Legislative Council

Thursday, 29th November, 1956.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

NORTH-WEST.

Taxation Concessions.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has any recent communication been received from the Commonwealth Government in regard to the representations made by the all-party committee in connection with a tax-free North?

(2) If there has been no recent communication, has there been at any time any indication that the Commonwealth Government will consider favourably in part or in whole the requests made?

The MINISTER replied:

The latest communication was from the Acting Prime Minister dated the 20th June, 1956. He advised that outstanding proposals were awaiting final consideration by Cabinet. On the 19th November, the Premier advised the Prime Minister that he would arrange for the all-party delegation to make a further visit to Canberra early next year if the Prime Minister considered this would be helpful to his Government.

HARBOURS.

Work at Albany.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Minister for Railways:

Further to my inquiries regarding the proposed expenditure on the Albany Harbour works for this financial year:

(1) What is the estimated cost of the rail access—contemplated to be completed by the 30th June—to the new berths?

(2) On what other works is it proposed to spend the balance of money allocated?

(3) Can it be assumed that any construction of the transit shed will be made—

(a) before the 30th June next; or

(b) during the 1957-58 financial year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £7,500.

(2).

	£
Wharf construction	96,000
Drilling rock preparatory to dredging	9,000
Oil, water and power mains	4,500

(3) (a) No.

(b) The provision of a transit shed will be listed for consideration in the 1957-58 draft loan programme.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Wellington Dam Extension.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

Further to my inquiries regarding proposed expenditure and work to be carried out on the Wellington Dam in this financial year:—

(1) What stage has the work progressed to, to enable the placing of concrete in the wall as is intended in January next—

(a) in the manner of the necessary forming;

(b) in the manner of the necessary reinforcements?

(2) What is the number of men at present engaged on the site?

(3) What are their occupational designations and how many are employed under those various designations?

(4) What is the anticipated time to be taken in raising the wall to the required height?

(5) What will be the proposed extended height, and what will be the additional capacity of the weir when the work is completed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) (a) Practically all the necessary forming is on site and the balance will be available when required.

(b) All necessary reinforcements are available.

(2) 78.

(3)

Foremen	3
Gangers	2
Artisans	29
Labourers	41
Clerical assistants	3
	78

(4) Provided sufficient loan funds can be allocated each financial year, it is planned to complete the raising before the 1960 winter inflow.

(5) Additional height, 50ft.; additional capacity, 32,000 million gallons.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to the amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.

Clause 2, page 2—Delete all words after the word "person" in line 14 down to and including the word "bookmaker" in line 19.

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

(1) and (2) A bookmaker is as much entitled as anyone else to have a personal bet on a racehorse and he should not, therefore, be called upon to pay turnover tax on his own investment on a racehorse.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

The Assembly's reason for disagreeing is on the same lines as those on which I opposed the amendment when it was before this Chamber. As I said then, a bookmaker having dealt with the rush of betting before a race might be informed by his clerk that he has over-bet, and so he immediately has a bet; in other words, he lays off most of that money. Should he pay turnover tax on that? As Mr. Diver said, an owner might bet £150 with an s.p. bookmaker who, in turn, immediately rings up and lays off a considerable portion of that bet with other s.p. bookmakers.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: With or without writing it in his book?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He pays the tax on the £150 when he takes the money from the owner; and under this amendment, he would pay it again when he laid the money off with the other bookmakers, and they would also have to pay tax on it, so that in all the tax would be paid three times. How can that be justified?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The bookmaker is not having a bet the same as any other bettor, as the Chief Secretary said.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course he is, even when he is laying it off. Those are the facts of the case.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I ask the Committee to consider further the Assembly's reason for disagreeing. Apparently the Government believes a bookmaker can operate as such and yet retain the right to bet. A parallel case in business would be a man engaged in buying and selling second-hand articles, who then accepts a position with a firm dealing in such goods. In those circumstances he automatically relinquishes the right to trade in those goods on his own account; and that is only right, as I think members will agree. Therefore, the Assembly's reason for disagreeing carries no weight with me. The bookmaker cannot have it both ways.

The Chief Secretary: He must, if he is to carry on.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is not so. A person in business dealing on his own account cannot continue that activity after he commences working for a firm in the same line of business. The rest of the Chief Secretary's argument, in regard to the laying off, is valid as that is not a personal bet. The fact that the bookmaker is in a protected and limited business means that he should relinquish his right as a punter.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I take a view different from that of the Chief Secretary and believe this Chamber should insist on its amendment. But before giving my reasons for that, I will read the long title of the Bill, as it has a bearing on this and the following amendment. The long title of this measure reads as follows:—

> An Act to authorise, regulate and control, betting and bookmaking on horse racing; to regulate the assessment, collection, and allocation of a tax on money paid or promised to bookmakers as consideration for bets, to repeal certain Acts; to amend certain Acts; and for other purposes.

The Government has taken the view, apparently, that the main principle to be considered in the long title is contained

in the words "and for other purposes" in order to protect s.p. bookmakers in Western Australia.

I draw the attention of the Committee to the words in that long title "allocation of a tax on money paid or promised to bookmakers as consideration for bets." That is what the Act has laid down. The only purpose in the attempt to remove those few lines in this clause in the Bill was to ensure that a bookmaker was not the person to decide whether a bet was a bet or his own investment. If we remove those words the bookmaker will have to make a full reurn of his off-course or on-course turnover. That is all the amendment seeks. So long as the bookmaker makes a true record of all his transactions, I do not care what he does.

We are not depriving a bookmaker of his rights by striking out these words; we are only putting him on the same plane as any other citizen who wishes to make a bet. However, on his own premises he should not be permitted to have a bet. If we agree to leaving these words in, it will mean that the Act will be difficult to police, and the Government will lose a considerable amount of revenue. The Committee would be well advised to insist on its amendment.

Hon. A. F. GRIIFITH: I wish the Government was as anxious to protect the people from the various taxes imposed as it appears to be in protecting the bookmaker from the imposition of this tax. We had a Bill introduced into this Chamber last night which seeks to tax widows and orphans.

The Chief Secretary: What did another Government do about the widows and orphans when it was in office?

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Chief Secretary will have his opportunity to tell us about that later. The main purpose of this amendment has been definitely put aside. In disagreeing to the amendment, the Assembly has submitted the most extraordinary reason I have ever read. I am sure every member in this Chamber must have smiled to himself when he heard the reason given. No one would deny that a bookmaker should be able to have a personal bet.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are being caught out; that is what is wrong.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The hon. member does not know what she is talking about. The Committee amended this clause to give the Government another opportunity to review its decision. However, it has not done so, and consequently it has not altered the rate of tax. The amendment was moved in this Chamber for that specific purpose. It is obvious to me that the Government is quite sympathetic to the bookmakers in the imposition of this tax, but nowhere near as sympathetic in the imposition of other taxes on the people.

Question put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the tellers tell, I give my vote with the ayes.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	12
Noes	15
Majority against	3

Ayes.	
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. R. F. Hutchison
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. G. E. Jeffery
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery *(Teller.)*

Noes.	
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. G. MacKinnon	Hon. A. F. Griffith
Hon. R. C. Mattiske	*(Teller.)*

Pair.	
Aye.	No.
Hon. F. J. S. Wise	Hon. L. C. Diver

Question thus negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

No. 2.

Clause 2, page 2—Delete all words after the word "person" in line 28 down to and including the word "bookmaker" in line 34.

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

> A bookmaker is as much entitled as anyone else to have a personal bet on a racehorse and he should not, therefore, be called upon to pay turnover tax on his own investment on a racehorse.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

> That the amendment be not insisted on.

I am surprised at the foolish action taken by some members in insisting on the amendment. Whoever has given a lead to the members of this House does not know very much about betting affairs. It shows how little such a person knows about betting when he insists on the payment of a turnover tax by a bookmaker who is making a bet.

Hon. J. Murray: You are only confusing your own mind.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This move to insist on the amendment is obviously wrong and members supporting it have been misled.

Hon. J. MURRAY: To be consistent, apart from anything else, I have to disagree with the Chief Secretary. At the

same time I protest against the suggestion that any member has been trying to mislead others in this Chamber into supporting the move to insist on the amendment. With regard to the second amendment, the issue has been confused. It was indicated by those supporting the Government that if this amendment is insisted on the whole of the betting tax on bookmakers will be cancelled; that is not the case. The bookmakers' tax is not affected by this amendment at all.

