Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 the word "eight" be struck out and the word "one" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: A similar amendment was defeated earlier, and I hope the Committee will not agree to this amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17—Second Schedule amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That the second column of figures be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—

£
2,100
2,100
2,100
2,100
2,100
2,100
2,100
1,680
1,572
1,470
1,362
1,572
1,260
1,572
1,260
1,260
420
840
840
430
546
420
336
336
168
252
228
420
210
126
42
2,100
840

The proposal in the Bill is that the present figure should be increased by 60 per cent. but, for the reasons I have given, I suggest that the increase should be 20 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Committee agreed at an earlier stage to the £2,800 maximum, and as these figures are on a similar basis, I hope the amendment will be defeated.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 12.55 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 28th October, 1953.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

(a) As to Return of Excess Equalisation Payments.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Can he inform the House when the Government intends to return to producers the excess equalisation fund payment on superphosphate collected for the 1952-53 season?

(2) If the answer is "No," when can it be expected that an announcement of the date of repayment will be made?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) It is not possible at the present time to announce a date of repayment. The work of compiling a schedule of all payments made by each farmer into the fund has just been completed, and the determination of the amounts to be refunded is now in process. There are over 40,000 items covering more than 14,000 claims, and some time must elapse before actual delivery of cheques.

(2) When all claims from farmers have been checked.

(b) As to Reduction in Price.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary:

As the price of new cornsacks was reduced recently, can primary producers expect that the price of superphosphate

will also be reduced, as in the past it would appear that the price of new sacks was the limiting price factor?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The Minister for Prices in reply to a question on the 27th October, 1953, stated that a reduction in the price of superphosphate would result in consequence of the lower cost of cornsacks.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION.

As to Interim Suspension of Acts.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the impending introduction of the Local Government Bill, the current investigation into local authority boundaries, and the desirability of retaining the services of experienced council and board members, while these matters are being dealt with, will he give consideration to the introduction of legislation designed to suspend, for up to 12 months, the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act, which call for annual elections in November and April respectively?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

As it is not anticipated that finality will be reached within the next 12 months in regard to the Local Government Bill or to any possible re-allocation of boundaries following the present investigation, it is not considered that any suspension of elections would be of value.

BILL—COLLIE CLUB (PRIVATE).

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

1, Adoption of Children Act Amendment (No. 1).

2, Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment.

Adopted.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st October.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [4.38]: This Bill contains about a dozen amendments to the Companies Act and, so far as I can see, some of them are desirable, while others are not so acceptable. For example, there is a provision in the Bill which will enable the Minister for Justice, or the Attorney General, as the case may be, to grant to non-profit-making organisations such exemptions from the provisions of the Act as he deems fit. As I mentioned last night, that would enable him to exempt a club or association, registered under the Companies Act, from all the strict technical requirements of the Act which, in the ordinary course of events, it is difficult for clubs to observe. This would also avoid the necessity of any club, which otherwise could not comply with the provisions of the Act, requiring to have a special Act passed through Parliament to deal with its particular case.

The measure also provides that in future auditors of a company shall be entitled to receive any notices of meetings which are issued to shareholders. I think that is quite a good provision. There is also an amendment in the Bill to provide that where a foreign company has shares which are without distinctive numbers, the company is relieved of that obligation, under our Act.

Another alteration in the Bill, which I think is long overdue, is that relating to the extension of time in which liquidators of companies can distribute moneys in their hands. At the moment the Act provides that any moneys held by liquidators for more than six months, from whatever cause, shall be paid to the Registrar of Companies. In practice it is found that that requirement is extremely irksome and I understand it has not been enforced by the Registrar of Companies. The Bill proposes to amend the Act so as to allow the registrar some discretion in this matter.

On those points I think the Bill will improve the smooth and efficient working of the Act, but there are one or two other points of which I am not so enamoured. For example, it proposes that on the liquidation of a company no person shall be entitled to be a liquidator of such company if, within two years of its winding up, he has been a director or an employee of it. Whilst in the majority of cases it is desirable that a liquidator should be completely at arm's length from everybody else and that an independent person should act in that capacity, this particular clause does not make any exceptions at all.

It applies not only to public companies but also to private companies where the winding up is on account of insolvency or for the purposes of reorganisation or the normal winding up of a wholly solvent company. I think we might have a look at this clause and restrict its operation in one particular, namely, in the case of a members' winding up. Under the Act winding ups are divided into various classes. There is the compulsory winding up by the court, and there is a voluntary winding up by creditors.

Then again there is also what is known as members' winding up. A members' winding up takes place only when a company is solvent. If the company is insolvent it must be a creditors' winding up. If before a company goes into liquidation the directors make a statutory declaration certifying that it is solvent, then we have what is known as a members'

winding up. In other words, in a members' winding up the only persons really concerned are the shareholders themselves. They are quite able to pay all their creditors 20s. in the £ and often as not a members' winding up is purely a matter between the shareholders themselves, although in a public company it is more than probable, even in a case of that nature, there would still be appointed an outside professional liquidator.

I suggest, however, that where a company is being wound up and it is capable of paying its creditors 20s. in the £, in 99 cases out of 100 the most convenient and most suitable person to wind up the company—provided he is a registered liquidator—would be the director or the secretary of the company. He is acquainted with the history of the company concerned and with its affairs, and, more often than not, would perform those duties for a minimum remuneration and probably not at the ordinary scale that would be charged if the job were handed out to a professional liquidator.

If the director or the secretary were exempted from the provisions of this clause I think it would be a fair and equitable proposition. Another point in the Bill is the proposal that a prospectus in which the print is less than eight point face measurement shall not be circulated in the State unless the registrar, before the prospectus is issued in this State, certifies in writing that the type and size of the letters are legible and satisfactory.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What is eight point face?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The normal print in "The West Australian".

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: This provision could adversely affect foreign companies.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: It certainly would, and when we remember a foreign company is any company which is operating outside Western Australia—

Hon. H. Hearn: It would affect a company from the Eastern States.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Members may have received a prospectus similar to that addressed to me in the post yesterday. It concerned a rather large flotation that is taking place in South Australia. In running through this prospectus I noticed on the last two pages the type is in less than eight point face. It so happens that this prospectus was posted to me from the Eastern States and is not circulated here. But under the provisions of this Bill the prospectus would infringe the provisions of the Companies Act.

I may also say that the prospectus to which I have referred is typical of every prospectus I have seen—and I have seen quite a number—that is printed in the Eastern States. In the main it is printed in eight point face type but later it goes off into smaller type because the information contained in those pages is of no interest or consequence to the investor.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Purely of a formal nature.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: That is so. Business being what it is these days and in the general run of things, we find solicitors and stockbrokers in the Eastern States drawing up the prospectus and sending it to be printed. They are not greatly interested in making shares available in Western Australia anyhow and as often as not shares are made available in this State only because of urgent representation by local stockbrokers and more or less as an act of grace by the Melbourne stockbrokers. More often than not that is the only reason they are made available for subscription to residents in Western Australia. Human nature being what it is, we find from experience that these matters are generally rush jobs.

From inquiries I have made around the town and from my own experience I find that if it is decided to allow the investing public of Western Australia to participate in an Eastern States flotation, the prospectus is sent across by the principle solicitors in Melbourne and Sydney to their agents, the solicitors in Perth, almost on the eve of the flotation, with a brief note asking them to run through it and reply saying whether it is in order and whether it has been registered or not.

I feel that we should not have in the Act a provision of this nature that would be completely out of uniformity with the Companies Act in any other State. When solicitors and accountants in the other States are drawing up prospectuses, they proceed according to local practice and would not hold up the whole flotation simply because of some tiddley-winking requirement in the Western Australian Act. Even though the clause be passed, it will serve no purpose and will be a grave injustice to the investing public of this State by denying to them the right to invest in Eastern States companies as and when opportunity offers. In Committee, we could well delete that clause.

