine against the railway experts? That is what Mr. Latham has in mind, but why should they?

Hon. W. J. Mann: Will the railway representatives be selected from a panel?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know. They may be selected from the railway experts here at present or a man may be brought here from abroad. I cannot tell the hon. member. Then again Mr. Simpson said that setting up the directorate was an insult to the Royal Commission.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Not to the Commission but to the Commissioners.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Quite so. The Royal Commissioners have been told definitely to ignore this Bill when they bring in their findings, and I want to make that point clear to the House.

Hon. G. Fraser: Either one or the other is useless—either the Royal Commission or the Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is nothing insulting about it at all. Very happy relations exist between the Government and the Royal Commissioners and we have told them to ignore the Bill altogether. It has been introduced in anticipation of the Commissioners bringing in findings along the lines indicated in the measure.

Hon. G. Fraser: And if their findings do not coincide with the provisions of the Bill—

The HONORARY MINISTER: Then no more will be heard about the Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: Why waste the time of Parliament?

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is no waste of time about it at all; the hon. member does not understand the position.

We believe that these deplorable conditions have gone on too long, particularly from the primary producers' point of view. If this Bill is carried and the Commissioners bring in their findings on the same lines, this directorate will be set up immediately.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: It will take them two or three years to get enough knowledge to be of any use to the railways or the State.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That interjection is absolute nonsense, because for a start we will have two experts from the Railway Department. Why, therefore, should it take two or three years for them to get the requisite knowledge? The Commissioners have been informed that whilst investigating the whole business and in arriving at their findings, they can ignore this Bill altogether, whether it be passed or not. If the Royal Commissioners say that such a board is desirable, we cannot afford to delay one week in getting on with the job of rehabilitating our railway system. To say it is an insult to the Commissioners—it is just not so at all.

Hon. G. Fraser: And you want us to pass the Bill and possibly not put it into operation.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is the answer to the statement that we have ignored the Commissioners and that we should have consulted them and awaited their findings. We will not get their findings until January or February and a full year will have passed before anything can be done.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Are members to gather that the Royal Commissioners have been instructed as to what they should do?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No. The hon. member should have more confidence in the Government than to make such a suggestion. I believe most members understand what I said. I trust the second reading will be carried. This is a matter of Government policy and we have kept faith with the electors in submitting the legislation.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS.

Returned from the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

*To Revoke Dedication—Assembly's
Message.*

Debate resumed from the 4th December on the motion of the Minister for Mines to concur in the Assembly's resolution as follows:—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28 and 37, laid upon the Table of the Legislative Assembly, by command of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor on the 3rd December, 1947, be carried out.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the resolution be agreed to.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [5.31]: I have examined the resolution and cannot see anything objectionable in it. It provides for the usual releases by the Forests Department to the Lands Department of pieces of land that might be useful for agricultural purposes. I desire, however, to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that his departmental officers are not up to date, as they describe the present Lieutenant-Governor as Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

The Minister for Mines: What is the date?

HON. C. G. LATHAM: The 4th December, 1947.

The Minister for Mines: I am glad you drew attention to it.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister might direct the Premier's Department, where this Order-in-Council originated, that Sir James Mitchell is now Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

The Minister for Mines: You may rest assured that I will draw attention to the matter.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1, 2 and 3 and had disagreed to No. 4 now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair: the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

No. 4. Clause 6, page 3:

In proposed new section 6B—Delete all words after the word "may" in line 22 and substitute the words "at any time charge the standard rent aforesaid without committing any breach of this Act. In the event of an existing lease the lessor shall without terminating the tenancy, give two weeks' notice in writing of intention to return to the standard rent and at the expiration of such notice the rent for such premises shall be the standard rent and the lessee shall be liable to pay to the lessor, and the lessor shall be entitled to recover from the lessee, such standard rent notwithstanding any provisions of the lease to the contrary."

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing is—

It might be inequitable to revert to the standard rent. For example, the tenant may be liable for a term of months or years under a lease into which he would not have entered at a rent higher than the rent agreed when he took the lease; or a tenant might have difficulty in meeting the higher rent for a house and might incur considerable expense and difficulty in vacating the premises for another house; or the tenant may have undertaken some responsibility in return for the rent originally agreed upon.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Members may recall that this was the amendment moved by Mr. Thomson, who unfortunately is not present. His argument, with which I agree to an extent, was that the landlord should be entitled to get the standard rent simply by demanding it. For a number of years now, however, leases and agreements have been entered into to overcome the difficulty as regards the question of a lower rent. The position is concisely and well explained in the Assembly's reason for disagreeing to the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH SCHEME FOR SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENTS AUTHORISATION).

Second Reading.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [5.39] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill which is designed to enable a number of employees of the Perth City Council to become participants in the superannuation scheme that is being conducted by the council. I think the history of the parent Act is well known to members of the House. It has been amended on two previous occasions. The purpose of the present Bill is to provide for 22 employees of the council who, although in the service of the council at the time of the introduction of the parent Act, did not avail themselves of the option given to them by the council at the time of joining the fund. It is true that there is no obligation on the council to afford an opportunity for these officers to join the fund, but at the same time, the council is in an unfavourable position in having 22 of its employees not covered by the superannuation fund. The council has resolved that if these employees are willing to pay in the total of their contributions since the inception of the fund in 1937, together with the interest on such payments that would have accrued to the benefit of the fund had such amounts been paid, then the council on its part is willing to contribute its payment quota, which will amount to approximately £500 per year for a period of 21 years.

It will be seen that under this arrangement the council will ensure the provision of superannuation for these 22 officers at no greater expense than if they had joined the fund at its inception; and, from an actuarial point of view, the situation is slightly to the advantage of the fund. There are also several reasons which have convinced the council of the desirability of making this amendment, inasmuch as the City Engineer, after 29 years of service, is due to retire at the end of this year; this officer is not a member of the fund at present and it would be extremely difficult for the council to allow him to retire without some form of

gratuity, the payment of which would almost certainly create dissatisfaction amongst those of the staff who have accepted the financial commitments of joining the superannuation fund. Then there are a number of officers who at the inception of the fund were in a relatively junior position, but have now become officers of some importance. In the absence of superannuation fund benefits for these officers, they lack the stabilising influence on the staff of being properly provided for. That briefly explains the object of the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.42]: I support the Bill. The offer from the Perth City Council is generous. It should not be made a general rule to allow employees to stand out of contributing to funds of this kind; but this might be treated as a special case. The admission of these 22 employees will mean that all the employees of the council will be in the fund, and that a few of them who retire in the next year or so will receive the benefit of the fund on their retirement. It would not be fair, generally speaking, for employees to be allowed to do that. I understand only a few of them will participate in the benefits of the fund in the next few years; the others will not benefit for some considerable time. No objection is offered to the measure, either by the council or the employees concerned and it should therefore be passed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th December.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.47]: I have looked through the various clauses of the Bill, and whilst I approve of them, generally, there are some points on which I

am not quite satisfied, and I would like some clarification from the Minister when the Bill is in Committee. The first matter that I am not in favour of is that of allowing the Commissioner of Public Health to delegate certain powers to public health officials. The Bill provides that the Minister may prohibit such delegation. If the Commissioner of Public Health is to be able to delegate certain powers to public health officials, they may be able to do quite a lot which is not in the interests of the individual although it might be in the interests of public health, and some time might elapse before the Minister could be acquainted of their actions.