It was indicated by the Premier that if this Chamber insists on the amendment the Government will dig its toes in and will not ask for a conference. He further stated that the Turf Club and the Trotting Association could ill afford the loss of revenue, but the Government could more easily do without it. Such a statement coming from the Treasurer of a State who has budgeted for a deficit of £1,500,000 does not sound good to me. The attitude of the Government in refusing to accept this amendment in the spirit in which it was moved, and which was clearly indicated in this Chamber and in the Press, shows its lack of concern for certain people. The spirit in which this amendment was moved was clearly set out in the hope that the Government would take a second look at the provision and fall into line with the considered opinion as to what the bookmakers could pay.

The Chief Secretary: Which amendment are you dealing with?

Hon. J. MURRAY: I am dealing with the third one.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not on that yet. The question before the Chair is that amendment No. 2 be not insisted on.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I must point out that this tax is a turnover tax, as was explained by the Chief Secretary. If a bookmaker receives a bet of £2 he is taxed on that amount of turnover. If he lays off £1 of that to another bookmaker, that fellow-bookmaker is taxed on that £1 again. Under this amendment the bookmaker who had been taxed on the £2 turnover would be taxed again on the £1 that he had laid off. That entirely departs from the intention of the tax, which is purely a turnover tax. By insisting on the amendment this Chamber is assuming that it is a betting tax. Some members say that bookmakers must be taxed if they make bets; in other words, they say that if a trotting bookmaker were to go to the gallops he should pay a tax on his bets.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is not our attitude.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is the attitude adopted by the Council. The position is not defined at all in the Act at present. The Commissioner for Stamps contends that the bookmakers should pay tax on their bets, but on the other hand the bookmakers say they should not. This amendment was framed to clarify the position.

Point of Order.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Mr. Chairman, when the Chamber divides on a question, does not that determine the matter; or do we have the opportunity of voting again?

The Chairman: There are three amendments on the notice paper and it is my duty to put them separately, although the reason given by the Legislative Assembly in respect of the first two amendments is the same. There are three separate amendments and they must be put separately.

Committee Resumed.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: This amendment deals with on-course transactions, and the other one deals with off-course transactions. It appears that the attitude of this Chamber is that the bookmaker should pay tax on receiving a bet and also when he is laying a portion of it off, as well as the other bookmaker having to pay it. The Government agrees that only the two receivers of the bets should pay the turnover tax; and that is where the difference arises.

The tax is a turnover tax; but to turn it into a betting tax will make the position impossible. The same position would prevail as obtains at present, and there would be no clear determination about this matter at all. The Commissioner for Stamps would insist on the bookmakers paying, but the bookmakers would argue that they do not have to pay. If the Bill is passed, the position will be clarified.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The other evening I gave what I thought was the correct interpretation of this clause; and if members read it in the same way as I, they will come to the same conclusion. This definition applies to off-course as well as on-course turnover. The definition should read, "On-course turnover does not include money bet by a bookmaker in his capacity as a backer." Therefore, a bookmaker who has registered premises in, say, Barrack-st. will be able to go to other registered premises in William-st. and place bets in a private capacity, and no money will be paid as a turnover tax if this provision is left in. He would not be subject to tax, and that is only right. We want these words taken out so that when he goes up the street to make a bet he will pay turnover tax on it. Why should not a bookmaker who makes a bet, as a private citizen, pay turnover tax on it?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Do you pay turnover tax when you make a bet?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes. Well, the amount I bet is included; but this money will be excluded.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I wish to speak on amendment No. 2. A bookmaker accepts a bet from a man on a racecourse, and he makes out a ticket for the transaction. Later he decides to lay the money off. He gets off his stand and makes a personal bet with another bookmaker. When he gets off his stand he does not write out a ticket that he has put £50 on a horse. He simply goes to another bookmaker and makes the bet with him, and it is recorded.

The Minister for Railways: And that bookmaker pays turnover tax.

Hon. J. MURRAY: Yes; and so does the one who makes the original bet. It is paid twice.

The Minister for Railways: You want to have it paid three times.

Hon. J. MURRAY: No. There is no suggestion of that at all. The issue can be confused as long as these words are left in. If these words remain, I can go to a bookmaker on the course and whisper in his ear, "This is bad money."

The Minister for Railways: You knock around with some good blokes.

Hon. J. MURRAY: It is done time and again. He does not record the bet in his own book. Therefore, there is one turnover tax paid on it—not when the bet is given to him, but when he lays it off with someone else.

The Minister for Railways: That is deliberately avoiding the tax.

Hon. J. MURRAY: As long as these five lines are left in the measure, this position cannot be policed.

The Minister for Railways: You cannot stop it at any time.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I would like to be able to try for about five minutes to stop it. This is simply to tighten up the clause and prevent these people from robbing the Government of tax and, incidentally, from robbing the W.A. Turf Club.

The Chief Secretary: Taking these words out will not stop them.

Hon. J. MURRAY: It gives the opportunity to stop them.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

No. 3.

Clause 2, page 3—Delete paragraph (e) of Subsection (2).

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

> The acceptance of this amendment would completely abolish the turnover tax in respect of all bookmakers and would deprive racing and trotting clubs of substantial sums of money. The Government would also lose heavily but could recoup its losses by adjusting bookmakers' licensing fees.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

> That the amendment be not insisted on.

Since we previously dealt with this matter, members have received fairly good information about it. Although the position was wrongly reported in the Press in the first place, it was later corrected, and the true position given. I informed members of what they were doing—that if they persisted in their attitude they would leave off-course bookmakers in the position of not being subject to any tax. That position has arisen.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: You know why.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It does not matter why. I am dealing with the actual fact of what was done. It is up to the Chamber either to allow the position to carry on where there will be no off-course tax on bookmakers, or not to insist on the amendment, when the 2 per cent. tax will go on. We naturally want to make the off-course bookmakers pay 2 per cent.

Members apparently think that no consideration was given to the matter by the Government. I tell the Committee that the Government gave every consideration to the question not only once, but on a dozen occasions. It dealt with every angle of betting, and finally a decision was made as to the amount of tax to be imposed. It is easy for members who have not gone into the whole question, to say that the tax should be 3 per cent. or 5 per cent.; but no member has attempted to show why a State which imposed a tax of 2½ per cent. for some years, reduced it to 2 per cent. That State has had s.p. betting for 23 or 24 years.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Is that Tasmania?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. F. D. Willmott: What is wrong with a sliding scale?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It has not been successful.

Hon. F. D. Willmott: Where has it been tried?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government even sent two Ministers to Tasmania where this arrangement had been in operation for more than 20 years. They were men who understood racing. They examined the position in Tasmania and also in South Australia. We considered the information they brought back and arrived at the decision which we considered the most suitable from all points of view. We had much more information before us than any member has been able to have, and we finally arrived at 2 per cent.

Hon. J. MURRAY: Having traversed some of the argument on this point, previously, I shall commence now from the point where the Chief Secretary said that we had not given much consideration to the

fact that one State, Tasmania, had reduced its tax from 2½ per cent. to 2 per cent. I previously suggested that the position in Tasmania might not be quite the same as it is here. I find this is borne out by fact.

In the first place, s.p. bookmaking operates on various types of amusement—horseracing and dogs. Furthermore, the bookmakers have a more or less balanced turnover. If Bill Smith has a turnover of £5,000 a year, Bill Jones has practically the same. There is no real necessity for a sliding scale in that State. The question is: How much revenue does the Tasmanian Government think it should take from this sport? The racing clubs get nothing out of off-course betting in Tasmania, but they get the whole of the turnover tax from on-course betting.

If the position were the same in Western Australia, so that the W.A. Turf Club and the W.A. Trotting Association received the whole of the turnover tax on on-course bookmaking instead of losing 90 per cent. of it to the Government, we would not find any racing or trotting club worrying to any extent about how much the s.p. bookmaker paid to the Government.

The Chief Secretary: Did I hear you aright, that they lost 90 per cent. of the on-course betting tax?

Hon. J. MURRAY: Yes; the clubs get 10 per cent.

The Chief Secretary: In respect to on-course betting? I hope the rest of your information is more accurate.

Hon. J. MURRAY: The rest of it is all right, despite loose statement. I am concerned more with the position in Tasmania. If the clubs in Western Australia received all the return from on-course bookmaking they would not worry about how much tax was paid to the Government on off-course turnover. It is nice to know that the Government in Tasmania, in a spirit of generosity, decided to reduce the tax from 2½ per cent. to 2 per cent. No evidence has been brought forward by the Government or anyone else to say that this reduction was made because of the fear of the bookmakers going broke, or going out of business. I venture to suggest that if the sliding scale had been adopted, no bookmaker—except in one or two isolated cases in the country, where it is not economical for an s.p. bookmaker to operate because the money cannot be laid off—would have gone out of business.

