house or a tiny self-contained flat, which today may consist of one room, a kitchenette and a bathroom? Under this Bill the wife of such a man would have the right to vote. Has not a freeholder, who has invested £50 in the purchase of a block of land on which he intends to erect a house, sufficient qualification?

Hon. G. B. Wood: His wife could claim the vote for the house in which she lived.

Hon. L. CRAIG: She might be living in an hotel. If it is right for the wife or husband in one case to have a vote we must agree that the wife or husband of anyone qualified to vote shall also have that right. This Bill deserves to go into Committee. It is an earnest endeavour by this House—introduced in this House—to amend its Constitution and the franchise of this Chamber. If we give it earnest consideration I think we can do something that will be satisfactory to another place, though I do not care what is said about it there, and we can make amendments that will be satisfactory to the people, if they take any interest in it, though I do not think they are concerned two hoots about the franchise of this House. I think we should bring our Constitution into line with similar Constitutions in other parts of Australia. I commend the Bill to the House and hope it will go through the second reading stage.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 11th September, 1946.

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

QUESTIONS.

TRACTOR CLEARING, ETC.

As to Operating Costs.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, What are the expenditure items that together make up the £13 10s. per working day of eight hours now being charged in respect to the two Government 80.4 h.p. tractors at present operating in the Mount Barker area?

2, Is he aware that in the Manjimup district a privately owned 75 h.p. tractor with bulldozer equipment is operating at a total cost of £10 for a working day of eight hours?

3, Would he say that the increased h.p. of the Government tractors warrants an increase in charges of £3 10s. per day?

4. If not, will he consider reducing the charges for clearing, etc., by Government tractors?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Travelling (transporter charges from metropolitan area and movement from property to property), £1.46; field maintenance, £0.20; fuel, oils and lubricants, £2.20; hire charges, £5.19; wages (includes provision for Workers' Compensation

and holiday pay), £1.55; breakdowns and repairs, £1.50; field supervision, £0.60; head office charges, £0.80; total, £13.50.

2, It is not known on what basis the Manjimup operator prepares his costs.

3, The charges are based on the considerations set out in the answer to No. 1.

4, The basis of charges will be reviewed at the end of each 12-monthly period.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Government Purchase of Stations.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, What stations in the North-West have been purchased by the Government?

2, Where are they situated?

3, What is the area of each one?

4, What price was paid for each property?

5, What improvements exist on the properties, and was any stock included in the purchase price?

6, To what use are they to be put?

7, In view of the fact that a number of stations are said to have been abandoned, what was the need for purchasing these properties?

The MINISTER replied:

1 to 7, "Abydos," of 387,794 acres, and "Woodstock," of 267,486 acres, situated 75 miles and 95 miles respectively south-east of Port Hedland and in the midst of properties abandoned to the mortgagees, were purchased at a concession price which was considerably less than the value to the Government of the buildings and improvements acquired, and which were valued on a conservative basis at £17,500. The purchase price did not include stock.

Each property has approximately 200,000 acres developed and sub-divided into paddocks and has homesteads, men's quarters and usual station buildings.

It is intended to use one of the properties exclusively for research into pastoral problems, and a committee consisting of representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Pastoralists' Association and University of Western Australia is visiting the area at present with a view to submitting recommendations regarding problems to be investigated immediately.

The second property will be developed as a commercial station for the purpose of testing out the recommendations and results which may be obtained from the research.

NESTLE'S MILK FACTORY.

As to Maintenance of Coal Supplies.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Is he aware that Nestle's Condensed Milk Factory at Waroona has insufficient coal stored to keep the factory running for 12 hours?

2, Is he also aware that 15 to 16 tons are required daily seven days per week to keep the factory in operation?

3, In view of the extreme difficulty of carrying on under present circumstances, and the heavy financial loss that producers of milk supplying Nestle's would suffer should the factory be forced to close down temporarily, can he state what steps, if any, are being taken to ensure that current supplies will be maintained and a reserve provided?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, Yes.

3, I have approached the Local Commonwealth Coal Distribution Committee in regard to this company's allocation and have been advised that it is always allotted sufficient coal to keep it in continuous operation, and, being an essential producer, the committee will ensure that it is kept in continuous operation.

GOLDMINERS.

As to Aluminium Treatment for Silicosis.

Mr. LEAHY asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Has any report been received from Dr. George regarding the application of aluminium treatment to miners in this State?

2, How long has Dr. George been engaged in investigating this most important treatment?

3, Seeing that many silicotic men in early and advanced stages of the disease are anxiously awaiting this treatment, hoping and

believing that its application may arrest the progress of the complaint and in doing so avoid the possibility of tuberculosis, would it not be possible to proceed with the preparation of inhalation chambers on the mines and thereby avoid unnecessary delay?

4, Has he any information as to the proposed visit to Australia of Dr. Robson?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, Dr. George has returned from his visit of investigation to Canada and is now completing his report. I have written to his Minister requesting a copy of same immediately it is available.

3, An officer of my department visited Dr. George when in Sydney this month and was informed that it was desirable that we study his report before taking any action, and that he was prepared afterwards to visit the State to discuss the matter with the department and its doctors. This procedure therefore seems desirable.

4, No. It is understood that he will await advice following the study of Dr. George's report.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. State Housing.

   Introduced by the Minister for Works (for the Premier).

2. Fisheries Act Amendment.

   Introduced by the Minister for the North-West.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Marketing of Barley (No. 2).

2. Factories and Shops Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—SEWERAGE.

As to Pans and Septic Tanks in Sewered Areas.

Debate resumed from the 4th September on the following motion by Mr. North—

That this House directs the Government's attention to the fact that—

(1) New houses under construction are being fitted with septic tanks in cases where deep sewerage is close at hand, and suggests that this practice is wasteful both of money and bricks; and

(2) also that there are still many houses using the pan system in sewered areas and suggesting that this practice be abolished.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.43]: This motion proposes to direct the attention of the Government to certain matters associated with new houses which are being constructed in the metropolitan area, and to the fact that septic tanks are being fitted to such houses in districts where the deep sewerage system is close at hand. It further proposes to direct the attention of the Government to the fact that there are still many houses in sewered areas depending upon the pan system, and it suggests that this practice should be abolished. It would be difficult for anyone to raise much objection to the motion, as it simply asks the House to direct the attention of the Government to these particular matters.

I propose this afternoon to direct the attention of the House to the policy carried on by the appropriate department before the war and to the policy which it is now carrying on, and will continue to carry on to the fullest possible extent with the means available to it. A forward policy was adopted prior to the war regarding the development of the metropolitan sewerage system. As a result, many districts were given the undoubted benefit of deep drainage facilities. After war broke out, it was not possible for the department to continue any longer—except here and there to some small extent—its policy of extending the sewerage system. In addition to manpower being diverted to war purposes, important materials essential to the extension of sewerage works were not available as they had to be used for the war effort.

When hostilities ceased and conditions became more favourable for this class of work, the department recommenced its pre-war policy and extensions have since been completed to serve many new houses erected under the Commonwealth-State Housing Scheme in the districts of Mosman Park, Bassendean and South Perth. Minor extensions have also been carried out at Subiaco and Claremont. Major works are under way at the present time in the districts of Bassendean and Maylands. Quite recently a decision was reached to extend the sewerage system to serve what is known

as the No. 1 Area at Midland Junction. This area has been settled, so far as its present population is concerned, for very many years. Unfortunately for it, many new districts, which were developed long after Midland Junction, were given sewerage facilities while Midland Junction was allowed to wait from year to year until, as I suggested, it has been waiting as long as 20 years for the great benefit that accrues from the installation of a sewerage system.

Mr. North: We have done more than Brisbane.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The post-war programme of the department provides for extensions in the districts of Leederville, Nedlands, Claremont, South Perth, Victoria Park, Cottesloe, North Fremantle and Fremantle. In addition to the districts which I have already mentioned, the approximate cost of carrying out the programme to which I have referred is £1,000,000. It will therefore be clear to members that the department has drawn up a programme of sewerage extensions that is of considerable dimensions. I can safely say that no delay will be occasioned in the carrying out of this post-war programme because of any shortage of the necessary finance. That statement will provide happy music to the sensitive ears—on this particular subject—of the member for Claremont. It should, I imagine, almost make true one of the dreams that he has cherished for a considerable time. However, it should be said that whilst there will be no financial disability arising in regard to the carrying out of the programme, the speed with which it is to be achieved will be conditioned by the labour and materials available from time to time.

Unskilled labour will, of course, be available in sufficient quantities but sewerage extensions, in regard to the reticulation system itself and especially in regard to the connection of houses, require highly skilled labour. Some materials which are in short supply, and will remain in short supply for some time to come, are also required in great quantities if this work is to be carried out speedily. Nevertheless the department will press forward with all possible haste to put this post-war policy into operation, and to complete it as quickly as is humanly possible. During the current financial year works are already in progress, or will be put in hand to provide extensions in the following areas:—Maylands, Bassendean, Midland Junction, North Fremantle, Graylands and Wembley. It will be seen from the districts in which work is to be carried out, or is already being carried out, that a wide area is being covered; and several more districts will receive attention.

It can therefore be said that the Government, through the appropriate department, has prepared extensive plans for the extension of the sewerage system. These plans were prepared some time ago with the object of being put into operation, to the fullest extent possible, when the necessary manpower and materials were available. In connection with new houses under construction in certain areas where deep sewerage is close at hand, but in which houses are being fitted with septic tanks, I would say that much of the areas concerned cannot be easily served by the existing sewerage system. In other words, it is not possible to serve such areas by means of the laying of ordinary gravity mains. If those areas are to be adequately served with sewerage facilities, it will be necessary to instal ejector plants or pumping stations, or both. It is because of this necessity that it has not been possible to extend the sewerage system although it is close to the localities in question. The only two alternatives are to leave the people, in those houses, dependent upon the out-of-date pan system or give them the greatest possible measure of up-to-date service by installing septic tanks.

Mr. North: And, I suppose, with standard fittings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The second alternative, of course, has been adopted. The septic tanks have been installed in such a way as to make their incorporation in the sewerage system a reasonably easy and not very expensive matter when the necessary ejector plants for pumping stations are available. I hope, therefore, that every member will be clear as to why the department has installed in these houses, in the particular localities, septic tanks instead of extending the sewerage system to embrace them. It was a matter of impossibility to obtain the plant and equipment necessary to extend the sewerage system and so the department adopted the best practical method available and installed septic tanks. On this point the member for Clare-

mont is, perhaps, most concerned with what is known as the Graylands area in the Claremont district. The sewerage system is already being extended there and I understand that sewerage facilities will be available to the people in that locality by the end of the present year. So those people will not have much longer to wait for the change-over from the septic tank to the sewerage system.

In connection with the question of the abolition of the pan system where it operates in sewered areas, I point out that at the 30th June last there were 3,091 premises in sewered areas being served by the pan system. I think it is not necessary to indulge in any criticism or condemnation of the pan system. Everyone, I am confident, is anxious to see it abolished as quickly as possible wherever it operates. Fairly rapid progress is being made with the abolition of this system. For instance, 173 premises with the pan system were connected to the sewerage system during the months of July and August. I frankly admit we will have to speed up the rate of connecting such premises to the sewerage system, and that speeding up will take place when the physical capacity to connect the premises in question is increased.

I mentioned a short time ago that a considerable amount of highly skilled work has to be done in connecting any premises with the sewerage system, and the services of highly skilled tradesmen have to be available. Now, I am sure that every member is aware that these highly skilled tradesmen are not plentiful at present—and I refer especially to plumbers. In addition, certain materials required, such as copper, are not available in great quantities. The department makes financial assistance available under very easy terms of repayment to any person not in a position to make his own private financial arrangements to connect his premises to the sewerage system. For this purpose an amount of £20,000 has been placed on the departmental Estimates for the current financial year. It will, therefore, be noted that the department is anxious to encourage, and to assist financially, any person not well situated financially to have his premises connected with the sewerage system as soon as possible.

Power to compel owners of property to connect their premises to the sewerage system resides in Section 80 of the Health Act. That power of compulsion is one to be operated by the local health authority. During the war there was some criticism of certain local health authorities because they did not exercise the power given to them under that section. However, I think the local health authorities shaped their policy in that regard on the fact that during the war it was extremely difficult to obtain the services of the necessary tradesmen, and also for the tradesmen in turn to obtain the necessary materials to enable premises operating under the pan system to be properly to the sewerage system. I have no doubt that, as the appropriate tradesmen and materials become available, the local health authorities concerned will, wherever they consider it to be necessary, use the power of compulsion or of direction that is given to them in the legislation to which I have referred.

Mr. Read: It is a doubtful power.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think it is a doubtful power. I suggest that if any local health authority considers the power to be doubtful the proper course for it to pursue is to exercise the power where it considers that power should be exercised, leaving it to the person to whom the direction is issued to test whether the power is doubtful or complete and adequate. As I said at the beginning, it would require a great deal of effort to bring one to a stage where one could oppose this motion or ask the House to defeat it.

Mr. North: Or to have it withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not even suggesting that it should be withdrawn. I do not think the Government will take it as a reflection on the Government or its administration if the motion is carried, because it directs the attention of the Government to certain matters of considerable importance. In reality there is no need to direct the attention of the Government to those matters because, as I have explained, we have to the extent of the limited resources available to us—I am speaking of the physical resources—carried out the work to which the motion directs our attention. In addition, in our post-war programme relating to these matters, we are pushing ahead with all speed in order to see that the best possible facilities in relation to the sewerage

system are made available to the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [5.5]: It was said, by way of interjection, that it was doubtful whether the power provided by the Act could be applied, but I believe that Section 80 of the Health Act, subject to Section 31, makes it certain that a health officer can compel any owner to connect premises with the deep sewerage system so long as that system is within 300 feet of the house concerned. I do not wish to say much on this matter other than to compliment my confrere on bringing the matter to notice. I have no doubt that the time has come when sewerage facilities mean a great deal to the people of the community. I was glad to hear the Minister's explanation on the matter of drainage, because I was anxious to know why houses were being erected and fitted with septic tanks while they were within a certain distance of the sewerage system. The Minister has explained that. Unfortunately I think there will be a cost of about £30 per house which somebody will have to bear, and I think it will eventually be borne by the taxpayer, when the houses go on to the deep sewerage.

I represent a very aristocratic suburb, wherein there are only nine houses that are not connected with the deep sewerage system. Of those nine houses there are four that belong to old-age pensioners. Those houses are so dilapidated that the council is just waiting for the time when the dear old souls occupying them pass away, and then it will see that the houses are condemned and pulled down. If other houses are erected on those sites they will be connected with the sewerage system. There are only two houses in Subiaco fitted with septic tanks.