There is a certain danger in allowing such wide powers of delegation. These matters should come under the direct control of the Minister who would then know what the Commissioner of Public Health was delegating. Another important question is that of dealing with tuberculosis and of bringing the Wooroloo Sanatorium under Section 294 of the Act, which is what we will be doing if we agree to the provision in the Bill which seeks to add the following new subsection after Subsection (2):—

From and after the coming into operation of this subsection, the "Wooroloo Sanatorium," a hospital established and maintained at Wooroloo for tuberculosis patients under the provisions of the Hospitals Act, 1927, shall be deemed to have been established and shall be maintained by the Governor under this section.

Subsection (2) of Section 294 provides—

The local authorities of the districts within such areas shall, from time to time, contribute to the expense of the establishment and maintenance of such hospitals in such proportions as may be agreed upon.

My opinion is that the dread disease, tuberculosis, should be dealt with nationally by the State, through Consolidated Revenue. This provision merely brings the Wooroloo Sanatorium under the same conditions as apply to the Infectious Diseases Hospital, whereby certain local authorities are called upon to make payments in respect of the people who are compelled, unfortunately, to be patients in the institution. This question should be controlled not only by the Commonwealth Government, but by the State Government. It is not right to make it partly the responsibility of local governing authorities. The Health Act lays down that a certain amount

shall be charged in the health rate and if the local authorities are to be made responsible for certain medical treatment for various diseases, the health rate will have to be considerably increased. The responsibility for the payment for these persons should be that of the State Treasury, although I do not know that it matters very much whether it is a Commonwealth or a State question. The money has to be found, and it does not matter much which Treasury pays it.

If I understand the Bill correctly, that is something we should not agree to. The Minister should withdraw that part and substitute something which would be of greater benefit to the people without imposing this charge on local authorities. There are other parts of the Bill to which I do not take great exception, but nevertheless some clarification is necessary. There is provision for the control of certain rodents by authorising the Commissioner of Public Health and the local authorities to order certain alterations to properties, and to control the erection of certain buildings with a view to preventing the breeding of rodents. I have not definitely made up my mind on this point; I would like some further clarification of it. It appears to me that such wide powers would impose hardships on the owners of property.

Whilst we are desirous, of course, that the rodent pest should be eliminated as quickly as possible, the Minister should give further consideration to this point. Another part of the Bill refers to stillborn children and provides that post-mortem examinations shall be ordered to ascertain, I take it, the reason for their being stillborn. The Bill does not say who is to bear the cost of the post-mortems.

The Minister for Health: It will be a Government responsibility. I tried to make that clear.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: There is nothing in the Bill to say that. While it provides that no midwife, medical officer or other person, including the mother, shall be responsible for that payment, it does not say that the health officer or the local authority shall not be responsible. These are some of the things on which I would like elucidation. I make these remarks in all good faith and I trust that my questions

will be answered by the Minister when, perhaps, we shall be able to determine just what is required.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.59]: The Bill contains many things which one must applaud, and the Minister and his department are to be congratulated on having these matters in mind. I do, however, regret that the Minister did not consider it possible to notify me that the Bill was to be introduced, because I feel I could have advised him from the angle of the practising profession. I realise that it was probably thought unwise for the Minister to divulge to anyone details of legislation to be brought before the House. One must face the fact that it is not alone in the departments that such measures can be properly drawn up, but by men who have spent their lives in practice and who have the interests of the public as seriously at heart as has the department.

I cannot applaud the manner in which this legislation is presented. I defy any member without knowledge of medical affairs really to see what lies behind the proposed amendments. I will deal with the various matters contained in the Bill and then put certain suggestions to the Minister. If the Bill reaches the Committee stage I propose to move amendments to some of its provisions, at least one of which I am convinced could not be carried out in practice. No steps that can be taken to reduce the incidence of Brills disease can be ignored, and I am wholeheartedly behind the provision that gives power to the Commissioner of Public Health to endeavour to eradicate that disease, which is spreading rapidly throughout our city and country areas. It is only about 15 years since the first case of Brills disease was reported in this city, but now it borders on being an epidemic. Not only is it now present in the metropolitan area, but it is extending to the outer suburbs and the country.

Within the last six months three cases of Brills disease, to my knowledge, have occurred in one country town only 50 miles from Perth. The Commissioner desires power to control this invasion by rodents and the vermin that live on their backs, and in that direction this House should give him every assistance. I feel sure we could stamp out the disease by concerted action

on the part of all local governing bodies, but it is of no use one such body acting to control the rat menace while others sit back and await the results of the action taken. Only a concerted effort can produce results.

I agree that the Commissioner should have power over the control and methods of destruction of rodents, and the materials to be used, but surely the wide sweeping powers contained in proposed new paragraph (47a) will be subject to other legislation and departments. I do not imagine that the Commissioner could simply state that a certain building must be altered to fit in with his requirements, while ignoring the practicability of such a direction. I do not think he would desire to exercise that power, or would exercise it if he had it.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Do you think the local governing authority should have that power?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I think the local authority would lean on the Commissioner in this case, and that its views would be taken into consideration by him, and vice versa. I cannot be laudatory about the provisions relating to tuberculosis, and do not think we will help in the prevention of that disease by allowing the Commissioner to delegate his powers to any public health official. I can see what is behind this proposed power—the Minister may correct me if I am wrong. The move to control tuberculosis has grown like a snowball in the last few years. For a long time we tried to get under way some move to prevent the disease, and with the advent of Dr. Hensell the movement has grown rapidly. Perhaps we have moved at a pace so great that other factors, such as accommodation for patients, have not kept up. It seems unwise to search extensively for new cases when we have neither the accommodation nor the nursing staff at Wooroloo Sanatorium to look after them.

It has been with the greatest difficulty in the last two years or so that one has been able to get a patient into Wooroloo, which is now practically reserved for those cases needing immediate surgical or manipulative care. While it may be a good idea to know where such cases are, we must be careful not to raise a scare in the minds of the people. With those thoughts in mind the planning of a campaign to eradicate the disease should go ahead. I would ask the Minister in what

way tuberculosis will be controlled by delegating to public health officers the powers outlined in proposed new Section 230A. I think I can see what it really means.

When the Commissioner got under way Dr. Henzell was taken from his job of superintendent of Wooroloo Sanatorium and made State Director of the Tuberculosis Branch. I believe this provision would empower the Commissioner to delegate all his powers for the control of tuberculosis to Dr. Henzell. To allow him to delegate his power to any health inspector in a district proclaimed by the Minister, looks to me like jumping too far ahead. I do not think a health inspector is capable of exercising these delegated powers.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He could exercise a lot of the power.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Would that be in the interests of the individual? I refer members to the various powers that would be conferred on a health inspector under this provision. He could declare that any land, building or thing was insanitary, or cause any insanitary building to be pulled down or any insanitary things to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of, and could cause animals infected or thought to be infected to be destroyed. He could require persons to report themselves for medical examination, or forbid persons to leave the district or place in which they were isolated or quarantined.