I feel we should insist on our amendment. There is no doubt in my mind that, because of the financial and other interest in the last State elections, by those in control of s.p. betting, these people are now getting their reward. It is unfortunate that the s.p. bookmakers in this State are not in the same position as they are in Tasmania, where the business is on an even basis, and each shop gets practically the same amount of business. The biggest bulk of the s.p. turnover in this State is channelled through about five men—it could be reduced to three, but we will say five to confuse the issue a little more.

This evening the Chief Secretary has gone to some length to show that the Government examined all the ramifications of betting. He said that it had examined figures and the like from people who knew more about the question than those who have spoken in this Chamber. The Chief Secretary is only confirming what I have already said in this Chamber —the s.p. bookmaker has in Cabinet one of the best advocates for his case that anybody could have.

While I believe that figures do not lie, I think they can be regimented, and with a story behind them can make a bad case into a good one. In the figures which were produced were included large amounts of what would normally be considered private expenditure—charges that no business, in the ordinary course of events, could legitimately put down as trading expenses.

To make the case look good, even the cost of motorcars, the cost of running hither and thither, have been put down in the figures supplied. It is unfortunate that, as we gave the Government a chance to have another look at this matter, it did not go a little way towards sweet reasonableness.

The Government will still be in power at the end of 1957, and this Bill must come up for a complete review. While I know it is not competent for us to demand the appointment of a Royal Commission on this question of off-course betting and all its ramifications, because it is a charge on the Crown, it is competent for us to appoint a select committee. The Government is turning down an opportunity of getting £116,000. I disagree with the motion.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: When we sent this Bill to another place with certain suggested amendments, we were quite sincere in asking the Government to reconsider the whole question in the interests of the State and in response to a real public reaction. While we still admit that the Government has the right to raise revenue from sources which it thinks best, we believe that a different approach could have been made to this question. Our action in returning the Bill for further consideration was to give the Government a second chance to weigh up public reaction and consider seriously the suggestions made in this Chamber, and in another place as regards an altered rate of tax on bookmakers.

I agree entirely with what Mr. Murray said about the various conditions that govern racing in this State as compared with

other States. There is no doubt that in this State there is a big difference between the amount handled by a big bookmaker and that handled by a small bookmaker. We still believe not only that the larger bookmaker is able to pay more, but also that he should be called upon to do so.

However, I do not think it is our function to cut across the powers of the Government in collecting tax. We did the right thing in returning this measure and asking the Government to review the position in the light of the debate that had taken place, and the known wishes of members in this Chamber. Having done that, we have to accept the Government's decision to maintain the rates as set out in the Bill.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It seems obvious to me that the Government has its likes and its dislikes, and it is not a bit of use our insisting on this amendment, because then there would be no tax at all. The only thing to do is to agree with the Chief Secretary's motion; but I repeat that it becomes more obvious each day that the Government has its likes and its dislikes.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: We cannot deprive the Government of revenue; but as we have such terrific deficits, we have to work out which is the most reasonable method of levying taxation to meet our deficiencies. The Government proposes to impose a further tax on land; and there is also talk of other forms of taxation—increased railway freights, and so on. Yet we are informed that all the Government can get from the big s.p. bookmaker is 2 per cent.! I admit that some of the money collected is paid back to the racing and trotting clubs; but I still maintain that, if the amendment were insisted on, the Government would still be able to receive 1½ per cent.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: No; the whole provision would be wiped out.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not sure of that. I think the Government should be informed that members here are not accepting the responsibility for the Government imposing such terrific taxes without investigating the causes of the huge deficits, particularly in the various departments. Every member here must realise that there must be an end to all these increased expenses; they are rising terrifically each year. I have no objection to increasing the tax on a gambler, because he is what I call a voluntary taxpayer—in other words, he need not gamble.

Hon. W. F. Willesee: Any developmental work incurs debts and this State is going through such a period now.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: When we were really carrying out terrific developmental works in this State, the deficits were nowhere near as bad as they are today. Look at the position 10 years ago. I will admit that our currency has been watered since then; but, allowing for all that, the figures then were £8,000,000 or so as compared with £50,000,000 today. There is no justification for the terrific losses on our railways.

The CHAIRMAN: I have been allowing speakers to border on second reading speeches; and while I do not want to deprive the hon. member of his right to make a speech, I must ask him not to get away from the subject matter before the Chair; and request him to confine his remarks to the amendment.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I shall not offend again. We have some right to know what the taxes will be used for, and we have a responsibility not to take more taxation than is necessary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government has given full consideration to this matter.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: We do not doubt that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Just as it gives consideration to every other matter.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: And decided in favour of the bookmakers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Bill is the result of the careful consideration given to the matter by the Government. Mr. Murray got on to his old hobby-horse and suggested that the Government was led by the nose by one Minister who was an advocate of the bookmakers. There are no advocates in Cabinet. From the hon. member's remarks, it would appear that only one man in Cabinet knew anything about racing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He did not refer to you, I hope.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He must have referred to me and the Minister for Railways. There is as much foundation in that statement as there is in his suggestion that 90 per cent. is taken from the bookmaker on the course.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What is the correct percentage?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The percentage is 60-40—and not 90-10, as Mr. Murray suggested. That is a vital matter, and yet he knew so little about it. I am not entirely a babe in the wood when it comes to matters of the turf. My association with the turf would probably go back a far greater distance than any experience the hon. member might have in that regard. I can remember the days when P. A. Connolly's red-and-white jacket flashed past the post. I think the name of the horse was Blue Spec and it was ridden by Frank Bullock.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the Chief Secretary will connect his remarks with the amendment before the Chair.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am doing so, Mr. Chairman. I am trying to show that, about racing, I know as much as, if not more than does the hon. member; and I hope to prove that there are people in Cabinet who know more about the turf than Mr. Murray thinks. I am trying to disprove that there was an advocate for the s.p. bookmakers in Cabinet.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that was said some time ago.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He said it a few moments ago. If the Committee desired I could give quite an interesting history of the turf.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no doubt you could.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amount of the tax to be imposed was arrived at by men who know the game inside out; they would certainly not play second fiddle to Mr. Murray in their knowledge of racing. It is true that we have all paid for our experience. The Minister for Railways has been right in the game.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He has gone down in my estimation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So this matter has been given a great deal of serious thought. The Government has no favourites when it considers taxing matters. A decision is made and a fair and reasonable tax is imposed. That is how we arrived at the amount of 2 per cent.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am astonished at the change that has taken place as the debate has progressed. Some people are getting so sensitive that they are arousing in my mind the suspicion that they protest too much. There seems to be an undue degree of sensitivity about this matter and that is what the public thinks.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They are trying to crucify one member of Cabinet.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: You see, Mr. Chairman, there is further evidence of sensitivity. This is an alarming situation—extremely alarming to the public. It is not good when one feels that the Government is becoming more and more sensitive. If all that has been said is correct, there should be no need for all this sensitivity.

The Minister for Railways: You ought to set yourself up as a psychologist.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am astounded at the petulant schoolboy attitude adopted by a responsible Government when this Committee took responsible action. Such an attitude does not do the Government or this Chamber any good. When similar legislation first came before Parliament, there seemed to be a genuine desire to control and license betting. Now it seems to have become a taxing measure, and the moral side seems to have gone completely over the hill.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I would not like to go back to the old days.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Why has the Government reduced its tax from 2½ per cent. to 2 per cent.? It has done so to maintain betting. I hope we shall not see too much more of this.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think there should be some cause for sensitivity on the part of members on the opposite side. Members know as well as I do that there are methods laid down in Standing Orders which enable genuine requests to be presented to the Government. But members here have adopted the attitude, and have said to themselves, "We are all-powerful here; we'll tell the Government what it must do despite the fact that we were elected by only about 30 per cent. of the potential electors of the country."

Despite this fact members wish to dictate to a democratically-elected Government which is responsible to the people. I am a bit sensitive, but I like to keep on the right track. Reference has been made to public opinion expressed in the newspapers. I have not seen a great number of letters published, though I have read leading articles in the daily papers. One can quite understand that, however, because the chairman of directors of West Australian Newspapers is chairman of the racing club.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the Minister to continue in this strain, because he is not dealing with the amendment before the Chair. There has been a lot of discussion, and members have gone off the beam. It is time we got back to the subject matter before the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I apologise, Mr Chairman. If I have got off the beam, I am not the only one who has done so.