Mr. J. Hegney: Does the member for Subiaco take credit for that?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: No, that is due to the good sense of the people and municipality of Subiaco, who decided to get on to the deep sewerage. I am glad that I represent them. There are only those nine houses in the municipality of Subiaco that are not connected with the sewerage system, and I have the assurance of the council that as soon as possible they will be connected to the system. I was pleased to hear the explanation of the Minister, and I accept his word that in the not too far distant future the whole of the people of the metropolitan area will have available to them the facilities of deep sewerage.

The Minister for Works: I did not say that.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [5.9]: I join with the member for Claremont in thanking the Minister for the definite assurance that he gave and the lucid manner in which he explained the problems connected with the question raised. There are about 1,000 houses in my electorate that are being served by the antiquated pan system. Speaking as a member of a local authority, I say that quite apart from the undoubted menace to health, there is an uneconomic position involved with the pan system. Together with other members who are members of local authorities, I am aware of the fact that, because of odd places here and there having still to be served by the pan system, the consequent cost of servicing those properties has risen. So it becomes a matter of some importance to the authority concerned and to the owners of properties, as to the cost involved in the service. A point that I wish to bring to the notice of the Minister is that in my own district—I have no doubt it is common to some other lowlying districts—when the sewerage system was instituted some years ago certain lowlying areas—I presume for financial reasons—were bypassed by the sewerage system. When originally installed, as the Minister points out, they had either to be serviced with a pumping system or a septic tank system.

I find that with the heavy rains we have had in recent months, on certain of those properties where septic tanks have been installed, it has been found that the tanks will not function, and the occupiers are in a most difficult position. I have made personal representations to the department and have found it very co-operative, but the position can only be overcome by the installation of a pumping system. I am hopeful that when the work is commenced the Minister will give particular attention to the matter of priority for those places that are lowlying and where consequently there is an added risk to the health of

the people occupying the properties concerned.

I would also like the Minister to bear in mind the possibility of devising some financial system under which hundreds of people in my own district, who are pensioners and therefore not able to provide the finance to have their properties connected to the sewerage system, or to take advantage of the liberal terms offered by the department, will be able to have their houses connected with the sewerage system. It is a costly matter, and a difficult problem, but not one that can be regarded as insuperable. Most if not all of these properties must have some equity in them, even allowing for an accumulation of rates, so in the interests of the community and of public health generally I think some scheme should be devised to make it possible for all those properties that can be served by the sewerage system to be connected with it. I am happy to know that the Minister has in mind the matter of sewering the unsewered portions of the metropolitan area and I hope that the availability of labour and materials will be speeded up in order that in the near future this problem, which is common to so many districts, will be overcome. I am glad that the matter has been brought forward and happy to know that both the department and the Minister are truly conscious of the position that exists.

MR. NORTH (Claremont—in reply) [5.12]: I thank the Minister for his comprehensive reply. I wish I had also alluded to another matter that I cannot now bring in —that the odour should be removed from the main treatment works. If money is available in the future for all these works we might even reach the stage of urging that consideration be given to the removal of the unpleasant aromas that arise at the headquarters of the scheme, at the outflow.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.15]: This Bill aims at giving municipalities additional powers under the Municipal Corporations Act. The first power proposed is one to make bylaws to prohibit, regulate and control brick-making and brickyards in a particular district. I think it desirable that municipal councils particularly should have this power. The manufacture of bricks usually entails the defacing of a fair area of land where the works are situated because of the fact that the clay has to be taken from that place or from some other place close to it, and the land becomes an eyesore in the district. We should bear in mind that the area constituting a municipality is never very large, and therefore I consider it essential that any municipality should have the right to regulate and control and, where thought necessary, prohibit the establishment of an industry of this sort.

The other power proposes to give municipalities themselves the right to establish and operate brickyards; in other words, the right to municipalise, as it were, the brick-making industry in any municipality. I do not know that any very serious objection can be offered to giving municipalities this power under the Act, but there are some dangers inherent in the proposal. For instance, a municipality has the right to examine and approve or disapprove of plans for buildings. If there were two brickyards operating within a municipality, one operated by the local authority and one by private interests, the municipality, I think, would have the power to declare that any particular set of building plans would be approved only on condition that a certain class of brick was used, and that class of brick might easily be the brick made by the municipality itself.

Such a position might more easily arise in a district where the municipality was the only authority operating brickworks. The local authority, on examining building plans, might approve of them conditionally upon bricks only of local manufacture being used for the building. It would be possible to argue solidly in favour of such a practice, provided the bricks made by the municipal council were of a quality equal or superior to those available from other places.

Mr. Doney: Who would determine that point, the municipality itself?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The municipality has power to decide whether

any building plans submitted might be approved or otherwise.

Mr. Doney: You have made it appear that that power would be too great.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not trying to make it appear that the power would be too great or too little, but am putting forward for the consideration of members a statement of the power that would be placed in the hands of municipalities if this part of the Bill were approved by Parliament. The main question that members have to concentrate upon is whether a municipality, given the power to establish and operate brickyards, might not be inclined to use the power, together with its powers in connection with the approval or otherwise of building plans, in such a way as to penalise, in the long run at any rate, those people who would undertake the erection of buildings in the municipality.

We might hope, I suggest, that the members of any municipality would not use this power or other powers for the purpose of penalising its own ratepayers. We might hope that the members of any municipality would do the right thing and would permit a person desiring to build to make his choice of the class of brick he would use in the building. I point out the possible danger so that members will not be able to say, in the event of the Bill becoming law, that they would not have agreed to it had they known exactly the extent of the power proposed to be put in the hands of municipal councils.

Mr. Doney: A municipal council using the power as arbitrarily as that would not last very long.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not easy to say just how long a municipality might last in the event of its using the power in arbitrary fashion, if I may apply that term. All said and done, the decisions made by a municipal council on this question would constitute only a percentage of its total decisions during the year, and the ratepayers as a whole would judge the councillors, not so much upon two or three or half-a-dozen decisions in the year on this one matter as upon the mass of decisions reached on a thousand and one different matters. I should imagine that any council exercising this power in an obviously unfair way for its own advantage would find itself in trouble with someone, and if any number of councillors used the power to their own particular advantage and to the detriment of people engaged in building activities, Parliament would be justified in stepping in and saying that the power given had been abused and should be deleted from the Act. With these remarks, I leave the Bill to the consideration of the House.

MR. PERKINS (York—in reply) [5.24]: I am very pleased at the Minister's reception of the Bill. There is just one criticism which he offered and which he dealt with partially. The troubles that he indicated might arise are not likely to occur in actual practice. Two checks are provided in the Bill against happenings of that sort. First of all, it is most unlikely that a municipal council would do anything that would have the effect of injuring its ratepayers. If any council did half the undesirable things the Minister indicated it would be able to do under this measure, there would be such an uproar within the district that the councillors would find themselves out of office at the first opportunity presented to the ratepayers to deal with them. So I do not for one minute believe that the happenings indicated by the Minister could become general.

If there be any doubt in the minds of members, they should recollect that there is provision in the Bill for the approval of the Minister being obtained before brickworks may be established. The municipal councils generally agree that some overriding power should be exercised in the early stages until we find how the proposal works in practice. Otherwise it is possible that some wasteful expenditure might be incurred. Some co-ordination would be necessary between one area and another, and I think this is adequately safeguarded by giving the Minister who administers the Act the power of approval or disapproval. I hope the House will agree to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; Mr. Perkins in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 219:

Hon. N. KEENAN: This is the clause that the member for York considers is sufficiently clear to guard against the possible dangers indicated by the Minister. Although the reply of the member for York would appear to be fairly conclusive, namely, that a municipality could not sell bricks to any person who offered to buy, except with the approval of the Minister, that would not empower the Minister to fix conditions of approval. He might approve or disapprove, but he could not say that he would agree to the sale subject to the condition that it did not exclude the right of the individual to obtain supplies from any other source. The Minister suggested that a council might say it would not permit an applicant to erect a building unless he bought bricks from the municipality, and thus he would be obliged to accept the bricks, whatever their quality might be. They might be inferior or they might be costly. The Minister's approval would not carry the conditions that the bricks must not be costly or inferior.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Surely the municipality could not make a condition of that sort!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I presume the Minister was speaking of an applicant who desired to build and the council would have the right, in its absolute discretion, to approve or disapprove of the plans submitted. If an individual is prepared to buy the bricks from the municipality he will get the permission. That is what would have to happen. Then the municipality would have to apply to the Minister for leave to sell. This provision does not give any right to the Minister to lay down conditions. If words were interpolated to the effect that the Minister might, upon the application being made, prescribe whatever conditions he considered justified and fair for the transaction to be approved, it would meet that requirement. But those words do not occur, and I desire to point out that the protection that the member for York considers sufficient is not, indeed, sufficient. It would only mean that the municipality having applied for leave to sell and having got it would then proceed in certain cases—which I daresay would be extremely rare—to use that authority to sell a very inferior product at possibly a very extortionate price.

Mr. WITHERS: Without looking up the parent Act as amended and consolidated a few years ago, I would say, from memory, that it is possible for a local authority to sell stone to any other authority or any person wishing to make footpaths within any authority's area. Unless we are going to extend that, it is not possible for a private individual to buy stone under the parent Act from a local authority. I remember that when the present member for Mt. Hawthorn was Minister for Works he introduced an amendment to this Act which was debated in this House and in another place to allow ratepayers to buy stone from local quarries; but I know that one is still not allowed to buy that stone. If one does, one has to pay cash, because if the stone is secured and cash is not paid, the council has no claim thereafter for the money. We are now proposing to allow authorities to enter into competition in the making of bricks and with the approval of the Minister they may sell to private individuals.

Mr. Perkins: This applies to stone and other materials as well.

Mr. WITHERS: If it is going to apply to stone—

Mr. Perkins: It does.

Mr. WITHERS: Then I have not much objection. I thought it was only going to refer to bricks and that the objection to the sale of stone would still remain.

Mr. PERKINS: In regard to the point made by the member for Bunbury, the provision does extend to other classes of material. I know that what the hon. member said is correct and that sales are made outside the powers of the Act. It is necessary that should be done because otherwise ratepayers and other people in the locality who desired the material would be put to extra expense and additional trouble. It is most desirable that powers under the Act should be extended with regard to bricks; and at the same time provision is made in the measure for an extension of the provision to stone and other materials. The Bill widens the whole section and brings it into line with what local authorities have been doing, though it is not permitted by the Act at present.

With regard to the point made by the member for Nedlands, it seems to me that

action by a local authority such as he suggested could take place would, if it occurred, be the grossest misuse by local authorities of the building permit power. I cannot imagine that any local authority would attempt such a gross misuse of that power, and I do not believe for a moment that such action would occur. Although the Minister may not have the power to over-ride a local authority, I think we should leave it to the ratepayers in the particular area to determine that point for themselves. After all, it is the ratepayers in the local districts who are most concerned; and if they are not prepared to look after their own local affairs, how can the Parliament of the State do what they cannot do themselves? It is most desirable to leave this latitude to the local authorities.

If Parliament is always going to adopt this paternal attitude towards local authorities and attempt to guide their every action, how are we going to build up a really virile local government in this State? It is only by giving responsibility to local authorities and local people that we shall achieve such an end. I hope the Committee will agree to the clause as it stands, because I believe there are sufficient safeguards already in the good sense of ratepayers in the areas concerned. The other power regarding the approval of the Minister is included more to prevent wasteful overlapping between one authority and another. It is feasible that local authorities in adjoining towns, perhaps 20 miles apart, might each desire to set up brick works. That would be wasteful, and it would be better to concentrate activity in one particular area.

Mr. DONEY: I am wondering what sort of inquiry or other activity would precede the Minister's approval or otherwise. I take it that his consent would not be more or less automatic. He would have to determine the rights and wrongs of the position and information would be required from the municipality before he gave authority. Would he consider, for instance, cost and quality factors; and how would he set about determining whether the quality was good or bad?

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

MOTION—STATE HOTELS.

As to Use as Community Hotels.

Debate resumed from the 4th September on the following motion by Mr. Perkins:—

That where a local community desires to take over a State Hotel to be run by it as a "community hotel," on a co-operative basis, giving good service and using profits for financing local amenities, this House considers that the Government should adopt a policy designed to make possible and further this objective.

to which an amendment had been moved by Mr. Hoar as follows—

That all the words after "that" in line 1 be struck out with a view to inserting the following words:—"this House is of the opinion that more State-owned hotels should be established in suitable localities and that controlling legislation should be introduced to safeguard the interests of any community in which the local community organises to take over or has already taken over an hotel with the object of operating it co-operatively for the purpose of rendering efficient service and devoting surplus moneys to the expansion of improved conditions for the community" in lieu.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [5.43]: In the absence on public business of the member for Nelson, I wish, in his stead to move—

That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

I feel that most of what requires to be said in connection with this motion has already been said. It is generally agreed that hotels are goldmines; that is, they return exceedingly high profits to those who happen to own them. I feel that, such being the case, the benefits should be received by the community rather than by select individuals. This state of affairs where hotels are such high profit-making institutions, if I might call them such, is brought about to some extent by State legislation or by the activities of an instrument created by the State. I refer, of course, to the Licensing Court which, as members are aware, has a restrictive influence on the construction and licensing of hotels.

Without debating the rights and wrongs of monopolies, if it is accepted as being the policy in Western Australia that there should be some definite limitation on hotels, I feel therefore, that rather than that the limited

number should be the province or sole prerogative of a few fortunate individuals, such hotels as are licensed should be available for the benefit of either the community at large or the community in a particular area. In other words, the State should erect and conduct hotels or else, as has been suggested by the original motion, communities themselves should undertake this particular business. At the present moment unquestionably—and I think that the motion, if given effect to, will overcome the situation—there is a tendency for hotels to fall into the hands of monopolies. Everybody knows of the growing influence and ownership of hotels so far as the brewing interests are concerned. I repeat that it is detrimental not only to the people of the State but to the general economic make-up of the State for either one investing organisation or a number of such organisations—comparatively few in number—to be allowed to have a monopoly.

Judging by recent history there is very little danger of the State becoming a monopoly or assuming a monopoly so far as this particular trade is concerned. In any case I see a wide difference between the State operating certain instrumentalities exclusively or almost completely, as against a similar state of affairs where private control is concerned. I feel that the Licensing Court should be directed in the legislation covering that tribunal to show some preference or give some form of encouragement to the community ownership of licensed premises and also so far as State hotels are concerned, rather than to grant, as appears to have been the disposition in the past, a license to the particular applicant who has the greatest amount of funds available for the erection of the most palatial premises irrespective of the economic requirements of the district in question. I would not suggest that all of the profits which one might logically assume would accrue to the particular community conducting a community hotel should be allowed to be reposed in that community. I have several reasons for saying that.