Another clause strikes me as being extraordinary. The substance is that where a company is a creditor of another company and that company goes into liquidation and is insolvent, the creditor company must have its claim deferred until the claims of all the other creditors are met, if the holding company happens to hold more than three-quarters of the capital in the subsidiary company. This gets away from the ordinary common law relating to creditors and debtors, and I cannot see the equity or justice of it, whether the company concerned be a mining company or otherwise.

If I remember rightly, the Chief Secretary, in moving the second reading, indicated that the Under Secretary of Mines was in favour of this clause. I do not know that that is any particular recommendation for us to adopt it. In so far as it relates to mining companies, I would suggest that if there is such a company carrying on business in the State, then any creditor company, whether a holding company or not, should rank equally and share and share alike with other creditors. Anyone who invests money in a mining venture, whether as a shareholder or a creditor, knows the risk and all should take their chance and there should not be any special priority for creditors who are not shareholders. That is what the proposal amounts to.

This provision would also operate to the disadvantage of the subsidiary company and even to the disadvantage of the creditors, whom the clause is designed to protect. A company might be on the verge of insolvency and require, say, £5,000. There might be a reasonable feeling amongst the board members that if this amount could be obtained by way of loan, the company could pull through and pay all its creditors 20s. in the £ and still continue to carry on its business profitably. That happens with many companies; an extra few hundred or few thousand pounds at a critical time saves the day and enables the company to continue producing. If there were a holding company that in normal cases would be prepared to put up the £5,000, it would hesitate—and I should say it would refuse—to do so saying, "We do not mind putting up the £5,000 if we are going to share and share alike with all the other creditors, but if you expect us to put up that money to keep the company afloat and give it a chance of new life, we are not prepared to do so if our claim is to be deferred until everybody else has been paid in full." The company would be putting up the £5,000, not for the benefit of the insolvent company, but simply for the benefit of the creditors. This is a very dangerous provision and departs entirely from ordinary commercial practice.

Another point in connection with the provision is that there might be a holding company that has advanced a considerable sum of money to its subsidiary, say, £50,000 or £100,000, and the holding company might have given a debenture charge over its assets to the lender—a bank or even the Under Secretary for Mines. The holding company gives a debenture over the whole of the assets to someone who is lending the money—a bank, financial institution, or the Under Secretary for Mines.

If this provision were adopted, the secured creditor, who lent on the security of a debenture over the assets of the holding company and therefore over the debt owed by the insolvent company to the holding company, would be denied normal rights because that debt would not be payable until the claims of all the other creditors had been met. If the clause be included in the Bill, a proviso should be added stating that it would not affect the rights of any person against the insolvent company under a charge given by the holding company to the lender. Otherwise most banks and financial institutions, having advanced the money to the holding company in good faith and on the security of the debt due to the holding company, would find that it was not worth anything.

The only other point on which I wish to touch—and I shall not press it but mention it in passing—is the proposal that no investment company shall invest any of its funds in a proprietary company. Looking at the matter from a purely commercial angle, I cannot see the wisdom of the proposal. As a matter of fact, from my reading of financial papers that arrived from the United Kingdom recently, I find that during the last six months, more than one investment trust has been sponsored with the blessing of the British Government and has received the co-operation and assistance of the Government where insurance companies and banks have participated for the express purpose of investing their money in proprietary companies, principally to assist those companies and save them from going into liquidation on account of the death duties payable when a shareholder has died.

That is a very important point in connection with proprietary companies. In view of the high rate of death duty prevailing these days, the demise of a principal shareholder could easily wreck a proprietary company through inability to find sufficient cash to meet the death duty. For that specific purpose investment trust companies are being formed today in the United Kingdom to take up shares in proprietary companies. I think the House might well give further consideration to that proposal which seems to me to be restrictive, without any real purpose.

The Chief Secretary: Would you re-emphasise the main point of your objection?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: It is that this provision sets out that an investment company shall not be permitted to invest its money in shares in a private company—a company with 50 members. I think we could well leave the Act as it is because the present trend is that the proprietary company, on account of financial stringency and so on, is finding it more and more difficult to keep afloat if one of its principal shareholders happens to die. Subject to the reservations I have mentioned I support the second reading.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [5.2] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small Bill which seeks to make easier the carrying on of business by small co-operative companies throughout the State. Members know that scattered here and there in Western Australia, from Carnarvon to Albany, there have sprung up, over the last couple of decades, quite a number of small co-operative stores, local companies, comprised of shareholders who are principally farmers from surrounding districts or people living in the town concerned. At Collie most of them are miners and at Bassendean the majority are local workers.

The Bill proposes to make conditions a little easier for the managements of such companies. Small co-operative concerns do not have large staffs. Generally in a big company there is a manager, his secretary, the share registrar and a lot of others, but a small company, consisting of members who have subscribed £1 or some additional sum, and where the provision of the Act is that no matter how many shares a person has he still has only one vote, is not run for profit. Sometimes such concerns do make a profit, but after having paid dividends the profit, which is limited by the Companies Act, is distributed in bonus shares to the shareholders or in payments to the people dealing with the concern.

The Companies Act requires certain returns to be sent in monthly and fortnightly, necessitating a lot of work. As the returns have to go in at the end of the year it is proposed to relieve these co-operative companies of the necessity of sending in fortnightly or monthly returns, which deal principally with the disposal of shares, shareholders and the appointment of directors of a company. In many instances, especially in places such as Collie and Bassendean, the shareholders are not permanent residents of those centres. The Bill contains six clauses and I think it is one better dealt with in Committee. I will therefore ask members to agree to the second reading. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [5.5]: This measure is open to one objection, in that it is, in effect, sectional legislation. All companies, even the smallest, have to comply with the many strict provisions of the Companies Act and it seems to me that if it is good enough for a small private company with a capital of perhaps £1,000 to have to fill in forms and comply with the edicts of the Registrar of Companies, there is no good reason why co-operative companies should be exempted. It may be found that many co-operative companies have a capital and membership considerably larger than that of some private companies.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They are not as extensive as some of the private companies.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: There are some private companies which are formed for no reason other than investment purposes, yet they comply with all the provisions of the Act.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They pay taxation, but the co-operative companies do not.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The co-operative companies are handling other people's money and incur debts and liabilities and should therefore be well managed. It will probably be found that the directorate and secretaryship of a co-operative company are not altogether the same as those of the ordinary commercial company and for that reason they should be perhaps more strictly controlled by the registrar. The Bill proposes to relieve co-operative companies of the necessity of putting in a return when there is a change of directors or when a director changes his address, and I support that proposal.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The return will go in at the end of the year.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes. At the moment all companies put in a return at the 31st March each year and in it they must give the names and addresses of directors, together with their occupations, and so on. The Act also contains what I think is a most pernickety provisions to the effect that if a director changes his address or if there is a change or directors during the year a return must be sent to the court within 28 days. To my mind co-operative and indeed all companies could well be relieved of that provision.

Every company has to keep a register of directors, which must be kept up-to-date and it is open to any person, on payment of the prescribed fee, to go to the company and inspect its register. I suggest that during the year— that is from March to March—it should not be necessary to lodge these returns of changes of directors at the court. I am a director of half a dozen companies and if I changed my address from 85, Tyrell-st. to 95, Tyrell-st., it would be necessary for half a dozen secretaries to fill in a form notifying the change and to pay the fee of 5s. or whatever it might be at the Supreme Court.

There is a further ridiculous position under the Act. When a company is formed the directors may or may not be named in the articles, but if they are, then when the memorandum and articles are lodged with the court, when the company is incorporated, the directors' names and addresses are set forth in the articles, but

they cannot go into the articles unless there is also given to the registrar at the same time the written consent of all the proposed directors named in the articles stating that they are prepared to act as directors.

One takes down the articles, wherein the directors are named and at the same time one must put in their consent to act, and yet within 28 days one has also to send to the registrar another return of directors. That is unnecessary duplication and I suggest to Sir Charles that he might consider accepting an amendment which I propose to move, when the Bill is in Committee, to exempt all companies from this requirement, which seems to me to be unnecessary and irksome.

