

amongst us throughout the session. Some members will have to face the electors next year. I wish them the best of luck. I hope all members will be able to enjoy the recess and return to the House with fresh vigour, greater inspiration and new ideas, and that we shall be able to carry on with the same routine that we have followed in this Chamber in the past with such great benefit to the country. I wish again to express my gratitude to all members for their kindness to me personally.

THE PRESIDENT: At the conclusion of this session and what is also the close, or nearly the close, of the life of this Parliament—the longest of the 17 Parliaments that have guided the destinies of Western Australia—I should like to express my sincere gratitude to members generally for the help they have invariably given me, one and all, in my desire to have the affairs of this Chamber conducted effectively, in good order and with proper decorum. I feel that all members are good friends of mine and I make no secret of the fact that as regards the retiring members, for one and all of whom I have a high respect, if I were qualified to vote in the ten provinces of this State I would vote for the return of each of them. In expressing my gratitude to members generally for the help they have invariably given me, I would also like to say that I feel particularly grateful to the Chief Secretary, the Honorary Minister, the Chairman of Committees, the Deputy Chairmen of Committees, the officers of the House, the "Hansard" staff and the recorders up aloft—the gentlemen of the Press. Of the complimentary remarks made regarding others than myself, I endorse every word; and as to the pleasant things that have been said concerning myself, if I deserve them, I can only say it is due entirely to the assistance that has been rendered to me by all with whom I have been associated in discharging the duties of my office.

There are many critics today of Parliament and of parliamentarians. Those critics are usually men who know very little indeed about the working of Parliament and do not know parliamentarians as we do. There is no member of Parliament who would venture to say that Parliament as an instrument of government is perfect. There is room for considerable improvement. But when we compare the parliamentary

system of government with other systems of government, both of the past and of the present, systems of autocracy, fascism, nazism and other forms, I think the parliamentary system with all its defects is the best that so far has been devised by the wit of man. I thank you all again for the kindness you have always extended to me and for the assistance you have given me on every possible occasion. I hope that when we meet again we shall see here each of the 10 members who go to meet the electors.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.29 a.m. (Saturday).

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 8th October, 1943.

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1943. This will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTIONS (7).

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Mt. Barker District Proposals.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

Why were the Mount Barker and adjacent districts to the north of that town excluded from the proposals re water supplies discussed by Mr. Dumas with the Road Board Conference?

The MINISTER replied:

The district referred to is beyond the economic reach of the proposed sources of supply. The district being in the heavy and assured rainfall area may be the reason that no request has been received from residents to be so included.

NATIVE ADMINISTRATION.

As to Employment Permits.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Does a "Single Permit" issued for employment of natives enable the holder to employ more than three natives in twelve months, and must such natives be employed one at a time?

(2) In view of the habit of natives of leaving employment after a short period, would it not be practicable to issue a type of permit authorising a farmer to employ natives so that in the event of frequent changes in a year being necessary for the reason stated, the permit holder could engage any available natives, one at a time, during the permit period?

(3) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No, the holder of a "Single Permit" is permitted to employ up to three natives successively in the twelve months, and the employer is only liable for the permit fee of 5s. when the first native is engaged and the contribution of £1 to the Natives' Medical Fund which covers all three natives and their families in regard to their illnesses.

(2) The employer has the right of securing a "Casual Permit" for which no permit fee is charged, but 5s. must be paid to the Natives' Medical Fund. A "Casual Permit" enables an employer to employ a native for not more than a month within a period of three months. Alternatively the employer has the right of taking out a "General Permit" at a permit fee of £2, and he must make a contribution to the Natives' Medical Fund at the rate of £1 per native up to the highest number of natives employed in the year. Under a "General Permit" an employer is entitled to employ as many natives as he wishes during the year, so long as he contributes to the Natives' Medical Fund at the rate of £1 per native up to the highest number employed.

(3) Answered by replies to questions (1) and (2).

CHILD WELFARE.

As to Proposed Council, etc.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government immediately to establish—

- (a) a child council;
- (b) a home for delinquent girls;
- (c) better methods of control in regard to juvenile street trading;
- (d) two sections of the Children's Court for varying ages as recommended by the Honorary Royal Commission on youthful delinquency in their report of May last?

The MINISTER replied:

These matters are receiving the consideration of the Government and an announcement in connection with them will be made in the near future.

SOUTH PERTH BUS SERVICE.

As to Stopping Places, etc.

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has he completed his inquiries and arrangements in regard to the stopping places of Government buses between Way road and Dyson street, South Perth?

(2) Is he aware that the Metro buses stop between the points mentioned to pick up and drop passengers?

(3) What arrangements has he made so that the Government buses can pick up and drop passengers in that area?

(4) If no arrangements are made will he arrange with either the P.W.D. or the South Perth Road Board to put in aprons so that the buses can move from the road to pick up and drop passengers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) None.

(4) I have already been in touch with the P.W.D. and will again approach that department with regard to the provision of aprons.

PETROL.

As to Trafficking in Ration Tickets.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Justice:

Further to questions by me, and answers given on the 7th ultimo, regarding the ninth prosecution associated with the alleged trafficking in Government-endorsed ration petrol tickets—

(1) Whether the Court's estimate that 90,000 gallons of Government-endorsed petrol tickets were involved in these cases is sound?

(2) Has the Government yet succeeded in locating the real criminal in these extraordinary cases?

(3) Have penalties of any kind been inflicted on those officers responsible for the safeguarding of these Government-endorsed ration petrol tickets?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Justice) replied:

(1) Information supplied to the Department by the Commonwealth officials indicates that the number was below 6,000 gallons.

(2) Investigations by the Commonwealth Security Officers are still in progress.

(3) No. Investigations have not been finalised.

TRADE UNION FUNDS.

As to Defalcation Charge.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Justice:

Whether in a letter signed by Mr. T. J. Hughes, drawing public attention to the withdrawal of a charge connected with the defalcation of Trades Union funds—

(1) It is correct to say as alleged by the writer that the prosecution was at all times in the hands of, and under the direction of, the police?

(2) If not, are not all such defalcation cases taken up by the police and made public prosecutions?

(3) Is he aware that in a similar case of defalcation the police refused to allow withdrawal although full restitution had been made?

(4) Can he explain the reasons for the attitude of the police in the case referred to by Mr. T. J. Hughes?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (for the Minister for Justice) replied:

(1) No—the complaint was sworn by the secretary of the W.A. Tobacco, Cigar and Cigarette Manufacturers Employees' Union.

(2) No—there have been similar cases in which the complaint was sworn by a private individual, and the prosecution undertaken by private solicitors.

(3) There is no knowledge of such an instance, and the question of the withdrawal of a prosecution rests solely with the Magistrate. The police do not ask for such withdrawals.

(4) Application for the withdrawal of the prosecution was made by Mr. T. J. Hughes on behalf of the complainant union, and no objection was raised by the police in view of the attitude of the complainant.

LOG TIMBER.

As to Road-Damage During Transport.

Mr. SAMPSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the heavy damage done to our roads by the transport of logs, later to be milled in the metropolitan area, also the damage to motor tyres and tubes and the consumption of motor spirit, will he give consideration to legislation, or the gazettal of regulations, to limit the weight of logs to be transported into the metropolitan area and thus necessitate the use of our railways?

The MINISTER replied:

A copy of this question was handed to me earlier. The reply is that Section 46 (i) (vii) of the Traffic Act gives power to make regulations limiting the weight of a vehicle and load on any road. Traffic regulations are now in existence limiting the weight of any vehicle and its load to 12 tons. A regulation can be framed to limit the load of a vehicle of a special kind on any particular road or roads in a district.

MOTION—STATE FORESTS.*To Revoke Dedication.***THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS [4.37]:**

I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 21, 24, 29, 39, 50 and 55, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor on the 7th October, 1943, be carried out.

The position is that under the Forests Act, before any land can revert to the Lands Department, it is incumbent upon this House to pass a resolution. Attached to the report which has been laid on the Table is a map which clearly defines the various pieces of land it is proposed shall be revoked. Area No. 1 is a small piece of land comprising two small areas about seven miles south-west of Kirup. It contains about 30 acres in all, and has been cut over for sawmilling. It is required as an addition to an adjoining holding. It is therefore necessary that it shall revert to the Lands Department for selection. The same remarks apply to the second area, which is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south-east of Muja. It consists of about 400 acres of poor-quality forest well cut-over for sawmilling and hewing. It has been applied for by an adjoining settler.

Area No. 3 is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles south-east of Wilga, and comprises approximately 60 acres. It has been cut-over by a sawmilling company and has now been applied for by an adjoining settler as an addition to his holding. Area No. 4 is about four miles south-west of Pemberton. It is approximately 15 acres in extent and has been cut-over for sawmilling. It is now ready for selection. Area No. 5 is about four miles south-west of Pemberton and consists of 40 acres including a paper-bark swamp. Alienation has been applied for. Area No. 6 is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-east of Karda Mordo. It is approximately two acres in extent and carries no timber of value. It consists of high ground and is desired by an adjoining settler for a house-site. Area No. 7 is 16 miles south-east of Manjimup. It is about 20 acres in extent and consists of some riverflat and the balance poor forest. Alienation has been applied for by an adjoining settler.

Question put and passed.

On motion by the Minister for Forests, resolution transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.*Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of five amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 5, proposed new Section 11A (1), page 3:—Delete the words "refuse or procure" in line 3, and substitute the word "influence."

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The proposed new subsection provides that a person shall not refuse or procure any person to refuse to let a dwelling to anyone on the ground that it is intended that a child shall live in the house. Under the Council's amendment, an offence will come into existence only when a person influences somebody else in that way. It would be an offence for an agent of a landlord to refuse, but there would be no offence if the landlord himself refused. I do not agree with any of the amendments. Still, we have obtained from the Council as much as we are likely to get, and rather than occupy time in disagreeing and holding a conference, probably without success, I would accept the Council's amendments as the best that can be obtained at this stage. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. McDONALD: Amendments Nos. 1 to 4 made by the Council involve a departure from the wording of the Bill which in turn followed verbatim the wording of the National Security Regulations. While I agree with the Minister that the amendments afford a substantial increase of protection for tenants with children, I think the Council was under a misapprehension regarding amendments Nos. 1 and 2. The wording of the proposed new subsection, as amended, will not make good sense and, if the amendment were disagreed to, I believe the Council would also take that view. However, I shall not dissent from the suggestion of the Minister that we might accept the amendments as representing something.

Mr. WATTS: I do not agree with the attitude of the Minister. We should not accept the amendments, late though it is in the session. No objection was raised in this Chamber to the proposed new Subsection (1) although the proposed new Subsection (4) was discussed. If the amendment is ac-

cepted the provision will mean nothing, and the Minister will be giving away entirely the principle for which he has worked. He will not be prescribing that, if there are children to live in a house, this shall not be a bar to tenancy. If we disagree with the Council's amendment, while we might not succeed in getting the original wording reinstated, we might get something better than the Council has proposed. The Minister should review his opinion. Any member appointed as a manager from this side of the Chamber would be prepared to adopt a very definite attitude, which probably would result in our securing something more acceptable than this amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I do not mind putting up a fight if members think we might gain something.

Mr. McDonald: I will support the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Leaders of the Opposition parties having assured me that they will stand by me in an endeavour to save more of this clause than would be saved if we accepted the Council's amendment, I am willing, as I said, to fight.

Mr. Watts: We certainly will support the Minister both in regard to this and the next amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I ask leave to withdraw my motion that the amendment be agreed to.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No 2. Clause 5, proposed new section 11A, (2), page 3—Delete the words "refused or procured" in line 9, and substitute the word "influenced."

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: This amendment is similar in principle to the first. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No 3. Clause 5, proposed new section 11A—Delete sub-section (3).

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If we are to have a conference on Clause 5, we had better disagree with all the Council's amendments.

Mr. Watts: So that we can give something away.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Not necessarily. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 5, proposed new section 11A—Delete sub-section (4).

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 5, proposed new section 11B, (1), page 3—Delete all words contained in line 32 down to line 39 inclusive.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. McDONALD: There would be no harm in including this amendment for consideration by the conference, although it is a sound one. The proposed new section means this: First, the landlord has to keep a record of the rent he receives. That is entirely proper and that part remains. The Legislative Council does not object to it. The section goes on to provide, however, that an owner or landlord must have and keep a record of the rent received where the premises were first leased on or about the 31st August, 1939; or, if first leased after that date, a record of the rent received and the name of the tenant at the time the premises were first leased after that date. This means that if I were to buy a house now I must keep a record of the rent I receive and the name of my tenant. That is proper. But the section goes on to provide that I must keep and have a record of the rent received when the premises were first leased prior to the 31st August, 1939. They may have been let ten years ago. I am required not only to have a record of the rent received when the house was first let long before I bought it, but I am required by this clause to make a statutory declaration as to the truth of my statement about the rent received by the preceding owner. He might give me wrong information. He might not have kept a record.

I agree that a landlord must keep records of rent received during the time he owns the premises, but I consider it would

be oppressive, and in many cases impracticable, to require a landlord to keep a record of rent received by preceding owners. In the first place, there is no means by which the landlord could be certain that he could get the information, and in the second place, even if he did obtain that information, that it was accurate. It would meet our case if we accepted the Council's amendment, which means that the provision would require every landlord to keep a record of the rent during the time he is the owner. I finally add that the words objected to by the Council do not appear in the National Security Regulations.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Mr. Watts, Mr. Withers, and the Minister for Labour drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1943-44.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day, Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Vote—Railways, Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply, £4,213,600 (partly considered):

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.10]: There is not much that I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister because matters connected with these Estimates have been fairly well discussed. However, there is one subject which is exercising my mind considerably, and that is the great shortage that apparently exists of trucks for handling stock and wool. I want to know from the Minister what action has been taken by the department to remedy the position. In the course of the day I received two urgent telegrams in regard to this matter, and on communicating with the department I found there was considerable concern as to the department's ability to furnish these trucks within a reasonable time. I will deal first of all with the livestock position. The only information I have at the moment comes from my own district, but no doubt the Minister will be able to acquire information of the difficulty which, I understand, exists elsewhere.

I am told that in my electorate there are approximately 70,000 sheep to be disposed of during the current month, starting on the 13th inst., and approximately half of these at the very least—and possibly a greater percentage—will require transport. I am informed that at the moment there is a sale which will require the removal of 7,000 sheep next Wednesday for which there is an insufficiency of trucks. There are at Borden sheep awaiting transport to that sale—stud sheep of considerable value—and I am informed the position is that no information is yet available that the trucks will be forthcoming. On the 18th there will be 4,000 sheep at Tambellup; on the 20th, 16,000 sheep at Katanning, and on the 23rd, 6,000 sheep at Kojonup.

The Premier: Is that the normal movement?

Mr. WATTS: Yes, because the off-shears sales invariably take place at this time of the year. But there is a little increase over the normal, because many farmers find they are unable to hold the stock. That has been mentioned in previous debates last week in this House on other matters.

The Premier: I thought they had a good season in those districts?

Mr. WATTS: Summer is coming on and the pastures have to be relieved to some extent. That is normally done at this time of the year, but there is some small percentage of increase, though not very much. From my recollection of previous years there would not be an increase of more than 10 per cent., or 12 per cent. It seems that only 30 trucks are in sight, and at least another 50 are needed. It is absolutely essential that some effort should be made to alleviate the anxiety of the people concerned. The telegrams I received did not come from brokers but from the flock owners themselves who are very gravely concerned about this matter, because on top of this there is the difficulty of shifting the wool. As is generally known shearing is almost completed, and wool is ready for transport to various places to which it has to be consigned.

In the Borden district, there is a considerable quantity of wool requiring transport, but no trucks so far have been made available. I hope the Minister will see that very special efforts are made so that the reasonable requirements of those people will be complied with. I dare say there are difficulties, but there is a substantial revenue

derived every year from the transport of stock from this part of the State. That form of business is profitable to the railways, and is certainly not of the type respecting which the freight charges are so low that it becomes unprofitable. I hope a prompt effort will be made to cater for the reasonable requirements of the people concerned. As not more than 40 per cent. of the trucks required is in sight, it is necessary to take immediate action, because the movement of stock commences at Borden next week.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin): Yesterday I asked the Minister for Railways certain questions regarding the value of tent and camp equipment issued by the Railway Department to men engaged in repair jobs. The first question I asked was—

What is the total value of the tent, blankets and other camp equipment loaned to "Ways and Works" men engaged on building and repair jobs away from home?

The Minister's reply to that question was that the amount charged was £18 10s. per set. My second question was—

What is the weekly rent charged to these men for this equipment?

The Minister replied—

No rent is charged for the use of this equipment but, under the W.A.A.S.R.E. award (Clause 36k), employees when called upon to camp away from their home station for not less than three nights are provided with tent or van, and stretcher, rugs and cooking utensils, and granted a camping-out allowance of 2s. 6d. per day. If the equipment is not provided, the employee concerned receives an allowance of 8s. per day.

Only one interpretation can be placed upon the Minister's replies. From this it would appear that the normal charge against these men for the equipment is 5s. 6d. a day. It will be abundantly plain to members that 5s. 6d. per day amounts to £1 18s. 6d. a week, or a little over £100 per year. If my interpretation is correct—I find it difficult to arrive at any other conclusion in view of the Minister's reply—it must be conceded that that is a most extortionate charge to impose. Surely there must be some mistake about it. The department would never impose such a charge! If it charged only 1s. a day that would amount to £18 5s. a year, which is practically the actual value of the goods covered. Even that would represent a return of 100 per cent., which is vastly too much. If the charge were 6d., it would

represent £9 2s. 6d. a year, and that would be a rental of 50 per cent. upon the outlay. I ask the Minister to explain the position and tell me whether my interpretation of his reply is correct. I find it difficult to understand that it is not so. If that is the position, it looks remarkably like profiteering.