The CHAIRMAN: That is correct; but I think it has gone far enough. It does not deal with the subject matter before the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I would conclude by saying that some members are taking the right attitude now by not insisting on this amendment.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I rise to protest against what the Minister for Railways has said. He said that Standing Orders permitted us to make a request. He might recall that when I discussed this matter a week ago, I was ruled out of order, even though I was trying to make a request to another place.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must draw the hon. member's attention to Standing Order 395.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I maintain that that Standing Order gives us the opportunity of which I am availing myself.

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

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

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Belmont Branch Railway Discontinuance and Land Revestment.
Without amendment.

2, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.
With an amendment.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Council.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.

2, Mental Treatment Act Amendment.

3, Jury Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—BOOKMAKERS BETTING TAX ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [6.5]: At this late stage it is of not much use making remarks on this Bill, because we have reached the position that whatever we say does not make any difference. I would like to point out to members of the Government in this Chamber that despite all the investigations in regard to the amount of these taxes, if they look at the report of the South Australian Betting Control Board they will find the net return from turnover from premises operations—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member has already spoken on this Bill.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [6.6]: This Bill imposes the tax and we have had a great discussion on the Bill which provides the machinery. I have already expressed an opinion in regard to paragraph (b) of Clause 2, and I do not think the Government has obtained all the money it can from turnover. This turnover must have run into around £12,000,000 for the last period, and all the Government can get of this, is 2 per cent. We can make no alteration in this Chamber; all we can do is just carefully watch the position.

I do not think the public has a realisation of what this taxing means to them, and the arguments of the tax collectors have not been very commendable. Mr. Diver made a statement, and one of these very injured gentlemen rushed into the Press and asked him to make the same statement outside the House, stating that he would deal with him. I do not think we should permit these threats. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT. (No. 3).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [6.11] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to amend Part V, Division 4, of the Land Act, which deals with special settlement areas. Under the Act as it exists today no person, persons, group of persons or corporation or company is able to hold more than 5,000 acres of conditional purchase land or land for special settlement areas. This Bill will make it possible for the Government to authorise Ministers to lease larger areas of land; in fact an area of any extent.

The reason for a Bill of this kind is the restriction of the acreage which can be leased under conditional-purchase conditions. There are several financial groups today—individuals as well—anxious to invest in land development and put that land into production so that larger quantities of food, clothing and materials may be produced to meet the requirements of a rapidly increasing world population.

We know that the rate of increase of world population is tremendous these days, but the rate of production of foodstuffs, clothing, and materials is not keeping pace. It is based on the quantities for which that population can pay. However, economic circumstances are changing throughout the world. Countries with big populations which have not previously reached a standard of living where they could afford to buy the clothes and type of food they really desire, are now becoming more prosperous, and their economy is improving. Therefore the demand is ever growing greater.

These financial groups and institutions or individuals who are so anxious to invest their money in land settlement—not to hold it up but to develop and improve it—are encouraged in that respect by virtue of the income-tax concessions which are made available in Australia on capital from foreign or overseas countries.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was saying that taxation concessions offer a great inducement now for land settlement on a large scale, or even a small scale, for those who have the capital and the cash reserves and income to enable them to undertake it. They have to look further afield these days for investments of this kind. In Australia, most of the arable land was either simply occupied or put under production many years ago in the Eastern States, and a diversion of capital has been brought about by those circumstances, until today we find that Western Australia has become very attractive to investors of that type.

Only recently we have had the Chase syndicate entering into an agreement with the Government to develop some 1,500,000 acres of land in the Esperance area. Without the passage of a Bill such as this, that agreement, legally signed by the Government in anticipation of the decision of Parliament, would not have effect. The Government action had to be taken because time was the essence of the contract in respect of the agreement. Apparently, these Americans work very fast. They have not unlimited resources, but they do have tremendous capital reserves, and are prepared to travel to all points of the earth investigating propositions which may offer opportunities for the investment of that capital.

We are most fortunate that, in respect of this syndicate, which approved of the opportunity offered in Western Australia, action was taken very quickly and rapid decisions were reached. The Government is conscious of the vital importance of land settlement to the internal and external economy of the State, and it was very pleased indeed when a syndicate of this size came along and approved of the land and its potential in that remote part of the State.

Much credit is due to the early settlers, and the more recent settlers who had sufficient capital to develop the land. It is a type of country which requires an enormous amount of capital to develop and place under production; and only through their efforts and experiments, and the investigations carried out at the Government research station in that area has the real value of the land been proved. It is most attractive to folk who are interested in land development and have the capital resources to invest in such development.

We used to hear Mr. Bennetts year after year telling us in this Chamber of the potential of the Esperance Plains, and how one day that district would be one of the main food-producers of the State. He must feel quite pleased about recent activities in the district, and I am sure he will never regret having advertised its possibilities as much as he possibly could.

There are others besides the Chase syndicate interested in our light land and our heavy land. In the Kimberley, in the Fitzroy basin, we have another syndicate interested in rice growing, and the Government is in process of negotiating with the company—Northern Developments—with a view to reaching an agreement, as a result of which it will be given an area of land, in the vicinity of 20,000 acres, for rice production. In the last five or six years the company has spent upwards of £30,000 experimenting in the area. It required nothing from the Government, but simply went there under an agreement with the pastoral lessees and proved to its own satisfaction that Liveringa station, in the Fitzroy basin, was capable of growing good-quality rice. Now it is prepared to spend many more thousands of pounds in putting the industry on a commercial basis.

There is another company—actually not a company but a group of private individuals—which has purchased from the Government upwards of 20,000 acres in the North Stirling area. That land was prepared for war service land settlement, but later was deemed by the Commonwealth Government—not by the State Government—to be unsuitable for that purpose, and reverted to the State. This group of people, represented by one partciular gentleman down there with the resources and the initiative, took up 20,000 acres and has proceeded to develop the area. Under the Land Act as it exists, no person or group is entitled to have under conditional purchase conditions more than 5,000 acres.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why couldn't a group of four people take it up?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Act says it cannot be done.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It would be all right so long as they took it out in their own names.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It must be limited to 5,000 acres. It is doubtful whether their tenure is actually legal. The Government wishes to amend the Act so that there will be no doubt about the legality of tenure. It is necessary to amend the Act so that the Government can take the opportunity of accommodating large financial groups, companies or corporations or individuals should they require an area of land large enough to be an economic business proposition.

We know that the Chase syndicate is simply going to develop its area, subdivide it, and then dispose of it under either lease or freehold conditions. It is much the same as a big land estate agency taking over an estate in the suburbs and cutting it up for subdivision. The undertaking will cost several million pounds and rapid progress will be made. We have already read in the Press that it is expected that something like 50,000 acres will be ploughed before Christmas.

That is a very worthy effort indeed considering the agreement was reached only on the 19th of this month. The company is getting down to work immediately and will have 50,000 acres ploughed by Christmas. That gives an idea of the speed at which this type of company works. It certainly does not sit down and look at a proposition for months and years. When it takes on a project, it evidently means business and begins operations at once. It can be expected that, with such rapid development taking place, the Esperance Plains area and the Esperance district in general will become productive on a large scale in a short space of time.

I think it can be confidently expected that two or three sheep per acre can be carried on the land in that area at the end of three years. I am informed that is a conservative estimate; and if it is correct, we can rest assured that within the next 10 or 12 years a tremendous number of sheep will be carried in that area. Western Australia is indeed fortunate to have so much foreign capital being brought in and invested within such a short period. It is more than likely that this venture, which is probably one of the largest of its nature ever undertaken in the Southern Hemis-phere, will attract other interests to this State.

There are many more millions of acres of Crown land available for investment in Western Australia; and although we would like to see that country developed by individual settlers, that would be beyond the resources of the average settler. Ventures of this kind require capital and reserves and income to keep the settler going until he has brought his land into production. There is something over 1,000,000 acres of Crown land west of the Midland Railway which will no doubt attract investors at some time. There are other large tracts of Crown land in the heavy forest areas that will also doubtless attract settlers and investors. Again, there are in the Kimberleys very large areas of Crown land that will in due course be sought after by those wishing to invest large sums of money in land development.

It is all a question of economics as to which area will be settled first. People of the type that will be interested naturally want to get as close to available markets as possible and to secure land in sure rainfall areas and proved districts. We are fortunate that few of our districts remain that have not been proved to be good agricultural areas and capable of producing almost all kinds of agricultural produce, particularly sheep and beef.

When I visited Manjimup last week—I had never previously had an opportunity to see much of the southern portion of the State—I was amazed at the development that has been achieved in that heavily timbered country. No doubt in that part of the State land settlement will progress rapidly—that is, rapidly for that type of country—in the next few years.