I feel that Clause 6 should be amended. Here, in a companies Bill—a public measure of great importance—we proceed to mention a person and exempt a special person from doing certain things. Section 397 of the principal Act provides that no memorandum or articles or any other document or agreement regarding the registration or incorporation of a company shall be lodged at the Supreme Court or with the Registrar of Companies unless a solicitor has signed the form of certificate set forth in the Act, stating that it complies with the Companies Act. There is one exception. Such a form may be signed by a solicitor or, where no one has charged a fee for preparing a document, by a director named in the articles.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Would you please read that section?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes, it is Section 397, and it reads as follows:—

> The Registrar shall not accept for filing or registration any memorandum or articles of a company or document affecting the memorandum or articles (other than an order of the Court) or other document or agreement (other than a prospectus) relating or incidental to the registration or incorporation of a company under this Act, including a company required to be registered under Part XI unless such document bears a certificate in the Form H in the Thirteenth Schedule to this Act signed by a solicitor or by a person named in the articles as a director of the company where the certificate contains a statement that no person has given advice in respect of, or prepared the document for or in expectation of fee or reward.

Of course, prior to the passing of the Companies Act, 1943-1947, there was no such provision as Section 397. Anyone could tender documents and they would be accepted by the registrar. However, most persons, in the normal course of business, took the precaution of having them prepared and lodged by a solicitor. Up to 1943 there was no express statutory obligation upon anyone to have the documents certified either by a solicitor or by a director named in the articles of association.

Why the Act stipulates a director named in the articles is beyond me, because I imagine that if a director was certifying, it would not matter whether he was named in the articles or not, so long as he was a director. In the Bill it is proposed to have the documents not prepared by a solicitor in such cases, or, if the company is a co-operative, by the person who is for the time being holding the office or acting as the secretary of the Federation Trust Ltd.

That seems to me to be an extraordinary provision. I could think of another excellent suggestion. It would be just as logical to say, "or H. K. Watson" or any member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries. I feel that when we start exempting a person from the requirements of the Act, we are getting away from the first principle of a public companies measure. This clause should either not exempt the secretary of the Federation Trust Ltd. or, alternatively, we should withdraw the whole section from the Act.

If that section is to remain in the Act, then it should apply to the secretary of the Federation Trust Ltd. and to any other secretary or company in Western Australia. I do not care which way it is altered, but I feel the clause should not be passed as it is at the moment, because it seeks to exempt a particular person, who, for the time being, is to be the secretary of the Federation Trust Ltd. Therefore, that point should be given some further consideration. Subject to those remarks I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. L. Craig, debate adjourned.

BILL—ASSISTANCE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN WIRING DWELLINGS FOR ELECTRICITY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [5.24]: This is a new measure and those who have read it will have a clear idea as to what it proposes to do. As the Chief Secretary said when introducing the Bill, it is a short measure with a very long short Title. In fact, it is one of the longest short Titles I can remember having seen.

The effective clauses, Nos. 3, 4 and 5, propose to make it possible for a local authority to assist a householder, owner, or occupier of a dwelling to have the installation of electricity or the rewiring of a house, as the case may be, performed for the occupier by the local authority under an agreement, having a maximum term of 10 years, the cost of the work to be repayable to the local authority by

means of rates. A local authority means a municipal council or road board as described in their respective Acts.

At the moment I am inclined to support the Bill after perusing it, but I will reserve my final opinion until I have heard the opinions of those who are more familiar with this type of legislation than I am. It has been suggested to me that the local authority might be the local supplier of electricity and from the point of view of the one who made that suggestion there is quite a deal to be said for it. I understand that some local authorities in the country run their own power houses and make their own installations.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Quite a number.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: And they make a profit on the sale of current. Obviously it is to their advantage to obtain as many consumers as possible and in order to do so, it has been quite a common practice among those authorities to suggest to the occupiers of houses, "You arrange to be connected to the electricity supply and we will provide the necessary funds, but we will ask you to repay the amount before the end of the financial year."

The object of that move was, firstly, to increase the number of consumers and, secondly, to avoid the possibility of the Government auditor querying their action. In one instance that I know of, a local authority increased the number of consumers very considerably and was able to render that service at a cheap rate. It had its own attendants at the power house and, during their ordinary working hours, they were able to make the installations for which the consumers were charged 10s. a point.

Hon. L. Craig: And now it costs £4 a point.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: As I have said, that local authority found it very profitable. But the position is a little different in a number of other areas. In the metropolitan area, the distribution of current is the responsibility of the State Electricity Commission, and even if that body wished to make arrangements with consumers similar to those proposed in the Bill, I doubt whether the Electricity Commission, under its Act, would have that power. In any case, the Bill simply mentions "a local authority." Local authorities, on the other hand, acting as agents in the main for the State Electricity Commission, and making nothing of it, in many instances might not be anxious to undertake a responsibility such as this.

After all is said and done, it involves making available finance, the preparation of agreements and the necessary inspections, which entail quite a deal of work, and the local authorities would probably find that they might be put to considerable expense. Certainly, the Bill provides that it shall be at their discretion. All the Bill proposes is to make it possible for a local authority to render that service if it so desires.

A position could arise where one local authority, being fairly financial, would be prepared to make this service available to consumers, but there might be another local authority not so well circumstanced, which might be loth to undertake the responsibility. There could be reaction from one section of ratepayers as against another clamouring for consideration along the same lines. So the Bill introduces some questions over which we should take our time and consider carefully. In the main the measure is a worthy one, but I will reserve my considered opinion on it until I hear the opinions of other members. At the moment, I support the second reading.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: (Midland) [5.28]: At first glance, the Bill seems to have a great deal of merit, but on second thoughts I think there may be a catch in it somewhere. Taking my own locality as an example, where the houses are being rewired to change the electric installation from DC to AC current and, particularly when some of them have not been rewired for a considerable time, such work will be pretty costly to the occupiers. Only recently, I had to pay £92 to have two houses rewired, both of which are on the one block. Unfortunately, the local authority concerned was responsible for my paying £20 for the advice they gave me, which they should not have given. But that is by the way.

The point I wish to make is that the work of installation is performed by a private contractor and not by the municipality or the road board. The municipality is responsible for bringing the current from the electric light pole to the main, and the wiring of the house is done by a private contractor. I want to know whether the private contractor will still do the house installation work and whether the local authority will pay him for his services and recover the cost from the householder.

It is a different matter when the local authority supplies the current and makes all the necessary installations, but what would happen in the case to which I have referred when a local authority only connects the house to the electricity mains? I would like the Minister to clarify that point when replying. The cost of rewiring a house in these days is very high and, as has been pointed out, the charge is something like £4 10s. a unit. In many instances, a working man cannot afford to pay the whole installation cost in a lump sum. Although there is a lot of merit in the proposal, I would like the Minister in his reply to give the House some information on the points raised.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [5.30]: I support the second reading for much the same reasons as those suggested by Mr. Logan. On the Goldfields, there are many old houses which, because of bad wiring, have more or less become fire hazards. People are worried about them, have them inspected, and then find that they have to be rewired. It often comes as a shock to ratepayers to receive notification from the inspector of electricity that this work has to be done. The manager of the electric light station which is conducted by the Boulder municipality, has pointed out that he is not desirous of causing people to incur an expense which at times they cannot afford, but he has to insist upon the rewiring being done, because the loss they would sustain by fire might be much greater than the cost of rewiring.

I have received many complaints from ratepayers that they have not been able to obtain an extension of time in which to have the work done. They have required more time because they have not had cash available to pay for the rewiring. The cost is rather high, and sometimes people who own their own homes cannot find the money. The Bill makes provision for them to have the work done by the local authority, with the payments extended over a period of up to 10 years. Even if prices remain as high as at present, it would not be a great hardship for anybody to have his house rewired under those conditions.