One could easily imagine two areas or centres, one where there is already an hotel which it is impossible for the local community to buy, and in the second case where there is no hotel but the committee representing the local community either establishes one, or is able to take over an existing establishment. The former could be faced with the position where the people would not have the required income for their local amenities such as kindergartens, baby clinics, etc., while the other one would have plenty of money. I feel it should not be a matter of accident or mischance to determine the standard of amenities that are to be made available in a particular area. I agree that owing to the initiative and the activity generally of the local community or committee they are entitled to something, and I would say therefore that a certain proportion of the profits accruing should be devoted to the particular area concerned. It would be wrong that those areas which are fortunate enough to control and own the licensed premises should have amenities that, because of circumstances, are denied to another community that perhaps operates under similar conditions with the exception of the particular feature I have mentioned.

Further, there may be an area where there is one hotel only and that operated by a local committee. That community would be able to proceed with all sorts of vast schemes for improving its local amenities for the direct interest of the people concerned. There may be another community, a much larger one, where there are several hotels, and because of being a larger community its requirements would be greater than those of the smaller communities. Because of circumstances, which I will not enumerate, it might be impossible for the greater community either to start a new hotel or take over one of the existing hotels. I feel accordingly that some system should be developed, if there is to be any great number of community hotels—I commend the idea of encouraging them—some system where there can be a general leavening upwards of many of the local amenities which unfortunately today, as members are well aware, are suffering as a result of the lack of sufficient money.

Finally I feel that the general principle of community ownership of licensed premises has been agreed to so far as the House is concerned, but there are some disagreements on the broader aspect. Members generally agree, I think, that there is nothing wrong with local communities owning and controlling hotels but there is objection to the State as such owning them. I look at the question in a broader sense. I repeat that, to my mind, it is wrong that such a lucrative enterprise should be available in continually greater numbers to a

few favoured people thus enabling them to make enormous fortunes through the sale of drink—in the minds of many people that is a vice—and in providing accommodation for the travelling public. If there are great profits to be made out of these ventures, the public itself should benefit. I have pleasure in submitting the amendment on behalf of the member for Nelson.

MR. THORN (Toodyay—on amendment) [5.52]: The member for East Perth has made out a good case against the Government concerning its management of State hotels. He emphasised the lucrative returns to be derived from the trade and the great profits to be made out of it. Can he explain to the House why the Government, in its management of State hotels, cannot make a profit?

The Minister for Lands: We give service, not profits.

Mr. THORN: I am putting this to the member for East Perth. The hon. member spoke about the trade being in the hands of a monopoly. In certain directions the Government has a monopoly but it cannot make these hotels pay. He spoke of the trade being in the hands of a few individuals. We know that is not correct and that the trade is spread over a very large community of business men throughout the country.

Mr. Graham: What percentage is in control in the case of the Swan Brewery for instance?

Mr. THORN: The breweries are the rent collectors. I advise the Government to become a rent collector and it would then come out on the right side of the ledger. Under the present management the hotels come out on the wrong side of the ledger. I claim that the member for East Perth has built up a case for the argument I put forward on the original motion.

Mr. Graham: You would.

Mr. THORN: I thank the hon. member for his assistance. He has made out a case for the Government to become a rent collector through these State hotels by leasing them to the community. The amendment has been moved to defeat the object of the motion. It is cleverly worded and is put up with that one object in view. I commend to the House the object of the motion as put up by the member for York.

Mr. Graham: The motion has now disappeared.

Mr. THORN: It was designed to make the hotel at Bruce Rock available to the community. We can all twist words and motions. The member for East Perth said that the whole community can share in State hotels. The community does share. It shares in the losses and in making up the deficiencies. That has been its share up to date from State hotels. Without further comment I am sure that the amendment moved on behalf of the member for Nelson will not achieve the desired objective. I believe it has been moved only to defeat the objects of the motion of the member for York.

MR. PERKINS (York—on amendment) [5.55]: I cannot support the amendment. Whilst I have no objection to the second portion of it, I cannot see the necessity for it. It seeks to direct the Government's attention to something, the importance of which the Government is fully seized of judging from the speech made by the Premier on the original motion. The Government is quite au fait with the necessity for some such legislation as outlined. I do not see much point in carrying the amendment to direct the Government to do something it already knows it is necessary for it to do. So far as the second portion of the amendment is concerned, although the objective might be a laudable one, I think we are largely wasting the time of the House in discussing it. There may be in the first portion of the amendment something which, from my point of view, if carried into effect, will make the position rather worse than it is now. It seeks to institute more State hotels. If it brings that about and the present Government remains in power and carries on with its policy of State hotels, it will mean that still more districts in Western Australia are going to be refused the opportunity to have community hotels managed by people in the particular locality concerned.

The Minister for Justice: That is not right.

Mr. Thorn: Because of a State monopoly.

Mr. PERKINS: Apparently that is the position. The Government was not prepared

to accept the original motion but is now apparently supporting the amendment which seeks to create more State hotels. Notwithstanding what the member for East Perth said, it seems as though the final outcome will be that still more districts will be denied the right to obtain community hotels, although the hon. member himself states that he personally favours the idea of community hotels, managed in the districts concerned by the local people so that they may be provided with the necessary amenities. The hon. member made a good speech if it could have been applied to the original motion rather than to the amendment. I am grateful to him for pointing out what the position will be in the various districts in the State provided that more districts develop this idea of community hotels as time goes on, and what the difference will be between those districts and others where there are only State hotels.

In those districts which set up community hotels we will find kindergartens, youth centres and other local activities financed out of the profits of the community hotels, while in the districts where State hotels exist whatever profit is made by them will be taken into general revenue and the people of the districts concerned will receive no return whatsoever except that return which they would receive as citizens of the State from the general benefits of Consolidated Revenue. They will receive no benefits from the profits made by the local hotels if they are State-owned. I suggest that the amendment very definitely conflicts with the arguments which the member for East Perth used when he submitted it. Furthermore, from the financial point of view, this House should not support any extension of the State hotel system. As I mentioned in an earlier speech, if the State hotels paid normal license fees and rates and taxes they would return more to Consolidated Revenue than they do under the present system by which they are absolved from the necessity to pay license fees and rates and taxes, but merely contribute to Consolidated Revenue what profits remain after meeting interest charges.

The Minister for Works: What about municipalised brickworks?

Mr. PERKINS: That is a separate subject.

The Premier: But closely allied.

Mr. PERKINS: In dealing with this matter the Minister said that the State hotels had been in operation for some 35 years. I do not think they have been in existence for so long, and I have worked on the basis of 30 years. The Minister stated that the hotels had contributed an average of £8,000 a year to Consolidated Revenue after meeting the interest on the capital that had been set aside for their establishment. Obviously, the Minister's arithmetic is sadly at fault. If we divide 35 into the total amount of £180,000, which the Auditor General points out in his report is the total sum contributed to Consolidated Revenue from the profits on the operations of the State hotels, we simply cannot arrive at an average return of £8,000 a year. If we take the more conservative figure and divide that amount by 30 we have a return of £6,000 per year from the seven State hotels. I now ask members if they think that is a record of which the State Hotels Department can be proud. It certainly is not.

The Minister for Lands: I would much sooner have that record than take thousands of pounds out of the pockets of the workers.

Mr. PERKINS: If the State hotels paid the normal licensing fees and the ordinary rates and taxes, they would contribute much more than £6,000 a year to Consolidated Revenue. The argument therefore that the State hotels are profitable from the Government revenue standpoint will not hold water. The Minister suggested I had been rather unfair in dealing with this subject, as I had taken an unfavourable year when I quoted £2,179 as the payment into Consolidated Revenue last year. I am not so sure that I did take an unfavourable year. I have made some inquiries since I spoke, and, as far as I can find out, the privately-owned hotels have shown better profits during the last two or three years than they did in the pre-war period. I have that information from a source upon which I place the greatest reliance. I urge the Government to check up on the general position, and not to delude itself in the belief that the lower profits received from the State hotels during the past two or three years have been solely due to the difficulties from which business in general has been suffering.

I am aware that the districts where State hotels are established vary considerably from the standpoint of profitable trad-

ing, but I also know that hotels in districts comparable with those where the least profitable State hotels are situated have been showing extremely good profits. In the circumstances, there is no excuse for any of the State hotels disclosing losses on their operations at present. I have been given to understand that some of those hotels have shown appreciable losses in recent times. I do not blame the local management nor even the general management of the department. As a matter of fact, I know that the department at present has some very fine staffs in the hotels. I do not know so much about the general management, and members can check up on that phase for themselves. I shall express no opinion one way or the other. To me it is very evident—I think members will agree with me—that a Government department is not flexible enough to run a business such as that associated with State hotels. It is the want of flexibility that is responsible for the lack of outstanding success of the State hotels. I cannot agree to the amendment which seeks to have the number of State hotels increased, and I certainly can see no necessity for the second portion of it.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed; the motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION—PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE.

As to Legislation for Appointing—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 4th September on the following motion by Mr. Mann:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce legislation for the appointment of a Public Works Standing Committee representative of both Houses of Parliament, but on which the number of members of the Legislative Assembly shall be greater than the number of the members of the Legislative Council, so that no public work to cost more than £30,000 shall be authorised unless it has first been investigated by such standing committee.

MR. MANN (Beverley—in reply) [6.8]: I regret the speech delivered by the Minister in reply to my motion. I followed the procedure adopted last year, and was hopeful on this occasion the Minister would take a different view of the matter. I thank the member for Perth for his support. With his long years of experience in the Commonwealth Parliament, he was able to prove to the House that a considerable saving had been effected as a result of the functioning of the Commonwealth Public Works Standing Committee. Then the member for East Perth and the member for Middle Swan indicated that they were agreeable to the proposition except that they were opposed to the representation of the Legislative Council. The only conclusion I can come to is that the Minister has a very poor case, for I am satisfied that he himself is more or less agreeable to the proposition. The trouble is that his officials object to it.

The Minister for Lands: That is a good one.

Mr. MANN: I feel quite definite on that point. They have been in office for so long that the various experts have dug themselves in pretty well.

The Minister for Lands: Who are the experts?

Mr. MANN: The officers in the various departments who would be concerned with the legislation that might be introduced. Those men are opposed to this proposition. In the circumstances it is idle for Parliament to discuss it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not replying to the debate but is introducing new matter.

Mr. MANN: I regard the Minister's action as indicating that he has a very poor case indeed.

The Minister for Works: The Minister could not put up a good reply to a bad case.

Mr. MANN: Members on the other side of the House have been instructed—very definitely. I can see what is going to happen. The numbers are stacked and members very definitely will oppose the motion.

The Minister for Justice: Members are not stacked; they have been elected.

Mr. MANN: When the whip cracks on the Government side of the House, members obey implicitly. They must obey orders.

The Minister for Works: You beaut! Drivel!

The Premier: Not drivel—dribble!

Mr. MANN: Had the Minister pointed out that it was impossible to give effect to the motion, I would have been inclined to let it pass, but he has not attempted to do that. I intend to divide the House in order to test the feeling of members. I want to give members an opportunity to tell the Government that it should take a different view of this question. If what I suggest were adopted, it would be in conformity with the opinions of some members sitting on the Government side of the House and it would mean that Parliament at least would know something about the cost of projected public works.

The Minister for Works: That is the way to talk to us.

Mr. MANN: I regret the Minister's attitude, and I will test the feeling of the House.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	16
Noes	20
Majority against	4

Ayes		Noes	
Mr. Abbott		Mr. North	
Mr. Brand		Mr. Perkins	
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver		Mr. Read	
Mr. Hill		Mr. Seward	
Mr. Keenan		Mr. Shearn	
Mr. Mann		Mr. Thorn	
Mr. McDonald		Mr. Willmott	
Mr. McLarty		Mr. Doney	
			(*Teller.*)

Noes.		Ayes.	
Mr. Collier		Mr. Panton	
Mr. Coverley		Mr. Rodoreda	
Mr. Cross		Mr. Smith	
Mr. Graham		Mr. Styants	
Mr. Hawke		Mr. Telfer	
Mr. J. Hegney		Mr. Tonkin	
Mr. W. Hegney		Mr. Triat	
Mr. Kelly		Mr. Willcock	
Mr. Marshall		Mr. Withers	
Mr. Nulsen		Mr. Wilson	
			(*Teller.*)

Pairs.	
Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Berry	Mr. Holman
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Millington
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Hoar
Mr. Watts	Mr. Wise

Question thus negatived; the motion defeated.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: The proposals in this Bill are designed to bring the Totalisator Duty Act more into line with similar legislation in other States and, when doing that, to give to the public who invest on the totalisator the right to be repaid a greater proportion of the money invested by them. It is necessary to explain just how the totalisator operates in this State and how the investments of the public are dealt with.

In the case of the straight-out tote, total investments for each race for a win or a straight-out ticket are subject to a deduction of 13½ per cent. Of the 13½ per cent., the Government collects 7½ per cent. and the club 6 per cent. The balance of 86½ per cent, is then divided amongst the ticket-holders on the winning horse to the complete shilling, not to the nearest shilling, because that could mean paying out a greater amount than had been invested. In connection with the place tote, the total investment for a place—that is, first second or third horse—is first subject to a deduction of 13½ per cent., of which 7½ per cent. goes to the Government and 6 per cent. to the racing club. The balance is then divided according to the number of starters into two or three equal amounts, each of which is divided amongst the investors on the first, second and third horses to the complete shilling. In the case of six starters, the amount is divided between the first and second horses in the race.

The Act at present provides that no fractional part of a shilling shall be paid by any racing club by way of a dividend. After the straight-out and place tickets have received their allocation of dividend, the fractions of less than 1s. remain. These fractions or portions of complete shillings are really the at present indivisible parts of the money of the totalisator investor. It is the money remaining after the deductions have been made for the operations of the tote. Of these fractions, the Government takes 7½ per cent. and the racing club 92½ per cent.

This Bill proposes to alter in the Act the fractional part of "a shilling" by inserting in lieu thereof the fractional part of "sixpence." This amendment will have the effect of causing the totalisator to pay dividends on straight-out and place winners to the complete 6d. There are thousands of people who at racing and trotting meetings at times invest on individual races and

thousands of people are affected as racegoers by this amending Bill. It is without doubt the members of the public who pay their entrance fees and who invest on the tote that in the main keep racing going.

I have mentioned that this Bill is designed to bring our Act more into line with similar legislation in the other States. All other States pay either to the complete 6d., or the complete 3d. In New South Wales totalisator dividends are paid to the complete 3d., and in South Australia, on 2s. 6d. tote investments, dividends are also paid to the complete 3d. In Victoria, Queensland and, I understand, Tasmania, dividends are paid to the complete 6d.

Mr. Seward: What about New Zealand?