The main provisions of this Bill seek to enable the Governor to authorise Ministers to lease under conditional-purchase conditions larger areas of land than the 5,000 acres to which they are at present restricted. If the Bill is passed, there will in fact be no restriction, and it will be possible for the State to sell any area of land under those conditions for land settlement purposes, provided that the agreement is with a corporate body and is ratified by Parliament. Any agreement entered into after the 1st January next in this regard will have to be ratified by Parliament before it is valid. In respect of the agreement already entered into with the Chase syndicate, the Bill will make this provision retrospective to the date of signing of the agreement, the 19th November, 1956.

The agreement with the Chase syndicate has been tabled in this House and is available in printed form to any member who may require a copy and the Clerk of this House will only be too pleased to supply copies to those desiring them. Although a measure of this nature would have seemed revolutionary a few years ago, today it is essential if we are to keep in step with modern developments. We find that at the present time there are huge sums of money available for land development purposes provided the scheme offers a sound business proposition.

It is just as well that that is so, because the funds required to develop areas of such magnitude as the Chase syndicate intends to handle would be beyond the resources of the State Government and, in the absence of an influx of capital such as this we would have to plod along on a small-scale development programme for many years before we could get 1,500,000 acres of land under cultivation by using the financial assistance that the State could make available.

I am sure that after studying the Bill in conjunction with the Act and the agreement made with the Chase syndicate members will agree that the 19th November was a big day of Western Australia. Outside this Chamber I have been asked where the stock is to come from once the land has been devoloped and put under pasture, and I am not in a position to answer that question. I imagine that stocking such a large area would be quite a problem to being with; but, on the other hand, sheep breed rapidly under good husbandry, provided they have the pasture on which to graze.

There is not the slightest doubt that the syndicate which is to operate at Esperance will have available to it all the necessary scientific knowledge in regard to pastures and sheep and cattle husbandry. It will spare no expense to obtain the services of

the right people to see that the development is carried out scientifically in order to produce the best results.

That is all I wish to say at this stage; but if members would like further information on any point in the agreement, provided they will raise those questions during the debate I will endeavour, when replying, to make available whatever information is desired. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [7.55]: I support the Bill. The only criticism of the measure that I now have to offer is that the agreement was not brought before Parliament earlier for ratification. Any other reservations which I had in mind have been dispelled by what the Minister has said. There has been a great deal of controversy and criticism in relation to this measure, arising either from ignorance or because people who sought information decided to make strong statements in the hope of eliciting it.

I think that many of the bitter statements made both verbally and in the Press in regard to this question have been prompted by a feeling of "sour grapes." There is at least one large organisation in Australia which, in 1953, had an opportunity of seeing what was going on at Esperance, and at that time there was ample evidence there of what the future offered in that district. I refer to the A.M.P. Society.

In 1953 several members of that organisation visited Esperance on the field day, primarily on an invitation that I extended to them. They travelled incognito because they said that although they were interested in the area they did not wish to be recognised, as there were in their affairs at that time certain factors which precluded them from making any move in regard to the Esperance country.

Some people now bitterly criticise the Government for allowing a foreign company with foreign capital to come into this State and take over the people's birthright. That is a most stupid statement to make, because, for at least 100 years, this country has remained idle, and up to six years ago it could have been purchased for 2s. 6d. per acre.

Some members will recall what happened to Mr. Helms, who was so active in experimental work in the Esperance area and who failed for want of a few paltry pounds of assistance. The grasses he was experimenting with in those days are now proving the Esperance Downs to be the kind of country that is dreamed of by agriculturists. Yet that man, in spite of all he had proved, had to walk off his land broke, after having set his heart on proving and developing it.

The only good thing which has come from these past heartbreaks and the tragedy of the settlers who spent their lives on that land and had to walk off in the end is that they all left some records. Some of those who were able to remain in the area have kept rainfall records that have proved invaluable; and in addition to that, the settlers who have gone there recently have put some of that country into production within a matter of a few years and have shown what it can produce, having had before them the knowledge that has been gained from the experimental station in that district.

For years representatives of that district in this House have had to suffer gibes and jeers when they advocated the settlement of the Esperance Downs. We have been ridiculed for advocating that area as a future source of wealth to the State. Some of that ridicule has been applied in a friendly way, and sometimes in a critical way, by farmers and others who, because they probably knew their job, thought that we did not know what we were talking about.

They claimed that we were not farmers, and that therefore our opinions were not of much value; and that may be so. However, the very fact that, as men who were not practical farmers we were so greatly impressed, made it worth while for a farmer to travel down to see what we were talking about.

I can remember the time when I placed some stooks of barley and oats in the Council corridor without any labels on them; and then I stood back and amused myself while members who were practical farmers came along and felt the heads of the cereals and expressed their varying opinions. One would say that they came from Dowerin, another would say they came from somewhere else. However, in the afternoon I labelled them to show where they had originated, and many members were astonished when they learned that the stooks had come from Esperance Downs.

I do not care who gets the praise for what has been done in the Esperance district so long as progress is made. It is amazing how many people one meets today who say they have discovered Esperance Downs. In the most unexpected places I have heard various people say, "It was I who discovered the Esperance Downs." But we do not care who discovered them. All we are hoping for is that in the near future the land down there will be as rich and as productive as the far-famed South-West.

The Minister's assurance that this Bill will grant to the responsible Minister the powers that are sought, will mean that any future sales of land that are made will be brought before Parliament for ratification. That removes the last reservation I had in mind. I can assure the Minister of this Government or the Minister of any future Government that he will have my whole-hearted support in granting to any

other company land which any company seeks to develop on the same terms as these.

With regard to the point he mentioned —that farmers elsewhere have raised the question as to how we are going to stock this land—I would say, as a person who does not know stock, that if we consider that in the last few years the stock population of this country has been decimated almost at regular intervals by drought and floods, we have not much to worry about. I am sure members have seen moving pictures or newsreels of large tracts of country which were literally decimated through fire of flood.

The Minister for Railways: There has been a 20 per cent. stock increase in Western Australia in the last five years. The total is now 13,000,000.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: That is so. In the first couple of years the progress would be slow; but it would be similar to the accumulation of compound interest, and once a start had been made the multiplication in the numbers would be incredible. I may be wrong, because I do not understand stock; but keeping in mind the tragedies that have occurred to our stock population, the disasters that have occurred throughout Australia and the amazing rejuvenation, I am sure it will not be long before those areas are completely restocked.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There are good vitamins in the soil round about Esperance.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: At least we know it is a good area, even although it may not be good soil. We know that the soil is merely a vehicle for production. We have to put into the soil the necessary elements, and we soon get the crops that are sought. I would like to mention that anything the Minister can do, even at this early stage, to meet a request submitted by a new venture which is anxious to start a project in that area would be greatly appreciated. I am referring to the establishment of a native mission farm.

The superintendent of the mission, Mr. Schenk, has expressed the wish that, when the time is opportune, certain land will be made available to young native lads who have completed their training at this mission farm. Should any member of this House be visiting the district in the near future I would advise him to visit this native farm, which is just out of Gibson's Soak, and he could see for himself the wonderful job that is being done by Mr. Schenk in the training of these young natives.

Half a dozen of these lads from that mission farm attended the last field day at Esperance, and I heard some extremely complimentary remarks expressed by farmers in the district concerning their ability. Local farmers have talked to them and have learnt of the work they are doing at the mission farm. I would be extremely pleased if the Minister could do anything to assist them to achieve their ambition.

The Minister for Railways: You are referring to a native settlement?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: What Mr. Schenk has in mind is that a certain portion of this land might be set aside so that these lads can acquire a farm in their own right. He is hopeful that land will be made available to these boys, who are being taught all the latest trends in land development.

There is another matter about which the Minister can do something. As is known, the settlers to whom land was leased in the Esperance district, prior to the signing of this agreement, had to agree to certain conditions regarding the development that had to be done. Travelling from Esperance to Mr. White's property at Young River, it is almost tragic to see the huge tracts of land that are being held with practically no development whatsoever done on them. The people who acquired this land in the first place did so under false pretences. In value, that land has now doubled at least; and nothing has been done by the people on the holdings towards increasing its value.

I think a warning should be issued to all people desirous of taking up land in the Esperance district that, unless they comply completely with the conditions governing their holding of that land it will be taken from them and given to people who are willing to comply with those conditions. When land was first made available in that area other men took up properties and cultivated the land with steel-wheeled ploughs, to drive which would require a Samson.

When the settler had finished his ploughing at the end of the day, he was dead beat with fatigue. However, he still went ahead, according to the terms of his agreement, to get the land into production. The work that he performed produced enough for him to pay for his fencing, etc. Today, one man's property is a picture. There is a mass of clover, feet deep. A car standing in one of those patches of clover would appear to be sitting on the chassis.