The Premier: No. This is merely a charge that the Arbitration Court decided upon by way of an award.

Mr. DONEY: I am not disputing that, but surely it is not regarded as a sufficient explanation. The point is that the charge is not one that can be justified. Possibly there is some other explanation of the matter. In any event, I suggest that the Minister look into it with the object of making a daily charge for these conveniences on a somewhat reasonable basis.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan): I regret that the railways are not securing the business that they should get, and further that heavy logs are being carted over our roads. The position is serious. A very grave danger is constituted, for the traffic is exceedingly heavy and must represent much loss to the State. Our roads, as provided by the Main Roads Department, are well constructed, but they were not put down with the object of standing up to the ten to 12-ton loads that are transported by trucks at very fast speeds. I ask the Minister to urge the department to use every endeavour to obtain the traffic that rightly belongs to it. On our roads, despite the fact that they have been so well constructed, there are appearing many pot-holes that will involve heavy expenditure in reconstruction work.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Swan is drifting away from the Vote, and is referring to matters that come more within the province of the Public Works Department.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am urging the Minister for Railways to do his utmost to secure to the Railway Department the traffic that rightly belongs to it, and thereby enable the railways to do the job for which the system was established. All districts depend upon the railway service to a greater or lesser degree. If the railways are not able to secure their proper business, outer township areas and various centres are deprived of the advantages of an adequate service, and that is reflected at Midland Junction itself. It is unfair to that town if the railways are not doing their proper work, while at the same

time local authorities are confronted with the spectacle of motor vehicles being permitted to convey heavy loads over the roads. Unfortunately, with regard to electricity supply matters, the position is much the same as in former years.

World conditions are such that it is not possible today to do all that could be desired, but some departments seem to manage to carry out certain work. I hope the Government will put forth the best efforts possible to make extensions of works, the major portion of which has already been carried out. The railways have never refused to carry on the job for which the system was established. Trains still run and do the work that is available. We find now, however, that the electricity supply undertaking requires greater generating power in order to do work it is asked to undertake. That is discouraging, and I hope it will be possible for the equipment already authorised by Parliament to be obtained in order that what is needed may be done. Long before the Minister ever entered this House we were informed that, once the additional unit was installed at the East Perth power-house, all our troubles would come to an end. I regret that has not proved to be correct. I hope that, despite world conditions, the Minister will be able to give some encouragement to those living in the outer suburban districts respecting the provision of electricity supplies, and also to local authorities with regard to the railways undertaking the heavy transport work for which the system was established.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco): I shall preface my remarks by saying I hope the Minister will not regard any comments I make as personal. He referred to some member who had said that he hoped the Minister would be burnt out. I have no desire that the Minister should suffer that fate. I think that what the Minister's friend meant when he used those words, was that he wished to see burnt out some of the rattle-trap trams and ramshackle rollingstock that we have today. I certainly hope the Minister will entertain no hard feelings regarding anything I say on this occasion. I assure him that we can compare our railways and tramways with the worst that there are in the world. I compare them with the systems in Russia and pre-Mussolini Italy. There when one wished to catch a train sche-

duled to leave today, one turned up in good time tomorrow to commence the journey.

I ask the Minister to cast his mind back a few weeks to an occasion when scores of children were left on the platform at the Perth railway station. The parents of those children had decided that they should go away for a week during the school holidays. They had secured accommodation and yet those children were left on the platform, because, although they had bought their tickets, there was no provision for them on the trains. Further, only on Saturday when many people were travelling to Byford, the Minister for Health will remember giving £25—which I believe it is against the law to do within a certain time before an election—in aid of a certain home. That women should have to stand in the men's lavatory attached to one of the carriages in order to obtain accommodation on a train, is, to my mind, absolutely disgusting. Therefore I speak with absolute conviction when I say that our railway and tramway systems compare with the worst that are in the world.

Now that I have unburdened my mind, I want the Minister for Railways to listen to me. I want him to remember that before he was Minister for Railways there was another Minister, Mr. F. C. L. Smith, the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. That Minister promised that we should get our tramways reconditioned, so that we could have another step put on them. He promised this, but he did not do it. Then I came to the present Minister, and for year after year, during the last three or four years, I have asked him for that step, and he has promised it but has not fulfilled his promise. Every year scores and scores of women suffer abortions and other mishaps because of that huge step. The Minister should know of this fact. I presume he is a man of domestic life, and he should know that women in that condition cannot take that huge step up into the tramcars. I have known older women who have fallen from that step. Only a few weeks ago an elderly woman was left on the tramway line with a broken rib because she had fallen from the huge step. If one tries to get damages out of a Government department in these times, one has a very difficult task. Few try, because of the difficulties of success. If we had autoeracy—

The Minister for Mines: Hypocrisy!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Hypocrisy we have with us all the time. Definitely, the Government has hypocrisy. You have the accidents and don't care!

The Minister for Mines: Don't be silly!

Member: This is a sop to your electorate!

The Minister for Mines: You should practise out in Subiaco, not here.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I know the Minister for Railways will be entirely with me in what I am now about to say, and that is that I have made these requests to the department for tramway improvements. I am speaking to the Minister for Railways, Mr. Chairman, and he is not listening. I want the Minister for Railways to hear me, Mr. Chairman. I am trying, and have tried for the last few months, to interest the Tramway Department in allowing a tram to stop in front of the Children's Hospital, so that the children may, without mishap, at least get there in time to see the doctors with whom they have appointments. I have experienced the greatest difficulty in this matter. I have written to the department asking that the officials should see that the prams of mothers of children get priority tickets on the trams, so that they will be able to take a tram and get their children to the hospital in time to see the doctors with whom the appointments have been made. I have been unsuccessful. The doctors and the secretary of the Children's Hospital have backed me up in my efforts to get something done. I have written to the Minister for Health, who has shown himself most sympathetic; but it has not been possible to convince the Tramway Department that there should be priority tickets for the purpose of visiting the doctors at the Children's Hospital with whom patients have appointments.

Now, this is a very small matter. A few hooks on trams would enable them to carry a few more perambulators, but the Tramway Department says it cannot be done. The next thing I have asked is that the trams, instead of stopping on the Perth side of Subiaco, should stop in front of the Children's Hospital, which is just across the road. Every tram that changes to come back to Perth after reaching Thomas-street stops in front of the Children's Hospital. Why ordinary trams do not stop there passes my comprehension. When the weather is wet, passengers have to stand in the rain with their children and wait until they

can get across the road through the traffic, which is considerable at that point. These are small things to many, but great to mothers and they could be done without any effort. I have brought this matter forward every year as a request from the Children's Hospital—the application for a new system of letting women who are bringing children to the Children's Hospital have priority on the trams, and for an extra stop on the trams.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands): I want to have a word or two to say regarding the tram services. I realise that the Minister for Railways has a big job because of manpower and other difficulties. I wish to make a few references to what are known as the No. 18 and No. 19 trams, which serve two very populous districts, and which are of considerable revenue earning capacity. I have brought this matter up on numerous occasions, both to the Minister himself and to the general manager, and they readily appreciated the difficulty. I do hope, however, that so soon as the possibility arises, both those routes will receive some consideration. As regards the No. 18 route, which provides for a very large section of people, I know the Minister has been very active. It is certainly the best paying line of the system. For that reason it has a definite economic value to the system, and surely its extension would pay the department.

The Minister and the general manager have done and are doing their best, and I hope that when an opportunity presents itself they will have the service improved. The No. 19 service has peculiar difficulties to contend against, inasmuch as North Perth and No. 3 Estate Mount Lawley are in the worst position. Some time ago I co-operated with the road board in regard to the new route, and as a result a plan was presented to the Minister. This plan, he told me subsequently, interested him greatly. I hope that when funds are available and new routes are being discussed, the new proposed No. 19 route to serve Mt. Lawley and North Perth will receive ample consideration. Every day I get letters from people who think of leaving those districts to live in Perth on the ground that they do not receive sufficient consideration. I bring these two matters under the notice of the Minister, and sincerely trust they will receive early attention.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): Last night the Minister endeavoured to hitch his railway wagon to a star. From what he told us, I gather that if he is able to do so he will electrify the metropolitan railways. It is not often we get forecasts of policy, and I consider that the Committee should commend the Minister for his ambitions in that direction. I am sure that even during the war there will be, after the election, some demands from the people concerned. In 1941 the House carried a motion on behalf of Claremont. I would like to refer to the portion concerning the modernisation of railways. I am sure that motion will be within the recollection of members. Every time we meet our constituents they want to know why we do not get on with these things. Members, however, know that the Government is not in a position financially to do what it would like. Surely the people could be informed by the various parties during the election of the plans that must be in the minds of the officers concerned.

Some years ago a question was brought forward that seems to have been utterly forgotten in the meantime, namely, the removal of the bottleneck from outside the Perth Railway Station. Another important question that has been lost sight of is that of hauling our wheat from Midland Junction along the south side of the river to Fremantle. Plans connected with those projects must be in the mind of departmental officers. There must be a general plan that all the heavy traffic from Midland Junction to the port should go on the south side of the river. The suburban railway should either be electrified, or if that is beyond the means of the State, Diesel trains should be introduced. The project might be started in a modest way by using existing railway trucks in which to convey the heavy goods involved. At the outset the railway line on the south side of the river could be confined to one class of traffic only and the system could be improved as time went on. About two years ago the question of the electrification of the metropolitan railway service was brought up.

I was impressed by what a resident of Claremont, who makes frequent journeys to Melbourne, said to me the other day—this may be of interest to the Minister. He said that if passengers were conveyed from Fremantle to the city to connect up with the

inter-State trains they would have to change from one set of coaches to another. If all the wheat were hauled to Fremantle along the south side of the river I do not see what objection there could be to that procedure. Indeed, there could be no objection to the Trans. line being extended right through to Fremantle. That would overcome any difficulty with regard to changing from one coach to another. I trust that the Minister in his reply will tell the Committee how he feels about reforming the metropolitan railway system after the war. He might also tell us whether there would be a speeding up of the passenger traffic if the wheat trains were moved to the south side of the river.

Mr. J. Hegney: You would not want the Trans. trains to be sent round on the south side of the river?

Mr. NORTH: At this time in particular we should let the people know what is in the minds of the departmental officers. There are several big ideas that were dropped about ten years ago. I have referred to the main railway station. After all these years we should consider the idea of embodying in our reconstruction plans the question of the erection of a first-class railway station in keeping with our big W.A.G.R. The present station is certainly not in conformity with the size of our railways and the importance of our State. I hope that point will be carefully considered in the plans that are being prepared in connection with post-war reconstruction. We are certainly entitled to a modern railway station, perhaps not as good as the Adelaide station, but something nearly approaching it.

Mr. Withers: Why not as good?

Mr. NORTH: There has been so much "playing down" in connection with plans for Western Australia that we may perhaps feel we should not ask for too much at once.

Mr. J. Hegney: A sort of inferiority complex!

Mr. NORTH: Something like that, I suppose. Forrest Place is a bad advertisement for our civic courage. Anyone who comes to Perth by rail goes to Forrest Place and sees one attempt at architectural beautification in the General Post Office and the Commonwealth Bank as representing another, but the rest of Forrest Place is of no significance whatever. The Central Railway Station is merely the relic of the early goldfields days.

We should give consideration to these questions, and I trust they will come forward during the election.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland): I was pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition raise the question of the great shortage of rollingstock. I support his representations in regard to the need for concentration on the supply of rollingstock for the transport of stock from the agricultural districts to market. With adequate transport producers would be able to function on an economic basis, and as a result of their industry railway revenue would greatly benefit. I now raise the question of a more important shortage. There is a market for our wheat today in different parts of the world, and that is a consideration which outweighs many other factors. To the north of Australia there are devastated areas where the people are hungry for food. We have arrived at the position now when we cannot get our wheat to port in sufficiently large quantities to load the ships that are now becoming available. Some time ago Australia secured a big flour contract. Instead of taking the wheat from the country to the mills, to enable them to grist the flour from the wheat and thus provide loading for the ships, it was found necessary to draw upon the wheat storage in the metropolitan area. That storage has been seriously depleted and although it is not yet exhausted it is rapidly reaching that point. Now that there is need to supply wheat to the hungry peoples in the Mediterranean area and elsewhere, Western Australia is being looked to for that commodity.

There is no part of Australia where revenue is so badly needed as it is in this State. It is our duty immediately to respond to the call of the Empire and supply as much of these requirements as possible. If we fail to respond the orders may have to be given to other countries. There is still wheat in Canada, and I suppose the United States could scrape together something with which to feed the hungry mouths of the people in question. Argentina is in a position to supply wheat. It is, however, preferable that the orders for food should come to this part of the Empire. We have reason to believe that if existing orders can be fulfilled, others will come along as the Allies meet with further successes. I want the Minister to realise the seriousness of the position. The facts have been set out in the form of a

letter and sent to the Minister for Agriculture, who at this moment is sitting on the Opposition bench. I am confident that the Minister appreciates the seriousness of the position and will do all he can to remedy it. I have no doubt that in the economic interests of Western Australia he will find some means to overcome the trouble. The wheat, of course, belongs to the Australian Wheat Board, and if it is lost because of the perpetual storage and resultant depreciation, that board will be the loser. We should therefore do the best we can to protect the interests of the Australian Wheat Board. We should not fall down on our job.

We should see to it that the wheat that is purchased from our farmers is made available for the world's markets and for the fulfilment of orders. There is no thought that we could consume all this wheat locally. It was well known that it had to be exported if it was to be used at all. As the wheat has been purchased for a particular purpose we should see that it is stored either at the port or in close proximity to it so that it may readily be shipped. At Bassendean there is plenty of storage available, but we cannot get the wheat to put into the bins that had been erected there. The matter is of such moment that at a meeting of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. yesterday it was decided that the full case should be presented to the Minister for Agriculture so that he could make the necessary representations to those in authority, particularly to the Minister for Railways, to see whether it was not possible to concentrate on the transport of wheat by giving it a first priority. The wheat could then be placed in our storage bins where it would be ready for shipment overseas when the opportunity arose.

If we do not succeed in removing the wheat that is stored in country bins, many farmers will be affected because they will be unable to deliver their wheat. They must have bags if they are to store the wheat on their farms, but we know it is impossible for them to secure such things. There is no other way in which to store wheat on a farm. If they cannot deliver their wheat to bins at the siding the position will indeed be a sad one. I am sorry I cannot help the Minister with any suggestion. I have discussed the question with those men at the workshops who know something about it. I be-

lieve if we could all get our heads together and make a determined effort we could ensure that wheat transport to the ports was made a first priority. At this moment we have a wonderful opportunity to get rid of wheat which has accumulated in the State during the last year or two. There is an ample supply here and we should be able to make it available to those who need it so badly in other parts of the world, and at the same time come to the aid of the Empire.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington): When introducing these Estimates the Minister referred to fires caused by railway engines. He offered a lot of sympathy to those who have suffered as the result of damage done, but no compensation. I know he is genuine in his sympathy because he has expressed those sentiments on many occasions. I do not desire to be pessimistic, but I think we can take it for granted that more settlers will be burnt out this summer as a result of railway fires. No matter what precautions are taken or what expense the farmers undergo in protecting their properties, they are unlikely to receive any compensation. I hope that state of affairs will be remedied before long. Over a long period I have endeavoured to have this matter attended to and justice done to those who have suffered so extensively. I suggest that the Minister get into touch with the railway authorities and see whether, in cases where there are military camps, the aid of the soldiers can be sought in the event of fires breaking out as a result of sparks from engines. We know there is a shortage of manpower, and because of that there is no labour available with which to fight these fires. I should not be surprised if grievous loss were suffered by farmers at any time as a result of these fires.

Again, the Minister might suggest to the Commissioner that he instruct his railway staff, station-masters in particular, to make more use of the telephone when fires break out in order to advise farmers that a fire has started. If a farmer is not on the 'phone, the nearest neighbour should be informed; the station-master should get word to him somehow. The fire might be burning for a considerable time before the owner of the property realises that it has commenced. The guard or engine-driver should report immediately a train arrives at a station that a fire has started, and the

owner of the property on which it is burning should be notified at once. The member for Guildford-Midland referred to the carriage of wheat by the railways. I have a complaint that I want to bring before the Minister's notice. The other day a farmer told me that he tried to purchase six tons of wheat. He was informed that the railways would not carry less than a 10-ton lot; that if he purchased six tons he would have to use a 10-ton truck and pay the full freight on it. That is hard to understand. I am told that the trucks which carry bulk wheat are built to carry 10 tons.

The Minister for Railways: Was this bulk wheat?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes.

Mr. Mann: He could have used some other truck.

Mr. McLARTY: I am told that the other trucks are not suitable.

Mr. Mann: They have fittings for them.

Mr. McLARTY: I hope the Minister will look into this matter. I do not know whether the Minister does much travelling now by train.

The Minister for Railways: I do.

Mr. McLARTY: I hope he does not suffer any discomfort. I am pleased to know that he does travel by train.

The Minister for Railways: I travel by the ordinary train, and do not have a special coach.

Mr. McLARTY: I would like to know whether the Minister, when he has made appointments, arrives on time to keep them. I know that the Railway Department is up against very real difficulties because of the shortage of manpower and coal supplies, etc.