The PREMIER: I understand that in New Zealand dividends are paid to the complete 6d. Western Australia is the only State that pays to the complete shilling. It is a fact that on many occasions in this State members of the investing public are disappointed to find that a horse pays a dividend merely sufficient to return their investment of 5s. There was an occasion recently when, with seven starters in a race at headquarters, the dividend paid on the first horse was 5s., on the second horse 4s.—for 5s. investments—and on the third horse 11s. I called for the sheet of totalisator investments for that race and, in order to size up the situation properly, have scrutinised the totalisator returns for many races, and I found that the racing public often would be paid 9d. dividends provided we paid to the complete 3d. There are many occasions when the amount of the remaining fractions, after deducting the sums for the totalisator service, would divide to 10d. or 11d.

So there is a case at this stage to give consideration to the claims of the investing public who use the totalisator as the medium of betting. The racing clubs and trotting clubs have greatly prospered in recent years. There is no denying that fact. The Turf Club has been able to purchase, I believe, all the former proprietary clubs and the courses of those clubs, and the Trotting Association, as is well known, has paid off a liability of £50,000. The fractions of the shillings with which this Bill deals have meant considerable revenue both to the Trotting Association and the racing club. At present, on last year's figures, approximately £25,000 was paid to each of the clubs from fractions.

Mr. Graham: Would not the nearest 6d. be practicable?

The PREMIER: The Bill proposes the complete 6d. The nearest 6d. would be impracticable for the reason that the amount divisible could be 10d. or 11d., and the nearest 6d. would be 1s. That is quite impracticable, as it would leave no part of the fractions for the club.

Mr. Graham: It would probably balance in time.

The PREMIER: That might be doubtful, and it would not be the desire of the clubs to lose portion of what they now get income from.

Hon. N. Keenan: The Government would lose 7½ per cent. of the fraction.

The PREMIER: Yes, in the interests of the people who patronise the totalisator as their medium of betting, the Government is quite prepared to sacrifice 7½ per cent. of the revenue which at present it receives from those fractions, but not the total amount. If the proposed amendment be agreed to and the fraction, 6d., is inserted in the Act, the amount to go to the clubs would be approximately halved. That would be the general effect for a period. I repeat that it is the patronage of the public which is the important thing to the clubs; and very likely there would be some stimulus given to attendances, if that is desirable. It certainly would mean to those who attend races a better return for the money which they invest in the totalisator. It is not imposing anything unreasonable upon the clubs at this stage, because these are in a strong position; but it does mean a lot to the tens of thousands of people who visit racecourses and, as I say, on some occasions invest tens of thousands of pounds on the totalisator, even on one race, if it be a Cup race.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I do not like the word "invest" very much.

The PREMIER: Any person who analyses what would happen to his money, if he is foolish enough to put it on the totalisator, must know that theoretically if he invests £1 seven times he must lose, because, after all, 13 per cent. is taken from each pound. It is only those people who can say which horse will win, if they know, who can make sure that their investment is an investment and

thus possibly come out on the right side. That is the practical side. But no insistence on that point would prevent people from investing—to use that word again. It is interesting to note that in this State over £1,000,000 was invested last year on the totalisator, both trotting and racing.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Is the totalisator the only legal means of betting?

The PREMIER: The totalisator is authorised by statute in this State. It is that statute which makes totalisator betting legal, and it is that statute which I am proposing to amend by this Bill. I said that over £1,000,000 had been invested last year on the totalisator, both trotting and racing, and I think it can be confidently anticipated that the same amount will be invested again, both in trotting and racing, this year. The other amendment is to insert "Commissioner of Stamps" in lieu of "Commissioner of Taxation." This is most desirable at this stage, because it is the Commissioner of Stamps to whom fees are paid on betting tickets used. The Taxation Department is under Commonwealth control and at present there is nothing left for the Commissioner of Taxation to do except to charge the State for his services in collecting the money.

It is the Commissioner of Stamps of this State who is responsible for the forms and returns, as well as the payments, under the Totalisator Act. Therefore, if totalisator duty is accepted as and acknowledged to be State revenue—which it is—there can be no argument as to whom the money should be paid. So that this amendment deals specifically with that point. That is the Bill. There is not much in it either in words or what is necessary to explain. It is essential, however, to stress, simple though the Bill be and small though it be, that it does affect the interests, so far as it relates to their sport, of tens of thousands of people in the State. I am sure many members present are aware how excited lady racegoers become when they find that their 5s. investment on the tote merely returns them 5s. It would hearten them quite a lot if they knew that the return would be to the complete 6d.

Mr. McDonald: It might encourage them.

The PREMIER: It might. I would not hope that, but it would give them the opportunity to get a greater amount than they might be entitled to at present from their investment on the totalisator. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [7.48]: I listened with much interest to the Minister for Health when he introduced this measure. I was at Wooroloo last Monday and had a talk with Dr. Henzell on the Bill. The whole idea is this: Owing to the scarcity of nurses at Wooroloo, the intention of the Government is to make Wooroloo chiefly a centre for the training of tuberculosis nurses. I am rather concerned about the question of what will happen to a nurse, after she has trained for two years and qualified as a tuberculosis nurse, if she desires to continue her training in order to become a fully qualified general nurse. The Minister said, in his second reading speech, that if nurses had the additional training and passed the examination they would be qualified general nurses; they would be, as it were, two years along the road to training for general nursing.

The Minister for Lands: This Bill does not provide for that.

Mr. MANN: I am basing my remarks on the Minister's speech when he introduced the Bill. I cannot see that it is possible. I would presume that they would still do two more years after the two years of T.B. nursing in order to become general nurses.

The Minister for Health: That is a matter of regulation, of course.

Mr. MANN: The Minister said if the Nurses' Registration Board was agreeable. I understand it is not. The board considers two additional years necessary. The position is that we have been taking young girls of 18 into Wooroloo, and instead of the ordi-

nary nine months' training, they have done 14 months. Then they have gone to Collie and other places, finishing up at Kalgoorlie. The result has been that quite a number of them have gone back to Wooroloo as patients. I understand there are seven suffering from the disease.

The Minister for Health: This will remedy that.

Mr. MANN: It will not save them.

The Minister for Health: It will remedy the position to a certain extent.

Mr. MANN: The tragic part of it is that in the past we have put young girls in places like Wooroloo, which is full of infection, and have then sent them to other hospitals to finish their training. What will be the position in the future? It is to be presumed that Wooroloo will definitely be the training centre for T.B. nurses; that is to say, that they will become qualified there as T.B. nurses. Up to the present all surgical work from Wooroloo has been done at the Royal Perth Hospital, and the girl training at that hospital has served portion of her three years on this T.B. surgical work. When Wooroloo is fully established and no more patients are sent to the Royal Perth Hospital, is it the intention that trainees shall go to Wooroloo for the last three months?

The Minister for Health: That is the intention in accordance with the Registration Board.

Mr. MANN: Will the same thing apply to the children's nurses who do three years and six months' training? Will they do the first three years at the Children's Hospital, then three months at the Royal Perth Hospital, and finally three months at Wooroloo, training for T.B. work?

The Minister for Health: They must all have experience in T.B. work.

Mr. MANN: The Minister has not made it clear.

The Minister for Health: You have the Bill before you. Everything that is to be done is in the Bill.

Mr. MANN: I am referring to the Minister's speech, which I consider is the most important part, because it was made when he introduced the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: How can the Minister's speech be the most important part?

Mr. MANN: I take it that the Minister's introductory speech was for the purpose of clarifying the Bill.

The Premier: The point you are raising rests with the Registration Board.

Mr. MANN: I will come to that directly. The whole idea is that there are a number of young girls who have not been able to pass into the nursing profession. They have failed at the last stages, and probably failed repeatedly. They have not been able to pass the educational test. That is the class of girl or woman that will apply. She must be over 21 to undertake T.B. nursing. What will be the educational standard of the girl who goes into Wooroloo for training? Will it be on the same basis as that of nurses at present, or will there be a lower standard?

The Minister for Health: That is only the 8th standard. I should say there would be a similar standard. There must be some standard; but that rests with the Registration Board.

Mr. MANN: If she has to pass, and intends going on further to general nursing, she must have at least an 8th standard certificate? These are points that need clarification. I have no objection to the Bill if it is going to help the position at Wooroloo. I understand that there are 25 nurses at Wooroloo, whereas some years ago there were 75. The Government's desire to reduce T.B. mortality is laudable. I attended a meeting of the campaign committee a little while ago, but not much publicity has been given to the work of the committee since then.

Last year there was laid on the Table Regulation 19, published in the "Government Gazette" on Friday, the 4th May, 1945, regarding the Nurses' Registration Board, and applying to the profession generally. I moved for the disallowance of that regulation and it was withdrawn, but no other regulations have been introduced since. That is a matter for concern because the nursing profession is anxious to know what the regulations will be. The Minister intended to have amended regulations tabled, but we have heard nothing further regarding the matter, which is very vital to the whole of the profession. Another matter affecting Wooroloo is that of male nurses. There are male orderlies there at present. Is it the Government's intention to have men trained as nurses generally?

The Minister for Lands: Do you want to be nursed by a male nurse?

Mr. MANN: No. I agree that there is a prejudice on the part of the ordinary male against male nurses; but I understand that in England they have selected the right class of male nurse, particularly for T.B. nursing, and those men have compared very favourably with female nurses.

The Minister for the North-West: You're telling me!

Mr. MANN: No doubt my honourable friend has had experience.

The Minister for the North-West: Leave them out, Jimmy!

Mr. MANN: It is a strange peculiarity on the part of males that they desire female nurses, but females prefer male doctors to female doctors. That is a strange attitude.

The Minister for Health: It is a matter of tradition.

Mr. MANN: It may be. I hope if there is going to be a scarcity that the Government will secure girls to take on T.B. nursing. It is a hard job. There is danger of infection, too. However, we are hopeful that women of a mature age will be more immune to infection than younger persons. If the Bill can do something to overcome the scarcity, it will be doing good. I support the measure. We will watch it further in Committee. Any help we on this side of the House can give will be willingly given with a view to assisting the nursing profession, which is in a deplorable condition.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [7.57]: Owing to other preoccupations I have not had the opportunity to give as much study to and to make as much inquiry into the Bill as I feel its importance warrants. It is, in one sense, a small Bill—to use a term so frequently employed in this House, often with little justification—but it is a very important Bill, because it deals with the health of a section of young women who are about to undertake a responsible, necessary and noble duty, but one which is attended or can be attended by no small risk to those who devote their services to the nursing of sick people with tuberculosis. Therefore, in the absence of some further inquiry from those able to advise me on a matter which is beyond the compass of a layman, I reserve my judgment on this Bill. I am in complete sympathy with the object of the Minister in endeavouring to get additional skilled services for sufferers from tuberculosis. That is a most laudable object and a most necessary one, especially at this time when there is such a shortage of nurses who hold the full nursing certificate. As I understand the Bill, it proposes to take in a class of girls who cannot be qualified, I think, until they are 21, but who may enter upon their training at 19.

The Minister for Health: No, they must be 21 before they enter.

Mr. McDONALD: They can then pass through a limited nursing course which would qualify them for nursing patients who have tuberculosis, but which would not give them the qualification for general nursing. The course that they would undertake would be less, in length of time, and less exacting in training and knowledge, than that which is prescribed for the general nursing certificate. It may be that at the present time, in view of the shortage in the nursing profession, some special means need to be adopted to supply skilled nursing for those suffering from this complaint. But it may also be that, while that is unavoidable, it is something which should be limited to the present shortage of general qualified nurses.

There are two factors that I want to mention. One is this: Is it desirable that we should have a special type of nurse known as a tuberculosis nurse? Such a nurse would, under this Bill, go through a short course to qualify under the restricted curriculum which would be prescribed for a tuberculosis nurse. At the end of her time she would be qualified to nurse tuberculosis patients but not to practise in any other branches of the nursing profession.

Mr. Mann: The mental nurses are the same.

Mr. McDONALD: Perhaps so.

Mr. Mann: And midwifery nurses, too.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not know about them. Would a tuberculosis nurse be entitled to nurse midwifery patients? I do not think so. I have yet to be convinced that a tuberculosis nurse would be qualified to practise as a mental nurse.

The Minister for Health: No, only as a tuberculosis nurse.

Mr. McDONALD: Therefore I come back to the position, that we propose, by this Bill, to create a special class of nurse who would be restricted entirely to the nursing of tuberculosis patients. Unless such a nurse married, or drifted to some other occupation, she would face, for the rest of her life, the prospect of nursing tuberculosis patients. It might be an avocation adapted to those who feel drawn towards this particular service, but on the other hand there might be women who commence as young girls and would, from the point of view of economic compulsion, have to spend the greater part of their lives in a type of nursing from which they would be subject to greater danger of infection—because of the particular disease—than are nurses occupied in general nursing, or the treatment of other diseases. I am not at this stage, and with the amount of knowledge I possess, able to pronounce any opinion on this matter, but it is an aspect which the House should take into consideration.

Is it desirable that we should encourage girls to enter upon an occupation, and qualify for it, when they would have no opportunity, as nurses, to escape or transfer from one of the most difficult and exposed classes of the nursing profession? Or from the point of view of the nursing community, is it better that we should strive to encourage nurses who are going to nurse tuberculosis patients to have their full certificate, in which case they might spend some years in this particular class of nursing and then pass on to other classes where they would also render good work and not be exposed to the same chances of infection?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That would be optional to the trainee. If she wished to undertake further courses she could.

Mr. McDONALD: That might be so.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No-one would stop her, surely?

Mr. McDONALD: If one of these girls had the opportunity and the energy, she might even go forward and become a medical practitioner. But the tendency is, when we prescribe a certain qualification, for those who attain that qualification to go no further. As people grow older they are less inclined to study to advance. Because of these things would it be better for us to encourage these girls to acquire the full certificate so that after a period of years of nursing tuberculosis patients they would be able to pass on to other classes of nursing? It may be more salutory for them to move on. If there is anything in that consideration then the Minister may be justified in bringing down this Bill as a temporary measure to meet a time when there is a grave shortage of fully qualified nurses. It might be better regarded as a temporary measure than as a permanent one by which young women may be encouraged to acquire a qualification which gives them only a limited scope in the profession in which they are working.

The other consideration I wish to bring forward—and again I have not had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge that I would like to have—is this, and it is not something to smile at: Should there be precautions in this Bill? I do not recollect any. The precautions that I am thinking of might be dealt with by regulation, or by the board which licenses girls before permitting them to enter this profession. What I have in mind is that I believe that some people are more subject to T.B. than are others. I understand that there are tests which can be made which determine, to a large degree, the liability of an individual person to the contraction of T.B.