The Minister for Railways: Some of the others are lightening the area, so to speak.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: That is so. I claim that those people are completely dishonest. They are holding that land under false pretences.

The Minister for Railways: It should be repossessed.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: In my opinion all land which is not up to the standard required should be taken from the people who are holding it and given to someone else who is prepared to develop it.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: There has been an enormous amount of work done in the last few years.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I agree. I am sure that any Government would see that people such as that were protected.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I think the great majority of settlers have fulfilled their obligations.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: There are great tracts of land between Esperance and Young River which have not been properly developed.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They may be holding it for their sons.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: That is exactly the point. This land was not leased to them so that they could hold it for their sons. It was leased to them so that they could develop it. That is the trouble. Many men have acquired land and have held it undeveloped in the hope that values would rise.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Did you go behind the paddock facing the main road to see if any development had been carried out there?

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I know that some places have been developed to a stage which is sufficient to enable the people concerned to hold on to the land. However, that is not true development according to the terms under which they acquired the property in the first place. It is felt that some of these settlers, instead of assisting the progress of Esperance, are retarding it. There are many people waiting who have the necessary capital to develop that country. Men like Mr. Button, Mr. Kirwan, and others have done wonderful work in bringing that land up to a stage that just staggers me when it is realised that they purchased it for 3s. 6d. an acre. On one occasion a man leaned on my car with his cheque book open and offered Mr. Button a fantastic price for his property, but Mr. Button just laughed at him.

I say "Good luck" to the man who has put the work into that land, because he is now reaping his just reward. If any other company similar to the Chase syndicate is prepared to come to this State with a proposition like this one, and if this Bill will make it possible for such a company to make a start in the same way as the Chase syndicate is going to do, I believe the Bill will merely be bringing our laws up to a stage where they will meet the changing conditions of business practices today. Any firm with the necessary capital can develop large areas of land for a nominal charge.

A similar type of project has been commenced in South Australia by the A.M.P. Society, which is using American methods; but that will only be a small venture compared to the project which is proposed by the Chase syndicate. I therefore welcome this new company, and I hope that it will convince the people who were keen to criticise its venture that this Bill will be a good thing for the State.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [8.15] in moving the second reading said: This Bill makes provision for a number of amendments to the principal Act, some of which are of considerable importance and which have been exercising the minds of members of the Government for a considerable time. It seeks to amend the annual amounts which are now being paid for the licensing of motor-vehicles. It also amends the basis of calculation which up till now has been used to determine the fees paid.

Experience has revealed that the present method, known as the Dendy Marshall formula, does not give the result which it attempts to achieve. Furthermore, Western Australia is the only State using this system. The Bill proposes to introduce the Royal Automobile Club formula, which will give more equitable results and will bring Western Australia into line with all the other States. I would like to emphasise that this measure does not deal in any way with the pattern of kerbside or any other form of parking in the metropolitan area, nor does it refer to proposals for the unified control of public transport.

One proposal is to abolish the quarterly payment for licences for motor-vehicles. This was introduced during the days of petrol rationing and petrol tickets, when the quantity of petrol available to licensees was so small that many people licensed their vehicles only for holiday periods or for specific short terms. It is now considered that there is little need for the issue of short-term licences. At the time this concession was introduced, the number of vehicles on the road was approximately one-third of today's total. In the country areas now, not more than 25 per cent. of motorists are availing themselves of the concession. Under the Bill, the motorist who is hard-pressed to meet the annual fee can take out a licence for six months.

Another concession which is being continued, but in a modified form, is in respect of the 50 per cent. concessional licence which is granted to persons following certain pursuits in rural areas and on the Goldfields. The amendment makes it mandatory for a local authority to grant the concessional licence in respect of one vehicle but the issue of further concessional licences to the same owner in respect to additional vehicles would be at the discretion of the local authority.

It is not intended that the additional fees proposed by the Bill will be paid into general revenue, although in this respect the Western Australian Government has been suffering a severe handicap. Last year a penalty of £750,000 was imposed by the Grants Commission because of the fact that the Western Australian licence fees had not been brought up to the Australian average.

The Government intends to place the additional revenue in a fund for the improvement of facilities for the motoring public. One feature that needs improvement is the crossing of railway lines either by overhead bridges or subways. In the metropolitan area provision is made to expend 50 per cent. of the additional revenue from metropolitan traffic fees on approaches to the Narrows bridge. The amount at present expended on traffic lights will be doubled to bring the amount to £40,000 per annum.

Dealing more fully with the proposals in the Bill, there is one to amend Section 7 (1) so as to provide that a licence for a vehicle employed in connection with any business establishment of the owner of the vehicle shall be issued by the local authority of the district where such establishment exists. In the case of an owner of a private vehicle the licence must be granted by the local authority in whose district the owner resides. If a business firm has several branches, the vehicles used or employed at those branches shall be licensed in the district where the branch exists irrespective of where the owner or head office exists.

Difficulties arose where some local authorities licensed vehicles, the owners of which were resident within the metropolitan traffic area but whose vehicles were employed in the cartage of bricks from kilns within the district of other local authorities. A firm of solicitors advised one of the local authorities that although there was some difficulty of interpretation, so long as the business establishment or branch establishment was within a district the local authority could license the vehicles irrespective of whether the owner had any interest in the business.

The solicitors concerned also advised the local authority that in their opinion Parliament intended "business establishment" to mean the business establishment of the owner of the vehicle. The proposal in the Bill would remove any doubt and prevent conflict between various local authorities.

At the present time vehicles are licensed quarterly, half-yearly or annually, at the option of the licensee, both inside and outside the metropolitan area. The Bill seeks to amend Section 9 of the parent Act so as to abolish the right to obtain quarterly licences outside the metropolitan area. When traffic was under my control, I ascertained from country local authorities that no objection would be raised to the abolition of quarterly licences. Information from local authority associations was to the effect that approximately 75 per cent. of registrations in the country are annual registrations, and that the abolition of quarterly licences should not cause any difficulty or hardship.

Another amendment in the Bill creates a similar position for the metropolitan area. Quarterly licensing of vehicles was introduced during the times of petrol rationing and has remained in the Act ever since. It is felt that there is no need for this concession to be now applied, as it creates unnecessary difficulties in the recording system of the licensing authorities. Vehicles may still be licensed half-yearly and annually at the option of the owners. The number of quarterly licences issued in the metropolitan area amounts to approximately 29,000 at present.

In 1941, when the present additional fee of 1s. for any licence obtained for less than a year was introduced by an amendment to the Act, the number of motor-vehicles of all kinds registered for that year was—metropolitan area, 30,432; and country, 38,055; and the number of country local authorities was 124. At the year ended the 30th June, 1956, the number of vehicles registered in the metropolitan area was 95,862; and in country areas, 81,628; while the number of country local authorities has remained at substantially the same figure—namely, 124.

It will be seen, therefore, that with the greatly increased volume of vehicle registrations to be handled by approximately the same number of licensing authorities, the increase in administrative work justifies the increase in the additional fee from 1s. to 2s. 6d.

Section 10 of the principal Act, which refers to the licensing of vehicles in the metropolitan area, has been amended on so many occasions that it has become disjointed and the provisions for renewals of licences are repetitive. For this reason the Bill seeks to repeal and re-enact the section. The new section deletes reference to the amendment Act of 1946 which is now redundant. It gives the Commissioner of Police power to issue or renew a licence, and provides the conditions for an application and for the fees to be paid to the Commissioner of Police.

The new section also provides that a licence may be issued for a tractor, semi-trailer or caravan for a period of one month or more, but not exceeding 12 months. The privilege of allowing a road tractor, semi-trailer, trailer or caravan to be licensed for one or two months was introduced by an amending Bill in 1947 and was for the express purpose of allowing for seasonal conditions.

So far as caravans are concerned, this mainly related to holiday periods when a party would only want to license a caravan

for one or two months such as at Christmas or Easter or any other holiday period. In regard to a road tractor, semi-trailer or trailer, the provision was designed to assist the farming and pastoral industry where it was found necessary to require a licence only for one or two months for the movement of wool or wheat and the carting of super. The provision is not available to regular contractors who, of necessity, must have their trailers, semi-trailers and tractors continually on the road.

The Commissioner of Police is given power to issue number plates; at present he may only assign a number to a vehicle. An annual licensing date is required for each vehicle licensed and a licence when issued will commence and have effect from and including the date of issue. This annual licensing date is essential for administrative purposes and to preserve the even rate of licensing business throughout the year. An annual licensing date implies a licensing year.