The Minister for Railways: And shortage of rollingstock.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. I am prepared to make allowances, but I have often wondered why it is that the trains are so irregular; why they are so late. It is an every-day occurrence. It is hard to understand. The Minister might discuss the matter with the Commissioner to see whether something can be done to bring the trains in on time, or at least to speed them up a little. With regard to electricity extensions, I appreciate the difficulties created by the shortage of material, but I would like the Minister, when replying, to indicate whether there is a

chance of any of the extensions, which have been promised for such a long period, being carried out next year, or when.

The Minister for Works: The Electricity Advisory Committee is reporting on that now.

Mr. McLARTY: The Minister for Railways knows that certain extensions have been decided upon for a long time. They have been considered to be good projects and have been agreed to by the Minister and his advisers. It is to these matters that I refer, and the Minister knows perfectly well what they are. Transport, generally, will I imagine falter very much in the post-war period. The Minister, no doubt with his experts, has already discussed this as a post-war problem. Instead of these long mixed trains, by which we have to travel from the country districts, more buses should be made available. The passengers would thus be more comfortable, would travel more quickly and, of course, the travelling would be more up-to-date.

Mr. Cross: You are again barracking for imported petrol.

Mr. McLARTY: The Minister realises that we cannot stick to the old methods for ever. Even though we have a certain obligation to carry out in connection with our railways, such as the repayment of moneys borrowed, we cannot stick to out-of-date methods. We will have to be more up-to-date in the post-war period.

The Minister for Railways: The Diesel trains are an improvement.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, they are. Many of our stations are getting into a dilapidated state. When circumstances permit I hope they will be attended to, and that in the building of any new stations—I have in mind at the moment the Brunswick Station—some attention will be given to the architectural aspect. The stations throughout the State are not very pleasant to look upon.

MR. MANN (Beverley): I support the remarks made this evening by the Leader of the Opposition in connection with trucks for shifting stock. Katanning is becoming well known for stud merinos. The sales for this month will total 60,000 sheep. Buyers are unable to make purchases in various parts of the State because transport for the sheep is not available. That is a pitiable state of affairs. I have no sympathy for the Minister or the Government

regarding our railways. We have for long been too sympathetic in this matter. I hope when Parliament assembles next year the Government will appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the conduct of the railways to ascertain what is the trouble. Today the railways control transport. In the post-war years, with the release of petrol and tyres, road transport will again worry the railways, and the public cannot be blamed for using that means of travel. We should devise some scheme to retain the traffic, particularly the passenger traffic of the railways after the war.

I have in mind the position at Narembeen. This town is a long way from Perth. It is at one end of my district. The people there are denied the right to come to Perth on suitable trains. A Diesel coach leaves Perth for Narembeen on only one day a week—Friday. It leaves here at nine o'clock and arrives at five o'clock. But when these people desire to return to Perth they have to leave Narembeen at 10 p.m. on the Diesel. They arrive at Merredin at midnight and have to wait there until they can board the Kalgoorlie express at 4 o'clock in the morning. People living in isolated districts should be granted additional road transport. I understand there is any amount of petrol available in Australia. No form of decentralisation is adopted, and no consideration is given to the man who goes outback. Why should we on the Great Southern enjoy the facility of two trains a day while these people outback—and the same applies to the Minister's electorate—are denied this form of transport? I pay a tribute to the stationmasters and guards and others who know their job. They are keen to help, but say that the bugbear is the administration at headquarters. Many incompetent men hold administrative jobs and will not accept suggestions from those who offer to help. Many excellent men on the country lines are heartbroken by the administration in Perth.

Mr. Cross: Whom would you class as incompetent?

Mr. MANN: The administration! The incompetency lies in the administrative department. If we are to keep pace with modern times we must adopt different transport ideas. I agree with what the member for Guildford-Midland said about transporting wheat in trucks. An incident happened recently in Beverley. A man wanted a 5-ton truck of wheat and it was hauled

all the way from Bunbury to Beverley. The Wheat Board refused to sell the wheat any closer to Beverley. The Railway Department should have refused to carry it.

The Minister for Railways: The department cannot do that.

Mr. Mann: The department is short of rollingstock and coal.

The Minister for Railways: As a common carrier the department could not refuse.

Mr. Watts: The railways are common carriers when it suits them.

Mr. MANN: Yes. When the new Parliament assembles it must appoint a Royal Commission to decide what type of transport we will have in Western Australia. Road transport will be a serious menace to rail transport. One cannot rely on the morning train from Beverley. It is generally one hour or one and a half hours late. The Diesels are doing an excellent job but they are being worked to death. Last Friday week one struggled all the way up the hill.

The Minister for Railways: Sometimes motorears struggle.

Mr. MANN: The Diesel cars today are doing a wonderful job, but they are much over-worked. The engines are in a pitiful condition.

The Minister for Railways: It is unavoidable.

Mr. MANN: It is not. We attribute far too much to war-causes. Are not the railways essential to this State?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. WILLMOTT (Sussex): I have only a few points to put to the Minister. One of them concerns the railway siding at Nannup. A serious accident was narrowly averted there a few weeks ago. The train, which was running late, arrived about 8 p.m. The night was very dark and wet, and the siding was not lighted. A lady passenger, having a baby in her arms, alighted from the train and thought she was moving towards the ramp, but, instead of doing so, she fell over the edge of the platform in front of the train. Fortunately she was not seriously hurt. I would like the Minister to see that lighting is provided at that siding. Perhaps some arrangement could be made for electric current to be conveyed from the town to the station. The cables at present do not extend as far as the station, which is outside the township, but they have been erected part of the way and there are people living between

the last light and the station. Perhaps those people would have their premises connected if the cable were run to the station. Failing that I would ask the Minister to see that the station is lighted, even if only by the guard's providing a few lanterns.

Every member who has spoken so far has referred to the late running of trains. The Busselton, Bridgetown and Bunbury to Perth trains after leaving Harvey, stop to pick up cans of milk at the various stations. They stop at practically all the sidings from Pinjarra to Armadale and then pull up at Carlisle, where the milk is unloaded. Why cannot the milk be conveyed by goods train? There must be at least half-a-dozen goods trains following that passenger train every day, and to utilise a goods train would save a considerable amount of time. The passenger train has to make a stay of 10 or 15 minutes to pick up the cans of milk, and I think that work could equally well be done by one of the goods trains.

The Minister for Lands: That might not suit the milk producers.

Mr. WILLMOTT: There are several goods trains following the passenger train, and the milk would arrive at Carlisle very little later than at present. The Premier, in introducing the Estimates, stated that a number of Diesel coaches are to be built, and the Minister for Railways told us last night that some of them would be used for country centres. In this connection he mentioned the Great Southern railway.

I hope the Minister will provide a Diesel for the South-Western railway. Some time ago I approached the Commissioner of Railways to get a Diesel for the week-end run to Busselton. After much consideration it was decided to give a Diesel service a month's trial. The train left Perth on Saturday afternoon and returned to Perth on Sunday night, leaving Busselton at about 5.30 p.m. At the end of a month the department found it necessary to run a trailer as well, because of the increased patronage. Now, unfortunately, neither the trailer nor the Diesel is being used, and we are back to the old train. Yet we were told in the first place that to provide a Diesel service would not be a payable proposition. When additional Diesel coaches and trailers, which the Minister said would carry 128 passengers, are provided, I hope one unit will be set aside for the south-western passenger ser-

vice. The trains that run from Busselton, Bridgetown and Bunbury to Perth are mixed trains. If we had a through passenger service, it would be of great benefit to the travelling public.

I wish now to refer to a matter I brought up on these Estimates last year, namely, that the passengers travelling from Perth to Busselton, Margaret River and Flinders Bay should be provided with sleeping accommodation, anyhow as far as Busselton. At present, through passengers have to leave the sleeper at Picton Junction at about 5.30 a.m. and carry on in the ordinary train to Margaret River and Flinders Bay, where they arrive—provided the train is on time—at about 7.30 p.m. Those passengers are in the train from the time they leave Perth at 11.35 p.m. on Sunday or Wednesday until they arrive at Flinders Bay at about 7.30 p.m. on Monday or Thursday. It is only fair that passengers who travel that long distance should be provided with a little comfort. This could be ensured if the sleeper ran from Perth to Busselton. I brought this matter under the notice of the department, and was told that owing to the shortage of sleeping-cars my suggestion could not be adopted. I point out that on this line there are only two trains a week that run through to Flinders Bay and, as I have mentioned, they leave Perth at 11.35 p.m. on Sunday and Wednesday. If my suggestion were adopted, the sleeper could be taken off at Busselton at 8.30 a.m. or 9 a.m., run back as far as Bunbury on the day train and then, from Bunbury to Perth, on the ordinary night train. I see no reason why this cannot be done. The Railway Department officials, however, say that they cannot do it.

The member for Murray-Wellington spoke of the need for locomotives being fitted with spark-arresters during the summer months. In the South-West we are enjoying one of the best seasons we have had for many years, and I assure the Government that the risk of fires occurring during the summer is very great. It does not matter what action the general public or the settlers along the railways take. They may do their utmost to protect their properties by ploughing fire-breaks, etc., but still the fires seem to get away. Before and during the early part of the war all the trains running south during the

summer season used Newcastle coal, which is less likely to spark and cause fires than is Collie coal. Now, however, it is out of the question to use Newcastle coal for this purpose, and so I urge the Minister to ensure that all these trains are fitted with spark-arresters. I have been told by men who are competent to speak that the engines lose a certain amount of power when using spark-arresters. This difficulty, however, could be overcome, even if only by reducing the load during the summer. As I have said, we have had a wonderful season, the feed is excellent and consequently the dry feed is likely soon to be a source of grave danger. As the member for Murray-Wellington remarked, it does not matter how much settlers suffer from these fires, they do not receive any compensation from the department.

There is only one other matter that I shall deal with, and I think I can do so on these Estimates. I refer to the lighting of the Busselton jetty, which is controlled by the Railway Department. I understand that a deputation waited on the Minister last week from the Busselton lumpers. I had an invitation to be present, but unfortunately had to attend to some work in my electorate and therefore could not attend. I have not seen the secretary of the union since his return, so am not aware of the result of the interview. I hope it was favourable and would ask the Minister in his reply to tell the Committee what answer he gave to the deputation. A number of deaths have occurred at the jetty. Fortunately for the State, at the present time many ships are being loaded with timber at the harbour and most of the work has to be done at night-time. The fact that the jetty is not lighted makes the work dangerous. The vessels generally arrive on Saturday, and except for some time off on Saturday night the men work through till Monday morning.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly): It was not my intention to say anything on these Estimates, and I would not do so were it not for some remarks made by the member for Murray-Wellington. I understood him to say that poultry keepers and others can obtain wheat, but only in 10-ton lots. I know that to be the case.

The Minister for Railways: That applies only to bulk wheat for poultry, not to bagged wheat.

Mr. SEWARD: I was rather surprised to think that the Wheat Board should make wheat available in such lots. From what the member for Murray-Wellington said, the fault does not lie with the Wheat Board but with the Railway Department. I would like the Minister to pay attention to what I am saying and to take a note of it. The member for Murray-Wellington led the Committee to believe that the Railway Department had only 10-ton trucks available to carry the wheat. If that is the reason given, the Minister knows perfectly well it is not a fact. I remind him that the only 10-ton trucks the department has are the steel trucks that were built for the department, but not paid for by it.

The Minister for Railways: The trucks are the property of the department.

Mr. SEWARD: The steel trucks to which I refer were built by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. at its expense.

The Minister for Railways: Not the whole truck.

Mr. SEWARD: I also remind the Minister that bulk wheat is carried in ordinary railway trucks belonging to the department; and that Bulk Handling Ltd. introduced the system of lining the trucks and making use of the extension. When those extensions are used on the trucks, the practice is to return the truck empty and to make the wheatgrower pay freight on the extensions which are returned with the truck. Surely, if wheat can be brought down in those trucks, the same trucks could be made available to carry wheat to the poultry farmers in reasonable quantities. There are not many poultry farmers who want a 10-ton consignment of wheat; they may require four or five-ton lots. I ask the Minister to take this matter up with the department. There is not a large number of people requiring this quantity of wheat and it would not take a great toll on the department's rolling-stock. A reasonable number of smaller trucks could be made available to meet the needs of the poultry farmers. It is not easy for them to get somebody else to share a 10-ton truck, especially because they are often unable to make arrangements to cart the wheat away when it arrives at the siding.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (in reply): The Leader of the Opposition spoke

about stock trucks and wool. All I can say in reply is that, so far as concerns rolling-stock, the department is making every endeavour to meet the situation. The department, as well as the Government, realises how serious the position is. Up to date, however, the department has not been able to cope with the freight offering. As I said last night, 30,000 tons of freight are held up. That is due not only to a shortage of trucks but also to a shortage of coal. The Railway Department and the Electricity Supply Department have been short of coal to the extent of about 1,500 tons a week for the last three or four months. Members will, therefore, understand the position in which the department is placed. We are building additional rollingstock as fast as we possibly can with the manpower and the materials available to us for the purpose. I assure members opposite that everything is being done in that connection. The complaints made are reasonable and will be conveyed to the Commissioner. I may mention that the Government views the position so seriously that Mr. Ellis has been recalled to the State and will now remain here to control the railways and put them on as good a basis as possible. The member for Williams-Narrogin mentioned something with respect to an award, but the department has not received any complaint from the union, which appears to be perfectly satisfied with the award.

Mr. Doney: What about the men concerned, who are losing 5s. 6d. per day?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Surely the hon. member would not expect the department to interfere with an Arbitration Court award!

Mr. Doney: Is it a fair charge?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not saying it is a fair charge.

Mr. Doney: You should satisfy yourself on that point.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think the hon. member misunderstands the position.

Mr. Doney: No. There is no misunderstanding.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There is no misunderstanding on the part of the various unions concerned. As a matter of fact, I had not heard anything at all about the matter until the member for Williams-Narrogin mentioned it tonight. That

is evidence of how contented the men are. As far as electricity is concerned, the member for Swan knows perfectly well that the department is doing everything possible; a sum of £20,000 is to be spent and we are anxious to help the people in the hills district, as well as people in the country who are doing excellent work producing our necessary food supplies.

Mr. Sampson: Some extensions have been almost completed for over two years.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am aware of that, but the delay is owing to shortages of materials and manpower. I know some of the railway stations are not in a very good condition. That applies to my electorate as well as to others.

The Minister for Labour: The stations on the Midland line are in a poor condition, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was going to mention that fact. We cannot, in our present circumstances, consider the building of new railway stations just now, but I assure members that this matter will be attended to as soon as the war is over.

Mr. Sampson: Could not the department transport the heavy logs at present being brought down on motor trucks?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, if the necessary rollingstock were available. The Government is concerned over the position with regard to wheat and flour. The member for Guildford-Midland spoke tonight about the economic side. That is very important. Not long ago a deputation waited upon me and I took the matter to Cabinet, when it was fully discussed. Everything possible will be done in that direction. I know the position with regard to fires is one of great concern to settlers, and if any member can suggest a remedy I shall be pleased to try it. We have communicated with various authorities all over Australia and in America to ascertain whether an invention is available that will succeed in arresting the sparks the cause of these fires, but without success. The only remedy I can suggest is to stop the trains running through the various districts.

Mr. Patrick: Make the Government responsible.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Every effort is made to prevent fires, and I shall accept the good advice of the member for Murray-Wellington and interview the

Commissioner on the subject. I shall ask him to give instructions to all the employees to render assistance by telephone or otherwise should they notice any sign of a fire, even should such action prove expensive to the department.

Mr. Patrick: Do you not think the Government ought to be responsible for the damage?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was not aware of the fact that there was no lighting at the Nannup station. There should be, and I will have a talk with the Commissioner about the matter. I know some deaths have occurred at the Busselton jetty and something must be done in the near future to light the jetty effectively. Four or five people have lost their lives there, but I cannot say whether that is the fault of the insufficient lighting. I promise the Committee that the department will do everything possible to assist the settlers. In some instances the settler is to blame for the fires that occur in country districts. He has not taken sufficient precautions; in other instances settlers have taken sufficient precautions and have been burnt out, but I point out that that is neither the fault of the settler nor of the department.

Item, Tramways, £357,500.

Mr. CROSS: I do not know what steps the Minister has taken to prepare for post-war conditions, but I suggest that provision should be made for the use of locally produced fuel in transport in the metropolitan area and as far as possible in the country as well. Necessary investigations should be conducted with a view subsequently to electrifying all transport in the greater metropolitan area. If the railways were electrified trolley-buses or electric trains could be run in the metropolitan area and engines would be released for the country. After the war there will be a tremendous demand for electrical equipment for trolley-buses, electric trains, etc. The Minister should give consideration to placing an order in Great Britain so that early deliveries may be obtained. Steps should be taken to do away with our obsolete tramway system and to institute trolley-buses and also to electrify the railways. Places like Manchester have orders for a tremendous number of trolley-buses to be constructed after the war. An order for 600 was placed at Coventry—probably one of the largest orders ever placed. If the

Government does not wake up until after the war is over and then desires to improve the different services, it will have to wait years for supplies. I would like to know from the Minister whether any effort has been made to order equipment so that it will be available as early as possible after the war. I would add that the people in South Perth have not forgotten that a promise was made that the South Perth transport system would be the first to be converted as soon as materials were available.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*State Batteries, £42,060; Cave House, £11,525*—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER:

I move—

That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ended the 30th June, 1944, a sum not exceeding £8,469,697 be granted from Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

All Stages.

In accordance with the resolutions adopted in Committee of Supply and Ways and Means, Bill introduced, passed through all stages without debate and transmitted to the Council.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS ESTIMATES, 1943-44.