We have not yet reached the stage of forbidding tubercular patients to move from one district to another, and I do not think we should give a health officer that right. We cannot force patients to remain at Wooroloo, and they can leave if they wish. The whole question of the control of tuberculosis should not be dealt with by a small amendment to the Act. A separate Bill should be brought down for the control of tuberculosis. I do not know under what heading the State Director is at present appointed, but he is there, and is doing a good job. If this clause were not amended any public health official could report to the Commissioner, who could then delegate to Dr. Henzell or even to the public health official the right to do the things set out in this clause. As I read it he could simply declare that in a given district a certain person had power to do those things.

I would like to confine that delegation of power to public health officers to action following the receipt of a report in a particular case. One does not contract tuberculosis as one contracts measles, the method by which one becomes infected being entirely different. We will not eradicate tuberculosis by taking the steps necessary to eradicate many other infectious diseases. First of all one must have a predisposition to tuberculosis, and then there must be continued exposure to infection, and behind that runs a national and inherent tendency to develop the disease, together with many associated factors. To prevent an individual travelling from one district to another, on the word of a public health officer, seems to be exceeding the need. The control of the disease calls not for a small amendment to the Act, but for considered legislation dealing with the whole problem.

Hon. C. G. Latham: With a plan for the necessary power.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: We will not help the control of tuberculosis by passing the measure now before us. I can see that the Commissioner is anxious to delegate to Dr. Henzell full powers as tuberculosis officer. Why not let the House know that? The Commissioner is not going to define or proclaim areas until he knows that they can be controlled, and the only area that can be controlled at present is that coming under Dr. Henzell's purview. The first step to delegate such power to him would be all that is necessary at the moment. We are racing where we should be hastening with prudence. The next two provisions are consequential upon that amendment. I come now to the provision dealing with clinics. It is proposed to amend Section 294 of the principal Act by bringing clinics under the term "infectious hospitals." They will therefore be clinics for infectious diseases, and the only clinics for infectious diseases are tuberculosis clinics. It appears as though Wooroloo and the tuberculosis clinic at the Royal Perth Hospital will come under this clause.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I was dealing with the insertion of the word "clinics" in the definition of "hospital." If one looks at the Act one will find that Section 294 deals with hospitals and that the words "infectious hospitals" are defined.

tious diseases" mean certain infectious diseases, and also any other disease which the Governor may from time to time by notification in the "Government Gazette" bring under the succeeding sections. My reading is that this would go right down to Section 294 so that the clinics would virtually be tubercular clinics. Then comes the question whether the hospital at Wooroloo and the clinic at the Royal Perth Hospital become involved in the subsection dealing with the contribution from the local authority.

I wish to diverge for a few minutes to give an outline of what I believe will be the future of this delegation of power by the Commissioner in the control of such diseases as tuberculosis, this coming down from the central head. Control of tuberculosis has become a social measure and will increase as a social measure. When I first came to Western Australia, I was the only person who had had any experience in the treatment of tuberculosis outside the State. As time went on, it became quite clear to me that it was useless for a private practitioner to think he could stem the tide, and I advocated that the treatment of tuberculosis should become a State measure. When control was taken by Wooroloo and I saw in Wooroloo an institution that would care for the sufferer from tuberculosis, I refused to look after the tuberculous sick and handed them over to the control of the State. Today, instead of being a person who sees most of the tubercular patients in the State, I seldom see one in private practice.

The Commonwealth Government has realised the same thing and is stepping into this field of protection for tuberculosis in a very wide manner. It seems to me that the organisation must come down from Commonwealth to State control. State control has been pushed forward to the extent I have already indicated, in the appointment of a State director in Dr. Hensell. There is also Dr. King, whose services are divided between the State and the Commonwealth. From then on, taking it to the people has always been a difficult problem, because of the fact that in this State we have no real public health organisation. We have a Commissioner of Public Health and we expect him to look after the whole of this vast State. I have always contended

that the Commissioner was being asked to do a task beyond human powers. Lately an assistant Commissioner of Public Health has been appointed, but even that is insufficient to permit of organising the public health of the State.

We have had in the past, and I think we still have to a limited extent, medical officers of health chosen from the doctors in the various suburbs, and I think they still act in country districts as deputies to the Commissioner of Public Health. In Subiaco, for instance, the medical officer of health is paid the munificent sum of £15 a year, but what is more, he is not trained in public health. One of the things I learnt when abroad was that there is a tendency throughout the United States of America to join together the practising profession and the Public Health Department. They had diverged over the years until they had little in common with each other. In the report I have submitted to the Government on the establishment of country hospitals, I have advocated that the person in charge of a zone hospital should be trained in public health and should be related in some way to the Commissioner of Public Health. Right through the history of this State, we have found the divergence between the management of a hospital and a superintendent of a hospital to be so great as to lead only to continual confusion.

Whilst abroad I found a general tendency to accept neither the medical superintendent nor the manager as the administrative officer of a hospital, but rather was it to look for a trained person, trained either as a medical man in administration or as a layman in hospital affairs. The Universities throughout America are setting courses of study for men who are either physicians with a public health degree in administration or laymen with the same degree. They are the men who in future will control hospitals. I have recommended that where the zone hospitals are located, the officer in charge shall be a man holding those qualifications. Then there could be no question about the Commissioner of Public Health delegating his authority, because he would have trained persons to whom to delegate such authority.

If the Minister really desires this Bill, which is to a large extent just a hotch-potch

because of our complete lack of present organisation, I will agree with him provided he will insert a time limit so that something of real worth can be attempted in the way of organisation joining the practising profession and the Health Department together. If we do that, it will be safe for the officer responsible under the Commissioner of Public Health for the treatment of tuberculosis to delegate his authority to those various zone hospitals. I have gone even further; I have said that these zone hospitals should be within certain districts, and where there are now existing smaller hospitals, there should be adequate health centres and in those health centres a medical practitioner should be located who should be in relation to the administration officer of the zone and so in relation to the Commissioner of Public Health. In this way, we should get convergence of public health control throughout the State. This would be a magnificent effort to put forward. Rather than delegate, as this Bill proposes, the power of the Commissioner to any public health official, let us get that organisation. Let us look at the health of the community as something vital and something real, and put something in the department to re-vitalise it so that its influence can descend from the department to the man in the city street and the man in the country. Then we shall really get somewhere.

I have protested—and in this every member will bear me out—about fiddling with health legislation. I have asked for some organisation. I have asked that there should be a hospital Commission. Yet we find this Bill proposes to put the Wooroloo Sanatorium under the infectious diseases provision and asks for all sorts of regulations to control the behaviour of the management and those admitted to the institution. I realise that it is necessary for a hospital to have its regulations, but to put in a Bill of this sort regulations for one hospital seems to me to be entirely unnecessary, provided we have some concerted plan of organisation for the hospitals of the State.