I was interested in Mr. Logan's question as to whether this work would be done by the electricians of the local authority or by contractors. That is a question that needs answering. Where a power station is controlled by a local authority, it is usually manned by electricians, who could do rewiring. On the other hand, where a local authority is buying current from another source, it may not have electricians of its own, and the work would have to be done by contract, and the question of price comes into consideration. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

BILL—HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West—in reply) [5.33]: I was very pleased to hear that Dr. Hislop fully agreed with the provision in the Bill designed to ensure that shipping companies should pay seamen's hospital fees direct to the hospital concerned, and not to the seamen. It was also pleasing to hear the hon. member's appreciation of the excellent service rendered to seamen, whatever their nationality or colour, by the staff of the Fremantle Hospital.

To those members who have expressed a great deal of what, I am afraid, is unnecessary indignation regarding the alleged injustice of charging the employers of seamen the actual cost of their hospital treatment, I would like to point out that the cost of treatment is not part of the Bill. The measure does not seek to fix rates, or to increase or reduce the existing rates. May I emphasise the impracticability of attempting by legislation to specify the rates which should be paid by seamen or any class of person.

Changes in the cost of living continue to occur, and it would be a bold man who would dare to prognosticate the events of the next few years. If the fees to be paid to hospitals by any class of persons were specified in the parent Act, it would be necessary, quite frequently, to amend the Act to meet changes in the cost of living. That would be far too slow and cumbersome a method by which to meet the position. That is why, for many years, the appropriate fees to be paid from time to time have been fixed by the Governor-in-Council.

The principle by which the full cost of treatment has been charged to the companies has been unaltered for many years, even during the period when hospital treatment was free to all local citizens. This charge of full cost applies not only to shipping companies, but to all traffic accident cases, repatriation cases and migration cases at least. Shipping cases are treated as private patients and occupy beds in private wards. They are not public patients in any sense as they are the private patients of the doctors, whom the shipowners pay in full.

I think that in that summing up practically all the angles introduced in the debate have been answered. Listening to the discussion, one would have thought at times that the companies had been singled out for special treatment. But nothing of the kind has taken place. The same treatment is being meted out to them as is applied to repatriation cases, those injured in traffic accidents, and so on.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 31A added:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The Chief Secretary said the Bill does not lay down any fees to be paid by shipping companies. That is quite right. All this clause does is to provide that the companies shall pay direct to the hospitals, whether the cases are covered by workers' compensation or not. But in another place, and even here, there has been some debate as to

what the companies should be charged. I agree that we can do nothing whatever in that connection through this Bill, but I would like to stress that the whole position is topsy-turvy at the moment.

Those who read the report of the debate in another place will know that in practically every State the charges are different. There are various sectional payments to different industries; and it is up to us, and certainly up to the Government, to get some sort of regulation charge so that all industries and persons will be charged the same rate. This matter comes indirectly under the clause, but we cannot make an amendment along those lines. However, enough has been said in both Houses to make the Government realise that there is inequity in charging different basic payments to different industries and sets of persons for different conditions treated in the same hospital. I trust that what has been said will have some effect in the future.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: This clause provides for any hospital to prescribe a fee, and whatever fee is prescribed by that hospital will have to be paid by the agent or owner of the ship concerned. I do not like the clause at all, and I think we should give some power to the Governor to regulate the fee and not allow any hospital to charge what it likes. I therefore move an amendment—

> That in line 18 of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 31A, after the word "fees," the words "as provided by regulation made by the Governor" be inserted.

The object is to give power to Parliament to have some say in what the fee shall be after it has been prescribed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment, which does not take us one yard further. The provision already refers to paying to the board "the prescribed fees." It does not matter who prescribes them; if they are prescribed, they are to be paid.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They are prescribed by the board. I want them prescribed by the Governor.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: All the Bill sets out to provide is that, instead of the money being paid to a seaman, it shall be paid to the board direct. Whether the amount is £1 or £10 does not matter a tinker's cuss so far as the Bill is concerned. I am surprised that the hon. member, with his legal training, should move to insert these additional words, which do not mean any more than those that would precede them. I think that on reflection he will agree that they have no value. He is trying to include the matter of the prescribing of the fee, which is not the point at issue.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not think the amendment will help us at all. I agree with the Chief Secretary. Hospital boards now have the right to prescribe their fees, and I think they are tabled here so that they are available for us to see. I think that before a hospital board would proclaim a fee it would discuss it with the Health Department. As a matter of fact, the department has almost taken away from the hospital boards the power to prescribe fees, because whenever they have done so, or done something of a financial nature, their action has been countermanded by the department.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The argument of the Chief Secretary is very ingenious, but I refer him to the definition of "prescribed" in the Interpretation Act. I understand that the Hospitals Act provides that a board may prescribe the fees. It is true that the Bill does not deal with the amount of the fees, but it does provide that certain fees for certain occasions shall be paid by certain people. Before these people are bound to pay the fee asked for by the board it should be a fee prescribed by regulation, so that the board would be held in check to a certain extent. I object to the whole clause because I think it is wrong that one industry should be charged differently from another. I do not know why the stevedoring industry should get off at 35s. a day, while the shipping industry has to pay £3 7s. 6d. or thereabouts.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I think the words proposed to be added are superfluous. From time to time the Health Department sends a circular to hospital boards setting out what the charges shall be, and it is the practice for hospital boards to adopt those charges by resolution at a subsequent meeting. Consequently there would be no necessity to bring down a special regulation for a charge.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If members want to know what a hospital is charging the shipping companies there is no better way to do it than by regulation because the regulation would have to be laid on the Table of the House. I have been told there is a differential charge. A certain amount is paid for the people on our coastal boats, whereas for people on overseas boats a sum considerably less is paid—or it was previously. Now it is proposed to ask the overseas people to pay our ruling rate. If our seamen go overseas I understand they are charged a lesser fee. My view is that if our people are treated more reasonably overseas than here, then we should reciprocate.

The Chief Secretary: They do not charge anything in England.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I understand that is so.

The Chief Secretary: Would you have reciprocity with England?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. It is only fair. If they treat our people on those lines, why should we not treat theirs in the same way?

The Chief Secretary: How many Australian shipping lines go overseas to England?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is not a question of number, but of principle. The time may come when we shall have big shipping companies here. I would like to see the amendment agreed to.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I ask permission to withdraw my amendment because I find that the Hospitals Act provides that the board may make by-laws. The Interpretation Act provides that by-laws shall be laid on the Table of the House.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.56]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill. Enough has been said by members preceding me for the House to know that the Act is outmoded, and that the amendments will not have the effect desired by the Chief Secretary. I would prefer to see the old Act continue in force until another session of Parliament when it could be pulled to pieces and reassembled so that we would have a completely new measure. Some members have said they believe that the firearms should be registered as well as the owners. Others have said they think that the owners should be registered and not the firearms.

So that we can eliminate, to a large degree, the indiscriminate use of firearms by people who have no need of them, it would be better, when an application for a firearm licence is made, and the applicant is not known to the police, to have the application endorsed by a magistrate or justice of the peace. If this were done we would have a better type of person owning and using firearms. At present there is nothing to prevent anyone from obtaining a licence and using a firearm.

The Act plus the proposed amendments will not eliminate, as the Minister desires, the criminal tendencies that a person in possession of a firearm might have. Whilst I am not a great user of firearms, I have a licence and I use one occasionally, but there would be nothing to prevent anyone with a criminal tendency from going to my place and stealing a firearm and ammunition and doing with it what he wished.

I cannot see that the proposed amendment will have any effect upon people who have criminal tendencies. I think it would be better to have a new Act to provide more strict supervision in the granting of licences. Those people whom we have heard about who just go around the roads shooting at anything they see moving, and having a pop at windmills and water-tanks now and again, should never have received a licence in the first place. I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill and I hope that I will get sufficient support, so that a completely new Act can be introduced during next session.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [6.0]: When introducing the Bill the Chief Secretary said that its aim and object was to endeavour to stop people with criminal tendencies from committing crimes. In my opinion there is nothing in this Bill which will prevent such people from committing a criminal act and merely by increasing the fine to a maximum of £200, plus six months' imprisonment, will not deter these people. If a man is prepared to commit a criminal offence, he knows that, if he is caught, he will be faced with a much higher penalty than would be imposed for the unlawful use of a firearm.