In Committee.

Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the State Trading Concerns for the year ending the 30th June, 1944, now considered, Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Division—*State Engineering Works, £279,859.*

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [8.17]: I take it that at this stage we can discuss State trading concerns generally, and I want briefly to refer to the various undertakings mentioned. I have in my drawer what I consider are some very illuminating particulars of the State trading concerns, and it was my intention to ventilate those details on these particular Estimates. I appreciate that the session has now progressed so far that there is no need at this juncture for me to occupy any lengthy period in dealing with the subject, but I propose to make some general observations. I do this because I wish to make this subject a feature of my election campaign. I believe the State trading concerns have proved of wonderful benefit to the economic life of Western Australia. So long as they are conducted for the purposes for which they were created, they represent a protection for the people against exploitation and the charging of unfair prices by combinations of manufacturers or producers.

The position regarding the State Engineering Works is, briefly, that the undertaking was established because it was found at that time that the cost of agricultural machinery manufactured in the Eastern States was more than doubled by the time it reached Fremantle, and then there were additional charges for transport and handling from Fremantle through the various agencies until the machinery reached the farms. The Labour Government, headed by Hon. John Scaddan, recognised this position. It was decided that although Parliament after Parliament had drawn attention to the enormous difference between the cost of the machine delivered to the farmer in Western Australia compared with the manufacturer's cost—the position had been exposed as the result of an inquiry into what was then known as "new protection"—action would have to be taken to overcome the difficulties. The farmers had become restive because they had ascertained the actual cost of manufacturing and realised the enormous impost thrust upon them in connection with agricultural machinery.

The Government of the day tried hard to secure a readjustment of some kind and finally, after Parliament had repeatedly drawn attention to the position and yet nothing had been accomplished, decided to make a start. The result was the creation of the State Engineering Works for the

manufacture of agricultural machinery. It is true that it was not successful. I shall not go into details regarding that phase, but it has to be admitted it did not prove the success we anticipated at the time. We were unfortunate in our selection of the original manager. We trusted him unduly; we took his word that he had accomplished and arranged certain matters, whereas it was subsequently found that nothing had been done and the matters he was to accomplish simply did not exist. Ultimately it was realised that, through faulty management and the incapacity of administrative officers and their inability to handle problems of that description, the whole proposition was a failure. The reason for that was not that Ministers were incapable but that they were unable to delegate authority to anyone who understood the problems associated with such an undertaking. The State Engineering Works failed from an economic point of view and that was somewhat of a disaster to the State. I am proud to know that now, however, the works have been rehabilitated and have rendered valuable assistance to the Commonwealth Government in its endeavour to put forth a maximum war effort. The particulars presented by the member for North-East Fremantle and others representing Fremantle interests were very encouraging and pleasing.

To turn now to the State Quarries, this undertaking was established because at that time the Commissioner of Railways had decided to re-ballast the whole of the permanent way from Fremantle to Midland Junction with broken metal. He abandoned as uneconomic the use of gravel, and therefore the quarries were opened up for the purpose of providing metal to ballast and hold the line. That type of work is now availed of almost universally in connection with railroads. As soon as the Government announced its policy those who controlled the private quarries saw the opportunity to exploit the State, and up went the price of broken metal. I played my part as a member of the Government in endeavouring to get wiser counsels to prevail. Instead of the price increasing as it did, it should have decreased because of the enormous orders that were forthcoming at the time, and that is what we endeavoured to prove to the quarry owners. The leading man in that sphere of private enterprise in

those days was Mr. Statham, who was the outstanding producer of broken metal. He, as a business man, got the other quarry owners together and he was so ill-advised as to induce them to set about increasing prices instead of organising the supply of metal at cheaper rates.

At that time the Government had the Boya quarries partly equipped. They had been opened up in connection with the construction of the Fremantle Harbour Works, and the Government decided to re-open the quarries with a view to securing metal supplies for State purposes. The Government appreciated that it could do the work more economically once the plant at Boya was in full operation. The quarries were completely equipped and immediately the price of broken metal to the working railways was reduced considerably, and the ballasting of the line from Fremantle to Midland Junction was done largely—I say, largely because the Government did buy a certain quantity of material from private owners—from metal procured from the State quarries at Boya. I am sorry to know that that wonderful quarry, which is certainly one of the best in the State, is now idle, but its day will come again just as the State Engineering Works have once more come into their own.

Next let me deal with the West Australian Meat Export Works. It is a very fine enterprise now conducted by the Government. Originally the undertaking was started by a number of investors who were large producers and financially strong. They decided to form a company which established meatworks at Robb's Jetty. They approached the Government for a subsidy, and the Government rightly agreed to assist. It responded by granting a subsidy in the form of advancing a certain sum of money at a low rate of interest. In this instance the undertaking was pioneered by private enterprise but unfortunately there were miscalculations. Just as the State miscalculated in connection with the State Engineering Works, so private enterprise failed in connection with the meatworks at Robb's Jetty. Those concerned approached the Government for further help as they could not meet their interest bill. Thus the Government from time to time came to the rescue of the company until ultimately those in charge appreciated the hopelessness of their position. Representations were made to the Govern-

ment to take over the concern, and the Government again responded. Thus we have another undertaking, which was started by private enterprise, now taking its place as a State trading concern. I think the Government made a very generous and wise businesslike arrangement with the company in taking over from the shareholders the control and ownership of the undertaking. In my opinion, the shareholders were treated very liberally considering their economic position when the Government had to step in and take the company over.

Now we come to the State Brickworks. It was started as a policing organisation by the Seaddan Government. The Workers' Homes Act had been passed and the Government was about to embark upon the building of a number of homes. In order to meet the housing requirements of the people who were in a difficult position—much the same as confronts us today—the Workers' Homes Act was placed on the statute book, and the Government put money into the enterprise and commenced to organise its activities. As soon as the obligation was taken over by the State, the cost of building materials commenced to rise again. Instead of private enterprise appreciating the benefits to be derived from the enormous demand that was created for bricks, it decided to exploit the market and up went the prices.

Mr. North: The opposite to the Ford system!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The opposite to that adopted by any decent business concern. At that time there was what was known as a brick combine in which those engaged in the industry were associated to control the position. As far as I can remember the price of bricks at that stage was immediately raised by 6s. or 8s. per thousand. In order to test it out the Minister for Works, under the direction of the Government, called tenders for a million bricks. In those days the double-pressed bricks were made at Armadale, and the Armadale double-pressed brick was the main brick for facing, while the ordinary wire-cut brick was used for internal work. We did have experts in brickmaking in the architectural division. The whole thing was put over to them, and they would not relax; they would agree to an extra price. The Government said, "You are not to get it unless you are reasonable and approach the matter in a reasonable way." The result

was that the State Brickworks were built for the express purpose of protecting the people purchasing workers' homes. We were determined to prevent the brick manufacturers of those days from exploiting the people. The commodity was to be obtained within a reasonable price, and sold at a reasonable profit to the Government.

The State hotels were built because at that time there was grave dissatisfaction with the hotel accommodation then provided in the growing population of the country districts. In many places hotels were purely bars, without any real accommodation. If one went to the South-West or anywhere else in the country, the hotelkeeper did not want him to live there; all he wanted one to do was to spend money in the front bar. There was so much and such grave dissatisfaction that the Government decided to overcome this difficulty by introducing the building of decent hotels with decent accommodation in the agricultural districts whose people made an appeal to the Government for such accommodation. At every centre where an hotel was built, it was built as the result of application by the people for the accommodation. Most members know what has been accomplished by State hotels. They have been a wonderful acquisition to the travelling public, and they have been a credit to the Government that introduced them and to the Governments that have maintained them since. Instead of acquiring all the hotels through the medium of the State Hotels Department, the State has only a certain number. Someone came here and started building hotels as the State ceased to do so. The State hotels were built for the purpose of giving good accommodation and at the same time paying back to the State the cost of running them. The main object, however, was to provide decent hotels in the country districts for the benefit of the country folk.

Again, the State Shipping Service was started in order to defeat the meat ring, and the meat ring was definitely under one control, known as Emanuel Bros. They not only owned a large number of stations in the Kimberleys, but by the control of shipping—and they had a monopoly of shipping in those days—they were able to dictate the prices which the cattle of the small pastoralists in and around East and West Kimberley were worth. That went on. There were Royal Commissions and Select Committees inquiring into the meat

trade in those days. I took part in one inquiry—whether by Select Committee or Royal Commission I do not remember—which went exhaustively into the operations of the meat ring to see whether it was not possible to protect producers of the far North against exploitation by Emanuel Bros. and at the same time furnish meat at reasonable prices to the people of the metropolitan area.

After we had made a thorough investigation it was quite clear that we could not achieve the latter end, even though we started butchers' shops for the purpose of retailing the meat, after experimenting in various other ways; but we found that while we had butchers' shops we could not supply the meat, because the combination had control of the shipping and one could not get cattle from the North down to the sale-yards at Robb's Jetty. Therefore we decided to bring them down; and so we started the State Shipping Service for the purpose of bringing East and West Kimberley cattle to Fremantle. There we established State abattoirs, and after a lot of cattle had been killed we had to introduce butchers' shops before we could bring the combine to its knees and make it realise its unfairness to the general public. Emanuel Bros. left Western Australia and went to London, where they lived in affluence as the result of their wonderful business capacity. I do not object to that sort of thing if individuals have that capacity; but the people need to have sufficient courage to say, "We will protect ourselves against combinations of that kind, and will return to Parliament men who will not be afraid of socialism or State trading or any other means of protecting the people against exploitation." That is what happened in regard to State shipping.

The Wyndham Meat and Freezing Works were established under extraordinary circumstances. The object was to enable the East Kimberley pastoralists to market their herds—which were growing in number and also in quality—in competition with the better class of cattle being produced in West Kimberley. The Freezing Works were the only solution, because at this time the production of cattle in the south of this country did not justify the bringing of so many cattle from the Kimberleys. Therefore we solved the problem by bringing the West Kimberley cattle down on the hoof. The

Wyndham works dealt with the East Kimberley cattle; killed and froze and canned the meat and sold it in other parts of the world. It has had its ups and downs, and has not been an economic success, but has been a wonderful help and encouragement to the growth of pastoral pursuits in Western Australia. And the lives of the people who went into those remote parts were made reasonably bearable because they had a market within reasonable reach of their stations.

The State Sawmills were established definitely to protect in the first place the railways against the enormous prices charged by men known as Millars' Combine. The Millars' Company had control of the timber industry of Western Australia. It controlled both the forests and the sawmills, and it dictated to the metropolitan area what the retail timber yards would pay for the commodity. There was little if any competition against the combine. In those times the railways were requiring timber at an enormous rate. Millions of pounds were being spent annually in the development of this country; and in that development timber played a highly important part. The late J. T. Short was then Commissioner of Railways, and Mr. Short brought before the Government the position he was in as regards timber. He had brought the matter to the attention of the previous Government, in which I think the late Frank Wilson was Premier. The late Frank Wilson started the first mill at Holyoake for the purpose of supplying timber to the railways in order to protect the railways against the combine.

I might have stated as regards the State hotels that the first hotel of the kind in Western Australia was built by the James Government some years before the Scaddan Labour Government came into office. It built the Gwalia State Hotel—one of the most lucrative hotels controlled by the State. So it was not a Labour Government that actually began the system of State hotels, but the James Government, in 1902 or 1903.

With the State Sawmills in existence, there was a rapid development of sawmilling by the State because of the requirements of the trans-Australian railway. The Commonwealth Government of the day, a National Government, made representations to the Scaddan Labour Government for the purpose of securing supplies of timber,

more particularly karri timber in the form of powellised karri sleepers, for use in the Trans-Australian railway. There is a history attached to that matter with which I shall not occupy the time of the House. I will merely say that there was a Royal Commission, and the Millars' combine was too strong for the State. There was a change in the Commonwealth Government and a change in the State Government, and those two Governments got together and stopped the operations of the State Sawmills and placated the privately-owned mills of those days, which were largely in the hands of Millars'.

A good deal of historical interest attaches to that also, and a lot of that history does not reflect very creditably on the Governments of those times. But I do not propose to follow those matters up to the present time. From then on the State Sawmills began to devote their activities to competition with Millars' combine. They went ahead under grave difficulties. We built the first mills at what was then called Big Brook, now known as Pemberton. The mills were called No. 2 and No. 3. The next mill was built at Manjimup, now known as No. 1 mill. I am not certain of the order of their construction. After we had got those mills built, it was disclosed to us that the Commonwealth Government was not going to carry out its undertaking, that the mills erected to supply sleepers would not be called upon to supply them, but that private mills would do so. The position was pretty serious at the time, and I was severely criticised and called everything but a business man. Ultimately we got our heads together and by close application were slowly but surely able to build up the State Sawmills until they absolutely smothered Millars', as they do today, not only in saw-milling in the bush but in transport to the metropolitan area and in the metropolitan timber yards and the joinery works. The State enterprise has put Millars' huge combine into second place throughout the world.

Mr. North: And it has reduced prices.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It did at the time. The State Sawmills led in London, in all parts of Australia, in India and in South Africa in the early days. I have given this history just to show that there was a purpose in establishing all these State enterprises. It was not done to create another State trading concern but to protect

the people against exploitation by these private companies. But we have arrived at a stage now when the mission of these State trading concerns is no longer being fulfilled. Instead of competing they are now working in conjunction with their rivals. That is a very sad position. The State Sawmills are part of a combination. Just as we had the Millars' combination in the old days when we started the State enterprise to control the position, we now have the State organisation as one of the big three—Bunnings, Millars and the State Sawmills—who are ruling the timber industry of this State. The whole position must be reviewed.

This situation has arisen not because a Labour Government is in office, but because an anti-Labour Government passed a Forests Act in 1919 by which it gave to the Conservator of Forests and Board of Management exclusive control of the forests of this country. That control was given to prevent Parliament from exercising any supervision in the handling of our State forests. The position has become so serious from the public point of view as to be against public policy. The State concerns should never be associated with any private concern. It is denying the State enterprise its right to function in the form for which it was created. If it cannot function in the proper way it should be sold to private enterprise, because it is practising private enterprise methods which should not be associated with State trading. It causes us to be mistrusted throughout the world. We are likely to be misrepresented because of the present position.

I prepared a Bill for the purpose of amending the Forests Act and intended to introduce it. Its object was to protect the State Sawmills against business associations of this kind. I have not brought it down because the State election was sprung upon us so speedily. I want to announce that if I am returned here one of the first things I am going to do is to appeal to the new Parliament to protect this State against an Act of that description. I appeal to members to get hold of the Forests Act of 1919 and read it. It is a reflection upon the Parliament that passed it. It is a vicious position when one man has such enormous powers, and he takes them to Melbourne with him. Today our forestry is under his control, and he is in Melbourne. He was

issuing his orders from that city until I exposed the position in this House. Orders were distributed to the big three who were allowed to pass them on to the smaller concerns.

I exposed what was going on by the asking of questions. The position was altered for a time. The big three are, however, again in control to the detriment of the limitation of the competitive power of the smaller concerns and of the State. The position has become so vicious that it will be a feature of my election. I will draw attention to the State trading concerns and will challenge my electors to say whether they want me to protect the people against combinations, or to allow them to exist to the detriment of the economic conditions of the public. I do not want to go to the people of the Guildford-Midland electorate and start raising a matter that I have not already raised in this Parliament. I have raised it here and it will be brought up again in the course of the election. If I am fortunate enough to be returned I will feature it during my early association with the new Parliament.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I do not want to see these Estimates passed without saying a few words on them. They represent £2,500,000 of the State's capital. While it may be said that the Government represents a board of directors we are in the position of shareholders or, at all events, proxies for the shareholders—the general public. The election has been brought on with so much speed—and, as I see it now, with undue speed—that we have not sufficient time to give adequate attention to the business of the country, an important part of which is reflected in the Estimates of the State trading concerns. Be that as it may, I intend to show, in the time at our disposal, that these Estimates will receive a most perfunctory consideration. I have had occasion, when speaking on the general Estimates, to say something about the State trading concerns. It is not necessary to repeat my remarks. If we are committed to an election within a very few weeks then members have occupations and duties which do not enable them to spend the time they should on matters such as this. I listened with interest to the informative statement made by the member for Guildford-Midland. The history of the genesis of our State trading concerns is not so well known to many of us as it is to the

hon. member. I want to say, however, that I am not prepared to follow his suggestion which, so far, has been founded on no evidence that any blame rests on the Conservator of Forests in connection with the position of the State Sawmills.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: He has all the power.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. I have always thought him to be a very able officer, and our State was fortunate in having secured his services. He has extensive powers, but it may be that he needs them. I am not prepared to express an opinion on that without some further knowledge of the facts. As I see the matter at present I am not prepared to assume that any sins of omission or commission on the part of the State Sawmills can be attributed to the powers exercised by the Conservator of Forests. I am in agreement with the member for Guildford-Midland that if there is any exploitation to the detriment of the general public, then the State is not only justified in intervening, but has a bounden duty to do so in some form in order to prevent that exploitation. If the most convenient way is by setting up a State trading concern of its own in competition with those that are exploiting the public, then, by all means, let us have State trading concerns, but do not let them exploit the public. It is, of course, a complete negation of the justification of State trading concerns if one is to be found inside a combine maintaining an artificial price to the general public, or a price that is beyond a fair price.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Beyond a competitive price.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. The justification for private enterprise is, by competition, to maintain prices so that the public may receive the most efficient and the cheapest service. If private enterprise combines in order, unfairly, to raise the costs of goods or services, it is bad enough, but it is far worse for a State trading concern to join in such an unholy combination. The whole reason for the existence of a State trading concern is to set a proper example. I have learned something of the matter mentioned by the member for Guildford-Midland in regard to the supply of timber in this State, particularly for war contracts. I have heard that the three big timber concerns, including the State Sawmills, may in this matter have had more power in their

hands than they should. I do not say that is true because I do not know the facts. I wrote to the Minister at one time in order to arrange a deputation so that the facts might be known. Before that deputation was held, the matter, apparently, was adjusted and it was not necessary to proceed with the deputation. This occurred some time ago.