I am told that it is possible to determine, to some extent, that one person may be liable to contract T.B. to a much greater degree than some other person. I also understand that by the use of that method there could be recruited, as tuberculosis nurses, girls or women who would have only a small chance of contracting T.B. whereas others, to whom these tests were not applied, might be admitted and run a grave chance of contracting this disease in the course of some years of nursing T.B. patients. I hope that the Bill will not be disposed of this evening, but that some further time will be allowed to enable members to obtain some information on their own account and their own responsibility to determine whether the Bill does all that is required. I repeat that we know, and agree with the Minister, that there is a grave shortage of nurses and that patients suffering from tuberculosis need our utmost attention, and that we should take every means possible to ensure that they receive the best nursing treatment, with plenty of staff provided

for that purpose. It may therefore be that, as a measure to meet the present position, a Bill of this kind might be entertained.

It might also be that there could be added to this Bill certain health safeguards for young women who may qualify under its provisions. It might be that we should rather re-frame the Bill, to treat it as a temporary measure and by our long-term policy encourage those who desire to enter the nursing profession to be fully qualified nurses, able to pass, in the course of time, from nursing tuberculosis patients to other branches of the nursing profession. For example, in this or another Bill it might be said that a nurse may acquire, in the course of her training, an intermediate or interim certificate as a nurse for tuberculosis patients, but that unless she proceeded with her training and studied to acquire a full certificate, within a certain number of years—perhaps five or six years—she should pass out of the nursing of tuberculosis patients, for her own sake. That might be a means by which we could encourage training as fully qualified nurses, while at the same time meeting—for the time being and during the present shortage—the requirements of tuberculosis patients, which the Minister so very properly had in mind in introducing this Bill. Therefore, although the Bill appears to be simple, I venture to suggest that there are certain considerations that might well exercise the minds of members before it passes this House in its final form.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [8.12]: I am wholly in support of this Bill and I think members may rest assured that there is more than one reason why it has been brought down. I have often wondered why there was not some specialist course for nurses, just as there is for medical men. In the institutions for the insane we have specialist nurses. Girls without any knowledge of nursing are given a course of training in mental homes and they become proficient and certificated nurses in mental disorders. They are unable to nurse anywhere else, but our experience is that except for those that get married the bulk of the nurses trained remain and look upon it as a career. It is just as essential to have trained nurses in this sphere—

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: There is no fear of contagion in mental homes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is just as much risk of contagion there as there are T.B. cases. Another argument in favour of the Bill is the system that has been carried out for a considerable time, which, as already explained by the Minister, is to take young girls and train them. When I first became associated with the Royal Perth Hospital no girl was taken into training until she reached 21 years of age, but the age has gradually been reduced to 18 years. Whether that is because of the modern trend among girls I do not know. Girls are now taken at the age of 18 for the Royal Perth Hospital, the Fremantle Hospital, and the Children's Hospital, and under the Government scheme. In the Royal Perth Hospital they do three years straight off.

I think everyone will agree that, where there is a bed average per day of 360 odd patients, covering all diseases and all classes of surgical operations, there is a greater opportunity for girls to get an all-round training than there has been under the scheme operated by the Health Department. Under that scheme they started at Wooroloo and served from nine months to 12 or 18 months, which I always contend was too long, and they began there at 18 or 19 years of age. Medical men agree that a younger girl, particularly if she has had no experience of taking care of herself in such a hospital, has a greater tendency to contract the complaint than has a person who is a little older. In addition, particularly since the present superintendent, Dr. Henzell, has been there, every precaution is taken, not only by the nurses who apply to go into this training, but by everyone concerned at the institution.

Applicants are thoroughly examined and x-rayed, and every precaution is taken to see whether they are likely to contract the disease. Not only the nurses, but also all employees at Wooroloo, cooks, yardmen and everyone else, are thoroughly examined. There is a continuous examination made to see that they are all right. Notwithstanding that, some of them do contract the disease. On the other hand, the Minister for the North-West has just informed me that while he was at Wooroloo he got to know

two or three nurses who had been there for nearly 30 years without contracting the disease.

Mr. Doney: You say that despite all the precautions taken some of them do contract the disease?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and some nurses contract it in hospitals where there are no T.B. cases. Scores of people contract T.B. without ever having nursed a T.B. case. It is not a disease that anyone can be certain of avoiding. I think members will agree that a person who is continually nursing none but T.B. cases is in greater danger than one who is not. That is simply commonsense. Under our present system the younger nurses start at Wooroloo and are then transferred to Collie, Bunbury or some other Government hospital for six months. They may finish at Kalgoorlie, and they have to serve four years. The result is that they have not the same opportunity, in the smaller hospitals, to gain the experience that they would get in the Perth hospital or the Fremantle hospital. When a nurse goes to Bunbury, Albany or Narrogin, at those hospitals there is not the number of medical men available to give lectures, which are an essential part of a nurse's training. The matrons are not able to give all the lectures.

At the Royal Perth Hospital there are 40 or 50 honoraries who are all prepared to lecture, and the same applies at the Fremantle Hospital and the Children's Hospital. At one time nurses with certificates from the Children's Hospital were looked on as first-class nurses, but now, owing to the attitude adopted by the authorities in the Old Country, they must have at least three months' experience nursing adults before they are accepted as fully trained nurses. Notwithstanding the experience they get of many complaints of children, Children's Hospital nurses must now have three months' training among adult patients before they are looked on as first-class and competent nurses.

There is another class of nurse—I call her a nurse—known as a nursing assistant. We have a large number of these girls in this State. Their services are utilised in hospitals, but they do not get any further than nursing assistants for various reasons. Some are not prepared to do the slogging work necessary to become fully trained; some feel that they have not had sufficient education; some start a little late in life. These girls remain as nursing assistants, and it is believed that this class would make excellent T.B. nurses. From what I can gather from those who are most interested in the matter, girls of this class will form the nucleus of our T.B. nurses. They are good, strong, healthy girls and have had a reasonable amount of experience, because they have done the work about hospitals, such as taking temperatures and pulses, and that sort of thing.

We have to appreciate that there is much less for a T.B. nurse to learn than for a general nurse because the general nurse is called upon to nurse any class of surgical or medical case. From my knowledge of hospitals—and I have been in a few of them—I think there is a great deal less work to do in nursing T.B. than general patients. If a girl of 21 desires to become a T.B. nurse, I understand that the rate of pay will be increased over that of the general nurse because of the risk of infection, and if she desires to stop at the end of the two years' course, there is no reason why we should discourage her. The member for West Perth need not fear our training a lot of nurses whom we cannot absorb. The Minister for Health and the Health Department will see that we train only sufficient nurses of this class as are likely to be absorbed in T.B. nursing.

Mr. McDonald: I am not concerned about that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member said we ought to be careful not to train a lot more nurses than we could absorb. I should say that commonsense would prevail and that the authorities would train only the number that could be absorbed.

Mr. McDonald: I did not mean that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At any rate, that is what the hon. member said. The point is that, in the future training of nurses, instead of their going to Wooroloo in the first year, they will work in the opposite direction. They will be 18 years of age when they start their training, mainly at Kalgoorlie. Instead of doing three, six or nine months at Wooroloo as

previously, they will not go there until they have finished three years and nine months as general nurses, and then they will complete their four years' training by doing three months at Wooroloo. By that time they will be somewhat older, will be better able to look after themselves and will run much less risk of contracting this terrible disease.

Mr. Mann: Will not you reduce the period of general nursing?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know nothing about that. The Nurses' Registration Board is in control and neither the Government, the Minister nor anyone else can interfere. The board consists of experts, and if they decide to reduce the period, it will be done. I have no authority for saying what follows, but I should think that the board could decide, after they had done two years, to enable them to become fully qualified in less time. If that were decided upon, it could be done only by regulation, and the regulation must be laid on the Table of the House, so the final decision would rest with Parliament. If that were proposed, I should watch developments with the greatest interest.

If there is one thing of which we must be careful, it is to permit no deterioration in the qualifications of our nurses. I have always argued that thousands of men and women after being operated on would die but for the attention of qualified nurses. A surgeon operates today and the patient is handed over to the care of the nurse. The surgeon might see the patient once or twice in the ensuing 48 hours, and subsequently only once or twice a week. Upon the skilled attention of the nurse the recovery of the patient depends. We should be jealous of maintaining the qualifications of nurses.

One complaint made before I left the Health Department was about the deterioration in the education of our nurses. With the increase of medical science, doctors argued, it is more essential to have a higher educational qualification to ensure a fully qualified nurse. That is why the holding of the Junior Certificate was insisted on. I was not keen on the Junior Certificate standard because I thought a nurse could be better judged by examination when entering the profession than on a pass secured some years before. That is a point of which we must take notice. As I have said, many of these girls are anxious to nurse in some capacity where they have not to do the four years' grind. For the first three years, at any rate, it is a hard grind to qualify as a nurse. Some of the girls will not submit to it, but they are prepared to take a lesser course and become qualified in a specialist job, just as are mental nurses.

Mr. Rodoreda: What is the age for these T.B. nurses?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Twenty-one years.

Mr. Rodoreda: The clause seems to imply that it is 19 years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Minister informs me that for a T.B. nurse the girl must be 21. Other girls can start their training at the age of 18 if the matron will accept them.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I think the Bill says differently.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I accept the Minister's word. If it proves to be otherwise, I may have something to say to him afterwards.

The Minister for Health: The provision says that every person who has attained the age of 21 years, etc.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have explained how it appeals to me. I welcome the Bill; I welcome the opportunity of getting a number of nurses anxious, capable and qualified to nurse T.B. cases, even though they may not desire to nurse other patients.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [8.28]: The Minister for Lands, in reply to an interjection, said that T.B. nurses could not start their training until they were 21. I should like to have some clarification of the point before we vote on the second reading. The Bill mentions every person who has attained the age of 21 years and has completed the prescribed course of training.

The Minister for Lands: The word "and" does not appear.

Mr. RODOREDA: Well, it says that every person who has attained the age of 21 years, has completed the prescribed course of training and has passed the prescribed examina-

tion shall be entitled to be registered as a T.B. nurse. I understood from the Minister that the period of training is to be two years. If that is so, the person must have done the course of training before reaching the age of 21. If the Minister believes that the Bill will preclude a girl from starting her training until she reaches the age of 21 years, he had better give further consideration to the provision because I do not think the measure expresses that intention.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [8.30]: My brief observations on this Bill will, for the most part, be made with the object of seeking some explanation from the Minister as to why the Bill does not go farther than it contemplates. It will be generally agreed, I think, that so far as the metropolitan area is concerned, at any rate, some form of staggering of vehicle licenses—and perhaps to a lesser degree of drivers' licenses—is necessary to overcome the confusion and the long periods of waiting that now prevail at the end of June in each year. As I read the Bill, all it does in that respect is to continue the present practice in connection with current licenses. In future, however, persons who license a vehicle for the first time will be able to secure a license for three, six, nine or 12 months from the time of licensing.

I agree that in the course of time there may be, although there is a deal of chance with regard to it, some system of staggering; but it would probably take ten years before there was a general dispersal—if I may use that term—of licensing that would spread the issue of licenses equitably over the year. Even the word "equitable" requires some qualification, because it may be found that, either by mischance or because in a particular period of the year more vehicles were purchased, there would be a definite bias in favour of one period.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You mean before Christmas.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes. Consequently, there would be a tendency over a period of time to bring about a state of affairs not differing to any great extent from that which now exists at the end of June. Why is it not possible still to work on the system of periods of licensing for three, six, nine or 12 months, as is the practice now and is the intention of the Bill? If a person purchases a car in the month of May, why should it not be possible for him to take out a license till May of the following year? That provision exists at present, but, as I read it, not for each of the months of the year.

Mr. Doney: Yes, from any one day.

Mr. Perkins: The license runs from the day the person takes it out.

Mr. GRAHAM: Apparently, I have misread the Bill in some particulars. My chief point, however, is that instead of allowing the present practice to continue there should be an allocation of the existing licenses over different months. If, as is the case, my license expires on the 30th June next year, I might be rendered an account for a period of 11 months or, if I desired a shorter period, five months. Somebody else would be rendered an account for 10 months, the shorter period in that case being four months. In that way, the licensing of vehicles would be distributed over the 12 months of the year in some sort of order, instead of allowing it to be merely a matter of chance.

To demonstrate my point, it could conceivably happen that nobody at all would purchase a vehicle in the month of February and consequently February would be a blank period; but during some other month—December was suggested—there might be quite a cluttering up at the offices where the licenses are renewed. Whatever the number of licenses in force at present, they should be allocated in such a way as to distribute them equitably over the whole of the 12 months. Bearing in mind the shorter periods for which licenses may be taken out, I feel that then the chief purpose of the Bill—or should I say the reason for the Bill—would be accomplished. There is a general outcry because of the great delay that takes place in the issuing of licenses at particular periods. I do not think there would be any confusion at all so far as the licensing authorities are concerned or so far as concerns those responsible for policing the Act.

Instead of using numerals to denote the year on the stickers that are affixed to cars, as is done at present, it surely would be

possible to use the numerals 1 to 12 for the months January to December, inclusive. The sticker for next year could be diamond shape and for the year after rectangular, and so on. In that way they could be easily identified. At the same time, individuals could be allowed the right to request that they should be placed in some other licensing period. I should say, however, that a very small percentage indeed would desire any change from that which was allocated to them. I put it to members that if their year were from October to October, all that would be required would be an adjustment for the first licensing period, and that consequently they might have a little less to pay for the lesser period. Then there would ensue the regular 12 months' commitment, or a commitment for a shorter period at the whim or fancy of the member concerned. But he would have the right, if he chose, to alter from the October period to November, or perhaps to the financial year as we know it at present.

It might be advisable, so far as commercial vehicles are concerned, to allow them to remain in the present period, that is in the period ending the 30th June, unless the owners specifically wish otherwise, for the reason that many trading concerns end their financial year on that date and would desire to make their payments up to that particular time. I appreciate that this would entail a little extra cost in initiating the scheme. But then instead of merely a stab in the dark, where we might still have rush periods and other periods of inactivity, and where in any case it will be many years before we get down to a workable basis, even if then, there might be something in the suggestion of allocating licenses to specific periods along the lines I have suggested.

There may be some reason, but I do not know it, why drivers' licenses have not been embraced in this proposed staggering scheme. The present charge for an ordinary driver's license is 5s. a year, which works out at 5d. per month. If the licenses were staggered, a driver could be given a 10 months' driving license, which would take him to the 30th April—that is starting from the 1st July—and in that case there would be the 4s. 2d. only to be paid in order again to make the distribution over the whole of the 12 months. But as from the date of the initial changeover, 5s. would be paid regularly from the 30th April next year to the 30th April in the following year.