As far as I can see, the Bill does not go far enough. One or two exemptions are provided and there is a clause which covers a man who wants to try out a rifle or a gun for a prospective buyer. Apart from increasing the penalties in one or two cases, that is about as far as the measure goes and, as I have already said, an increase in the penalties will not deter a criminal from committing an offence. It is possible today for any person to send cash from Western Australia to somebody in the Eastern States so that a firearm can be purchased. The firearm can then be brought back into the State. It is registered with the retail or wholesale store in the Eastern States, but that does not stop the firearm from being brought into this State.

As a matter of fact, in the Eastern States no permit or licence is required by the individual for the purchase of firearms other than pistols or revolvers. That provision applies in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland and yet we are trying to bring into the Act in this State something which is entirely foreign to the conditions prevailing in the Eastern States. If we can stop the foolish use of firearms we might be getting somewhere, but I do not see how we can, by any Act of Parliament, stop a criminal from committing an offence.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It is not possible to stop crime by any Act of Parliament.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is so.

Hon. L. Craig: But we can make it more difficult.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not know that this Bill will make it any more difficult if a person wishes to commit an offence.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Certainly not more difficult.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If a person wishes to procure a firearm in this State today he must have a reasonable excuse for buying it and the only person who can interpret what is "a reasonable excuse" is the Commissioner of Police. A man who did not know the set-up could go to the Commissioner and ask for a licence. When the Commissioner asked, "What do you want it for?", the person wanting the licence might become bewildered and say that he wanted it to shoot something somewhere. In such a case he is unlikely to get a permit; but if another man were oiled up before he went in as to what he would be asked, he could say, "Yes, I want it to shoot vermin on such and such a property and I have the permission of the owner of the property." In that case, the permit would probably be issued. In my opinion the Act needs to be overhauled and the only way to overcome the position is to license the individual and not the firearm.

Where a person is convicted as a drunken driver for the third time, his driving licence is withdrawn for life. We could do the same thing as regards firearms licences and if the court found that a person was unsuitable to hold a licence, it could be cancelled. If the police were suspicious of a man and thought that he had a firearm, they could stop him before he committed any offence. We must overhaul the Act in order to put some common sense into it, and endeavour to prevent a criminal from committing an offence. This Bill is not the way to do it. Unfortunately I have not sufficient time to read out all the information I have been able to obtain in regard to this subject.

Hon F. R. H. Lavery: There is plenty of time.

The Chief Secretary: We will listen.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Unfortunately I cannot work it out while I am trying to make a speech, but I hope an opportunity will be given later on so that some use can be made of this material. I believe the Government could make a better approach to this problem than it has done by the introduction of this Bill. While I am not sure that I will vote against the second reading, I think it would be better if this measure were redrafted.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [6.7]: I intend to support the Bill because I think it will tighten up the existing provisions and, in some measure, will achieve what it sets out to do. But I would like to ask the Minister, or maybe Mr. Parker, a question as to whether there is any law in this State which prevents a person from carrying a concealable weapon. I cannot find it in the Firearms and Guns Act, but I think if we could prevent a man from carrying a concealable weapon, it would go a long way towards stopping people with criminal tendencies.

Under British law it is an offence for a person to carry a concealable weapon, and if a man is bent on criminal intent with the use of firearms he will not carry a .303; he will carry a pistol or a revolver. If we could cover that aspect, we would go a long way towards overcoming the problem, because a concealable weapon is the one mostly used by persons with criminal tendencies.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [6.9]: I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill mainly because I want the Minister controlling the department concerned to have another look at this legislation in view of the criticism that has been directed at it. It seems to me that the individual rather than the firearm should be licensed, and it recalls to my mind a most unsatisfactory position as regards the issuing of licences. In order to enable any of my employees to use any of my firearms for the shooting of vermin such as kangaroos, eagle hawks and so on, I have had to obtain permits from the police for the particular employees concerned.

However, I have discovered that a permit entitles an employee to go in and buy ammunition where and when he likes. That seems to me to be a grave weakness and it is one aspect of the legislation which needs tightening up. The police eventually caught up with one chap I had working for me and we found that he had five previous convictions. The fellow concerned had been issued with a permit and he could have gone on buying ammunition for all time, at least as far as I can make out.

In my opinion those who are responsible for framing this legislation have not given sufficient thought to those questions. If the licence is confined to the individual, and this restrictive action of the Police Department in preventing a person from lending a weapon or giving it to someone to use for a specific purpose is to continue, I can see a danger such as I mentioned a few moments ago. After all, if a responsible person is given a licence, and licences should be issued only to such people, surely he could be relied upon to have sufficient control over the weapon to see that it did not fall into criminal hands. I wanted to make my attitude clear so that the Minister may understand why I will vote against the second reading. I think this legislation has been ill-considered by the people responsible for it.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [6.13]: I intend to support the Bill but I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that there are a large number of

licensed gun-holders in this State who are sufficiently responsible to have guns in their possession. In common with other members, I am a little worried that in their efforts to protect the population from the criminal class, members of the Police Department might prosecute a man for some minor breach of the Act and deprive him of the use of his rifle or gun for the rest of his life.

Members have heard me speak about indiscriminate shooting in my electorate, but there are a number of licensed gun-holders who do get permission to go on to certain property in that area. There is a leading doctor in the State who has a dairy in my area and he allows a number of business people to go on to his property at the week-end to do some shooting.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: There is not a great deal more I wish to say, but I would like to endorse the suggestion made by Mr. Henning the other night that a pamphlet be issued to people who desire to license firearms. Up till a few months ago the Traffic Department issued a small pamphlet to any person who went to get his car licensed. As Mr. Henning said, something similar could be done under this Act. Country members have referred to irresponsible people shooting their stock, and perhaps they could be educated by this means. I support the second reading of the Bill, though I am not at all happy that some parts of it will not be used against a genuine holder of a gun licence.

HON. N. E. BAXTER: (Central) [7.31]: I have examined this amending Bill fairly thoroughly, and have listened with interest to the contributions made to the debate. Some of the speeches have been quite constructive. But in a number of instances I think members have got away from the clauses of the measure. To a great extent this Bill is purely of a machinery nature, and is designed to assist the police in the licensing of firearms and guns.

Clause 2 provides that the holder, or an employee of the holder of a licence, should be in a position to carry a firearm for testing and demonstration purposes. Although I do not hold entirely with this amendment, I think a provisional licence should be issued to these people. They should not have a permanent licence, nor should they enter in a book a record of the time of testing of the firearm. It is possible that a dealer or a manufacturer could employ a person who is irresponsible, and he could take a firearm out into the country with somebody who purported to be a prospective purchaser and use that firearm indiscriminately, while holding no licence at all. I think a provisional licence should be the order of the day, so that if that firearm were being tested, and a police officer came along, some authority could be shown to him for handling the firearm. I do not think this clause will assist the Police Department in the handling of firearms and guns.

Clause 3 is another machinery clause. It provides that the Governor or a diplomat should be permitted to carry a firearm without a licence. Clauses 4 and 5 are also machinery clauses, mainly for the purpose of helping the police. Clause 6 has been referred to by members. This increases the penalties mainly for carrying a pistol or a revolver. I agree that this provision will not in any way stop a person with criminal tendencies from shooting or injuring another person with a pistol or a revolver. I do not think the clause will help very much, because the majority of criminals are not particular whether they go to gaol for the offence or not. Clause 7 is also a machinery clause, and I think it is in order. The police will know where they stand on this matter. Clause 8 is much along the same lines.