If there has been an extension of these practices in the timber trade then the member for Guildford-Midland can count on my support to ensure that they are terminated at the earliest possible moment. I want to add one word more, and that is to say that I would welcome any move by the hon. member with regard to the operations of our State trading concerns. I think that after the long interval of time, and bearing in mind the cause of their introduction, it would be well for us to survey the position as it is today and ask ourselves in the first place whether their existence is justified. If it is, then we should ask what can be done to increase their service to the public and find out if there is any weakness in the operations of any concern that is out of step with the mission it should fulfil in our society. In such a case we should decide what steps should be taken to restore the State trading concerns to their true operations. I will help the member for Guildford-Midland if he should ask at some future time—and I am in a position to assist—for an inquiry—not in a critical spirit but in one that will give them full credit if they deserve it—into the position of our State trading concerns, which should be designed to act on one principle only, namely, as to what best can be done in the interests of the general public.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I probably would not have spoken but for the erroneous impression created by the member for Guildford-Midland. He conveyed an impression that led the member for West Perth to believe that the State Sawmills are part and parcel of the timber combine. That is not correct. I can understand the reason for the hon. member having a particular "derry" on the Forests Department. I wish to reply to his statement by explaining briefly that years ago, when the industry depended almost solely upon the export trade, there was an understanding between the State Sawmills and private sawmills in this State to hold the

price for timber sent overseas. This was probably the right thing to do at the time, rather than indulge in competition one with the other, because there was ample trade for all, and the arrangement permitted of decent conditions being extended to the workers in the industry as well as the maintenance of the trade, which indirectly was of great benefit to the State.

So far as the local market was concerned, there was no understanding between the State sawmills and the private millers. There was open competition and that existed right up to the time of the declaration of hostilities. When the war began and the overseas market was lost, local trade increased tremendously. A large quantity of timber was required hurriedly for war purposes, and the Commonwealth Government arranged for our Conservator of Forests to go to Canberra. I do not know why he was selected unless it was that he was the best man in Australia. He was given certain powers and in that avenue has done a good job for the war effort. He has organised the timber industry and, having a knowledge of what timber was required, allocated it proportionately amongst the timber millers of Western Australia. I am surprised that the member for Guildford-Midland should take exception to his undertaking a job of this kind during the war. He arranged for millers to supply timber for war purposes much more quickly and much better than could be done under the tiddley-winking efforts the hon. member would be prepared to make.

Division put and passed.

Divisions—State Quarries, £575; West Australian Meat Exports, £143,873; State Brickworks, £31,650; State Hotels, £65,070; State Shipping Service, £271,834; State Sawmills, £632,414; Wyndham Freezing Works, £41,052—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of the State Trading Concerns for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment.
Without amendment.
- 2, Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance).
- 3, Companies.
With amendments.

RESOLUTION—RAILWAY GAUGE UNIFORMITY, PORT PIRIE- BROKEN HILL LINE.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution:—

That this House regrets that the Federal Government does not intend at present to proceed with the unification of the railway gauge between Port Pirie and Broken Hill, as announced in "The West Australian" of the 29th September, and urges that the priority ranking of this work be reconsidered, and that this motion be sent to the Legislative Assembly with a request for its concurrence.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred in the Assembly's resolution.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 45 amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3. Delete the definition of "Discharged member of the Forces" on page 2.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. SEWARD: How can we follow the proceedings when we have no copies of the amendments? The Minister has not indicated what effect the Council's amendment would have on the rest of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the definition is deleted a discharged member of the Forces will not get a vote. From our point of view, the Bill has been mutilated, and the Government is opposing the whole of the Council's amendments.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 3. Insert after the definition of "Election" a definition as follows:—"Elector" means any person whose name appears on the electoral roll of a province as an elector."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We want to give soldiers a vote whether they are on the roll or not so long as they have

fought overseas. The definition would mean that if these men are not on the roll, they will not be entitled to vote. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Unless a soldier, irrespective of where he is or what his age may be, is enrolled for some province he will not be entitled to vote under this amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: I understand the effect of these amendments is, broadly, that the Legislative Council proposes to retain the basis of the franchise as it now exists under the Constitution, and has disagreed to the extension of the franchise which was proposed by the Bill as it left this House.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 3: In definition of "Member of the Forces"—Delete the words "or has been" in line 22.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 3: In definition of "Member of the Forces"—Delete all the words after the word "Commonwealth" in line 23.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. McDONALD: I wish to make my own position clear. It is not my intention to discuss the merits or demerits of each amendment, because the issue is a plain one between an extension of the franchise as proposed by the Bill and the retention of the existing constitutional franchise as proposed by the amendments. There may be some amendments with which I shall be in agreement, and others which I would oppose; but as apparently the whole matter will be the subject of a possible further discussion between the Assembly and the Council, I do not propose to rise on each amendment and express an opinion one way or the other.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 3: Insert after the definition of "Province" a definition as follows: "Qualified member of the Forces" means a member of the Forces who is serving with any unit within Australia or outside Australia, but within that portion of the South-Western Pacific Zone as may be proclaimed

from time to time under the provisions of section four of the Commonwealth Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Act, 1943, and who is an elector.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: In view of what the Leader of the National Party has said, I think we should take the amendments en bloc.

Mr. Seward: No, let the Committee hear what they are.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 6. Clause 4—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

This is really the crux of the Bill. We should retain the original provision.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is clear what the Legislative Council has done with this Bill. It has amended it systematically from beginning to end to provide that the soldiers who are electors for the Legislative Council and are enrolled shall have the same facility for voting as the electors who are on the Legislative Assembly roll. If a soldier is on the Legislative Council roll he gets a vote. The Council says, "We will give to the soldier with a property qualification what has been given to the soldier with the adult suffrage qualification." That is not the Government's policy, which is to liberalise the Legislative Council franchise, so that an elector for that Chamber would be enabled to reflect his opinion, as a soldier, both in this Chamber and in another place. What would be the use of a soldier voting for a policy outlined by this Chamber when he is denied the right of following with his vote into the other place, where legislation is determined? The whole thing in a sense is a farce.

I agree with the Minister that we must put the responsibility for defeating this Bill on to another place, because then the soldier will know perfectly well what the property Chamber thinks of the man who is fighting for the protection of property. This Chamber says to the soldier, "You have nobly responded to the call of Empire; we will make you a noble elector by giving you equal opportunity of voicing your opinion, irrespective of whether you own property or

not. You are fighting for property and consequently should have the right to exercise your political faith irrespective of property qualification." The other place says, "No, you don't! Hands off property! Humanity must not count! Humanity may fight and be sacrificed! Property is sacrosanct; it must not be touched. Property must have its right to dominate the politics of the country against the best interests of the humanity of the country."

Mr. McLarty: The Council said nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Council has systematically amended the Bill in that way.

Mr. McLarty: You say so.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I welcome that declaration. It is the kind of declaration I like. I want to get a clear-cut issue. Is property to prevail? Is it to dominate the country to the extent that it has done over the generations? Is not this war for the purpose of securing freedom? Is it merely for the protection of property, and shall property continue with all its rights and all its privileges that it has enjoyed over the generations? When the time comes there will be a show-down. By these amendments the Legislative Council is issuing a challenge. I accept the challenge on behalf of the soldiers who will be returning. I will be well and truly in their ranks to demand that those who have responded to the call of Empire shall have the full rights of Empire so that their will shall prevail, and no longer shall vested interests and property dominate the welfare of humanity.

Mr. McDONALD: We are not helped by speeches of that kind.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is good to have it on record.

Mr. McDONALD: I speak as a soldier and for other soldiers, and soldiers do not want speeches of that kind. We are addressing ourselves to a problem as a constitutional Assembly and I hope we will address ourselves to it with a realisation that there may be different views on those problems. Rightly or wrongly, the Council has taken the view—and there is something to be said for it—that this is a radical alteration of the Constitution of the State. It has been said in this House that during the war there should be an avoidance of controversial matters, the idea being that we should all unite and as a first consideration concentrate our efforts on securing vic-

tory. We should leave on one side matters that have agitated us in the past and have been the subject of differences of opinion. As I said, we are not helped by speeches such as that delivered by the member for Guildford-Midland, although I listened to the member with very great attention and interest. What we have to consider is that here there is a difference of opinion. This House can express its view and so can another place. If we cannot agree we go to conference to see what can be done.

Mr. SEWARD: I support the Minister, although I cannot go as far as he does. While I subscribe to some of the utterances of the member for Guildford-Midland, I also cannot go as far as he has. I think he has made a mistake in the date and place of this particular meeting. However, I want to place on record that I consider the man who has gone oversea and has fought for the defence of his country should be given the right to vote for the Legislative Council, regardless of whether he possesses a property qualification or not. He has made the biggest sacrifice anybody could make in the defence of his country and, as I said when the Bill relating to the Assembly election was under consideration or during the second reading debate on this measure, there is nothing we could do in return that would not still leave us in his debt. He should be given the right of the Legislative Council franchise solely in return for what he has done. The Council is perfectly right to insert such amendments as it deems necessary, but in this respect I consider it has erred.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 7. Clause 6, (1) page 4—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 7.

No. 7a. Clause 7, page 4—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 21.

On motions by the Minister for Justice, the foregoing amendments were not agreed to.

No. 8. Clause 8 (a), page 4—Delete the words "or non-commissioned" in lines 28 and 29.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know whether the Council has no faith in

non-commissioned officers or what is the reason for this amendment. My information is that quite a number of small units are in various places under the command of only a non-commissioned officer. They are visited perhaps by a commissioned officer once a day or every second day. If we strike out the words "or non-commissioned" it will mean that the commanding officer will be able to designate only a commissioned officer to do this work. He should be left to decide the matter himself.

Mr. McDONALD: My information is similar to that of the Minister for Mines. It is desirable to reject this amendment both for the reason he gave and on general principle. I would be prepared to entrust this responsibility to non-commissioned officers.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 9. Clause 8, (a), page 4—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 30.

No. 10. Clause 8, (c), page 4—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 38.

No. 11. Clause 9, page 5—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 1.

No. 12. Clause 10, (1), (a), page 5—Insert before the word "member" in line 12 the word "qualified."

No. 13. Clause 10, page 5—Delete the words after the word "province" in line 21, down to and including the word "be" in line 26, and substitute the words "for which he is enrolled."

No. 14. Clause 10, (2), page 6—Delete the words "or non-commissioned" in lines 4 and 5.

No. 15. Clause 13, (a), page 6—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "member" in line 33.

No. 16. Clause 15, page 7—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 16.

No. 17. Clause 15, (b), page 7—Delete the words "or non-commissioned" in lines 24 and 25.

No. 18. Clause 15, page 7—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" where same appears in lines 32 and 39.

On motions by the Minister for Justice, the foregoing amendments were not agreed to.

No. 19. Clause 16—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

If this clause is deleted, it means that voting by discharged members of the Forces will be disallowed.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 20. Clause 17—Delete.

No. 21. Clause 18—Delete.

No. 22. Clause 19—Delete.

No. 23. Clause 20—Delete.

No. 24. Clause 21—Delete subclause (1).

No. 25. Clause 21—Delete subclause (2).

No. 26. Clause 21, (3), page 9—Delete the words "Subject to this section" in line 37.

No. 27. Clause 21, (3), page 10—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "member" in line 37.

No. 28. Clause 21, (3), page 10—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 1.

No. 29. Clause 22—Delete all the words after the word "who" in line 9, down to the end of the clause, and substitute the words: "is an elector may vote in accordance with the provisions of this Act, in so far as those provisions are applicable, as if he were a qualified member of the Forces."

Provided that in the case of any project, undertaking or work outside the State, the functions of a commanding officer and of a commissioned officer, as set out in Division (2) of this Act may be performed respectively by the engineer or other person in charge of the project, undertaking, or work, and by any person designated by him."

No. 30. Clause 23, page 10—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 36.

No. 31. Clause 23, page 10—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "member" in line 41.

No. 32. Clause 24—Delete.

No. 33. Clause 25—Delete.

No. 34. Clause 26, page 12—Insert the word "qualified" before the word "member" in line 9.

No. 35. Clause 31—Delete.

No. 36. Clause 32—Delete all words after the word "force" and substitute the words "until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-four and no longer."

No. 37. Schedule No. 1, (2)—Delete all words from the beginning down to the word "full" in the fifth line, and substitute the words "I am enrolled as an elector."

No. 38. Schedule No. 1, (3)—Insert after the word "election" in first line the words "for the Province."

No. 39. Schedule No. 2—Delete.

No. 40. Schedule No. 3—Delete.

No. 41. Schedule No. 4—Delete clause 2.

No. 42. Schedule No. 4—Delete clause 3.

No. 43. Schedule No. 4, (4)—Delete all the words from the beginning down to the word "full" in line 4, and substitute the words "I am enrolled as an elector."

No. 44. Schedule No. 4, (5)—Insert after the word "election" in the first line the words "for the Province."

No. 45. Title—The Title was amended by—

(a) Deleting the words "for the duration of the present war and twelve months thereafter,"

(b) Inserting the word "qualified" before the word "members" in line 3.

On motions by the Minister for Justice, the foregoing amendments were not agreed to.

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

A committee consisting of the Minister for Health, Mr. McDonald and the Minister for Justice drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 9 amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 3: Definition of "motor vehicle"—Insert after the word "used" in line 43, page 2, the words "on roads."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I may as well deal with the first four of the Council's amendments as they affect the definitions in the Bill. The first amendment is designed to make sure that aeroplanes are not covered. Amendment No. 2 merely deals with a grammatical error and No. 3, by the addition of the words set out, makes certain that farm tractors not used on public roads or aeroplanes used in air navigation, are covered by the definition of "motor vehicle." No. 4 deals with the definition of "policy of insurance" and seeks to add a reference to "certificate of insurance." This has been requested by two companies that issue certificates of insurance and not cover notes. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Clause 3: Definition of "motor vehicle"—Delete the word "or," line 3, page 3.

No. 3. Clause 3: Definition of "motor vehicle"—Insert after the word "bus" line 3, page 3, the words—"any farm tractor which is not used on a public road or any kind of aircraft intended for use in air navigation."

No. 4. Clause 3: Definition of "Policy of Insurance"—Insert after the word "note" line 17, page 3, the words "and/or certificate of insurance."

No. 5. Clause 3, (3), page 4:—Delete the words "who has" in line 2, and substitute the words "if such insurer had."

No. 6. Clause 6, (2), page 9:—Delete the word "relation" in line 15, and substitute the word "relative."

No. 7. Clause 7, (7), page 12:—Delete the word "for" in line 29, and substitute the words "in respect of contracts or policies of."

No. 8. Clause 14 (1), page 22:—Delete the word "When" in line 30, and substitute the word "Where."

On motions by the Minister for Works, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 9. Clause 26, page 29:—Delete subclause (3), and substitute the following:—

(3) (a) The members referred to in paragraph (c) of the last preceding subsection shall be appointed after consultation with such body or bodies as in the opinion of the Minister, represent the interests of owners of motor vehicles.

(b) The members referred to in paragraph (d) of the last preceding subsection shall be appointed from a list of persons compiled

from names submitted by approved insurers each approved insurer having the right to submit the name of one such person.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is rather an important amendment. Its effect will be to widen the scope when selecting representatives. It extends the right to nominate to those companies which had not been included—those issuing certificates. Now all companies taking this insurance business will have the right to submit names as representatives on the premiums committee. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—COMPANIES.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 27 amendments, made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 1, (1): Add after the word "proclamation" in line 10, the words "but not until six months after the cessation of hostilities in the present war."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I feel that the Bill should not be proclaimed as proposed by the Council's amendment. Before the measure is proclaimed, Australian business men should be allowed an opportunity to get their manpower back and have their businesses moving smoothly. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. WATTS: The interpretation given by the leading authorities in regard to the Bill appears to mean exactly nothing. Hostilities may cease when an armistice is signed, or when the peace treaty is signed, or when it is ratified, or at some other time dependent on the treaty itself. Someone should try to get some better words than "cessation of hostilities."

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 24, (1), page 21: Insert before the word "he" in line 19, the words "subject to this Act and on payment of the prescribed fee."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This is a protective amendment, and I commend it. It is only fair and reasonable that any promoter of a company should have to give 21 days' notice by advertisement in the Press. That will help to protect the creditors, and to prevent persons from forming companies and then transferring the assets, unknown to the creditors. The amendment gives the prejudiced person an opportunity of entering a caveat; and until that caveat is withdrawn, or discharged by order of the court, the company cannot be registered.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We have no copies of the amendments which are before you, Mr. Chairman. We must rely on information given by you. Would you read that amendment again?

The CHAIRMAN: I will certainly do all I can to assist the Committee, and will certainly read that amendment again, it being only a short one.