We went to the country as a party and said we would institute the block system of nursing. I mention this only because the Minister, in moving the second reading of the Bill, referred to the inci-

dence of tuberculosis amongst nurses at Wooroloo. If I understood him aright, I gathered that the risk of nurses contracting the disease at Wooroloo was relatively less than in the case of a nurse in a general hospital. It should be so and could be so, but it has not been so. We should introduce the block system of nursing, to make absolutely certain that no nurse ever went to Wooroloo who had not resistance against the disease. Up to a short time before I left this State, those conditions were not being carried out. I do not know what the present position is, having been away so long.

The Minister for Health: The fact is it is there.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Will the Minister give the figures in the course of his reply?

The Minister for Health: I gave the total figures, but not the figures for the nurses.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I must go further and ask the Minister also to tell us what has been done regarding the nurses at Wooroloo who develop tuberculosis during their care of the sick, and their pensions. Members will remember that last year I asked certain questions. I can assure members that some of the nurses who developed tuberculosis in Wooroloo or in the Royal Perth Hospital have received very scant treatment. I was promised by the then Minister that a measure would be introduced to protect those nurses. I note with interest that Dr. Henzell has mentioned the point in regard to workers' compensation, but I consider that the girl who develops tuberculosis whilst nursing the sick deserves everything the State can give her in the way of protection and adequate compensation and treatment afterwards. Every one of us in the profession throughout would believe that the statement was correct that nurses would run less risk at Wooroloo if there had been introduced the block system of nursing by which nurses only went for short periods to Wooroloo after they had developed immunity by nursing in other institutions.

Point of Order.

The Minister for Health: On a point of order, I am afraid that so many irrelevant matters are being brought into this discussion that it will take hours for me to reply to points which I do not think are pertinent

to the Bill. I do not want to enter into a dissertation in regard to nurses and the block system.

The President: The Minister's point of order is that the discussion is irrelevant. Will the hon. member kindly connect his remarks with the Bill?

Debate Resumed.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I would not have referred to this matter at all except for the statement the Minister made in introducing the Bill. I will leave what I have said to members of the House and let the matter remain where it is. I think I have said enough in this House to make it clear that I am going to ask the Minister to withdraw this legislation on tuberculosis and to put before this House a well-conceived measure for its control. There is no reason why a separate Bill cannot be introduced giving the powers that are necessary and which I believe are not effected by this method of small amendments to the Act. I can assure the Minister that if he introduces a Bill to control tuberculosis in which every member of the practising profession and of the public could take willing action, he will achieve something much more valuable than he will accomplish by the amendments contained in this Bill.

I would like to go further and deal with this question of the post-mortem of the stillborn child and point out that I consider that this is completely ultra vires the section concerned. This Bill proposes to amend the section of the Act relating to midwives and the proposal is to insert the words "medical practitioner." If members look at the principal Act, they will see how difficult it is; because when they reach the end of it they will find that the penalty on the first occasion for failure either by the midwife, the nurse or the doctor to report is 40s. and on the second occasion £20. Then the provision goes on to say that the name of the midwifery nurse can be erased from the register; but there is no such penalty for the medical man. In the midwives section of this Act we simply propose to insert the words "medical practitioner," but I do not think it has anything to do with that section. This is one of the most laudable proposals we have had submitted to us but I would like to see the whole matter put into some clear legislation.

Perhaps it might assist if I said that some months ago a committee was appointed to help the Commissioner in looking into this question of stillborn births. On that committee are medical men, who really know their particular specialty. I cannot remember them all, but there is Dr. Thompson, obstetrician, Dr. Kelsall, dealing with the blood, and Dr. A. T. Pearson, pathologist. They were to go into the whole question and assist the Commissioner. Owing to the unfortunate ill-health of the Commissioner and the fact that he has been out of the State, no meeting of that committee has taken place for five months. Yet this legislation is introduced. It does not represent the finding of the committee, the members of which were unaware of the legislation.

In this Bill we are asking that a medical practitioner notify every case of midwifery he attends, whether it is normal, stillborn or abortion. In the case of some medical men this will mean 400 certificates a year and it will not be carried out in practice. I cannot understand the need for a penalty clause in this case. The profession has always been keen to make progress in medical work and an appeal to its members to notify stillborn births would produce a 95 per cent. response. The failure of the other 5 per cent. would be probably due to the fact that they had overlooked it. We are not seeking to chase somebody legally for being responsible for a stillborn birth; we are only making a scientific inquiry into the cause of such births; and I should think, therefore, that the co-operation of the profession would be sought rather than that a legal penalty should be imposed. There was no difficulty in securing the formation of a committee to inquire into this matter, and there would be no difficulty in securing the co-operation of the profession.

There is nothing in the Bill to tell us how the whole matter is to be worked out. It does not give the committee which is going to make the inquiry a legal standing but imposes a penalty on a member of the profession if he fails to do something. I know what is at the back of the mind of the Minister and the Commissioner, and together I think we could submit legislation, if legislation is necessary, that would produce an inquiry of real value. If it were felt that the committee, in order to collect statistics, had to have power, that power

could be given and this House would not object. I for one would assist in every way possible. But to ask every medical practitioner to notify every maternity case he attends is to ask for something that would not be carried out in actual practice, not because men did not want to do it, but because they would not have the time.

I do not know whether the department realises the number of certificate members of the profession already have to fill in. The Act makes it necessary for a nursing midwife to notify every case and now we are going to ask the medical man to do so. So we will have certificates from both the nurse and the doctor. I cannot see the value of that. If we are going to require a report of all the difficult cases, it will need a considerable length of time to be devoted to the certificates forwarded by the medical practitioners. Otherwise it would be of no value. I would have thought that to give the committee some legal status to inquire into this matter would be very much better than to impose a penalty on a medical man for failure to notify an ordinary case. I cannot see any need for that. Not only is this provision to be inserted in the wrong section, and not only is it unwise in relation to the profession, but it is also extraordinary in its wording. It says that—

It shall be the duty of every midwife or midwifery nurse and every medical practitioner who shall, in any district or part of a district, from time to time specified or defined by Proclamation, attend at the birth of a stillborn child to cause a post-mortem examination of the body of such child, to be made by a medical practitioner to be appointed by the Commissioner.

Then it puts the onus on those persons to forward the pathologist's report. I should think that it would be better if the pathologist made his report quite separately from those who were making their report about the case of stillbirth. But this makes it essential for the pathologist to hand his report to the nurse, midwife or doctor, and for them to submit the report to the Commissioner. Not one of us who has looked at that thinks it necessary. It would be wiser for the report of the pathologist to be sent separately. I know quite well what has been done in this matter and applaud the Government.