There is not a great deal to quarrel about in this Bill, but I do agree that there are some necessary amendments which could be incorporated in the Firearms and Guns Act. For example, today when a person applies for a licence for a motorcar he has to demonstrate to a police officer that he is capable of driving a motorcar and that he can handle one. On the other hand, practically any person can go to a police officer if he has already obtained a permit, or if he can get the permission of a licence-holder of a gun or firearm, and apply for and get a licence without demonstrating to the police officer that he knows how to handle the firearm or gun.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is not true.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think it is correct, and I disagree with the hon. member on that point.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: It does not say that in the Act.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The hon. member may think he knows a good deal more than I do, but I have had a fair bit of experience in these matters. A person can go to a police officer and obtain a licence for a firearm without demonstrating to that officer that he can use the firearm. I think I am right in that. At no time does the police officer pass the firearm to the person concerned and ask him if he knows how to handle it. If the hon. member had been in the forces—I think he was—he would have realised that one is first taught how to handle a firearm. There are different ways of handling a firearm.

There is a clause in this Bill which refers to pointing a firearm at another person. If a man was handling a firearm properly he would never point it at another person because that is one of the first things one

is taught not to do. That is one of the main complaints I have against the present Act: it is too simple to obtain a licence without demonstrating whether or not one is able to use a firearm. I support the second reading of the Bill, but I ask the Minister to give some consideration to the constructive suggestions that have been put forward.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West—in reply) [7.40]: I desire to thank members for the contributions they have made to this debate. I do not propose to deal with all the points that have been raised, because I think members will agree that this is essentially a Committee Bill, and that all the points raised can be thrashed out when we get to the Committee stage. There seems to have been a little misapprehension during the debate. To refresh the minds of members as to the purpose of this Bill I should like to quote from a part of my second reading speech. It is as follows:—

> The principal Act was introduced in 1931 as a result of a request from the executive of the Police Association—

I am reading this because it was suggested during the debate that there is no necessity for this Act at all, and that it should go out altogether.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Retain the Act and bring down a new Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will reply to the hon. member a little later. My remarks continued as follows:—

> —which submitted that legislation of such a nature would have a considerable effect in curtailing a great deal of the crime that was then occurring. Similar opinions were also being voiced by judges, magistrates and coroners.

I would like to emphasise this—

> The whole purpose of the Act is to restrict the possibility of the use of firearms by people with criminal or dangerous tendencies.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Is that in New South Wales or here?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is dealing with the main Act. Members seem to have overlooked that point; they have debated this Bill as if it were the original Act. That, of course, is not so. My remarks on the second reading continued—

> The main intention of the Bill is to increase the penalties for the illegal use of firearms. There are also other amendments designed to correct anomalies in the parent Act.

That is the whole reason for introducing the Bill. I was surprised that a lot of members should have expressed the intention of voting against the second reading. Is that a fair and reasonable attitude for members to adopt?

Hon. H. L. Roche: Yes, if it is not a good amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Let us get to the Committee stage and then deal with the points suggested. This afternoon Mr. Jones said, "Throw this out and bring in a new Bill next year". I would like to ask the hon. member whether if he had a hole in the roof of his house and proposed putting a new roof on next year, he would leave the hole there until such time as he had got round to installing the new roof. Of course he would not! The police have realised there are certain shortcomings in the parent Act. Certain phases of the Act have been found to be unable to stand up to present-day conditions, and this Bill proposes to correct that state of affairs. Is there anything wrong with that?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: No.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope members will not persist in their intention to defeat the measure at the second reading. Let us in the Committee stage deal with the points raised and if the amendments are not suitable, members can then make suggestions which will bring the Bill up to the standard required.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You do not always listen to reason.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Do I not? I suggest that we pass the second reading and deal in Committee with the various points that have been raised. If members adopt that attitude, I am sure we shall find that this legislation will be all the better as a result of the consideration given to it by this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

To Refer to Select Committee.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move—

> That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

As to Committee Stage.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

> That consideration of the Bill in Committee be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th October.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [7.47]: I find myself in some difficulty concerning this Bill because it is designed for people for whom I have considerable respect, but there are aspects of it that leave me with a sense of misgiving. I regret that I have not been able to accept the invitation of the superintendent of the Dental Hospital to visit that hospital

before speaking on the Bill in order to familiarise myself with the conditions that prevail there, but I trust that before the Bill is taken into Committee, I shall have that opportunity.

In dealing with a Bill for the registration of nurses, we must first of all ensure that the amending measure will fit into the principal Act. There is one aspect of the measure which to me makes it unsuitable for inclusion in the Act. Possibly it could be introduced by a Bill of its own, but it should not be included in nurses' registration legislation. Every class of nurse that is registered has a qualification only in regard to nursing in some form or other. These include general nurses, children's nurses, mental hospital nurses, midwifery nurses, tuberculous nurses, mothercraft nurses and nursing aides.

The nurses in every one of those groups have their qualifications purely on a nursing basis. Yet, under this proposal, one of the major branches of training consists of secretarial work. Those who have received a copy of the curriculum of the Perth Dental Hospital training school for dental nurses will appreciate that these girls are to be trained in all forms of office routine.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I have not seen that circular.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I thought that every member had received a copy of it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Well, I did not.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You may have my copy.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Let me point out that there are certain groups of subjects under Item 11 as follows:—Elementary book-keeping and business principles applicable to a dental practice—(a) introduction to office routine; (b) office routine and general knowledge; (c) patients' records and accounts; (d) store records and payment of accounts; (e) staff records, sundry account books and incidental records; (f) practical instruction. Under paragraph (e) there is included a list of requirements that amazes me—principles of industrial arbitration and awards, wages rates, taxation deductions and stamps, insurance, workers' compensation and so on —a purely office routine. Hence these nurses will veritably be part-time nurses and part-time secretaries.

Whether the training of one of these girls is good or not does not enter into the question with me at this stage. I do not believe that these nurses are entitled to be registered under this Act. If they are registered under the Act, we shall be bringing in a type of nurse with qualifications altogether different from those held by nurses registered under the Nurses Registration Act. No other nurse registered under the Act is asked to do any work involving accountancy or office routine and yet half the time of these girls will be spent on what is essentially office routine. Therefore I say that the training of these girls will not entitle them to be registered under the Act.

There are a number of other aspects of the Bill that call for much consideration. We must look at the type of work that these nurses are being given today. I am of opinion that if we register a person, we should ensure that she is able to gain a livelihood as a result of the training received. It would be of no use registering me as a medical practitioner to engage in the treatment of the sick if only witch doctors were able to treat the sick. I would not be able to earn a living.

I believe that this work is essential in a central hospital, but the number of people in the city who would employ these nurses afterwards would be very limited; and on that account, too, I doubt whether we should give them registration, leaving them to find that when they had got their diploma, there was no job for them to do. I have been told that these girls are being trained in numbers below the requirements of the city. Yet I believe that there would be only about two dental surgeons in the city by whom they could be employed to the full extent of their training. All the rest of the work in the ordinary dentist's room would be done by a girl with much less training, while one trained to the standard mentioned would not have an opportunity to exhibit her training, because much of the work would be done in private hospitals where registered qualified nurses would take control.

There are various other aspects which I must consider before I could agree to the measure. The training of anyone in a professional sense should as far as possible come within the limits of the work to be done. I do not think we should put these girls to this amount of work unless we are going to make use of their services. Only three years are needed to train a general nurse. In many parts of the world, three years is the recognised period of training for a nurse, and this will train her to assist in highly technical surgical work. Yet we are to ask these girls to spend three years in doing the work I have outlined.

There are many dental places where a patient may suffer nervous reaction to the treatment. Where there is work to be done that calls for skilled nursing treatment, as I have pointed out, such work is usually done in a private hospital. Therefore the only standing that a girl trained under these proposals will have will be in the room of a dentist. Once a patient enters a private hospital, the general trained nurse takes over. This is a point that should be clearly understood.