Mr. WATTS: This amendment is the hinge on which the next one is to hang. If we accept the exact words of this amendment we are almost bound to accept amendment No. 3. I doubt whether that is the intention of this Committee, although the other aspect of this amendment, namely the prepayment of the prescribed fee, is all right, but I fancy the words "subject to this Act" have been inserted in order that they might lead to the qualification to follow.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The only point about this amendment is to make certain that the fees are paid. I do not see any necessity for it. I have never heard of a departmental officer filing a document without getting the fees. The insertion of the words will do no harm.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 24—Add a subclause after Subclause (2), as follows:—

(3) (a) The Registrar shall not register a company—

(i) unless a promoter or proposed director of the company makes application in writing, in the prescribed form and containing the prescribed particulars, to the Registrar for registration of the company; and

(ii) unless at least twenty-one days before the proposed date of application a notice of intention, in the pre-

scribed form and containing the prescribed particulars, to apply for registration of the company, signed by such promoter or proposed director, has been lodged with the Registrar and a copy of such notice advertised in a daily morning newspaper published in Perth and generally circulating throughout Western Australia and in a newspaper generally circulating in the locality, if other than Perth, where the registered office of the company is proposed to be situated; and

(iii) unless a caveat has not been lodged with the Registrar before the proposed date of application or unless, if any caveat has been so lodged, the same has been removed or withdrawn.

- (b) The Registrar shall cause a book to be kept wherein every such notice shall be entered and such book and the notice therein shall be open to the inspection of any person upon payment of a fee of two shillings.
- (c) Any person may at any time before the proposed date of application, on payment of the prescribed fee, enter a caveat against the registration of the company as being likely to hinder, defeat or delay any claim of the caveator against any person.
- (d) Every such caveat shall be in the prescribed form or to the like effect.
- (e) Upon the receipt of any such caveat the Registrar shall cause a copy thereof to be posted to the promoter or proposed director giving notice of intention to apply as aforesaid.
- (f) Such promoter or proposed director or any other person interested in the registration of the proposed company may summon the caveator before a judge in chambers to show cause why the caveat should not be removed; and upon the return of such summons the judge shall hear and determine whether the registration of the proposed company is likely to hinder, defeat or delay any claim of the caveator against any person, and in such determination may direct upon what terms and conditions the registration of the company can be proceeded with.
- (g) If on the hearing of such summons it appears that the registration of the proposed company is likely to hinder, defeat or delay any claim of the caveator against any person, the judge may make an order directing that the company shall not be registered until the said terms and conditions are complied with; but if it does not so appear, the judge may order the caveat to be removed, and upon the service of the order on the Registrar he shall remove the caveat therein mentioned.

- (h) The caveator may withdraw his caveat at any time by giving notice to the Registrar that he withdraws such caveat.
- (i) If after the terms and conditions aforesaid are complied with the caveator refuses to withdraw his caveat or to sign an application for the withdrawal thereof, the promoter or proposed director or any other person interested in the registration of the proposed company may summon the caveator before a judge as hereinbefore mentioned to show cause why the caveat should not be removed, and the judge may order the removal of such caveat; and upon the service of the order upon the Registrar he shall remove the caveat therein mentioned.
- (j) Upon the hearing of any summons under this subsection the judge may make such order as to costs as he thinks fit; and any person who enters a caveat without reasonable cause for considering that the registration of such company would be likely to defeat, hinder or delay any claim of the caveator against any person, and any caveator refusing without reasonable cause to sign an application for withdrawal of his caveat after the terms and conditions aforesaid have been complied with, shall be liable to pay the promoter or proposed director or other person interested in the registration of the proposed company aforesaid (as the case may be) such sum by way of compensation as the judge upon the hearing of any such summons deems just and orders.
- (k) The registration of a company and the issue of a certificate of incorporation in respect thereof shall not be deemed insufficient or invalid by reason only that in any such application or caveat or in the notice of intention aforesaid there is an omission or incorrect or insufficient description or misdescription in respect to the particulars required by law to be contained in such application, caveat or notice of intention, if the court judge or justice before which or whom the validity of such registration, application, caveat or notice comes into question is satisfied that such omission or incorrect or insufficient description or misdescription was accidental and due to inadvertence and was not of such a nature as to be liable to mislead or deceive.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This is a much more important amendment and introduces a new principle, namely, one that is founded on the practice in connection with bills of sale.

The circumstances are not the same. When a bill of sale is granted a mortgage is created. Any person who has a claim against any property has at law the right to enter a caveat. The amendment may involve a good principle, but it is entirely novel and was not part of the Bill brought before this Chamber. I understand it was a late thought conceived in another place. This measure was referred to a Select Committee which took a lot of trouble to get evidence and make a report. It was then brought before this Chamber, and no one could say it was passed in a hurry without proper debate or examination. We never thought of including this provision, which has emanated from the Registrar of Companies. It is extraordinary, if he thought it a proper provision to include, that he did not bring it before the Select Committee or, if he forgot to do that, that he did not mention it to the Minister when the Bill was previously dealt with here. I have only had time to look at the Victorian Act and no such provision appears there. It may be included in some other statute but I can find no reference to it in the margin. My objection to it is that it is entirely new matter to which we have given no consideration, and to which the Select Committee did not give consideration. We never heard of it until this late date. It is not desirable to include such matter unless for a very good cause. This may be a good idea, but this is not the time to deal with it. The session is now closing, and we are endeavouring to get the business through with the greatest possible speed. I have no desire to block the Bill.

Mr. WATTS: I agree in substance with the member for Nedlands. The principle of lodging caveats is all very well in the case of bills of sale, where a man would be able to dispose of an asset in favour of some third party.

The Minister for Justice: In this case an asset could be transferred to some other company when a new company was formed.

Mr. WATTS: That position would not arise. One asset is exchanged for another in the formation of a company. This subclause will make the registration of companies extremely cumbersome, and I do not know whether it will be of any benefit to any section of the public. The member for North-East Fremantle, if he were in his seat,

would agree that it was undesirable to hamper the registration of companies in this manner. The Select Committee set out to prevent undesirable companies from continuing in operation, but not to prevent, restrict or make cumbersome the registration of a bona fide concern. The safeguards in the Bill are designed to prevent fraudulent or unsatisfactory operations by companies. This would give the Registrar almost dictatorial rights and add to the expense of the registration of small concerns which the Select Committee was most anxious to encourage. It will not do the slightest good to anyone. It will not protect creditors as they are protected in the case of bills of sale for the reasons I gave earlier. The Minister would be well advised to oppose this amendment. It will entail a lot of unnecessary work without any commensurate benefit. I do not know anywhere else where a provision of this kind exists.

Mr. McDONALD: Like the member for Nedlands, I desire to assist the Minister to complete the passage of this Bill. It might be wise to ask the Legislative Council to omit this clause. I have a great respect for the opinion of the Registrar of Companies, and this may be a good condition, but it was inserted in the Bill possibly last night and we have not received copies of "Hansard" to enable us to find out what reasons were given for its insertion. The commercial community has not had the opportunity to look into it. I suggest to the Minister, while I agree that almost all the amendments proposed by the Legislative Council would be received without opposition here, that the Council be asked to delete this one. There will be time to amend the Act before it comes into operation if such a clause is found to be desirable.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am not wedded to the amendment, but I think it has merit. The Select Committee desired to protect all sections of the community, and this provision will protect creditors. Before any person may register a company, he must give 21 days' notice, and any creditor would then have an opportunity to lodge a caveat, if necessary. Creditors are not protected as they should be. If a caveat were maliciously lodged, the person lodging it would expose himself to liability to pay compensation. Six or eight weeks ago, the Registrar made inquiries in South Australia and Victoria, and recommended this provision. If

experience shows that the provision does not operate satisfactorily, it can be amended. I know the measure will need amendment after it reaches the statute-book.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the Minister asks that opposition to the measure be withdrawn for some good reason, I am prepared to consider it. It may be that if we do not agree to the amendment, the whole measure will be jeopardised. In that event, I am prepared to assist him.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 28: Delete Subclause (6), on page 27, and substitute the following—

- (6) (a) A legal practitioner engaged in the formation of a company, or a person named in the articles as a director, or the secretary of a company, may file with the Registrar a notice specifying the name by which it is proposed that the company shall be registered, and if the use of that name is not prohibited by this section, for a period of twenty-eight days from the date of filing the notice such name or any name so nearly resembling (in the opinion of the Registrar) the same as to be calculated to deceive shall not be registered as the name of any company, firm, individual or association under the provisions of this Act or the Business Names Act, 1942, or the Associations Incorporation Act, 1895, except the said company in the course of formation.
- (b) The Registrar may on application in writing and on payment of the prescribed fee direct that the period in the last preceding paragraph mentioned be extended for a further period specified in the direction of not more than twenty-eight days from the date of the expiry of the first mentioned period and the said period shall be extended accordingly.
- (c) Any person filing a copy of a prospectus in relation to an intended company may, on payment of the prescribed fee, apply to the Registrar for the reservation of the name appearing in the prospectus as the name of the intended company for three months from the date of filing the prospectus and for such period the name of the intended company or any name so nearly resembling (in the opinion of the Registrar) such name as to be calculated to deceive shall not be registered as the name of any company, society, firm, individual or association under the provisions of this Act, or the Business Names Act, 1942, or the Associations Incorporation Act, 1895, except the said company named in the prospectus.

(d) This subsection shall not apply to companies within the provisions of Part XI. of this Act.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This is a desirable provision. The object is to protect a company against any company, firm or association, and if there is unavoidable delay, a further 28 days' protection may be obtained. Protection is required in the event of there being any delay in forming the company. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The only exception I take is to paragraph (c). We are mixing up with company law legislation which should in the Business Names Act. Indeed, provision is made in that Act against any firm registering under a name that might mislead or deceive the public into believing it is another company or firm.

The Minister for Justice: That would not apply to a company.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so, but it is a bad principle to refer to other statutes in the one being dealt with merely because it is a suitable example. This form of legislation is not desirable or necessary; in fact, it might be regarded as being highly embarrassing. If one were asked to give an opinion on a business name of a character similar to one already registered by another firm under the Business Names Act, one would turn to that Act and not the Companies Act for the answer. Then one would perhaps find that one had given a wrong answer because the information was contained in an Act entirely separate and different. However, I do not wish to press my objection.

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

No. 5. Clause 28, Subclause (7), page 27—Insert after the word "in" in line 13 the following words and figures:—"Subsections (1) to (5) both inclusive of."

No. 6. Clause 28—Add the following provisos to Subclause (7), page 27:—"Provided that—

(a) where in the opinion of the Governor on being satisfied that it would be inequitable or unreasonable to require any company formed or incorporated outside Western Australia to which Part XI. of this Act applies to change its name, style, title or designation before complying with the require-

ments of such Part it is in the circumstances of the particular case expedient, the Governor may, notwithstanding anything in this section or section thirty of this Act, authorise the Registrar to accept for filing the documents and particulars specified in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of subsection (1) of section three hundred and twenty-nine of this Act; and

(b) where a company formed or incorporated outside Western Australia to which Part XI. applies has (after complying with the requirements of Part XI. under its original name) changed, in the country of its incorporation, its name to a name which includes any word or words prohibited, either generally or in the circumstances of the particular case, by this Division, the Governor, if of opinion that it would be inequitable or unreasonable to refuse to allow the new name to be entered in the register in place of the former name, may authorise the Registrar to enter the new name in the register and the Registrar shall enter the new name in the register accordingly.

No. 7. Clause 28—Add a new subclause after Subclause (7), to stand as Subclause (8), as follows:—" (8) In respect of every authorisation by the Governor pursuant to either of the provisos to subsection (7) of this section a fee of five guineas shall be paid to the Registrar by the Company concerned."

On motions by the Minister for Justice, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 8. Clause 101 (a), page 79—Delete the words "together with the words 'registered office'", in lines 38 and 39.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This amendment does not alter the principle of the measure and something is struck out that is superfluous. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The words proposed to be struck out are absolutely necessary, otherwise a person desiring to find out the situation of the registered office of a company would have to make a search at the Supreme Court. Notices to be served on a company must be served at its registered office, and if the words "registered office" are painted on the outside of the company's

office, service of notices will be facilitated. The provision has been in existence since 1893.

Question put.

The CHAIRMAN: The Ayes have it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I did not hear any reply to the Ayes.

The CHAIRMAN: I did, and gave a decision in favour of the Ayes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Will you allow me to call for a division? Did the Minister say Aye?

The Minister for Justice: I must confess I did not.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know who the voters were, but the member for Nedlands is entitled to call for a division.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I call for a division.

The Committee divided.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	11
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	7
				—

AYES.

Mr. Overley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Styant
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Triat
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Wise
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Withers
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Thorn
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Wilcott
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Seward	

(Teller.)

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 9. Clause 112, (1) (xx), page 89—Insert at the beginning of the paragraph in line 39 the words "Except where a company is a proprietary company."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The purpose of this amendment, which has the approval of the Registrar of Companies, is that proprietary companies shall pay the appropriate fees at the time they lodge their documents with the registrar. At present it is not obligatory for them to do so. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 10. Clause 112 (2), page 90—Add after the word "manager" in line 19, the

words "and the company when presenting the same shall pay the fee prescribed in respect thereof."

No. 11. Clause 113, (2), page 93—Add after the word "manager" in line 2, the words "and the company when presenting the same shall pay the fee prescribed in respect thereof."

No. 12. Clause 114, (1), (a), page 93—Insert the words "in numbers" after the word "majority" in line 26.

No. 13. Clause 126, (1), page 103—Delete the word "fifteen" in line 33, and substitute the word "eighteen."

No. 14. Clause 152, (1), page 127—Delete the word "one" in line 39, and substitute the word "two."

No. 15. Clause 152, (1), page 127—Insert the words "holding at least ten per centum of the paid up capital" after the word "shareholders" in line 39.

No. 16. Clause 164 (3), page 140—Delete the word "shall" in line 17 and substitute the word "may."

On motions by the Minister for Justice, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 17. Clause 164, (3), page 140—Delete the words "without any" in lines 17 and 18, and substitute the words "by a."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 18. Clause 164 (3), page 140—Delete the words "or other proceeding" in line 18, and substitute the words "and after three months shall be forfeited".

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This makes it mandatory that shares must be forfeited after three months.

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

No. 19. Clause 175, (1), page 145—In line 10, delete (c) and substitute (b).

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This is consequential.

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

No. 20. Clause 184, (3), page 150—Insert a new paragraph after paragraph (b), as follows:—

(c) Nothing in this section shall disqualify a body corporate from acting as a liquidator as aforesaid, provided such body corporate has by statute been empowered so to act.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

There are two companies—the W.A. Trustee Executor & Agency Company and the Perpetual Trustee Company—which are qualified to act as liquidators, but there was some doubt as to whether this clause, if it became law, would not supersede the Acts governing those companies. The amendment is to safeguard the position.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This matter was given long consideration when the Bill was before the Committee. Is it to be the practice that a matter which has been carefully considered here and in respect of which a decision has been reached is to be lightly passed over because a different view is taken in another place? That is not the proper view. The alleged grievance in this case does not exist, because the two companies referred to would have no difficulty in obtaining leave to act as liquidators. I am not going to be a party to flouting the considered opinion of this Committee.

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

No. 21. Clause 256, page 186—Insert a new subclause after subclause (1) as follows:—

(2) (a) The notice shall state the situation of his office, and notice of any change thereof shall be given by him within twenty-one days of such change.

(b) Service made at such address shall be deemed good service on him and on the company.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move:—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I would like to have some reason for this. I have tried by inquiry to discover reasons for these various amendments but am finding it difficult to do so. Apparently they were all passed at 2 a.m. this morning!

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

No. 22. Clause 329, (1), (c), page 226—Delete the words contained in lines 36 to 38.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 23. Clause 334, page 230—Insert a new subclause after subclause (3) as follows:—

(4) This section shall not apply to any company, which by the law in force in the country or State where it was incorporated is not required to file with a Registrar its balance sheet.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move:—

That the amendment be agreed to.

It seems to me that if a company is not required to compile a balance sheet in the place where it was incorporated it should not be required to do so here. On the other hand I can see the necessity for such a company filing a balance sheet so that the public would know exactly where it stood. I am rather easy in relation to this amendment. I did not see the Bill myself until 3 o'clock this afternoon and I have had no time to think out the possible effects of this amendment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I hope the Committee will not accept this amendment. Originally the Bill provided that at least once a year a company would have to file with the Registrar of Companies a copy of its balance sheet, and we went so far as to provide that in the event of the document not being in English a translation would have to be attached to it, so that those interested would know that all the details were covered in connection with the company's affairs.

The Minister for Justice: I quite agree with your contention. You need not stress it.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

*Sitting suspended from 11.18 till
11.30 p.m.*

No. 24. Clause 357: Delete.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Is anything to be substituted for this clause, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know that there is very much to be gained by retaining this clause, which appears in the old Western Australian Act as Section 235. I do not know that there is any real value in this. I will hear what the member for Nedlands has to say. In the meantime I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This provision was not in the original Companies Act. It was in an amending Act. It was included because it was necessary. Many mining companies were foreign companies and practically all of the shares were held in Western Australia. The amendment was made so that the shareholders should be able to receive their dividends at the registered office of the companies in this State.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 25. Clause 362: Insert a new subclause to stand as subclause (5), as follows:

(5) Nothing in this section shall disqualify a body corporate from acting as a receiver as aforesaid, provided such body corporate has, by statute, been empowered to so act.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This amendment is consequential. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 26. New Clause. Insert after Clause 424 a new clause to stand as Clause 425, as follows:—

Penalty for false statement.