A laboratory is being instituted at the King Edward Memorial Hospital, where the

major portion of the work will be carried out. The Government has the services of Dr. A. T. Pearson, who is perhaps one of the best anatomists we have had in this State, and we will probably get a considerable amount of information. But to secure the earnest co-operation of the profession would be better than holding a legal penalty over their heads if they do not do something. I hate to speak like this, but I do think there are things we can do between us—the department and the practising profession—and the sooner we get together the better it will be. I think we can get together. Although I have spoken like this, I offer my services to the Minister and the department and I am certain the B.M.A. and the members of the committee who were appointed to deal with stillborn births would give every assistance. But such matters should be dealt with in separate sections of the Act if they are to be brought in at all and not put away in some dark corner of the legislation.

One of the other phases that disappoints me in the measure is that there is one amendment of the Health Act that is urgently necessary and has not been dealt with. In 1942, when we had people of other nationalities on our shores, we were urged to pass legislation in regard to V.D., which I opposed very strenuously. Previously, if an informant sent a signed statement to the Commissioner of Public Health that he had acquired V.D. from a certain person, that person could be picked up for examination. That was altered to read that if—not on a signed statement but merely on some reasonable grounds—the Commissioner believed a person was suffering from V.D. he or she—and it was designed for "she"—could be picked up for examination. Surely we do not want that wartime legislation, which was dangerous, to remain on our statute-book! I am submitting an amendment to remove it.

The Women's Service Guild, and, in fact, every women's organisation, has asked me for some time to take steps to have that removed from the statute-book. I understand that it is not the practice of the department to carry out the amended legislation but the Act as it stood. This is not just something hypothetical. There have been recorded cases in which persons who have acquired V.D. have accused the wrong person,

and the Commissioner may find himself in the difficult position when he does not have to have a signed statement under our legislation. Someone can simply make a statement that a certain person has communicated V.D. to him and the Commissioner thereupon has "reasonable grounds" for taking action. I think that persons should be responsible for statements made to the Commissioner in that regard. It might be that a perfectly innocent person who had refused the attentions of a certain individual would be notified as the person from whom the complaint had been acquired.

Then we go on in a more extraordinary way to meet these extraordinary conditions and state that because of the difficulty then existing at the Royal Perth Hospital, such a person could be taken to the gaol hospital in the first instance. That provision was passed by this House and it certainly should come off the statute-book. I do not desire to speak at any greater length but I appeal to the Minister to look at what I have said from the point of view that I have nothing but construction in my mind. I have applauded what he wishes to accomplish but the manner in which he seeks to go about it will not achieve his end. I ask him to proceed slowly and to realise that tuberculosis is a waning disease, although, of course, the enthusiasm for its control is ever increasing.

I suggest that we will assist the Minister to bring down legislation that will be a model with regard to the control of tuberculosis within the State. I ask him to realise with regard to his inquiries into stillbirths he will achieve more by co-operation with the medical profession if he gives them the facilities to further the work they are doing at the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women and to spread such inquiries through the zone hospitals as they are established. He will accomplish more by that means than if he proceeds along the lines he has suggested. Finally, I ask him to accept my amendment dealing with those matters that are so abhorrent to the women of the State and which are so dangerous that the provisions regarding venereal disease in that direction should be removed from the Act.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [8.2]: This is an important Bill. The first clauses deal with the attempt to lessen the incidence of

Brill's disease by the extermination of rats. That is essential and I am glad the Commissioner of Public Health is keen on this matter because in the metropolitan area in particular some local authorities are very anxious to grapple with the problem whereas their next door neighbours do practically nothing. The amending legislation in that respect is important and the department deserves credit for bringing the matter forward.

I listened with great attention and interest to Dr. Hislop when he was dealing with tuberculosis and the main provisions of the Bill have reference to that disease. I agree that it would have been better had the Government brought down a special Bill to deal with that subject, but there is now no time for that to be done. The measure before us is an attempt to carry out Dr. Henzell's programme. Public interest in tuberculosis is greater now than ever before and Dr. Henzell deserves every credit for the splendid work he is doing.

The clause setting out that the Commissioner of Public Health may delegate his powers is sound, but I am opposed to giving him unlimited authority. I think every delegation of authority should be subject to the approval of the Minister. The provision in the Bill constitutes a bad breakaway from democratic government, seeing that we are asked to give an officer unlimited power, even though there is the saving provision that the Minister may step in if he thinks it necessary to do so. I think that part of the Bill should be altered so as to make any such delegation of powers subject to the approval of the Minister.

Everything possible should be done to help the committees that are interested in the work and to aid Dr. Henzell in his task. We cannot afford to defeat that part of the Bill so as to give effect to what Dr. Hislop desires because we have not the requisite time and the problem is too urgent to be left over until the next session of Parliament. The delegation of authority to the Commissioner should be agreed to, subject to the modification I have suggested. I am much concerned about the possibility of local authorities being loaded up with the additional cost of clinics and Wooroloo hospital. Mr. Davies drew attention to that point and I hope the Minister will give the House some explanation

of the position. The local authorities already have sufficient to do with the load they have to carry.

The third portion of the Bill has reference to the attempt to lessen the number of stillbirths. All who take an interest in that phase of our life—I can speak only as a layman—are much concerned about what appears to be an increase in the number of such births reported. We should agree to the legislative proposal in that regard because it will assist to make every inquiry possible with a view to finding out the causes of stillbirths and remedying the position. We should agree to the Bill and it would be a great mistake to drop it for the reasons suggested by Dr. Hislop.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.11] in moving the second reading said: The Bill, as hon. members know, is very important and relates to the distribution of electoral districts and provinces throughout the State, with the object of securing a redistribution. Members may like to know what has brought this necessity about and will be interested in a short history of the electoral districts. In 1889 the Constitution Act provided for the electoral districts and in 1893 a Redistribution of Seats Act was passed. Further redistribution enactments were passed in 1899, 1904 and 1911.

The Act of 1911 is still in force so far as the boundaries of the provinces are concerned. In 1922 a further redistribution was effected and again amending legislation was passed in 1929. The latter measure affected the Legislative Assembly only. In 1922 the North-West was given four seats and the Goldfields central area was created. In 1929 an Act, which is the existing law today, divided the State into the metropolitan area, the agricultural area and the mining and pastoral area. It did away with the Central Goldfields area, which included Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Hannans and so forth.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The North-West had four seats.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. Under the existing law, two electors in the metropolitan area count as one—I am speaking of the Legislative Assembly electorates. In the agricultural and central Goldfields areas two electors count as three and in the agricultural and Goldfields central area the voters are equal. In 1929 the Goldfields central and mining areas were joined up with the mining and pastoral area. Under that Act in the metropolitan area—this applies at the present time—three electors count as two; in the agricultural area two count as two; in the mining and pastoral area, one elector counts as two.