Expressing this idea orally, one may seem to be a little involved; but I feel confident that if members could see a table drawn up indicating what the effect would be, they would discover some merit in the proposal. In any case, if the purpose or intention of staggering is that there shall be a more or less equal distribution of the work for each of the 12 months of the year, it will surely be worth while to undertake a little extra work at the commencement in order to achieve that objective. I am putting these matters forward as suggestions. They may be impracticable but they appeal to me as being fair and reasonable. If the Minister is able to demonstrate that they are not workable or are in other ways undesirable, it would not be my intention to pursue them.

It is not my purpose to dilate upon the other provisions of the Bill because my expressions of opinion, generally speaking, would be broadly along the lines of the remarks of other members; that is, I am in general agreement with what is understood to be the effect, notwithstanding that a few of us may differ on certain details. There is one thing I would like to mention, though I doubt whether it is linked with these particular amendments. The member for Pingelly suggested that there were certain provisions in the Traffic Act to which effect was unfortunately not being given; that is to say, they are not being sufficiently policed. I suggest that the Minister might take steps to ensure that there is a definite enforcement of the law relating to riders of bicycles without tail lights. There is an extreme danger both to the boy or other person who happens to be riding such a bicycle and to other traffic.

It is almost impossible to see bicycles at night time, particularly if there is a mist or rain or anything of that nature, if they have no tail lights. Many, too, do not carry headlights. The driver of a more powerful and heavier vehicle is at a disadvantage because almost invariably sympathy would be with the cyclist if he sustained any injury or damage to his cycle as the result of a collision. I realise that for some time past it has been impossible to have the requisite number of police officers on the job to see that the traffic re-

gulations by and large are observed; but anybody who is a driver of a motor vehicle —or for that matter moves around the metropolitan area in any other way—can, on any night of the week, see not one but very many breaches of the particular regulation to which I have referred. In the interests of the cyclists themselves and in the interests of motorists, some steps should be initiated for the purpose of enforcing the present provisions. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill generally.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [8.46]: This Traffic Bill is a very important one not only to the pedestrian but also to the motorist. I have listened carefully to quite a number of speakers dealing with traffic matters and in some instances can agree entirely with their sentiments. The member for East Perth has touched on a question of considerable importance; namely, the suitable lighting of vehicles. Any driver in the metropolitan area realises that the greatest danger he has to confront is that of knocking down cyclists whose machines have no back lights—or, for that matter, headlights either. I am given to understand that across the street from the Traffic Department's office in Perth at the Boys' Central School some time ago there was a check-up on bicycles. It was found that 147 were without headlights, tail-lights, or registration numbers.

No action was taken to see that the regulations were enforced and that the owners of the bicycles complied with the law. That is totally wrong. The offenders were youths. In many instances girls also are at fault. These young people, when they start to ride bicycles, should be instructed in the correct manner of handling the machines and in taking steps to protect both themselves and other people. There are hundreds of bicycles at the school opposite the Traffic Office and any day a hundred of them can be examined and found to have no headlights, tail-lights or registration discs. That is a matter that should be gone into. Young people who begin to ride motor vehicles or to use ordinary push-bikes should be taught that there are essential requirements with which they must comply.

Sometimes one travels in a motorcar at night and when driving along, perhaps in a slight rain, finds another vehicle approaching with lights six or seven feet from the ground. For a period of two or three seconds after that vehicle has passed everything is a black-out. In such circumstances I presume that other drivers are like myself; they slow down but do not stop. It is during that period of black-out that damage can be done to a cyclist in front of one if he has no tail-light. In those circumstances there is no reflection and a driver cannot see the cyclist in front of him. In many instances, even if the cyclist had a tail-light, it would be difficult to see him because of the effect of the powerful headlights of the car which had just passed. That is a matter that should be given consideration.

Mr. McLarty: Would you favour compulsory dipping?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and I contend that no headlight should be beyond a certain height, whether it be that of a motorcar of a private individual or of a Government official or of a tram or trolley-bus. The lights should be hooded and kept down to a certain degree. Glaring headlights are a terrific danger, as any driver realises on a wet night.

Mr. McLarty: There is a regulation that the beam must not be higher than three feet.

Mr. TRIAT: I know; but how often is it policed? It exists the same as do the regulations governing tail-lights, but it is not carried out.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They policed 60 or 70 the other night.

Mr. TRIAT: The regulations are not policed satisfactorily at all. I know that the big police car—the Bentley—has had trouble with glaring headlights. The driver dipped his lights for an approaching flash car but the other car did not respond, so the driver gave him the full glare and made him stop. But the men on the Bentley did not prosecute that driver. It is beyond their dignity to do that kind of thing. Nevertheless they are patrol men and they should do it.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There were 90 prosecutions in a couple of weeks.

Mr. TRIAT: There are not enough prosecutions. I am sorry more action is not taken. The only way to protect motorists and others is to see that the regulations are carried out. I do not know whether it means that more traffic policemen must be employed, but something should be done. We

are killing too many people. When I go to the Traffic Department and hand over the money for a driver's license I am not asked a question. It is given to me. The authorities do not say, "Can you drive a car?" I was never put through a test for a driver's license.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Well, you got yours in the country where they are not particular.

Mr. TRIAT: I should be asked that question and next I should be asked, "What sort of car have you got, and what is its mechanical condition?" Under the law I am not permitted to have a car on the highway without a brake on it. The most dangerous thing that anyone can do is to drive in traffic without brakes. I have been in several cars in the last six months and the drivers have told me that the brakes were bad. Unless those people are careful they run into someone. The regulations provide that we must have good appliances on a car, but today there are thousands of cars without good brakes, but nobody tests them and nobody cares. I have four friends whose cars are without brakes.

The Premier: They are bad company to keep.

Mr. TRIAT: I have told them that they are mad. They have said, "We will be careful." Why beat about the bush? I will bet that there is not a member present who has not, in the last 12 months, sat in a car that has been without brakes.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I would get out at once.

Mr. TRIAT: I did on one occasion. Yet, these four people have registered their cars without being asked a question. A car is of no use unless it can be stopped immediately in traffic. It is more important to have good brakes than a good engine. These factors should be given consideration. When we apply for a license the authorities should say, "We want to know the mechanical condition of your car."

Hon. J. C. Willcock: How did they stop without any brakes?

Mr. TRIAT: They ran them up a bank.

The Premier: Where is there a bank except the Bank of New South Wales, on the corner of St. George's-terrace and William-street?

Mr. TRIAT: I do not mean that sort of bank; they ran them up an incline. I was asked to drive a motor truck from Perth to Kalgoorlie to be repaired. I was to pick up the truck in Newcastle-street. I did so and was bringing it to Parliament House, but I turned up the job and took the truck back. It did not have a brake on it. I put my foot on the brake pedal and the truck did not stop, so I took it back and said to the owner, "You can take it up yourself." The man who wanted the truck in Kalgoorlie was a Government official and he knew there were no brakes on it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I am not going to ride in any more cars.

Mr. TRIAT: When renewing my driver's license I have not yet been asked if I know the traffic signals of the city. Many people, when they turn a corner, stick their arms up vertically instead of putting them out horizontally.

The Premier: That means that that is where you are going.

Mr. TRIAT: If a person is following such a driver the next thing he knows is that the car has shot across him. If he makes a row about it the driver of the offending vehicle says, "I put my hand out." Well, he did, but he did not give the correct signal.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: He would put your light out.

Mr. TRIAT: What is the use of joking about this? If the member for Geraldton does not drive a car at night time I can assure him that I do, and there are dozens of men whose signals are incorrect. Those are the things that cause people's deaths. Why make a joke about this?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I am talking about the brakes.

Mr. TRIAT: They are bad too.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They are not there.

Mr. TRIAT: Some car owners are too lousy to pay £2 or £3 to get their brakes overhauled. They save the money and kill someone. But according to the Traffic Act their brakes must be in good order and condition. I suggest that not one person who goes in to re-license his car has not had the vehicle in a garage within the last two or three months for some repairs, for oiling and greasing, or for something else. The garage proprietor attaches a ticket to say that the car needs to be oiled and greased at a certain time, and he could certify on that

ticket the condition of the car. The officer at the Traffic Branch could look at it and he would know that the car was O.K.

Mr. Leahy: How about the man who services his own car?

Mr. TRIAT: Well, he could get it done. I agree with what the member for Kalgoorlie had to say about drunken drivers. If a man, under the influence of liquor, takes a vehicle on the road he must be prepared to sacrifice any right to drive a motorcar But the Bill proposes to give such a person three chances. The member for Kalgoorlie suggests two. Once a man has been found guilty of this offence he should be completely debarred on the second occasion. An argument put up by a member opposite is that a man might be under the influence of liquor and his car be against the edge of the roadway. Well, I do not think the police would take action unless the man was driving the car. A car owner could not be prosecuted if he were drunk and his car in the garage. It is only while attempting to use a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of liquor that a prosecution would lie. If a man were drunk inside a hotel and his car were outside, he should not be prosecuted until he attempted to take control of it. I will agree to any suggestion on those lines.

I come now to the matter of the hit-and-run driver. This has me a bit worried. Anyone who hits and runs is a criminal in the worst degree because by stopping and giving assistance a life might be saved. People do not all die when they are knocked down, but many do. There is a degree of guilt in this matter. I know some hit-and-run motorists who have unknowingly knocked a person down and continued on their way. That can happen when turning a bad bend on a night drizzling with rain. The back of the car might strike an obstacle or a pedestrian might be knocked down without the driver's knowledge, but because someone sees the accident and takes the number of the car he is charged as a hit-and-run driver.

Unless the driver actually knew that he knocked a person down he should not be charged. In this matter we could have innocently-guilty people. That is a rather peculiar term. What I mean is that they could be innocent of the accident and yet guilty of committing the offence that the Act prescribed. A certain amount of discretion should be given to the magistrate. If a motor driver, knowingly knocked a person down and continued on he should suffer a term of imprisonment. The suggestion that juveniles and females should not be imprisoned for this offence is beyond my comprehension. If anyone is entitled to imprisonment for it, it is the young people because they should not knock people down and run away. Their senses are more alert and they have better eyesight and hearing than have the older people. Those who should not be so badly penalised are the older ones whose senses are dulled and who, probably, should not be driving motorcars.

There is no excuse for a female knocking anyone down and getting out of it any more than there is for her getting out of murder. A female should stand up to her obligations the same as a male. I am perfectly in agreement with the sentiment expressed by the Bill, and I am prepared to support it, with the amendment suggested by the member for Kalgoorlie. I am also prepared to support an amendment that will provide a certain amount of redress for the people who knock somebody down without knowing it and proceed on their way without stopping. They should not suffer imprisonment.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [8.59]: This Bill is an attempt to lessen the tremendous number of accidents occurring lately, by imposing severe penalties on hit-and-run and on intoxicated drivers. For that reason I think it should be welcomed by every member of this House. I am satisfied with the Bill as a whole, though I may take exception to one or two details. I am pleased with the provision that deals with the new system of licensing. I have advocated that system on every occasion when the Traffic Act has come before this House for amendment, but apparently there was some reason for its not being adopted until now, when wiser counsels have prevailed. I hope it will soon be an accomplished fact. This system of licensing has been in vogue in Victoria for over 20 years, to my knowledge, and has worked satisfactorily in that State. I see no reason why it should not work to the satisfaction of everyone concerned in this State.

The member for East Perth mentioned that the avoidance of congestion at the Traf-

fic Office was apparently the sole reason for the introduction of the new system of licensing. While I agree that that is one benefit to be derived from this measure, I think the main benefit is that the motorist, under the new system, will get full value for his license fee. Under the old system, the least period for which a man could license his vehicle was three months and, if he bought a car and licensed it in the eleventh month of the license year, he had to pay three months' fee for one month's use of the car. Under this system such a man will get the benefit of the full three months, six months, nine months or 12 months, as the case may be. That is a great advantage from the point of view of the motorist.

As the member for East Perth stated, the machinery part of the provision will be the use of stickers, numbered from 1 to 12, according to the month in which the motorist licenses the car, and different colours or shapes will be used for different years. There will be no reason for confusion. I fail to see why the three months and nine months periods of licensing are included. I could see no reason for them under the old system. Why not make the minimum period six months or 12 months?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Or two years.

Mr. RODOREDA: I was responsible for having the three months provision included in the Act, and it was for the first period of the licensing year. Before I introduced that amendment it was impossible for a man to license his car for three months, except for the last three months of the expiring year. To take care of special circumstances that existed in the North-West, I got an amendment through, under which a man could license for three months at the end of the licensing year, and for the first three months of the next licensing year, giving a period of six months, which was the peak period for the use of motor trucks and trailers in that area. The provision did not apply to cars, but gradually it became part of the Act and has been perpetuated, though all the reason that I could see for the concession has departed. If we give a man opportunity to license his car from the 2nd February or the 2nd March, as the case may be, for a period of six months, that should be sufficient concession. I can see a great deal of unnecessary work involved in the provision for three months and nine months. Instead of two classes of stickers for the 12 months, four classes will be required for every type of vehicle to be licensed. Members must realise that there would be a vast amount of printing necessary and much unnecessary work would be imposed on the secretaries of local authorities.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Will there be something to show the month when the license expires?

Mr. RODOREDA: Yes, it will give the number of the month when the license expires. I am becoming confused with the present system. The date at which the license expires will be the only point necessary, so I must withdraw what I said in that regard. I still do not see why we should allow a period of three months. A man could repeatedly register for three months.

Mr. Doney: Seventy-five per cent. of motorists would register for the 12 months.

Mr. RODOREDA: My main argument is that the three-months and nine-months periods were introduced because one could only license from the 1st July to 30th June. Now one can license for 12 months from any date, and in my opinion a concession of six months would be all that would be necessary.

Hon. N. Keenan: What is the Victorian practice?

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know the present Victorian practice as to concessions for less than 12 months. I notice that severer penalties are to be imposed on drunken drivers, including the driver of a car which is at rest, a man who is just starting his car. The car may be at rest when the driver is apprehended by the police, but he immediately comes under the provision dealing with drunken drivers. That position could be remedied by deleting from Section 31 the words "attempting to drive." I am in accord with members who have already spoken, in realising that we have to do something that will have a more drastic effect and reaction on drunken drivers than has the present system of imposing fines, but I do not think it is fair to impose such severe penalties on a man who, though drunk when apprehended, is just getting into his car and attempting to drive it.

The Premier: I would stop him there.

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not think a man who has caused no damage, but who, in the opinion of a policeman, is drunk, should be put on the same footing as a man apprehended while driving at 50 miles an hour, or the drunken driver who has hit someone and failed to stop.

Mr. Doney: It is a kindness to charge him then, instead of letting him drive his vehicle and perhaps kill someone.