425. If any person in any prospectus, return, declaration, report, certificate, notice, balance sheet, or other document required by or for the purposes of any provision of this Act wilfully makes a statement false in any material particular knowing it to be false, he shall be guilty of misdemeanour and shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years and be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months and in either case to a fine in lieu of or in addition to such imprisonment as aforesaid:

Provided that—

(a) the fine imposed on summary conviction shall not exceed one hundred pounds;

(b) nothing in this section shall affect the provisions of the Criminal Code.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Criminal Code contains a similar provision, but even so we should agree to this amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Bill already provides by Clause 424 that where any matter or thing is directed or forbidden to be done and such act so directed remains undone, or such act so forbidden to be done is done, in every such case, unless a specific penalty is provided therefore, every company or person offending against such direction or prohibition shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £20, and, in the case of a continuing offence to a daily penalty not exceeding £5 for every day during which the offence continues. Why make a special penalty? I have no objection to the severity being increased if it is necessary, but £5 a day ought to be sufficient.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I can see no real objection to the clause. It makes provision for special offences such as false statements.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is an offence now.

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

No. 27. Tenth Schedule, subheading C—Delete the items under this subheading and substitute the following:—

	£	s.	d.
On lodging a notice of intention under Section 24	0	6	0
On lodging a caveat under the said section	0	15	0
For every notification (after the first) to any promoter or proposed director of a caveat ..	0	2	6
For reserving any name under Section 28, Subsection (6) (a)	1	0	0
For extending the time of such reservation	1	0	0
For a reservation by the Registrar under Section 28, Subsection (6) (c)	2	0	0
For every authorisation by the Governor under the provisos to Subsection (7) of Section 28	5	5	0
For every license under Section 29	1	0	0

Upon the forwarding, delivery, lodgment, registration, or filing of any notice, summary list, statement, statutory declaration, balance sheet, or sheet, or other document (other than a Memorandum of Association or Memorandum of Registration) required or authorised to be lodged, registered, deposited or filed with or by the Registrar in connection with any company, society or association—

(a) if within the period (if any) provided by law .. 0 5 0

(b) if within twenty-eight days after the period prescribed by law .. 1 5 0

(c) if after more than twenty-eight days after the period prescribed by law .. 5 5 0

The Registrar may, if satisfied that just cause exists for so doing, reduce the fees prescribed in paragraphs (b) and (c) last preceding, but in no case shall either of such fees be reduced below 5s. and 10s. respectively.

For inspection of any document filed with, or file of, the Registrar .. 0 2 0

For a copy or extract of any document kept by the Registrar relating to companies, certified by the Registrar—

(a) if five folios of 72 words or under .. 0 5 0

(b) if exceeding five folios, for each additional folio .. 0 0 6

Examining a written or printed copy and certifying same by Registrar—

(a) if 10 folios of 72 words or under .. 0 5 0

(b) if exceeding 10 folios, for each additional folio .. 0 0 6

For doing or causing to be done any act referred to in and under Section 297 .. 2 2 0

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have not had time to read this amendment but it was agreed to by the Chief Secretary in the Upper House. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A Committee consisting of Mr. Leahy, Mr. McDonald and the Minister for Justice drew up reasons for not agreeing to certain of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Appropriation.

2, Loan, £350,000.

Without amendment.

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

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 1 to 5 disagreed to by the Assembly.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be Mr. Needham, Mr. Watts, and the mover.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 1 to 45 disagreed to by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be the Minister for Mines, Mr. McDonald and the mover.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

**RESOLUTION—RAILWAY GAUGE
UNIFORMITY, AS TO PORT
PIRIE-BROKEN HILL LINE.**

Council's Message.

Message from the Council requesting concurrence in the following resolution now considered—

That this House regrets that the Commonwealth Government does not intend at present to proceed with the unification of the railway gauge between Port Pirie and Broken Hill, as announced in "The West Australian" of the 29th September and urges that the priority ranking of this work be reconsidered.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [12.2]: I move—

That the resolution be agreed to.

"The West Australian" of the 29th September contained a paragraph as follows:—

Canberra, September 28.—The Federal Government does not intend at present to proceed with the unification of the railway gauge between Port Pirie and Broken Hill. The Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) said tonight that the official Army view was that there were other necessary works to be carried out occupying a higher priority.

It was intended that the gauge should be made the same as that in New South Wales, 4ft. 8½in., to enable quicker transport of metals from Port Pirie as well as stepping-up transport of essential goods across the continent.

By passing the motion we shall show that Western Australia is still anxious that this work be commenced and that there is no lack of interest in the project. It gives us an opportunity once more to reiterate our desire for the carrying out of this great work. Admittedly the Prime Minister would not have spoken lightly, but I think he would be foolish if he lost the chance of showing to the people of this State his continued interest in this work.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

**BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT
ACT, 1941, AMENDMENT.**

First Reading.

Received from the Council and, on motion by Mr. Watts, read a first time.

Second Reading—Defeated.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [12.17] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to amend the Traffic Act with the object of conferring upon owners of motor vehicles, with two exceptions, that have gas-producers fitted to them, the benefit which was conferred a couple of years ago on the owners of petrol vehicles, of a reduction in the license fee payable under the Traffic Act. It will be remembered that when petrol rationing became serious, a Bill was brought down and assented to by all parties in this House, authorising local authorities and the Traffic Department when licensing motor vehicles that were petrol-driven to accept a fee of 75 per cent. of the normal fee. That is to say, if the normal fee was £8 a fee of £6 would be accepted in full settlement for a petrol-driven motor vehicle. Since that time the use of gas-producer vehicles has been seriously restricted. When the previous Bill was passed it was anticipated that a vehicle fitted with a gas-producer would have the full use of the roads, because the owner would not be restricted in any way in the purchase of charcoal or of tyres, which at the time were easily procurable, whilst spare parts were not under any system of control at all. Since that time, however, the position of the gas-producer-driven vehicle has fallen—from the point of view of transport and ability to use the vehicle for long distance and just as the owner pleases—into a very similar category to that of the petrol-driven vehicle.

Today there is a substantial measure of control over tyres and, unless one has a high priority in respect of a motor vehicle, one cannot obtain spare parts except with great difficulty. In consequence, it seems to me to be justifiable that we should extend the concession which was then given to petrol-driven vehicles to vehicles which use producer-gas as their means of propulsion. I mentioned that there were two exceptions to this proposal. They are motor vehicles for which a passenger-vehicle license or a carrier's license is required. Such vehicles, as a general rule, are used for essential ser-

vices and therefore tyres and parts can be obtained for them. They are not affected seriously by the control regulations; in fact, having a high priority, they are rather assisted by the regulations and they obtain, consequent upon the fact that the use of privately-owned vehicles is restricted, rather more business than they got formerly. Following the principle which was adopted in the earlier Bill—now an Act—that if an owner has the full use of his vehicle he is not entitled to the concession, this Bill proposes to exclude from the benefit conferred upon gas-producer-driven vehicles those which are passenger vehicles or have a carrier's license, the great majority of which—if not all—are able to carry on in an efficient and practically unlimited manner.

Those are the provisions of the Bill and those are the reasons which actuated its sponsor and presumably another place to submit it to this House for passage here. It is intended that the Bill shall not come into force before 1st July next. The reason is that the licensing year commences at that time; and notwithstanding that the Act makes provision for licenses for a shorter period, it is not desired to create a difficulty for local authorities in regard to licenses already issued for the current year. That difficulty was freely discussed when the previous Bill was before the House. The Bill should commend itself to members on both sides of this Chamber. It must not be forgotten that vehicles entitled to the concession which this Bill proposes to confer are to be found all over Western Australia. Broadly speaking, the further one gets from the metropolitan area the greater are the restrictions which are imposed upon vehicle owners because of tyre difficulties and spare parts difficulties, superimposed upon the previously existing petrol restriction.

Mr. Cross: In what way would this Bill affect the revenues of local authorities?

Mr. WATTS: Not very severely; in fact, much less than did the original restriction which was imposed by the Traffic Act about two years ago. Finally, I would say that a resolution asking for this Bill was carried at the annual general conference of the Road Board Association of Western Australia approximately two months ago. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is one of the questions to which undeniably there are two sides. Before the license fees for petrol-driven vehicles were reduced, we called together the people concerned, that is, the representatives of road boards and municipalities, to discuss the matter, because after all the license fees are their money. At that time those bodies could not afford even the reduction that was made. Instead of a 33 1-3 per cent. reduction being made, in the main those bodies agreed to a reduction of 25 per cent. That was for petrol-driven vehicles. Gas-producer-driven and diesel-propelled vehicles were excluded. The reason is not far to seek. If the local authorities had to depend upon revenue from the latter vehicles there would be no roads. A very splendid road policy for Australia was initiated by Mr. Bruce. Western Australia shared well in that system, taking into account its area and population. We have main roads in this State from Albany to Northampton and eastwards. I am not sure of their length, but it is very considerable. The money for those roads was found out of the taxes paid on petrol-driven vehicles. For a long time the tax on petrol—imposed by the Commonwealth Government—was 7d. or 7½d. For some time the local authorities' share of this tax was 2½d., but some years ago the amount was increased to 3d.

I believe the tax on petrol is now as high as 1s. 2d. a gallon, but still the local authorities receive only 3d. towards the road system. That money is still being collected. The owners of petrol-driven vehicles are still supplying the money. An enormous amount was spent on roads in this State—about £5,000,000—and this was paid by the motorists, and even so only a proportion of what they paid was expended on roads. The fact remains that were it not for that, we would not have our main road system. That has to be remembered. In addition, the petrol-driven vehicle also had to be licensed and the fee was paid to the local authority. Although the Road Board conference agreed to forgo a proportion of the license fee for the gas-producer vehicle, I am not sure that road boards can afford to lose that revenue. In the main, local authorities in our country districts have been in sore financial straits, and they should consider very seriously before agreeing to cut down their revenue.

Further, the reduction is to apply only during the period of the war. Our country roads, unfortunately, are getting into a state of disrepair and money will be required for repairs and maintenance when the war is over. Members are aware that reserve funds were created into which were paid moneys which afterwards will be utilised by the local authorities for putting the roads in order, independently of those roads for which the Main Roads Department is responsible.

We have to consider the fairness of this proposition. The vehicles in respect of which it is proposed to make an exemption to the extent of 25 per cent. are using roads for which they have not provided a penny piece. True, so far as license fees are concerned, they contribute equally with the petrol-driven vehicles; but no portion of the license fees is paid into the Main Roads account. The revenue from license fees is expended on roads for the maintenance of which the local authorities are responsible. I admit that many roads have been constructed out of revenue from license fees; but the main roads system in this State, which was paid for by the petrol-driven vehicles, is also used by the gas-producer vehicle and the diesel-driven vehicle. That was one reason why we agreed to the reduction of 25 per cent. of the fees for petrol-driven vehicles. It may be remembered that, recognising that the fair way in which to tax the motor owner was through the petrol tax, an endeavour was made to do this. I think we collected about £25,000, and then found we had no right to do so, that being excise. When we found out our mistake we ceased to collect. Then the Commonwealth took a hand. When it was proposed that that concession should be given, the price of petrol was continually rising because of the Commonwealth excise, which was increasing all the time. Some petrol-driven vehicles are taxed to the hilt. Petrol that used to cost 1s. 6d. in the metropolitan area now costs 2s. 10d.

Mr. Cross: It used to be 1s. 5d.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and it costs much more in country districts. Although the Road Board conference agreed to forego this money, this is the information we have: Before introducing the Bill to reduce license fees on petrol-driven vehicles, we took a very careful census of

those concerned, because it is not Government money we are dealing with, but the revenues of local bodies. On the last occasion when we asked for an expression of opinion on this proposal, those in favour were the Municipality of Subiaco, the Road Boards of Peppermint Grove and South Perth, the City of Perth and Claremont. Against the proposed reduction were the Fremantle, Bassendean, Bayswater, Nedlands and Kelmscott-Armadale Road Boards, and also Cottesloe. Having thought it out from all angles, those local authorities were against the reduction. The opinion was very divided. The question is whether we should, without very much consideration, agree to a proposal that reduces the revenues of road boards, which are always in difficulties. Members are aware that over half the revenues of road boards in this State is derived from license fees. They could not exist otherwise, and we must be careful before we start giving away their money.

From the information we have, I am not disposed to agree to this measure. Victoria has never agreed to a reduction, either for petrol-driven or gas-producer vehicles. In Queensland and South Australia the reduction is 25 per cent. and in New South Wales, 20 per cent. But it has to be remembered that these fees are collected by the central authority. Parliament has the right. It is giving away its own money, or reducing its own revenue. In this State the position is different, and the local authorities have been jealous of their control of traffic fees in this State. Even in the metropolitan area we only collect the fees, which are returned, less cost of collection and 22½ per cent. which is paid from the Metropolitan Traffic Pool to the Main Roads Department's account. Let the matter be settled on its merits. I am not going to raise any technical points in respect to it. It is a very moot point as to whether those concerned, whose money is involved, agreed to this proposal. I consider that not only should we get the opinion of the Road Board conference—that is to say, of the delegates assembled—but we should also have the opinion of the municipalities throughout the State, which are just as much concerned. So far, the information we have is that they are divided in respect to it.

While there is a good case for the present reduction of fees, there is not the same argument in respect of the gas-producer-driven vehicles. Again, it must be remembered that we are dealing largely with producers that have a 50 per cent. reduction already, and are getting an addition of 25 per cent. on that. So the reductions are serious already so far as road boards are concerned. That 50 per cent. for private producers' vehicles is a very generous concession. It would be very simple and probably would tend to make us popular with our constituents to agree to a reduction, but it is not a wise procedure, and for the reasons I have stated—mainly because the position is not on all-fours with the reduction this House previously agreed to, and because there is certainly not the same cause for it—I oppose the measure.

MR. THORN (Toodyay): I would like to make one or two observations in support of the Bill and I hope that before I sit down I will be able to convince the Minister that he should agree to it. First of all we will admit that the Road Board conference agreed to the suggestion. Secondly, the Minister mentioned our roads. They are certainly wonderful. The Main Roads Department has done an excellent job, mostly out of the petrol tax. The Minister agrees there is a big tax on petrol, but only a small portion is going towards our roads. From observation, members will agree that there is practically no road work taking place, and the road boards will not miss this revenue.

The Premier: They will.

MR. THORN: No, they will not, because—

The Premier: You lose 10 per cent. of your wages and see whether you miss it!

MR. THORN: The road boards today are accumulating revenue; they are not using it.

The Minister for Works: And they are accumulating liabilities, too!

MR. THORN: They are not using the revenue because they cannot get the manpower to carry out the work. I know that road boards are accumulating revenue and that in many instances their roads are in a bad condition.

The Premier: Let them reduce their ordinary rates!

MR. THORN: In many instances they have done so. I am a ratepayer of the Swann Road Board district and that board

has been most considerate, having made substantial reductions in rates. Nevertheless, it is still well off for revenue. When we dealt with petrol-driven vehicles, the situation was very different. Today the gas-producer vehicle has all sorts of restrictions imposed upon it. These vehicles are short of spare parts. Unless they have a high priority—that is to say unless they are passenger-carrying vehicles and carriers, for which special provisions are made—they cannot procure tyres and spare parts. The majority of gas-producer owners have to conserve their tyres and be careful of the running they do, owing to the shortage of spare parts. Another point is that this measure is only for the duration of the war.

MR. CROSS: The Bill does not say so.

MR. THORN: The Bill may not say so, but it deals with the Act that made provision for petrol-driven vehicles and proposes to amend the Act to include gas-producer vehicles. As the local governing bodies are well off for revenue which they cannot use, why not grant this concession? The Minister has been very fair. He put his side and said he would leave it to the House to decide.

The Minister for Works: I put the road boards' side.

MR. THORN: I do not know that the Minister did that, seeing that the road boards agreed to it.

The Minister for Works: You have put the licensees' side.

MR. THORN: No, I am taking my cue from the findings of the Road Board Conference, which agreed to this reduction.

The Minister for Works: They did not care to oppose it.

MR. THORN: The Minister cannot put it that way. The Road Board Conference treats all these things very seriously. This affects the revenue of road boards. Therefore they must treat the matter seriously and the conference agreed to this reduction. Apart from that, members must realise that, as time passes, restrictions will become more severe and running will be curtailed to a much greater extent, except as regards essential services. That is very evident. I see no harm in agreeing to this Bill and granting this concession to gas-producer vehicles.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I have been impressed by the remarks made by the Minister and I appreciate the facts he has

put forward for the consideration of the House. On the whole, however, I feel that the Bill is one I could support. It has received the approval of the conference of road boards and, if they have approved, it means that they have, in effect, requested it and it is therefore legitimate for us to accede to their request. But I am also impressed by the fact that the people who put on gas-producers have in many cases done so because they have been compelled to do so. It has been a condition of their being able to use their vehicles at all. They have been obliged to go to very considerable expense and the use of gas-producers has been generally considered to be a very patriotic gesture, something we should undertake, an expense we should incur in order to save petrol.

I am not too sure that the argument as to the saving in petrol is not somewhat dubious, and that such saving may not be counterbalanced by the damage done to the engine in the case of many gas-producers. I do not think that people using gas-producers can be relegated to the class of people who are not carrying a burden. I should say that most of them would much prefer not to have gas-producers and would continue using petrol-driven vehicles but for patriotic reasons or the compulsion of National Security Regulations. The view of the Road Board Conference was that this was an act of justice and I think the expression of opinion by that body should receive the consideration of this House.

MR. CROSS (Canning): I cannot support the Bill because it would make the position distinctly unfair. The man who uses a petrol-driven vehicle will be paying for practically the whole cost of road construction and maintenance while the people with gas-producers will pay nothing. The fact that under the parent Act a reduction was granted was due to the desire to encourage the use of gas-producers in order to save petrol, which had to be imported. The Bill does not aim to do that.