Thus it will be seen that in the mining and pastoral areas the electors have three times the voting power of an elector in the metropolitan area and in the agricultural area an elector has one-and-a-half times greater power than a metropolitan voter. The distribution of seats at the present time gives 17 to the metropolitan area, 21 to the agricultural districts, eight to the mining and pastoral areas and four to the North-West. In 1929 there were 215,879 voters on the roll and today there are 297,089, an increase of 81,210 in 18 years. The latest figures available show that in the metropolitan area there are 172,691 electors as against 111,379 in 1929 while in March of this year the number was 171,379, an increase between 1929 and March, 1947, of 60,352, or more than a third. The figures for the agricultural area are—

Present	..	..	95,882
1929	..	..	85,556
March, 1947	..	..	96,694

an increase between 1929 and March, 1947, of 11,188, or one-eighth. The figures for the mining and pastoral area are—

Present	..	..	27,040
1929	..	..	16,037
March, 1947	..	..	25,923

an increase of 9,886, or half as many again. Members will note that the figure for the mining and pastoral area has increased by over 1,000 since March. For the North-West the figures are—

Present	..	..	3,229
1929	..	..	3,529
March, 1947	..	..	3,093

These figures have increased by a little under 100, but they have declined by one-eighth

from 1929 to March, 1947. Under the 1922 Act, it was provided that if five or more districts were above or below 20 per cent. of their correct numbers, then the Commissioners should bring in a report. In 1937, a report was brought in, but it was not given effect by law.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was it not introduced into the House?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not sure.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It was.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The numbers in some of the districts are enlightening as showing what the position is. At present they are—

North Perth	..	6,455
Perth	..	7,774
West Perth	..	7,206
Canning	..	15,357
Mt. Hawthorn	..	14,971
Nedlands	..	15,489

Nedlands is the largest. The figures for the agricultural area are—

York	..	2,671
Katanning	..	5,306
Swan	..	7,402

The figures for the mining and pastoral area are—

Mt. Magnet	..	2,101
Kalgoorlie	..	4,981

These figures should show members how absolutely essential it is that there should be a more correct distribution of seats. At present, the boundaries are entirely wrong and disproportionate. The Bill provides that the North-West shall have three seats instead of four.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Shame!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There are only 3,229 electors on the roll for all of these four seats at present. The position in the North-West has altered considerably since it has had four seats, as there is quicker and easier transport; but, unfortunately, fewer people are there. Notwithstanding that the Bill provides for the reduction of one seat, the North-West will still have six members of Parliament for 3,229 electors. I consider that quite reasonable in view of the circumstances. We know that it is a vast area, but it can now be reached by aeroplane. Two votes in the metropolitan area will count as one; for the remainder of the State, which is known

as the mining, pastoral and agricultural areas, one vote will count for one elector.

Members will readily understand that, in dividing the areas, the Commissioners will have to deal with fractions. The Bill provides that any fraction will go to the metropolitan area, which is loaded by two to one. Further, in fixing the boundaries the Commissioners have discretion as to a 10 per cent. margin more or less. Obviously, they cannot make the districts exactly the same as they now are. The Bill also provides that the Commission shall be constituted of the Chief Justice—if he is not available, he may appoint a judge in his place—the Chief Electoral Officer and the Under Secretary for Lands. The present Act provides that the Surveyor General shall be a member of the Commission, but it is thought that the Under Secretary for Lands would be more knowledgeable for this purpose than would be the Surveyor General.

An innovation in the Bill is that after the Commission has divided the country into electoral districts, it shall make its report. That report will be available, and any member of Parliament, or any voter, may raise objections in writing to the report pointing out what might appear to him to be an anomaly. The Commissioners may then alter the boundaries, if they so desire. After a certain period, the Commissioners' recommendation will automatically become law. Previously, the Commissioners reported the districts and a Bill was then brought down to implement their report, with the result that there was much discussion of a personal nature on the report. That will now be eliminated. I venture to say that it will be impossible for anyone to forecast with any degree of accuracy the boundaries of any electorate, or what the Parties are likely to be as a result. I think we can say, however, that approximately the position will be that the metropolitan area will have 20 seats instead of 17, as now; and the 27 remaining seats will be for the rest of the State, excluding the North-West; that is to say, the mining, pastoral and agricultural. Even those figures are conjectural.

This Chamber is very slightly affected. The Bill provides that the Commissioners shall divide the State, as far as possible, to conform to the areas of the present provinces, but making the boundaries co-terminus with

the boundaries of the electoral districts. So far as the North-West is concerned, there will be no alteration; as regards the other provinces, there may be some slight alteration. There is one serious alteration in respect of the Metropolitan province and the Metropolitan-Suburban province. As members are aware, at present some 30,000 odd people are enrolled for the Metropolitan-Suburban province, and I think some 6,000 odd for the Metropolitan province.

Hon. T. B. Bolton: Make it 7,000.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Bill provides that, in dividing the Metropolitan-Suburban province, the Commissioners shall make the total number on the roll for each province as nearly equal as possible, at the same time bearing in mind the division of the area. Apart from that, I doubt whether the Bill affects the representation in this Chamber. The next biennial election will be held in May on the present province boundaries, as effect could not be given to this Bill before then. Those members of the Council who are going before their electors next May can continue their good work in their provinces as they exist today.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Will the franchise be the same?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not prepared to say anything about any other Bill, because that is against the Standing Orders. I think members will agree that this is an extremely fair Bill and an honest attempt to have a true representation of the people in the Legislative Assembly. Should members require any further information, I shall be only too pleased to supply it, if at all possible. I hope I have not left out any material point and that members will fully appreciate the serious significance of this proposed alteration in our electoral districts as it affects the rights of the people of Western Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

BILL—IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 4th December. Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 4, after an amendment to insert the word "fifty" in lieu of the word "fifty-two" had been negatived.

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That the word "fifty-one" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

My desire is that the Minister shall have power, if he so desires, to go to the extent of 51 per cent. It is not laid down that it must do that. But on occasions the Government may be called upon to contribute large sums of money and the Minister then should have control to the extent of 51 per cent. It might be said that this will prevent other companies from coming in, but I do not think that will happen.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Clause 4 means that the Government, in order to encourage the development of the steel industry, may put money into a public company, pay for shares and hold them. Would any member here put money into a company in which he knew the Government could acquire more than half the shares, and so assume complete control?

Hon. C. G. Latham: It depends on whether it is a company dealing with iron, or a brewery.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It does not matter whether it is matches or boots. Members would not have anything to do with a company over which the Government had control.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I would in the case of an iron and steel company.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The hon. member may be simple, but other members would not invest money in such a company. I agree that to encourage private enterprise the Government should acquire shares up to 50 per cent., and if the amendment is defeated I propose to move that we insert the word "forty-eight."

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why not "forty"?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Well anything, so long as it is not fifty. The Government can be represented on the board, benefit from the profits and advance money. It should do those things to encourage an enterprise in which the State is interested, I ask members to vote against the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I support the amendment. The only other concern in which a Government has shares, that I know of, is the Commonwealth Oil Refinery Company, in which the Commonwealth Government holds 51 per cent. of the shares. Does any member suggest that is not a successful company?

Hon. L. Craig: Do you know what dividend it pays?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. The last dividend was eight per cent. to the ordinary shareholders.