Mr. RODOREDA: We make provision for a heavy penalty in the case of the hit-and-run driver but, in my opinion, he is worse than the drunken driver. We only provide imprisonment for the hit-and-run driver if he hurts somebody. He is only subject to a fine when, as a result of the accident in which he is involved, no-one is hurt. The member for Kalgoorlie touched on that point. The fact that a man is lucky enough not to hurt anyone when he is involved in an accident and drives on should not prevent his suffering the penalty imposed on a man unlucky enough to have hurt someone. I want both cases to be treated alike. If a man is to be let off lightly because he has not hurt anyone, a man who is drunk and who has not moved his car should also be let off lightly. There is room for further investigation of that matter.

While the hit-and-run driver is a problem, I can sympathise with those members who say that a man may unknowingly knock a cyclist over or do something of the sort and drive on. If he is caught, he is liable to a term of imprisonment. We should be able to devise some provision to meet such cases. Admittedly, this is a very difficult matter. When a motorist taken to court is represented by a competent solicitor, he is often able to prove that black is white.

Mr. Seward: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. RODOREDA: Some astounding decisions have been given by the courts in cases where people have been killed. In some instances, the motorist has escaped any punishment. I repeat that the problem is a difficult one, but more consideration should be given to the aspects I have mentioned before the Bill passes the Committee stage. The Bill refers to a new type of vehicle described as an external power vehicle. I should like to know what class of vehicle that is intended to cover. If the Minister mentioned it when moving the second reading, I did not hear the reference. Does it relate to trolley-buses and trams?

The Minister for Works: A motor vehicle operated electrically.

Mr. RODOREDA: No, that type of vehicle is also mentioned—a vehicle propelled by electric battery.

Hon. N. Keenan: It must mean a trolley-bus.

Mr. Triat: I suppose it would be a "push-your own car."

Mr. RODOREDA: The clause refers to a vehicle which derives its motor power from a source external to the vehicle or from an electrical storage battery which is not connected to any source of power when the vehicle is in motion. I should like an explanation of that provision. The only explanation I can offer is that it refers to a tram or trolley-bus.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There are vehicles that carry a large bag of gas on top.

Mr. RODOREDA: That is not external to the vehicle.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is

Mr. RODOREDA: It is not; the bag of gas is on the vehicle. If this reference to an external power vehicle does cover trams and trolley-buses, the provision will conflict with the definition of a vehicle in the interpretation section of the Act, which specifically excludes trams and trolley-buses. We should certainly frame a more specific definition of an external power vehicle than that contained in the Bill.

MR. HILL (Albany) [9.13]: I support the second reading. There is no doubt that the motorcar is here to stay. In many cases it is a necessity; in other cases it is a luxury, but whether a necessity or a luxury, if not properly controlled it can be an instrument of destruction. I consider that we have two jobs to do. The first is to make the law; the second is to ensure that the law is enforced. Quite a lot has been said about the hit-and-run motorist. Nobody has any sympathy for the "dinkum" hit-and-run driver but, when we convict a man of that offence, we should ensure that he is guilty. On one occasion a man was found lying dead on the Perth-Bunbury-road. A motorist who had passed that way examined

his car and found indications that it had evidently bumped something. Later he was satisfied that he had hit the man and killed him. He was under the impression that he might have touched a kangaroo, but he had not stopped. If that motorist's number had been taken and the police had approached him before he contacted the police, he would have been classed as a hit-and-run driver.

As to the drunken driver, a judge some years ago stated that a motor vehicle in the hands of a drunken person was an instrument of death. Early this year I had a narrow escape from picking up a couple as a result of their using a motorcycle while they were under the influence of liquor. I left Albany a few minutes ahead of my son. He told me that he had been passed by a motorcycle travelling faster than he had ever seen anything moving along the road. He thought to himself, "I will pick you up very soon." At the next bend in the road, he came upon a man and woman badly smashed lying alongside the motorcycle, and he had the job of picking them up.

There are several authorities responsible for the administration of the traffic laws. In the metropolitan area, the police exercise control in some parts, but there is one place where I believe there is no police control. I refer to that area outside the Perth railway station. This recalls to my mind an incident that occurred last Saturday. I arrived at Albany and my wife and children were on the station to meet me. The kiddies were excited at seeing Daddy arriving home and ran from the car outside the Albany station. Those who are familiar with that part of the town know that there is a wide thoroughfare in front of the station. It is on railway property. As my children were going along the road, a car travelling at a fairly high rate, came along and I consider that he drove to the danger of the children. The driver was not passing that way on business connected with the railways; he was driving through for his own convenience.

A little later I saw the traffic inspector and made a complaint to him, but he replied, "That does not concern me; I have no jurisdiction over that part of the road." That part of the road, like the area in front of the Perth railway station, is under the control of the Railway Department, but has anyone ever seen a railway official outside the Perth station or the Albany station acting as a traffic cop? I have not. I have seen a porter outside the Perth station checking up on the parking but not controlling the traffic. At Albany, when a train arrives, the area in front of the station is congested, but the railway men are busy with their railway work and have no time to do the work of a traffic cop. I trust the Minister will take notice of these matters and have regulations issued to provide that when the police are in control, as in the metropolitan area, they will exercise authority over any road that is open to the public. In a place like Albany, arrangements should be made so that any road used by the public shall be under the jurisdiction of the traffic inspector.

I must plead guilty to having laughed on one occasion when I should not have done so. Country drivers are very lax in giving the necessary signals. On that occasion a man from Perth was visiting my home and was driving up to my woodheap when out went his hand to give the signal. Though I laughed at him, I did wish that the habit was as deeply ingrained in me. I had a small accident through failure to observe the proper signal. The traffic authorities should insist upon all drivers giving the proper signals.

Another traffic law often ignored in the country is that which requires observance of the rule of the road. The Minister and I had a narrow escape a few miles out of Nornalup. We were driving in a Government car and, as we topped the brow of a hill, we found another car right in front of us. How we missed it, I do not know. That was the closest I have ever been to meeting with a serious accident. On the Albany-road, motorists may be seen hugging the wrong side of the road when taking corners and sometimes travelling at 60 miles an hour. At all corners on main roads the white lines should be drawn as a reminder to motorists to observe the rule of the road, and the rule of the road should be strictly enforced on those sections of our highways.

Another matter which I think should be dealt with is speeding in the metropolitan area. I am frequently on the Stirling-highway, where there is quite a lot of speeding of cars. If a pedestrian or a child were to cross the road, he would be running a great risk. I support the Bill, but would like to

add that I can see no difficulty in introducing the staggering of licenses. It should be quite easy to arrange for a sticker which would enable a constable or a traffic inspector to know at a glance for which month the license is current.

MR. PERKINS (York) [9.22]: Many members have spoken on this Bill and the ground has been fairly well covered. I desire to deal with one or two aspects only. I support the country members who have already spoken and voiced the objection of country licensing authorities to the provisions of the Bill that seek to apply the staggered licensing periods to country areas. I have a letter on the subject from the Secretary of the Bruce Rock Road Board. He states—

> Traffic Act Amendment. This board notes from Press reports a Bill to amend the Traffic Act to provide staggered licensing of vehicles.
>
> 1. We believe country local authorities handle approximately 50 per cent. of the vehicle licenses of the State, but this board has not been consulted regarding this new proposal.
>
> 2. We have no special staff for renewing licenses but manage to avoid inconvenience to owners in the issue of licenses.
>
> 3. We have, however, very scattered settlements and the policing of licenses is much more difficult than in metropolitan areas. This amendment (full details of which we do not have) may provide the dishonest vehicle owner with the opportunity of avoiding prompt and regular renewals. In the city with numbers of policemen always on duty such an offence is hardly possible.
>
> 4. The amendment would also entail added administration in the repeated issue of renewal notices which at present are issued uniformly in June of each year. Additional stickers to windscreen, etc., will also be required. We already have over 40 of these and the East Ward Road Board Association has requested reduction to four to minimise office records.
>
> 5. These, and other aspects have possibly not been considered by the Government in introducing this Bill. Already owners have provision to license quarterly, which appears to be sufficient.

This letter indicates that at some country licensing centres the congestion at the end of the annual licensing period on the 30th June is not anything like as acute as it is in the metropolitan area. In fact, there have been few, if any, complaints about inconvenience on that score. Obviously, it does suit the convenience of the country licensing authorities to have the licenses falling in at one period, and at present that appears to be at a time of the year when the other routine office work is not particularly heavy. The issue of rate notices occurs at a rather later period of the year, and consequently one can understand the desires of the local authorities in this respect. I am rather sorry the Minister did not make contact with the representatives of the local authorities in order to obtain a rather fuller expression of their views on this subject. However, I think some country members will endeavour to amend the Bill so as to make it provide that the staggering shall apply only to the metropolitan area, leaving the country districts as they are.

The Minister for Works: Before they do so, they had better give some consideration to the interests of the motorists in their various districts.

Mr. PERKINS: I am not exactly aware of what the Minister is referring to. The only complaint which I have had is about the injustice and inconvenience in the licensing of certain farm vehicles. At present, farmers who desire to cart their wheat by means of a tractor and trailer, mainly in the months of December and January, are compelled to license the trailer for two months, but to license the rubber-tyred tractor, under the Traffic Act, for six months, notwithstanding that it will be used only for two months. If the House agrees to leave the provisions regarding payment of license fees in country areas as they now stand, it will be necessary to take some action to amend the parent Act to enable farm tractors to be licensed on the same basis as trailers are now licensed.

A small amendment of the relevant section of the Act could easily be made to include farm tractors on the same basis as trailers, because the conditions in regard to the use of one are exactly similar to those of the other. The tractor is used to pull the trailer and therefore, in my opinion, the same provision should apply to each. The other question I propose to touch upon relates to the convenience of the local authorities and it is one on which there is some division of opinion. The Minister apparently has some reasons for believing that it will suit some people in country districts to have this amendment applied to country areas as well as to the metropolitan area. On the other hand, some local authorities desire otherwise; and so I hope the Minister,

when he replies, will make perfectly clear the reasons why he desires the staggering provisions to apply both to the country areas and the metropolitan area.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [9.28]: There are only one or two aspects of this Bill upon which I wish to touch. First, I do not think the member for Mt. Magnet is quite fair in asserting that there is lack of control of traffic. I read the papers regularly and I have noticed that during the past four or five weeks some 70 or 80 people per week have been charged with traffic offences. So we can at least say that if the police are not exercising as much supervision as they should, they are exercising supervision to the extent of charging 70 or 80 people with traffic offences in a week. There are other charges that I know of. Offenders have been asked to attend at the Traffic Office and explain the circumstances of accidents. They have been given a warning.

Mr. Triat: Those are car-parking offences.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: No, all sorts of different offences.

Mr. Styants: Trivial offences!

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: No. The authorities do give these people the opportunity to explain the circumstances. The offenders are then warned that if they get a black mark against them on the next occasion they will not get another chance. One cannot fail to observe from the number of prosecutions that take place that the police are supervising the traffic. They are very interested in their work and are most anxious to prevent accidents. Even the Commissioner is taking a firm stand; in fact, he has become a public propagandist in advocating safety first in the interests both of the pedestrians and the motorists. He has been enthusiastic himself and there is no doubt that he is trying to instil in his subordinate officers the need for a strict policing of the traffic laws.

Mr. Triat: There is a shortage of traffic policemen.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Yes. But as the Premier pointed out last night, that is one of the reasons for the proposed increased expenditure. The Police Department will receive £20,000 more. That is because the Commissioner and the Police Department generally are anxious to do a better job, which cannot be done without the necessary staff. A point I want to make is in regard to the mandatory provisions covering penalties. It is quite wrong to take away something that has been fundamental in British judicial and magisterial adminstration; that is, the discretion of a magistrate or judge in regard to the penalties to be imposed for an offence. Gilbert and Sullivan wrote a play, "The Mikado," in which there was a reference to the punishment being made to fit the crime. In this instance, there will be varying degrees of culpability in regard to offences committed; and yet we are saying that, irrespective of what may take place, and irrespective of the fact that there has been a law and a usage extending over hundreds of years permitting discretion to be exercised by those in charge of our courts—who are selected because of their capacity and judgment—these men shall not be permitted to exercise such discretion.

I think there is only one crime in the Code on which it is mandatory for a judge to pronounce a death sentence, and that is the crime of wilful murder. If a man is found guilty by a jury of that crime, the judge must pronounce the penalty of death. That must be considered by the executive of the Government before it can be carried out. In this instance, however, we say that even though a comparatively trivial offence has been committed, the offender must go to gaol. I suppose there are thousands of people who may find themselves in trouble of this kind and who will be faced with the prospect of going to gaol. The stigma on an individual who has served three months in prison is enormous. I do not know how it would affect a member of Parliament if he were convicted and put in gaol for three months. I think he would be disqualified.

Mr. Doney: There is not much doubt on that point.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I do not know whether this is called a misdemeanour or a crime. I have not gone into that aspect.

Mr. McDonald: I think we are safe in that respect.

Hon. N. Keenan: A member of Parliament could get leave of absence.

The Minister for Works: On the ground of urgent public business!

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: It may be the same as bankruptcy. If a member of Parliament is guilty of that offence his seat becomes forfeit.

Mr. Doney: That is what I was indicating.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Yes. It is a tremendous thing to say that people must be sent to gaol without any option and without any mitigating circumstances being taken into account. Presumably it is not desired that people shall be convicted and sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and that thereafter deputations and crowds of interested persons shall go to the Minister to ask for a remission of this serious penalty. I hope we are not going to fall into that position. Some discretion must be allowed. There are bound to be wide differences in the degree of culpability of persons involved in cases of this kind.

The system of giving magistrates and judges discretionary power after they have heard the evidence and know all the circumstances that can be brought out in court, has been well tried; but here we are saying that, notwithstanding that a magistrate may think the offence committed is not worthy of a penalty of three months' imprisonment, he is to be given no option but to inflict that punishment. That is a very serious thing. Any of us might be involved in an accident of that type, and once the finger of scorn had been pointed at an individual; once people had pointed to him and said, "See that fellow? He has done three months," that man would never be able to face ordinary company again. In cases of larceny or crimes of that kind—premeditated crimes—the circumstances are different. But here is a case where somebody, suddenly and without any premeditation, and with no opportunity to avoid the occurrence, finds himself involved in an accident; and he must arbitrarily be put into prison and left there to rot for three months.

Mr. Styants: The Bill does not provide for that.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Yes; that will be the result of the proposed law. I think the Minister would be well advised to have some modification made of the excessive penalty provided. We should avoid placing on our citizens the stigma of having been in gaol, if we can possibly do so. We should not make it mandatory that because a man is involved—perhaps unavoidably—in an accident; that just because for a few moments he loses his sense of proportion and reason and clears out, he must, even though there is no great harm done, go to gaol for three months without any consideration of any kind being shown him, unless the Executive Council exercises clemency and asks the Governor to use his prerogative of mercy and let him out after a lesser period. I would like the Minister to go into that matter carefully.