It is desired to preserve the present system of staggered licensing in the metropolitan area so as to obviate the congestion which would arise if licences were issued of fixed half-yearly and annual dates. It is necessary that licences be not renewed for the periods of 12 or six months unless such period falls due on the anniversary of the licensing date. This will enable continuity to be maintained.

The new section still allows application for the renewal of a vehicle licence to be made during the month prior to the date on which the licence is due to expire or within 15 days after that date and is substantially the same as the existing section. If a vehicle were not registered within 15 days of its expiry date the previous owner would be responsible for the return of the number plates to the Commissioner of Police, and, in default, would be liable to pay a fee equivalent to that for a licence for a period of six months, or such lesser sum as might be demanded, even though the person might have ceased to own the vehicle.

The Commissioner of Police is given power to relicence country vehicles purchased by metropolitan residents, and to issue an initial licence for a staggered period. According to the parent Act the owner of two or more vehicles may apply to the commissioner for a common licensing date. This means that the owner of a motorcar and a motorbike may obtain a common date and have his licence adjusted to expire on the 30th June. The amendment provides that before a common date is approved the owner must have five or more vehicles registered.

It has been found that difficulties occur when a licence is issued on payment of a cheque which is not honoured by the bank. The vehicle remains licensed although the cheque is of no value and usually some time elapses before the matter can be straightened out. The Bill seeks to overcome this by providing that a licence shall be void if the fee is paid by a dishonoured cheque. The licensing authority is also given power in such cases to demand the return of the licence and number plates; and if this is not done, an offence is committed for which a penalty of £20 is prescribed.

Another amendment provides that one half of the fees collected for transfers of licences in the metropolitan area shall be paid into a fund to be called the Metropolitan Area Railway Crossing Fund Account. This fund will provide finance for the improvement, maintenance, repair and provision of railway road crossings, including subways, overhead bridges and level crossings in the metropolitan area.

I might mention that a couple of years ago I caused an investigation to be made into the number of railway crossings in the metropolitan area and into the reaction of local government authorities to a suggestion that was made for the improvement of those crossings. The idea of the inquiry was to eliminate unnecessary crossings wherever possible; and in other instances to decide whether a bridge, subway or some other method should be adopted in order to obviate as much as possible the actual crossing of the railway lines.

As a result of that inquiry it was found that because of the heavy cost involved, no local authority, nor the Government itself, could set out on a programme to improve the means for crossing over the lines in the metropolitan area. The Bill proposes to set up a special fund so that progressively improvements could be made to crossings by the building of overhead bridges or subways.

It is proposed, in an amendment to the Third Schedule, to increase transfer fees by 100 per cent. The estimated increased revenue would be £14,000 in a full year. Victorian legislation also provides for a fund for the same purpose.

The Bill also seeks to provide that where power to relicense country vehicles purlicence fees for distribution to the local authorities in the metropolitan area exceeds the total for the year ended the 30th June, 1956, then 50 per cent. of that excess is to be paid to the Commissioner of Main Roads each year for a period of 10 years. This money is to be used in defraying the expenses to be incurred in taking the land for the purpose of providing and developing roads and approaches of the Narrows bridge and roads associated with the required development of the metropolitan area.

Subsection (2) (a) of Section 14 provides that an amount of £20,000 shall be applied for the provision of traffic lights and signs for the direction of traffic. The Bill proposes to increase this amount to £40,000 in order that the installation of traffic lights may be accelerated.

The purchaser of a vehicle previously registered is responsible for the registration of the transfer and the payment of the prescribed transfer fee; but it is found that in many cases, where the purchaser has the vehicle in his possession, this procedure is neglected. The Bill places the responsibility for the transfer and the payment of the fee on the seller. It is considered desirable that the person selling the vehicle should be responsible for the transfer and payment of fees rather than the purchaser.

Section 17 of the parent Act provides that, upon conviction for an offence against the Act, the court may order the cancellation of the offender's licence. It could be that when a licence holder was convicted, the licence might have only a few days before expiry, and this cancellation would be no hardship. It is proposed in the Bill to give the court power in such cases to order that the person convicted be disqualified for a period not exceeding 12 months from holding a licence of the same type as that cancelled.

At present, dealers in new and used vehicles are charged a licence fee of £5 per annum, but a charge for identification plates is not provided, although plates issued to every other type of licencee are charged for.

An amendment in the Bill is designed to include an additional charge for the issue of plates. It is also considered necessary that the annual licence fee of £5 be increased to £10 to conform with the increase in other charges which are proposed in the Bill, and to bring this State into line with the Eastern States in regard to licence fees charged. For example, in South Australia the fee for dealers' plates is £16 for each pair; in Queensland, £15 for the first pair and £6 for each additional pair.

Another amendment seeks to implement the recommendations provided by the Australian Uniform Road Traffic Code Committee in its progress report of 1954. These deal with the use in this State of overseas motor-vehicles when temporarily in Australia. This is very important in view of the many visitors in Australia for the Olympic Games who have brought their vehicles with them. All other Australian States have made provision in their legislation for the licensing of these vehicles while in Australia; and it is therefore necessary for Western Australia to include conditions in its legislation. Clause 12 provides for a new section, 21A, which sets out the conditions under which these vehicles may be used.

Section 22 of the principal Act does not contain any specific provision whereby a traffic inspector of one local authority is authorised to question or obtain particulars from persons residing in the districts of other local authorities for the purpose of conducting investigations into offences against the Act committed in the district for which he is responsible. This clause rectifies the position and gives the necessary powers to traffic inspectors.

Section 23 of the Act provides for the issue of drivers' licences generally and for the refusal by the Commissioner of Police on certain grounds. Subsection 4 provides for a sight and hearing test. Over 4,000 drivers are required to wear glasses, but there is nothing in the present section to allow for conditions to be prescribed for a driver to wear glasses or a hearing aid whilst driving. The Bill seeks to amend Section 23 (4) by adding paragraphs providing for an ordinary driver's licence to be endorsed with a condition that the licensee is to wear glasses or a hearing aid and to prescribe a penalty for any breach of the condition so endorsed.

Section 24 of the principal Act gives authority to the Commissioner of Police to suspend or cancel drivers' licences for various reasons, but does not provide for the cancellation of a licence if it was obtained by fraud, contrary to the provisions of the Act or regulations or failure to comply with any condition endorsed on a licence. The Bill amends Section 24 to give the commissioner this authority.

The Act provides conditions to be observed by the holder of a learner's permit to drive a motor-vehicle, but there is no provision for the conditions to be observed by the holder of a learner's permit to drive a motor-cycle. This clause amends Section 25 of the Act by adding a new subsection to provide conditions for this purpose.

Under Section 31 of the principal Act as it stands, a person convicted of the offence of driving a vehicle recklessly or negligently or at a speed or in a manner dangerous to the public is liable for a first offence to a fine not exceeding £50. For a second offence, the penalty is a fine not exceeding £100 or imprisonment for three months, and it is mandatory for the court to suspend his licence to drive for such period as the court thinks fit, but for not less than three months, and he is disqualified from obtaining a licence during the period of suspension.

It is considered that the minimum mandatory suspension for a second offence is too harsh in the case of negligent driving, and it is proposed to give the court a discretion; but where a person drives in a reckless manner or in a manner dangerous to the public, it is proposed to allow the mandatory suspension for a subsequent offence to remain. Offences under this section which were committed prior to the Traffic Act Amendment Act, 1953, are not to be taken into account when fixing the penalty for a subsequent offence.

The Bill seeks to amend Section 32 of the Act to provide that when ascertaining the penalty to be inflicted by the court for an offence against that section which

deals with drunken driving, no conviction for an offence which had been committed prior to the coming into operation of the 1946 amendment shall be taken into account as a conviction, whether it is a first or a subsequent conviction; and when a person has been convicted subsequent to the 1946 amendment, that conviction is deemed to be the conviction for a first offence. If a person was convicted for three offences prior to the 1946 amendment, he can apply to the Commissioner of Police for a licence; and provided that there are no other impediments, can obtain one. If there were not more than two offences subsequent to the 1946 amendment, he can also apply for and obtain a licence if his term of disqualification for those two offences has expired.

The Police Department has difficulty in obtaining information when a minor offence has been committeed as to the driver of the vehicle involved when the driver is not the owner. Frequently information is withheld from the investigating officer in regard to the name and address of the person concerned, and the Bill seeks to amend Section 34 by providing that the owner or person in possession of the vehicle at the time of the offence shall be deemed to have committed the offence. This owner-onus provision is included in the majority of the Eastern States legislation.