Let us see how far this training goes in relation to the Medical Act. Before we pass the Bill, we must ensure that it does not infringe some of our existing legislation, and I believe that it does. I want the House to realise that the power of a dentist to give treatment is limited by the Pharmacy and Poisons Act, which shows that the amount of prescribing a dentist is entitled to do is very small indeed. When it comes to the use of such things as poisonous drugs, it is significant what a dentist is permitted to do. Under the regulations published in the "Government Gazette" on the 12th October, 1951—I am reading from the regulations under the Act of 1910-48, but I do not think they have been altered much since then—we find the following:—

> Subject to Section 43C of the Act, any of the drugs or preparations referred to in the Tenth Schedule shall not be sold except by—
>
> (a) a medical practitioner;
>
> (b) a registered pharmaceutical chemist holding a licence under Section 26 of the Act;
>
> (c) a registered pharmaceutical chemist holding a licence under Section 16 of the Act and employed in dispensing medicine at any public hospital or other Government institution,
>
> and the sale of any of such drugs or preparations shall be subject to the following conditions:—
>
> (1) Sale shall be made only on the prescription of a medical practitioner or of a dentist as defined in the Dentists Act, 1939-1947;
>
> Provided that a dentist shall not prescribe any drug or preparation referred to in the Tenth Schedule other than any of the following, namely, penicillin, sulphonamides, barbiturates (not more than six tablets or capsules), and in any case shall not prescribe any such drug or preparation except for purposes of dental treatment only.

Hon. L. Craig: Prescribe, not use?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: He may prescribe them for dental use only. It continues and says that when a medical practitioner writes a prescription for drugs under this Tenth Schedule, the prescription shall be cancelled unless he has specifically prescribed that it shall be repeated. Then it adds that a dentist shall not write a prescription to be repeated, and that when dispensed it shall be cancelled, so the amount of prescribing by dentists is limited.

Hon. L. Craig: But the dentist can use all these things ad lib.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not think so. If he is going to use them, he must write a prescription for them. He has in his surgery such drugs as cocaine, but he cannot give them to a patient to take away I am pointing out that the use of these drugs is confined to the dentist's rooms. He cannot go into a private hospital and write a prescription for a patient he is going to treat the following day, except within these limits.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: What is there, not on the list, that he would want to prescribe?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am saying that he is limited to this degree, and am going to point out that the training laid down for these nurses goes far beyond what a dentist is allowed to do. Under the provisions of these regulations, the dentist can procure a number of drugs for his own use, but his power of prescription is strictly limited. In spite of that, the nurse is going to be instructed in the various methods of administering drugs—hypodermic injections and the like—although the dentist may order these things only in a limited way for the treatment of his patients.

If the nurses are to be trained in the various methods of injection and so on, they will not possibly be able to use them after they have qualified, because they cannot be used in dentists' rooms. We are therefore asking these girls to train in work that is required in the Dental Hospital, because it is necessary there, and not in work required in a dentist's rooms. I do not think we are justified in asking nurses to do this training and then, when they are qualified, telling them that there is no occupation available in which to allow them to use the training they have been called upon to undergo.

Hon. L. Craig: They will not be paid for it, at all events.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No; the nurse is only to assist in the work of the dentist and she cannot take much part in that. She certainly cannot be trained to a stage where she is able to do more than the dentist himself can do. That would be unreasonable. In view of that, why should she be put to the trouble of learning dental histology, pathology, the structure of bones and teeth, and so on, when it will be of no practical use to her later on, and will not fit her for what she is to be called upon to do? As I have previously said in this House, I have seen this sort of thing attempted in other parts of the world where an endeavour has been made to turn nurses into a kind of half-trained professional group simply because their work is necessary in the various training institutions.

When I visited the Queen's Hospital in Honolulu, I was told that somebody had left a large sum of money for the building of a research laboratory for the training of the nursing staff, and in that place I saw 40 magnificent microscopes—at a time when we could not buy them in Australia —and the person in charge said that every nurse should be able to recognise a tubercle baccilus under the microscope—a claim that I would not make for myself. The tendency to do that sort of thing is growing all the time. It is not fair to train people to a standard which they cannot use when they have qualified.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Are these requirements under Government sponsorship?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes: this is for the Dental Hospital, and the work is necessary there, but it cannot be required of more than a very few. I am not certain that some of what is today called oral surgery is not an infringement of the Medical Act. It is a moot point as to where is the dividing line between surgery of the mouth by a dentist and surgery of the mouth by a trained surgeon. The whole question of this training should be considered in a much more serious manner than that in which it has been presented to us. If a nurse is not going to be able to fit teeth for people, but will be able only to assist the dentist, who has his own mechanic to make the teeth, why should she be trained in the examination of teeth, the preparation of dental plates, and so on? It seems to me that all she needs to be trained for is as assistant to the dental surgeon when he is actually fitting a patient. To tell her that she must be trained in the method of examination of the patient and in maxillary and mandibular relations is ridiculous.

On the question of assistance in general anaesthesia, I can realise that such training might have been necessary in the days when gas was employed, but I doubt whether intravenous anaesthetics and general anaesthetics are used today in dentists' rooms. I think the dentist, for his own protection, would want in such cases to use the theatre in a private hospital, and the moment the patient went there, that work would be taken over by a trained nurse. So exclusive are they making this work of the dental nurse that there is in the Bill a clause which makes it impossible for a general trained nurse—even the sister who has had charge of the Royal Perth Hospital surgical theatre—to become registered as a dental nurse. I always think that the greater should include the lesser.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: The persons who have been mentioned would not be debarred from getting work with a dental surgeon?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No, but such a nurse could be registered as a dental nurse only after she had been employed in a full-time capacity for a period of not less than one year as instructress to this school. That means that the person instructing these nurses in dental nursing must do it for 12 months before she can herself become registered as a dental nurse.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Is that not additional?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes, but I do not have to train to do something in a lesser capacity than I was first trained for.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: But she is specialising.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The only thing that is specialised about this nursing is the office routine, and all this training could do for a general nurse would be to instruct her in the awards and so on.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: She takes two years to do it.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Under the curriculum, she will have to know a lot about many things, but surely a general trained nurse who has been appointed to instruct these nurses should not have to be an instructress for a year before she could herself become registered. That is unreasonable. There is this further point—that a girl trained at the Children's Hospital can never be registered under this measure. It is made essential that the general nurse, who is entitled under the existing Act to do everything in the field of nursing except infant health nursing and midwifery, which entail special certificates, must in addition have been an instructress at the Dental Hospital for a year before she can register as a dental nurse. We should bear in mind the ability of these girls to get employment after they have completed their training, and there is the question of how far this curriculum infringes the provisions of the existing legislation.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: How would you overcome the difficulty of the qualifications of a fully trained nurse?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That should make her qualified automatically as a dental nurse.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I think a dental nurse in many cases is little but a receptionist, and there would not be enough work for her—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Mr. Barker has made a most excellent contribution on my behalf and has said in a few words what has taken me half an hour to explain. For a dental nurse we require really not a nurse but a trained door attendant, nurse and secretary, and I do not think such a person is entitled to be registered under the Act. If it is required, then the registration should be under a separate Act. The work required in most dental surgeries in this town could be done by a girl with one or two years' training.

Last year this House passed a measure adding to the list of nursing registrations the term "nursing aides", and we allowed those girls to be trained in general hospital duties for one year in order to be able to do the work of assistants to trained nurses. If we remove the qualification of office experience these nurses would become qualified in the same time as a nursing aide provided we do away with all this extravagance in regard to dental histology, knowledge of the bone structure, and so on. Therefore, I think we should consider the Bill very carefully. Firstly, I am of the opinion that it is outside the orbit of the parent Act; and, secondly, I think the training period is excessive.

Hon. L. Craig: The Bill proposes to bring them under the parent Act.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It should not bring them under the parent Act. I believe that the object of the Bill could be achieved in a much better way if a committee were appointed, comprising representatives of the Dental Board, the Dental Hospital and possibly a representative of the medical profession—whose members will have to prepare some of the curriculum—to present a more reasonable Bill to provide for the training of dental nurses within a shorter period.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban) [8.16]: I cannot support the Bill. After interviewing the president of the Dental Board I was somewhat surprised to find that he knew nothing about the matter. I should have imagined that that body would have been the first to be consulted in regard to this measure. So far as I can gather, last year, or earlier, Professor Radden suggested that dental nurses should be registered for the purpose of giving service in the dental hospital, and I understand the superintendent of that hospital thought it was an excellent proposal. Strangely enough, the president of the Dental Board was not consulted. The board has not seen the Bill, nor has it been approached by anyone in connection with it. The president had not even heard of the syllabus, a copy of which has been sent to many members, and so I provided him with one. He told me he had a recollection that some time ago the secretary of the board mentioned to him that Professor Radden had suggested something about registering dental nurses, and the board had said it was not interested.