Mr. Watts: The hon. member says that a reduction of the license fee in respect of petrol-driven vehicles will encourage the production of gas-producers.

Mr. CROSS: Diesel-engined trucks are driven with heavy oil which has to be imported and, in fact, more of that type of oil is imported than petrol. That will en-

courage the use of the heavy trucks that do so much damage to the roads. I am sure the local authorities in my electorate would criticise me if I did not oppose this measure. The Bill will have the effect of encouraging the use of Diesel-engined trucks which do so much damage to the roads, and yet they will pay practically nothing towards the upkeep of those roads. The local authorities will be left with very little money with which to carry out that work.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly): I support the second reading of the Bill. Although I am prepared to give due weight to the Minister's arguments, the local authorities he mentioned were mostly confined to the metropolitan area and so cannot be regarded as representative of the opinion of the local authorities spread throughout the State. Personally, I am not inclined to place much store by the opinions of municipal councils because their areas are mostly small, and their interests are practically confined to the areas from which they receive their rates. I should say that the license fees recovered by municipal councils respecting vehicles that use the roads would mean much less to them than those fees mean to the road boards.

The Minister for Works: That is so.

The Premier: And yet most of them live on their license fees.

Mr. SEWARD: Not to the extent that the road boards do. At any rate, the views expressed at the recent Road Board Conference should carry some weight with the Government. Another point is that the gas-producer vehicles in the country districts are being restricted in their use by the group carting system. I am frequently at the Department of Supply and Shipping dealing with matters arising out of the new system. The trouble is that the farmers are unable to get tyres unless they are grouped. I know of one young farmer who has 3,000 acres and 100 acres of hay ready to cut and cart. He expects 2,000 bags of wheat and he has 2,000 sheep for which he will have to commence carting water and feed very shortly. This means that his truck will be going from early morning until dark, yet he is unable to get tyres and may not be able to use his truck much longer because he is not grouped. How could such a man be grouped? He could not possibly use his truck apart from his own work.

The effect of all this is that quite a number of men with trucks will be forced off the road even though they may have gas-producers. I think the proposal embodied in the Bill is reasonable seeing that the farmers cannot use their trucks to the extent of more than 25 per cent. of what is normally done, and the small reduction in the license fee would extend some consideration to them. I know that the roads are deteriorating and will continue to do so during the war period. At the same time, the funds of the local authorities are accumulating and ample money will be available for the repair of roads when hostilities cease.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—in reply): As so often happens, the member for Canning has lost sight of the real point which is involved in the discussion. He referred to Diesel-engined trucks that do so much damage to the roads. The fact is that such trucks are excluded from the scope of the Bill almost entirely, because the great majority of them are vehicles for which a passenger or carrying license is required.

Mr. Cross: There are still a lot of them.

Mr. WATTS: Then there should not be, because Diesel-engined vehicles are mostly used for passenger work or for carting of goods for reward. In consequence, the great bulk of them are excluded from the provisions of the Bill almost for the very reasons advanced by the member for Canning himself. Therefore there was no substance whatever in the point he made. Another matter he referred to—and it was also mentioned by the Minister to some extent—concerned the contributions that must be made by users of petrol-driven vehicles to the road funds. These contributions have been substantially reduced of recent years because of the fact that vehicles are using comparatively little petrol. It is only during the past two years that a great number of gas-producers have been fitted to vehicles, and therefore the owners of those vehicles that had to use petrol before had already contributed substantially to the revenue that has gone into the construction of roads to which the Minister referred.

Today there are no roads being constructed, so the suggestion regarding the effect of this Bill cannot be nearly as bad as the Minister and the member for Canning would have us believe. In fact, the point

raised in this regard is one that could almost be ignored. Another point made by the delegates to the Road Board Conference was that gas-producer vehicles do far less damage than petrol-driven vehicles because with the former the drivers cannot get up any very fast rate and therefore do not knock the roads about. There is force in that argument, as anyone will admit who has travelled for any distance in a gas-producer vehicle.

The Minister for Works: Is that opinion borne out by the engineers? I thought it was quite the contrary, with the big, swaying loads.

Mr. WATTS: I am informed that that is the view taken regarding the effect of the large trucks on the roads. I understand from the engineers that speed is the main consideration that breaks down the surface of the road. The theory as given to me by engineers, including men who are very competent and are associated with the Main Roads Department, is that on other than bitumen roads the heavy vehicles suck up the mixture from the surface and that leads to cracks in the roadway and ultimately to its breaking up. I have never disputed the argument, and have never questioned that information that was given to me by these people who are experienced in the matter. Those of us who have noted the difference between travelling at 50 miles and 30 miles an hour can appreciate that the wear and tear must obviously be less at the lower speed.

Mr. Cross: Everyone is limited to 30 miles an hour.

Mr. WATTS: I subscribe to that view so far as the regulations are concerned, but I confess that gas-producers of necessity are reduced to a speed that complies with that regulation whereas those who drive petrol vehicles proceed at a speed that complies with the regulations only when they happen to remember them. I desire to quote from the minutes of the recent Road Board Conference, and I find on referring to the official minutes that the Denmark Road Board placed before the conference a motion reading as follows:—

That vehicles with gas-producers be given the same license as petrol-driven vehicles.

That motion was carried.

Mr. Thorn: How many road boards were represented at the conference?

Mr. WATTS: There were 81 boards represented by 126 delegates. If that is not a comprehensive attendance, especially in these days of transport difficulties, I do not know what would be regarded as such. I should think that a conference attended by representatives of 81 boards out of about 120 that operate throughout the State, should satisfy even the member for Canning.

The Premier: It would largely depend on how the voting went.

Mr. WATTS: That is not indicated in the minutes.

Mr. Thorn: If it was carried, more than 40 boards must have voted in favour.

The Premier: But there could have been 40 against it.

Mr. WATTS: At any rate, that phase is not recorded but, according to the minutes, there was no opposition to the motion. I wish to go a little further and remind the House of what the present Minister for Works had to say on the 22nd October of last year when he moved the second reading of the Local Authorities (Reserve Fund) Bill. In the course of his speech the Minister said—

A number of municipalities will have substantial credit balances at the end of this year which, if taken into account, will result in very low general rates being levied for next year, notwithstanding the fact that these credit balances have resulted mainly from the general inability to keep roads and other works in a satisfactory condition owing to the shortage of material—particularly bitumen—and manpower. The limitation I have mentioned is a very important one. Municipalities and road boards are definitely limited to making up the discrepancy between revenue in hand and the estimated requirements for the coming year. The approximate credit balances anticipated at the 31st October, 1942, for the following municipalities are—

	£
Fremantle	2,000
North Fremantle	500
East Fremantle	3,000
Cottesloe	3,000
Claremont	4,500
Subiaco	4,000
Midland Junction	800
Guildford	800

These balances would have been much greater had it not been for expenditure on A.R.P. works. Many road boards are in a similar position, the credit balances totalling very substantial sums. One metropolitan board now has £1,000 of its balance on fixed deposit, and

another outer suburban board has £3,000 on fixed deposit. Road boards had built up credit balances at the 30th June, 1942, as follows:—

	£
Bassendean	1,704
Bayswater	997
Bruce Rock	2,010
Cue	1,131
Fremantle	1,905
Melville	4,377
Northam	1,853
Quairading	1,062
South Perth	6,401
Swan	4,526
Victoria Plains	1,338

Although this legislation has been introduced to enable reserve funds to be built up, local authorities will not be compelled to take advantage of the measure.

Later on he said—

The boards, being unable to spend their revenue, have automatically built up reserves. Strictly speaking, this is illegal but there appears to be no help for it. The object of the Bill is to put the matter right and establish some order.

I ask this House not to give consideration to the suggestion that the Bill will upset the financial calculations of the local authorities. The Minister said that their credit balances would be far more substantial had they not contributed so much towards the A.R.P. That has been confirmed. The Road Board Conference agreed to this resolution, and therefore we are fully justified in bringing it forward for consideration by this House. I submit that I have dealt fairly effectively with the objections raised to this measure, and I hope it will be carried.

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

Ayes 7

Noes 19

Majority against .. 12

AYES.	
Mr. Mann	Mr. Thorn
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Seward	
NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Fox	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Triat
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Willcock
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Needham
Mr. Millington	

(Teller.)

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

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

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and had appointed Hon. W. J. Mann, Hon. H. S. W. Parker and the Honorary Minister as managers for the Council, the Speaker's room as the place of meeting and the time, forthwith.

Sitting suspended from 1.22 to 2.50 a.m.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and had appointed Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. C. F. Baxter and the Chief Secretary as managers for the Council, the Chief Secretary's room as the place of meeting and the time, forthwith.

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

Conference Managers' Report.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR [2.50]:

I beg to report that the conference managers met in conference on the Bill and reached the following agreement:—

Clause 5—Strike out all the words after the word "follow" in line 2, page 3, down to and including the word "tenant" in line 25, and insert the following in lieu:—

11A. (1) A person shall not refuse to let a dwelling-house to any person on the ground that it is intended that a child shall live in the dwelling-house:

Provided that the court may on application by the lessor if satisfied that the lessee has failed to take reasonable and proper care of the premises or of any goods and chattels leased therewith make an order for the recovery by the lessor of possession of the premises and any goods and chattels leased therewith and for the ejectment of the lessee therefrom.

(2) In any prosecution for an offence arising under this section where it is proved that a person has refused to let a dwelling-house to any person it shall lie upon the first-mentioned person to prove that the refusal was for some reason other than that it was intended that a child should live in the dwelling-house.

(3) A person shall not state his intention by advertisement or otherwise not to let a dwelling-house to any person if it is intended that a child shall live in the dwelling-house.

Strike out all the words after "him" in line 31 down to and including the word "land" in line 39, and substitute the following:—

Where the land was leased on the thirty-first day of August one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine such record shall show the rent and the name of the lessee at that date. Where the land was first leased after the thirty-first day of August one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine such record shall show the rent when such land was first leased and the name of the lessee at that time.

The main alteration made to the clause as amended here by the amendment agreed upon at the conference is that the landlord or his agent shall not refuse to let a dwelling-house to any person where it is likely that children will live in the house. The proviso added is that the court may, on the application of any lessor, give an order for the recovery of the premises to the lessor if the court is satisfied that the lessee has not taken good care of the premises or of any of the chattels therein. The amendments are reasonably satisfactory. To a large extent they give practically all the protection to prospective tenants with children that was given in the clause as amended here. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL.

Conference Managers' Report.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE [2.55]:

I beg to report that the conference managers met in conference on the Bill and reached an agreement to reinstate "non-commissioned" in Clauses 8a, 10 (Subclause 2) and 15b, and agreed to accept the other amendment made by the Council. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—COMPANIES.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed not to in-

sist on its amendments Nos. 3 and 24 but insisted on its amendment No. 23 disagreed to by the Assembly.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the Assembly no longer disagrees to the amendment insisted on by the Council.

Question put and passed.

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

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

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.

THE PREMIER [3.7]: This concludes the business for this session. I desire to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the courtesy and assistance you have extended to me and to all members—I think I can speak on their behalf—not only during this session but during the whole life of this Parliament. This Parliament has had a very extended term and we as a people have passed through an important phase of our history. We have been in serious danger; in fact, some of our citizens during the life of this Parliament lost their lives through warfare. This is an entirely unprecedented happening. I think it can be said, however, that this Parliament gave a very good lead to the people of the State. There was no panic. Instead, there was a grim determination to face whatever trouble came with the resolution characteristic of the British race.

I have also to thank the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Watts), and the Leader of the National Party (Mr. McDonald) and, may I add, the former Leader of the Oppo-

sition (Hon. C. G. Latham) for their courtesy, kindness and co-operation and for the manner in which they assisted in the conduct of the business of Parliament. We can still say, so far as concerns this Parliament, that there has always been good feeling, toleration and friendship between members of all Parties, notwithstanding that perhaps they hold strong opinions on matters of principle. At all times in the conduct of our business the utmost good feeling has prevailed. To the members of my own Party I have nothing but gratitude for the way in which they have supported not only myself but all members of the Government during our term of office.

I hope the time of danger for Australia has passed and that the new Parliament will meet without the shadow of war over our country. I trust that shadow will have disappeared for ever, and that we shall be able to turn our thoughts again in peace to the reconstruction which is so necessary in order that the State may be developed quickly and reach a destiny greater than some of us imagine it will attain. With regard to the forthcoming elections, which no doubt are in the back of the minds of us all, I would remind members what a former Premier said when facing an election: "All I can do is to wish you all the good luck which one political opponent can wish to another." Members can take that in the spirit in which it is meant. If I were asked—indeed, if most members were asked—whether they would be pleased if all the members were returned, they would not express dissatisfaction if that result were obtained in the forthcoming elections.

I am sorry that on this occasion the member for Boulder is not present. I tender my congratulations to him as father of the House. He has had a long and honourable career in Parliament. The fact that he has represented one constituency for the lengthy period of 38 years is indeed evidence that he must be held in the highest respect and esteem by the people of his constituency. That feeling is reflected throughout the members of this House, no matter to which Party they belong. I hope the member for Boulder will be returned to this Chamber so that with his very ripe experience he will be able to assist us in the work we have

to do in the future. I thank you, Mr. Speaker and through you the Chairman of Committees, officials of the House and "Hansard" and members, and everyone who has assisted in the work you have done on behalf of the people of the State. Before the next Parliament has gone through its course I hope that times of peace will be with us again.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I join with the Premier in his thanks to you, Sir, to the clerks, to "Hansard" and to the other members of the House staff for the kindness and consideration displayed during this session and, as I think it can accurately be said, hitherto. We all appreciate what has been done for us and more especially the way in which it has been done. As far as the political situation is concerned, I can subscribe very substantially to the remarks made by the Premier. I trust that we will have a fair battle and, as they say in cricket circles, the best team will win. I wish to thank the Premier, too, for the very kindly way in which he has dealt with matters that I have had to discuss with him during the last 12 months, and to assure him that we all appreciate the reciprocity he displays, as far as he can in the limitation of politics, in regard to the matters with which we jointly deal. I also thank the Leader of the National Party for the assistance he has rendered me, particularly in the early days when I undertook the duties I am now carrying out.

I also wish to express my wholehearted appreciation of my colleagues who sit with me on these benches. They have extended to me in the 12 months that I have occupied this position—it was 12 months ago on the 8th October last year that I commenced to carry out these duties—their wholehearted support and co-operation which, I can assure them and the House, I have greatly appreciated. After the election we shall have to do our best in the interests of the State on whichever side of the House we may be. I feel sure that the great majority of members will want to do that. Some of us on occasions gain the impression that things might be better done than they are. I am in this instance referring to the conditions of Parliamentary control as a whole. But if we carefully study the situation I think it will be found that the Western Aus-

tralian State Parliament is one which stands high for the dignity and reasonableness of its behaviour and its methods.

I do not think we could find a better Parliament in Australia. I trust that that state of affairs will continue and that if we can improve it we shall do our utmost to achieve that end, because, no matter how good a thing may be, most of us will agree that it can be improved. We should all subscribe to that view. I reiterate my thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the staff, and those I have mentioned and for the courtesy I have received from the opposite side during the last 12 months.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I would like, on behalf of myself and my Party, to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in the tribute that has been paid to you, Mr. Speaker, for the distinction with which you have occupied your high office during this Parliament. We have deeply appreciated your courtesy, your impartiality and your help. I also extend our appreciation to the Chairman of Committees and the Deputy Chairmen for their expeditious despatch of business, although our Chairman of Committees, like General Montgomery's Eighth Army, goes with a great speed. To the officers and staff of this House I extend thanks for the assistance they so ably and willingly placed at our disposal. I also wish to extend our appreciation to the "Hansard" staff for the work its members have done—often under not inconsiderable difficulties—and have carried out so efficiently. I desire to express to the Premier and his colleagues, and to the members of his Party, all the good wishes that can be extended to them with the reservations and qualifications that may be proper because of the elections so soon pending.

The Premier is a difficult political antagonist; it is so hard to get angry with him. I also extend to the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues my appreciation and that of the members of my Party for the co-operation, help and kindness they have always extended to us, and to my own colleagues for their indulgence and the advice which they have always placed at my disposal. We can feel that this Parliament has, in general, always shown that spirit of tolerance which is the real foundation of liberty. I have felt during my period here

that, in that respect as well as in others, but in that one in particular, it has been an example of a democratic institution working responsibly and in the way it should. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, once again and extend to you my good wishes.

MR. SPEAKER: On behalf of the Chairmen of Committees and officers of the House and the staff generally, and "Hansard," I thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party for their kindly remarks. I also personally thank them for the great assistance they have been to me during my term of office. As distinct from previous sessions members will not this time be able to rest on their labours for the next week or two. I can see quite a busy time ahead of them. As to the members who are away with the Fighting Forces, may we extend to them the hope that they will return safe and sound. All mem-

bers will agree with me when I say how proud we are of our Assistant Clerk of Records, Mr. Bartlett, who has now completed 60 operational flights over Europe and has been awarded the D.F.M. We are most proud of him! I thank members also for their kindness and generosity to me since I have occupied this position. They have been most generous in overlooking any little faults I may have displayed while occupying the position of Speaker. As one member to another, the best I can wish you all is a safe return to this House after the 20th November.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till the 30th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.20 a.m. (Saturday).

[By Proclamation published in the "Government Gazette" of the 29th October, 1943, the Legislative Council was prorogued until further Proclamation and the Legislative Assembly until and including the 13th day of December, 1943.]