Clause 20 of the Bill deals with the recognition of drivers' licences issues overseas and held by visitors to this State, in order to implement the recommendation of the Australian Uniform Road Traffic Code Committee. This amendment is necessary in view of the provision previously made for overseas motor-vehicles contained in Clause 12.

Section 47 (1) of the principal Act is the section which contains the regulation-making powers. The Bill proposes to amend this section by empowering the Governor to—

(a) enable a duly authorised officer of a local authority to demand the return of number plates upon expiry, revocation, cancellation or suspension of the vehicle licence;

(b) prescribe special provisions relating to official traffic signs;

(c) and (d) to incorporate the existing provisions of Section 42 (3) of the Railways Act in order that the provisions of that Act and the parent Act may become uniform. This deals with the penalties for persons failing to obey "Stop" signs at railway crossings.

Difficulty is experienced at intersections where traffic lights are installed through neon lights and other illuminated signs confusing motorists approaching such intersections. It is considered this is dangerous and could contribute to serious accidents. To eliminate this it is proposed in the Bill to amend Section 58 (2) of the principal Act to apply conditions to prevent the use of any light being burnt or exhibited at any place likely to confuse or create circumstances likely to cause any risk.

Section 59 of the principal Act provides that no person shall advertise to obtain a passenger in a motor-vehicle not licensed to carry passengers, nor advertise any request for conveyance in a motor-vehicle without the approval of the Commissioner of Police. No penalty is provided in this section for the offence, and the Bill has a provision for a penalty of £20 for such an offence.

Section 50, which deals with car-stealing is repealed and re-enacted. For some time the prevalence of car-stealing by both adults and juveniles has caused the Government and citizens of the State no little concern; and despite the penalties inflicted by the courts under the present sections, the incidence of offences has not diminished. In an endeavour to check these offences, the Government feels that more stringent penalties must be inflicted on those convicted; and the Bill seeks to delete the present penalties and replace them with more drastic measures.

In view of the proposed increase in charges for vehicle registration, and other licensing charges, it is necessary to amend the Second Schedule so far as the definitions of motor-car and motor-carrier are concerned. A class of three-wheel vehicle which is designed and controlled in a manner similar to a four-wheeled motorcar is removed from the heading "motor-carrier" and included under the heading "motor-car."

For some time the Grants Commission has been penalising the State because of its low motor-vehicle registration fees as compared with the charges levied by the non-claimant States. This penalty has been in the vicinity of £765,000. Details were obtained of the charges in the other States and a comparison discloses that each other State is charging fees very much in excess of those charged in this State. Proposals represent an increase of 45 per cent. over the present fees. To correct the position to conform with other States an increase of 84 per cent. would have been necessary.

This State's computation methods were based on the Dendy Marshall system whereas all other States used the R.A.C. formula which was laid down by the Royal Automobile Club of England. To bring this State into line with the other States it has been decided to introduce the R.A.C. formula to this State. At present, motor-vehicle registration fees are formulated on a sliding scale, but it is considered advisable to amend this method of computation, and introduce in lieu figures based on a rate of 4s. per power-weight unit which is derived by adding the weight of the vehicle to the horse power.

Previously the licence fees for commercial vehicles were based on a power-load-weight unit; but it was considered that this form of licensing was not equitable to various types of vehicles, and consequently the new licence fees for these vehicles will be computed by the same method as for motorcars—that is, power-weight units, but at a different scale of charges. These are—

	Per power-weight
	s. d.
Up to 50 power weight	5 3
51 to 75 p.w.	6 0
76 to 100 p.w.	7 6
Above 100 p.w.	9 0

In all cases where vehicles use a fuel other than petrol, it is proposed to charge double the licence fee for petrol vehicles. The licence fees for all other types of vehicles—that is, motor-omnibuses, motor-carrier other than motorcar, caravan, trailer and semi-trailer, tractor (prime mover type and other types) and motor-cycle—have also been increased to bring the charges into line with those for motor-cars and motor-wagons and also to make them comparable with those of the Eastern States.

It is estimated that these increased charges will bring in additional revenue amounting to £616,000 for a full year. Of this amount £329,000 for a full year will be obtained by local authorities outside the metropolitan area, while £287,000 will be from the metropolitan area. At present that total amount received from motor-vehicle and other licensing charges is £1,381,000 comprising £637,000 in metropolitan area and £744,000 in the country areas. Added to the present revenue the proposed increase would mean a total revenue of £1,997,000 for a full year.

The schedule attached to the Bill is required for the purpose of amending Section 390A of the Criminal Code to comply with the proposals in Clause 24 of the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—TRUSTEES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [8.45] in moving the second reading said: As members are aware, Section 5 of the principal Act authorises trustees to invest trust funds in certain ways. This authority, however, does not extend to the placing of money on deposit in savings banks. When the State Savings Bank was operating trustees were empowered to deposit trust funds in that bank, and the Banking Act of 1945 of the Commonwealth permits similar action so far as the Commonwealth Savings Bank is concerned.

The position therefore is that so far as the savings banks sponsored in this State by the Rural & Industries Bank and the trading banks are concerned, no authority exists for trustees to place money in these savings banks nor are trustees protected should they do so. The private trustee companies have asked that trustees be given this authority and the Bill seeks to achieve this.

Members will notice that the Bill makes separate reference to the Rural & Industries Bank Savings Bank and to the private savings banks. This is necessary as the private savings banks are constituted under the Commonwealth Banking Act of 1945, and the Rural & Industries Savings Bank under the Rural & Industries Bank Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [8.47]: This is the amendment to the Trustees Act which I mentioned when speaking to the Rural & Industries Bank Act Amendment Bill and it does precisely what was requested by the trustees and the private banks. It brings the operations of the R. & I. Bank, as regards trustees' deposits, into line with those of all banks; and I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [8.48]: There is just one point which I think is worth the attention of the Chief Secretary in dealing with this Bill. It provides that trustees may open accounts with the Rural & Industries Savings Bank, or any other authorised savings bank; and it so happens that under the Administration Act, when a person who has a bank account in his name dies, although that bank account may be in his name, or jointly with someone else's—and quite often the account is in his name purely as a trustee—that account cannot be operated on until such time as his executor or the other party gets consent from the Commissioner of Stamps that the duty payable by the deceased person's estate has been paid.

That provision is obviously necessary in so far as it relates to a man's own bank account, whether with the R. & I. Bank or any other bank; but the position is entirely different where he is either a sole trustee or one of two trustees and the bank account is in his name purely in the character of the trustee.

My point is that in such a case there should be no clog in the operation of that account, because it could seriously inconvenience the trust estate. I mention this now because when the Administration

Act Amendment Bill is being further considered, I propose to move an amendment which will cover the point I have just discussed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [8.52]: This is only a small Bill, which provides for the establishment of canteens in isolated areas. It appears to deal only with areas where the exploration for petroleum products is being carried out; but I notice that there is an amendment on the notice paper which will have the effect of widening its scope to enable it to cover an area in which any company is operating. Subsequent to the permission of the Licensing Court, a company with a number of employees could establish a canteen. In a State as vast as this one, a provision of this character should be agreed to. It is a lot to expect people to go into the outback areas; and where we can provide some small amenities for them, we should do so. That is all the Bill seeks to do, and I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. L. A. Logan in the Chair; Hon. W. F. Willesee in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Second Schedule amended:

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The only point at issue is in regard to Clause 9 of the Second Schedule.

The CHAIRMAN: That cannot be amended under this Bill.

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I move an amendment—

> That the words "or which is operating in an isolated area," in lines 20 and 21, page 3, be struck out and the words "or any company which for the purpose of its business is operating in an isolated area" inserted in lieu.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT (No. 2).

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. E. M. Davies in the Chair; Hon. A. R. Jones in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Section 668A added to Code:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Mr. Baxter had moved an amendment to strike out the words "or in connection with which the convicted person has used a motor-vehicle," in lines 9 to 11, page 2.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I hope the amendment will be agreed to. There are all manner of offences that might be indictable; and even though the motor-vehicle was not directly responsible for the offence the licence could be cancelled. The Crown Law Department thought the provision in the Bill was going too far.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As Sir Charles Latham has explained, an indictable offence may be committed by a person, and yet the motorcar need not have any direct bearing on the offence. For example, a person might travel by motorcar and cash a false cheque which, in itself, would be an indictable offence; and under the provisions of this Bill, his licence could be taken away. The provision is meant to apply to a person who uses a motor-vehicle for the specific purpose of carrying out an indictable offence.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 9.4 p.m.