Hon. L. Craig: It could have been four per cent. and no-one would have said anything about it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It could have been six per cent.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is a monopoly.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: So is the one under discussion. Who else will start an iron and steel works here? I do not like the paragraph at all, but if the Government is going to put money into this venture it should have some control.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I oppose the amendment for the same reasons that Mr. Latham supports it. He mentioned the Commonwealth Oil Refinery Company, which has a monopoly of something required every day and night. That is a different proposition. I agree with Mr. Craig. If the Government holds 52 per cent. of the shares we will not get people to invest in it. Why not say the Government is to have 48 per cent., or 40 per cent.? By agreeing to 50 or 52 per cent. we would be establishing another Government-controlled concern. Who is finding the money for Brasserts? The Japanese found it before, and perhaps they are finding it now. In a few years' time this venture will be another baby for which the taxpayers of this State will be responsible. We already have two, those at Wundowie and Lake Campion. I hope members will not only reject the amendment, but will ensure that the Government can take only 40 per cent. of the capital.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Cut out the clause altogether.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I would do that.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I support the amendment. If the people are going to be

committed, through their Government, to large sums of money in a problematical show such as this, the Government should be able to hold a controlling interest. This is obviously a doubtful proposition. The Bill would not otherwise provide for the Government to have a share-holding, and at the same time be prepared to advance money. Another part of the Bill which makes me believe that the Government should have a controlling interest is that which says that the measure is to authorise the Government to contract or arrange for the development and mining of any iron-ore resources of the State, and to promote or assist in the promotion of any company. That is very wide. I would prefer to see the clause struck out, but, if it must remain, I will support the amendment.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The amendment is necessary to protect the taxpayers and the interests of the public generally. An iron and steel industry is urgently required in this State, and the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. will not establish it. This is the only way in which we can establish the industry, and I think members should support the amendment.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: From the trend of the debate one would think the clause made it mandatory on the Government to take an interest of 51 per cent. That is not the case. The clause gives the Government power to take shares up to that maximum. Iron-ore, coal and limestone are national assets and must be developed on a national basis. The clause, as it stands, will give the Government greater bargaining power than it would otherwise have, and the people are entitled to that protection.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: The figures "52" were taken out of the Bill for reasons similar to those already advanced, and if we are to insert in lieu "51" that will simply mean that there was no sense in striking out the figures "52." As a rule Government enterprise is not as successful as private enterprise, and if private interests could acquire only 49 per cent. of the shares, that would act as a deterrent to the subscription of private capital for the venture. I do not think we should do anything to jeopardise the prospects of the industry.

Hon. G. FRASER: After listening to Mr. Craig, Mr. Baxter and others, one would think the amendment laid down the

minimum number of shares the Government could hold in the concern. Actually it limits only the maximum number of shares to be held by the Government. If the Government subscribes more than half the capital it should hold the controlling number of shares. I trust members will support the amendment.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The Government will be called upon to subscribe most of the money.

Hon. G. FRASER: Then it should hold a majority of the shares. I wish only to protect the taxpayers' money.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The clause should be struck out altogether, as the company will be given the right to hawk this project round the world for the next four years. It cannot be developed with less than millions of pounds. Are we to commit the Government to subscribing such vast sums?

The Minister for Mines: This has nothing to do with the agreement.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The agreement says Brasserts can hold the leases for four years.

The Minister for Mines: We are not dealing with that clause.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The taxpayers of this State should not be asked to put millions into the concern.

The Minister for Mines: This has nothing to do with Brasserts.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, but why is the other man being given this right? Eventually it will cost millions. The clause should be struck out and close consideration should be given to the rest of the Bill.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	14
					—
Majority against	..	..	..	..	3
					—

AYES.

Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. C. G. Latham	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. H. A. C. Daffin	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
	(Teller.)

Amendment (to insert word) thus negatived.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I desire to move an amendment to strike out paragraph (c).

The MINISTER FOR MINES: On a point of order, the hon. member could be in order in going back?

The CHAIRMAN: My ruling is that we cannot go back.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Committee having agreed to the deletion of a number greater than one-half, obviously must approve of a number less than one-half. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (c) the word "forty-eight" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

I want the control to be in the hands of private enterprise and to prevent political appointments to the managership, etc.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: At what stage may I move to delete the clause?

The CHAIRMAN: The Bill would have to be re-committed for that purpose.

Hon. G. FRASER: I oppose the amendment. The Government has introduced a Bill and now Ministers are voting against a vital portion of it. That is an extraordinary position.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The percentage was amended in another place.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but the Minister moved the amendment. If the Government provides most of the share capital, it should have most of the say. Apart from subscribing share capital, the Government might also advance loans to the company.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I oppose the amendment. Though the Government held only 48 per cent. of the shares it might still have a controlling influence on the board of directors. I consider that the right thing to do is to delete paragraph (c).

The CHAIRMAN: That can be done on recommittal.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	11
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	3
					—

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. C. G. Latham	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. G. FRASER: In view of the discussion and the interjections that the Government will get value for the money put in, I intend to make an attempt to provide that the Government shall have value for the money by moving for the deletion of paragraph (c). That will limit the Government to having a say in accordance with the amount of money put in as share capital. It was suggested that 48 per cent. would give the Government value. I am prepared to provide for that. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (c) be struck out.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is no need for this paragraph, because we have legislation empowering the Government to make advances for any purpose. It looks to me as if this were specially inserted for Brasserts or anybody engaged in the steel, coal or coke industry. I support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Solicitor General has deemed it necessary to have this inserted because it is doubtful whether the Government could lend money to a company in which it has so many shares. It is rather extraordinary that members are prepared to allow the Government to subscribe money but others say "No, you can subscribe but must not lend." That is rather an extraordinary attitude. They wanted to prevent the Government from subscribing but say, "Now you have defeated us, we will stop you from lending and force you to put money in."

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: There is another approach to the matter. In the opinion of some of us the Government's commitments should be limited in a show of this kind. There should not be a blank cheque given.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I cannot believe the opposition to this clause is serious. The provision is a tremendous help to the Govern-

ment. It may feel that it does not want to subscribe to the capital of a company, but in order to be of assistance it might say, "We will lend you money or guarantee your account at the bank. In this case you will get your money from the bank." By lending money it takes security for the assets of the company. It may not be willing to subscribe and thus risk capital but may be willing to lend and take security.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister said the Crown Solicitor had advised him there was doubt whether the Government could lend money to a company in which the Government was a shareholder. That was the very point I wanted to raise. I do not want the Government to have that power. I would like to be a representative of Brasserts with this agreement in this legislation! I would hawk it around the country, and if I could not make a success of it I would eat my hat!

The Minister for Mines: It has nothing to do with Brasserts.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Why is the schedule attached, with Brasserts specially mentioned? I am satisfied the Minister has not read his own Bill. The preamble to the Bill connects it up, and the last clause says that the agreement set out in the schedule is hereby ratified. Power is given to arrange for the development of iron ore deposits and Brasserts are particularly stressed. It is the best means of fooling the public if you want them to put money into a concern that may not be profitable. I am not going to encourage any Government to put the taxpayers' money into trading concerns, which is what this means. Not only are we to become shareholders but we are to have power to loan money to the company but are not to have sufficient power to determine its policy.

The Minister for Mines: The Government has been lending money to private enterprise for years. When you were a Minister, too!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But it never became a shareholder.