I am with the Minister as much as any other member in his desire to prevent this hit-and-run business, particularly when serious damage occurs or death results. In the latter circumstance, however, an offender can be charged under another section of the Code altogether. He can be charged with doing grievous bodily harm, if a person is injured, and that would be punishable with imprisonment; or he can be charged with manslaughter, if he causes death, even indirectly, and can be given a sufficient term of imprisonment. But here we are providing for no method of imposing a less serious penalty for an offence which is comparatively trivial. I ask the Minister to go into that question and see whether he cannot make some modification of a penalty which might have the effect of blasting people for the rest of their lives.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [9.38]: The question was raised as to the effect which the clause in this Bill dealing with taxi-cars might have in connection with the reasonably free movement of a taxi-car from one district through other districts to a destination some distance from the district in which the vehicle was licensed. It was suggested that I had not, in introducing the Bill, given any reason why this clause should be in the Bill. I think I might have skated over that rather quickly in the belief that this part of the Bill, in comparison with other parts, was not of great importance.

Mr. Doney: I certainly searched your speech very carefully without finding anything about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do say, however, that under the existing law it

is possible for a taxi-car to be licensed in one district and, at the wish or discretion of the owner, to operate in some other district or districts. As the law stands now, a person can license his taxi-car in the Narrogin municipality, for instance, and, a week or a month afterwards, can take his car to Northam or Perth and establish himself there with his taxi license and operate for the remainder of the licensing year. An action of that kind is most unfair to the persons who have been licensed to operate in those other districts. That is why this particular clause in the Bill has been included to tie up to a reasonable extent that weakness in the existing legislation.

I might want to license a taxi-car in the Northam municipality. The municipal authorities there might consider that already sufficient taxi licenses were in operation in that district and might refuse to grant my application. I could go to Merredin or some other place and procure a license and, as soon as I considered it appropriate, I could return and squat in the Northam municipality. The object of the clause, therefore, is to leave in the hands of the local authority concerned more power in regard to the number of taxi-cars that shall be licensed to operate in its district. There is no desire to restrict in any way the legitimate running of taxi-cars from Northam to Perth, from Merredin to Perth, or from Katanning to Albany.

Mr. Doney: Picking up whom the taxi-drivers may like on the return journey?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I admit that in one clause there is a prohibition against taxi-cars on the return journey picking up passengers at intermediate places.

Mr. Doney: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The contention there is that taxi-cars licensed at such intermediate places should be those to enjoy that business. There is, I submit, some merit in that regard, but I am not wedded to that provision.

Mr. Doney: That is a phase with which I was concerned.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We can discuss the point in Committee and possibly arrive at some reasonable compromise. The proposal in the Bill in connection with staggering licensing periods has had a somewhat mixed reception. Everyone appears to approve of the adoption of the system in the metropolitan area, but some members representing country districts have on the contrary opposed the idea of establishing the system in rural areas. I think those members have taken into consideration only the convenience of the people working for road boards and municipalities in country districts. I suggest that the convenience and requirements of many other people in those parts of the State deserve some consideration.

Mr. Doney: There is something in that contention, too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that the convenience of a road board secretary or a town clerk should be allowed to overrule the convenience and requirements of thousands of motorists.

Mr. Doney: Are you not considering the convenience of the Traffic Branch of the Police Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, to some extent.

Mr. Doney: That is what I thought.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The staggering of the licensing period is not suggested primarily for the benefit of the licensing authorities, irrespective of whether they operate in the metropolitan area or in the country. It is being brought in for the benefit mainly of the owners and operators of motor vehicles throughout Western Australia.

Mr. Perkins: What inconvenience are they suffering in the country districts under the present system?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Many are suffering a fair amount of inconvenience and certainly are suffering a degree of financial loss. Of that there is no doubt. If, for instance, a person purchases a motor vehicle in November, he has to take out at least a quarterly license, for which he will get six or seven weeks' value only.

Mr. Doney: That is one weakness in our argument.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In these days a person buys a motor vehicle whenever he can do so, because it is difficult to obtain one.

Mr. Perkins: There is a provision in the Traffic Act with regard to rebates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But many of the vehicles purchased in these days are not new.

Mr. Perkins: Why not extend the provisions of the Traffic Act to deal with them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the system proposed in the Bill is better. I am convinced, too, that with the passing of time road board secretaries, town clerks and those employed on their staffs will not experience all this additional work that they imagine they will have to handle.

Mr. Perkins: They are doing the job.

Mr. Doney: And they should know.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They have not done the job under the proposed new system, so I suggest that they do not know but are merely guessing.

Mr. Doney: Who else knows?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Naturally, there is always opposition to a proposal to relinquish an existing system and to introduce a new one in its place. I am satisfied that with the passing of time the proposed system will become completely acceptable to those representatives of local authorities in country districts who today are somewhat worried and scared about the additional work that they think the new system of licensing may impose upon them.

Mr. Perkins: What do you base that on, because in no other State is the licensing disposed of as here?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think the hon. member needs anything to base it on until we appreciate how the new system will operate. One suggestion was made during the debate which, if it proves acceptable to members, will ease the position and possibly improve it from the point of view of the licensing authorities in both the metropolitan area and in the country. That suggestion was that the three-monthly and nine-monthly licensing periods might be abolished altogether, leaving motor vehicle owners the choice between licensing for 12 months or for six months. That suggestion is worthy of consideration.

Quite a lot of discussion took place in connection with the penalties included in the Bill to meet what are known as the hit-and-run cases. Most of the concern expressed by members was directed to those who might be found guilty of this very serious and, in my opinion, inexcusable offence. Not very much thought was given apparently, and certainly not very much concern was expressed, regarding the victims of this type of motor vehicle driver. The penalties provided in the Bill are set down for the purpose of acting as effective deterrents against this type of individual. Under the existing law a hit-and-run driver does not take any extra risk—certainly very little—by running.

Mr. McDonald: He can get 12 months without the option.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know that, but if the member for West Perth carefully examines the records of penalties imposed on hit-and-run drivers, he will, I think, find that that maximum has never been imposed. As far as I am aware it has not, and I cannot recall any penalty of imprisonment having been imposed. The Government is seeking to establish penalties that will deter motor vehicle drivers, who are involved in an accident, from running. We are trying to establish penalties which will so impress them, in the event of their being involved in an accident, as to cause them to pull up as quickly as possible for the purpose of returning to the scene of the accident to assist any injured persons to the greatest possible extent.

Hon. N. Keenan: Suppose they do not know that they have caused an accident?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The penalty set out in the Bill will not apply unless some person has been injured as a result of the accident.

Hon. N. Keenan: Suppose the driver does not know that anyone has been injured?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the member for Nedlands will on this occasion exercise a little patience—

Hon. N. Keenan: I am trying.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —which he is not very often guilty of doing, I will come to that point and discuss it in a fair and reasonable manner. We know that hit-and-run drivers have, in recent months, done a considerable amount of damage to human life. Many persons have been killed because of the activities of this type of individual. Many others have been maimed and seriously injured in various ways and, in addition, a

good deal of damage has been done to property of one kind and another. There should be no sympathy expressed towards this type of person; he is not entitled to one scrap of consideration! He should receive a severe penalty when found guilty of having committed this type of offence. The penalties set out in the Act are, probably, not as severe as they ought to be for this sort of offender. Unless the penalties are made severe this type of person will continue to hit and run and probably, if discovered—and the problem of discovery is always extremely difficult—will be fined £20 or £50 while his victims, if they are still alive, will be suffering goodness knows what amount of pain, discomfort and physical disability, and might continue so to suffer for years to come.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: He would be imprisoned for manslaughter if he killed anybody.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not seen that happen.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Many people have been gaoled for six months for it, even where the injured person was given assistance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That might be but, as I said a moment ago, the anxiety of the Government is to deter these people from committing this offence. We want to establish a penalty severe enough to impress on the mind of anyone involved in an accident that if he runs he takes the risk of going to gaol without the option of a fine.

The Minister for Mines: He has only to stop to avoid the penalty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. He need not suffer the penalty of imprisonment. He can avoid that penalty by doing the reasonable and humane thing, namely, pulling up his vehicle as quickly as possible and returning to the scene of the accident. There are the odd cases, and I think that applies to every class of offence which the law creates. There is always the one odd case in a thousand, but I suggest it is not a sensible thing to frame penalties in such a way as to meet only the one case in a thousand and thereby treat most leniently the 999 cases.

Mr. McDonald: That is a reversal of the English conception of justice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It migl be, but it is a confirmation of the ver sound principle of commonsense in dea ing with a situation of this kind where w are trying to deter individuals, who hav killed people or seriously injured then from rushing away from the scene of th accident as fast as their motor vehicle will take them. I would be prepared t consider in Committee—and I do not wan anyone to interpret this as a promise t accept whatever amendment might be move —a suggestion that the penalties set ou in the Bill would not be applied where th magistrate concerned was convinced tha the hit-and-run driver had no knowledg that he had been involved in an accident

Hon N. Keenan: Causing injury.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I woul not put that in. That would be openin the gate to its full width to allow the ac cused person to escape.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You could mak it a crime under the Criminal Code.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: would not put that in. But it might b reasonable to allow a magistrate to exer cise his discretion as to penalty, if any, i he were convinced that the person con cerned had no knowledge that he had beer involved in an accident. Against that would suggest that even if that provisio were not included in the Bill any magis trate who was convinced that a person in volved in a hit-and-run accident had n knowledge that he had been so involved would most probably find that person no guilty. I cannot imagine that a magistrate, if he were convinced that the person con cerned had no knowledge of what had oc curred, would record a conviction against him.

Mr. Doney: Does the Bill, as drawn, allow the magistrate that discretion?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill leaves to the magistrate the discretion of finding whether the accused person is guilty or not guilty.

Hon. N. Keenan: The magistrate does not have to be satisfied that the offence was committed knowingly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The magistrate has to be convinced that the

person concerned was guilty of hitting and running.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If there is any doubt about it he has the right to bring in a verdict of not guilty.

Mr. McDonald: I doubt that.

Hon. N. Keenan: The only doubt would be as to the hitting taking place. If the hitting did take place he must bring in a verdict of guilty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Most of the odd cases described in the debate related to individuals who, on a dark and stormy night, while travelling along the road, experienced someone walking into the side or back of the vehicle. I suggest that in a case such as that the magistrate would be fully justified in bringing in a verdict of not guilty because, in fact, the driver of the vehicle in those circumstances would not be guilty.

Mr. Doney: Are you referring to a case where he did not hit someone, but was hit by someone?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It could be contended that the person who suffered the accident had walked into the side of the vehicle and had himself been responsible for the accident that occurred.

Mr. McDonald: If you put that in the clause it will make a lot of difference.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would not accept the word of every hit-and-run motorist who says he has no knowledge of the fact that an accident has occurred. In this morning's paper there was reported the case of a man, driving a truck at Fremantle, who hit either the back or front of a tram-car and pulled portion of the fittings off the tram, as well as a perambulator. He had the effrontery to go into court and declare that he had no knowledge that an accident had occurred.

Mr. Doney: That was admitting drunkenness.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the Committee stage we might consider any suggestions that would give a magistrate discretion, where he is convinced that a person accused of having been engaged in a hit-and-run accident has no knowledge of its having occurred. We had somewhat the same classes of arguments put forward in relation to drunken drivers. We were told that a drunken driver, if he were to lose his driving license, would thus be robbed of his livelihood. I do not think we should worry about that. Every speaker on the subject has agreed that the drunken driver is a menace to himself and to everyone else on the road. We should not be concerned about that kind of individual losing his livelihood, but we should be concerned that other people should not lose their lives or limbs as the result of a drunken driver operating a motor vehicle on the road. If a drunken driver is convicted and his license is cancelled, he does not lose the right to earn a livelihood. There are many classes of work to which he could turn, apart from driving motor vehicles.

Mr. McDonald: He could enter the liquor trade.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suggest that the penalties proposed in the Bill for drunken drivers should, if altered at all, be altered only for the purpose of making them more severe. I desire to confirm what the member for Geraldton told the House, to the effect that the staff of the Traffic section of the Police Department is being increased as quickly as possible. Additional motorcycles and vehicles are being obtained for the use of those officers, in order that they may more completely cover the field of enforcement of traffic laws and regulations. There is no doubt that during the war there was a great slackening of respect for the traffic laws and regulations, and, when there is such a slackening, it takes a considerable time to tighten it up again. We must have the necessary enforcement staff, properly equipped, to re-establish a full regard for the law by the operators of motor vehicles.

Mr. McDonald: And in other directions too, I hope.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am convinced that it is only a comparatively small percentage of the total number of motorists that is responsible for the majority of accidents. I think it could safely be said that five per cent. of the motorists are responsible for 95 per cent. of the accidents, while the other 95 per cent. of the motorists are responsible only for the remaining five per cent. of accidents. Every effort should be made to straighten up that small minority, and if it should prove difficult

more severe measures should be taken against them. I sincerely hope that when the enforcement system of the department becomes stronger and the five per cent. are prosecuted time and time again, as no doubt they will be, the magistrates and others concerned with the deciding of the cases and the imposition of penalties will see to it that the frequent offenders are punished, to an extent sufficient to prove to them that continual breaking of the laws and regulations will not be countenanced.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 12th September, 1946.

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

QUESTION.

TYPHOID FEVER.

As to Admissions to Hospitals at Perth and Fremantle.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Minister state the number of cases of typhoid fever admitted to the Fremantle, Children's and Perth Hospitals in each of the last five years?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes. I hope to be able to lay the figures on the Table of the House at the next sitting.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.34]: The Bill is really one of great importance and I am sorry that the legislation has not been re-cast entirely instead of a measure being submitted seeking its extension for a further period. It is difficult to amend the measure and in the circumstances I am compelled to vote for the second reading. On the other hand, I trust that before next session the Government will go fully into the question of rents and deal with the matter comprehensively. There are a number of anomalies and a great many difficulties. At present there is no machinery with which to smooth out those difficulties.

The rents as at August, 1939, are taken as the standard rents and in certain circumstances applications may be made to secure increases. There are many cases where the time has expired within which people could approach the court to have their rents fixed. In my opinion the machinery dealing with that phase is not of the best. It is left to the local magistrate to deal with and, with all due respect to magistrates and judges, I do not think they are the people best qualified to determine what are fair and proper rents. In my opinion it would be much better if a board were established that could deal with appeals, the members of which body would have a far greater knowledge of the rental values of properties and of the general business as between landlords and tenants than a lawyer could possibly possess.

Then again, when a person goes before the court to secure the adjustment of his rent the magistrate is very prone, perhaps correctly so, to rely too much upon the rules of law and evidence instead of getting down to the real bedrock facts as to what constitutes a reasonable rental. Quite obviously, there must be control; otherwise with the shortage of houses and shops the highest bidders would claim the best and the greedy landlords would certainly accept