Hon. L. CRAIG: This has nothing to do with shareholders.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Paragraph (c) has not, but we have said the Government can be a shareholder. Now we are saying money can be lent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member said that this was put in to swindle the people.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not use the word "swindle." I object to that statement and I ask for a withdrawal.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member did not say "swindling" but "hoodwinking," and I thought the words had a similar meaning.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The hon. member has not withdrawn his statement.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister has corrected his first statement by altering the word to "hoodwinking." I hope that will satisfy the hon. member.

Hon. C. G. Latham: All I am concerned is that it should not go into "Hansard" that I referred to "swindling."

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure "Hansard" will make the correction.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member said this was an opportunity to go round the country hoodwinking the people, and I think he said he would like to have the opportunity. All I can say is that I do not know enough about that type of commercial business and I trust that I never will. Here is a gentleman gets up and says, "I insist on 52 per cent.," and here is a clause which says that the Government may if it likes have 48 per cent. of the shares and may then, if it so desires, advance money on any conditions the Treasury thinks fit. The conditions of advancing money to a company are often by way of the company issuing debentures and the debenture shareholders usually have a representative on the directorate. Is that not giving control to the person who lends the money? But for some reason the hon. member desires at every opportunity to vote against the measures put forward and I can only feel that it is for some reason apart from this Bill or this clause that he votes in opposition.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think it would be a mistake to pass this amendment and a reflection on our business integrity in the House. It would be fatal to the Bill. I am sure the mover will withdraw the amendment if he reflects on the effect.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have no intention to withdraw the amendment. If the Com-

mittee had seen fit to give the Government the power so far as shareholding was concerned, I would have been prepared to allow this to remain; but I am not prepared to allow the Government to make advances to the company and only have a 48 per cent. maximum shareholding.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the Minister will not continue to adopt the attitude that because I take a certain action I have ulterior motives. He is not going to get away with that sort of thing. I will express myself as I think fit. It is certainly not a very friendly attitude for him to adopt, and I shall support anything that I think is in the interests of the people.

The Minister for Mines: You have a perfect right to do so.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 5—Ratification of agreement.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—

"Provided that paragraph (a) of Subclause (iii) of Clause 5 of the said Agreement is and shall be deemed amended by the insertion after the words 'plus five per cent.' in the last line of the words '(any dispute, doubt or question between the parties arising under this paragraph shall be determined by arbitration under the provisions of the Arbitration Act, 1895, or any statutory modification thereof).'"

Members will notice that there are two ways in which the price can be fixed for iron-ore purchased from Koolan Island. It was thought in another place that quite possibly a dispute could arise under paragraph (iii) of Clause 5 of the Agreement and the Minister in charge of the Bill undertook to have the matter looked into and an amendment moved in this House if deemed necessary. It may be wondered why the amendment is included in the Bill and not in the agreement. The explanation is that the agreement has already been signed by the Minister and by the company's representative. We cannot alter a completed agreement and therefore the amendment, which is agreeable to Brasserts, is made to the Bill.

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

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS.*Assembly's Amendments.*

Schedule of two amendments made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 6, page 3, line 30. Delete the word "two" and insert the word "three" in lieu thereof.

The HONORARY MINISTER. The effect of the amendment will provide members of the board with a tenure of office of three years instead of two years. The proposal is acceptable and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Clause 11, page 4, lines 36 and 37. Delete the words "as well as a deliberative."

The HONORARY MINISTER: When the Bill went to the Assembly it contained a provision that the chairman or deputy chairman of the board should have a casting vote as well as a deliberative vote. Exception was taken to the exercise of the two votes and the Assembly deleted the provision for the deliberative vote. I have no objection.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What if there should be a tie?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The question would be resolved in the negative. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 11, page 4, line 37. After the word "vote" insert the word "only."

The HONORARY MINISTER: This amendment is consequential and means that the chairman shall have a casting vote only. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

**BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT
AMENDMENT (No. 3).***Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.40] in moving the second reading said: This is a short but important Bill, which affects local governing bodies considerably. It seeks to amend Section 134 of the principal Act which sets out—

No member shall vote upon or take part in the discussion of any matter before the board in which he has directly or indirectly, by himself or his partner, any interest, or in which any person of whom he is an employee has any interest, apart from any interest in common with the public, and any member who knowingly offends against this section shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50 for every such offence.

On occasions it has been found that a board may desire to make a donation to an agricultural society but it has been discovered that one of the members of the society is also a member of the road board and is therefore unable to vote. Such a man is not debarred from his road board membership but from voting or taking part in any such discussion. One road board was required to take a referendum in order to make a donation of £50 to an agricultural society. It has happened that a board desires to donate a small sum to the local R.S.L. Practically all the members of the board also belong to the R.S.L. and so could not take part in the matter.

The second part of the Bill is framed to enable a local governing authority to order the repair of a dilapidated house so that it may reach a standard in conformity with that generally applicable to the district. If the owner or tenant does not carry out the board's directions, it can take the necessary action and recover the cost from the owner. It will be agreed that in these days many people allow their wooden premises to get into a state of disrepair and plead that they cannot secure the necessary materials and so forth. Sometimes the explanation is correctly advanced, but too often it is used as an excuse. In the circumstances the Bill should be acceptable to members, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 4th December of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.49] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is complementary to another which will shortly be before the House amending the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act of 1938. The parent Act, which was passed in 1871, provides that a public servant, under certain conditions, after ten years' service, may receive a pension of one-sixth of his then salary; and he progresses until finally he obtains a pension of two-thirds of his salary after a certain number of years' service. The present Public Service Act was passed in 1904 and it did away with all pensions. No person who entered the Public Service after April, 1905, comes under the Act which this Bill proposes to amend. Members will note that pensioners under the 1871 Act are becoming a diminishing number, because, for a person to come under that Act, he must have served for 42 years. There are a few persons still left who will in due course be entitled to a pension under the 1871 Act, but their number is very small.

The Bill proposes to meet to some extent the increased cost of living. It provides that there shall be an increase in pension rates of one-quarter. It has been considered equitable to make provision for an increase in the pensions of those persons to meet the increased cost of living. The peak of the liability of the State in this connection has just about been reached. The basic wage

at present is approximately £288 per annum. The Bill proposes that any pensioner whose pension is £288 a year, or less than £288 per year, shall be entitled to an increase of one-fourth; if his pension exceeds £288 a year, but is less than £360, his pension is raised to the sum of £360. If his pension is £360 or more per year, he will receive no benefit under this Bill.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Will the Bill apply to those already receiving a pension under the 1871 Act?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. It does not grant a pension to anyone; it merely increases pensions already granted.

Hon. L. Craig: To those persons who have retired?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. Members will no doubt appreciate that 20 or 30 years ago a pension of £288 was a handsome pension, but that is not so today. For the period between 1905, when the Public Service Act came into force, until 1938, when the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act was passed, public servants did not have any pension rights. Another Bill will be introduced to provide for increased benefits under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Will the contributions under that Act be increased?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will deal with that point when speaking to the other Bill. I candidly admit that I have not yet examined it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

House adjourned at 9.54 p.m.