Hon. H. Hearn: Who prepared the syllabus?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not know. Of course, it is an extraordinary syllabus. It sets out that a nurse must know the symptoms of a disease affecting the dental pulp. If I attend a dentist I want him to know that because I am paying him for his services. I am not aware of what these nurses know or can do. After making inquiries I have found that all a dentist requires is a good intelligent girl who can, in approximately three months, get to know his ways of working and be able to supply him with his requirements when dealing with a patient. I have had a good deal of experience over a number of years with many dentists, and I do not think that a qualified nurse is necessary to assist a dentist in his work. What will be the position if the Bill is passed? We will have these girls registered as members of a union and the Arbitration Court will make an award for them and, being qualified persons, they will be awarded margins for skill.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: That applies to ordinary nurses.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, and who pays?

Hon. R. J. Boylen: The employer.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: And who pays the employer to pay them?

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Those who pay the employer.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I would rather go to a dentist and pay him for his services and knowledge than go to a person who merely watches him at work. I cannot imagine that the girl who is to assist a dentist is going to be such a marvel that she will also acquire a full knowledge of the principles of the Arbitration Court. That is an examination in itself.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Is not that an exaggeration?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Of course it is and it is stupid.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I did not mean it that way.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The curriculum that I have here sets down that a dental nurse must know—

- Principles of Industrial Arbitration and Awards.
- Basic Staff records and records of annual and sick leave entitlement.
- Wages rates, taxation deductions and stamps.
- Insurance — Workers' compensation and others.

That is the proposed curriculum. Apart from that, during the course trainees must have practical experience in office routine including a fortnight's practical experience in a general office in their third year. They are also responsible for collecting accounts and issuing receipts.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That refers to office experience at the dental hospital, does it not?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It might; but why should every nurse have to acquire that experience? We are told that there are many girls who have qualified as dental nurses but they cannot get into the Perth Dental Hospital.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: There is a demand for trained dental nurses.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: And you think they are necessary?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not; but I do not think I am qualified to judge that. There is nothing at present to prevent a nurse from being fully qualified. We have been told that a dentist need not employ a dental nurse if he does not wish to. If a girl qualifies as a dental nurse she can obtain plenty of employment, and there is no need for her to be forced to join a union. This proposal emanates from the Western Australian Trained Nurses' Association and from nowhere else. Why should a fully qualified girl have to acquire further qualifications such as a knowledge of book-keeping, the principles of industrial arbitration and awards and so on?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is an exaggeration.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Of course it is; but that is what is set down in the curriculum, and it is the basis of the Bill which we are asked to pass.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: It is not an exaggeration; it is untrue.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not know whether the hon. member is saying that the secretary of the Western Australian Trained Nurses' Association is an untruthful person.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You are misleading the House.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: In what way? I have just read the contents of the curriculum to the hon. member.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You said they had to have knowledge of Arbitration Court procedure.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Perhaps the hon. member did not hear what I read out to the House. Under paragraph (e) of the curriculum the following is set out:—

> Principles of industrial arbitration and awards.

To fully understand industrial arbitration and awards one has to be an expert. Other qualifications mentioned are:—

> Basic staff records and records of annual and sick leave entitlements.
>
> Wages rates, taxation deductions and stamps.
>
> Insurance—workers' compensation and others.
>
> Columnar cash books—dissection and balancing.
>
> Bank statements and reconciliation.
>
> Petty cash and postage books.
>
> Sundry records and returns.

Then, under paragraph (f) is set out what practical instruction a trainee shall receive.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Now read the first two pages.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not want to.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is only in relation to her job. She does not have to learn the whole outline of arbitration.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not know what she is going to gain from such knowledge.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That again is in relation to her job.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: What about "wages rates, taxation deductions and stamps"?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is in connection with her job also.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: What about "insurance—workers' compensation and others"?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: There may be five or six dentists on the staff.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: In that case, a dental nurse has to be qualified with a full knowledge of dental procedure, keep the books for five dentists, and know when they are due for sick leave and all the rest of it.

Hon. H. Hearn: And know how to draw cheques.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: She will probably know how to do that. She has to know the theory of book-keeping. The only thing she does not have to know is how to write shorthand and how to type. Yet she must be able to draft letters, and I should think that typing would be a most essential qualification in doing that work. The Bill will only increase the cost of dental services that are rendered to patients, with no improvement in those services. Such a proposal might possibly have the effect of dentists, whilst they are absent from the surgery, leaving their work in the hands of these trained nurses.

Hon. E. M. Davies: You would not suggest that.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I would go further and say it is a fact, because I know one dentist who leaves his nurse to do all the work. Might I ask the Chief Secretary what is the object of the registration of these girls? What advantage will be gained by the nurse herself? What advantage will be gained by the dentist?

Hon. R. J. Boylen: What advantage—

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I refer the hon. member to Standing Order No. 413! There is nothing to prevent a girl who desires to become fully trained from doing so if she is able to obtain service in a surgery where she can be trained. The Bill makes no provision for her training. My

dental friends have told me all they require is a good intelligent girl, and they say that they can train her according to their own desires and the practices of their own surgery.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [8.28]: I am sorry Mr. Parker did not treat the measure more seriously instead of trying to heap ridicule on what seems to me to be a very worthy Bill. I would like every member, before he speaks on this measure, to visit the Perth Dental Hospital, because such a visit is absolutely essential in order to obtain a proper appreciation of the provisions contained in the Bill. By some good chance I had that opportunity only a few days ago, and it was certainly a great experience to realise that the Government has established this up-to-date dental hospital in Perth, with the most modern equipment and the most efficient set-up.

Throughout my years, I have attended various dentists, but never have I seen the profession of dentistry carried on in such an efficient, hygienic, and up-to-date way as that in which it is being followed at the Perth Dental Hospital. The members of the staff are enthusiastic about the work. My visit was unannounced, and it was just a coincidence that I happened, when walking along a corridor, to come face to face with a man who is a leader of the dental profession in Perth. I understand he was down there doing honorary work, and instructing nurses and others in this very important profession.

I am only a layman, and it is with some trepidation that I beg to differ from Dr. Hislop who is much more qualified in this sphere than am I. I would make that reservation when putting forward my submissions. But it does appear to me that the work of a dental nurse is obviously different from that of a general nurse. The people who are in control of the Dental Hospital believe, and have apparently convinced the Government, that a measure like this is necessary. It will raise the status of the profession. The motive can surely be only to give the public a better and more efficient service.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: At a lot higher cost.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I cannot see the logic of that argument. I cannot agree that efficient, capable, and skilled treatment is given at a higher cost. I always find that the most costly treatment is the cheap and nasty treatment. That is the most expensive in the long run. If one goes to a highly skilled dentist who has modern equipment and a highly trained nurse, I think that is to one's benefit and should prove much cheaper in the end.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What work would nurses do?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What do they do today?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am not the sponsor of the Bill, and there are aspects of it that I do not fully understand. I make no pretence of doing so. But I would point out that the Western Australian Nurses' Association, which is an organisation representing the trained nurses—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: An industrial union of workers, you forgot to add.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It is only one branch.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I do not know how many members this organisation represents, but it is apparently registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act and seems to be an organisation of considerable standing in the community. If there are others, I cannot gainsay the fact. I have a letter which comes from this organisation, which is of some standing. If it is not of standing in the community and is not representative of the nursing profession, other members who know more about it can enlighten the House. All I can assume is that this is a worth-while organisation, fully representative of the trained nurses in Western Australia, and it applauds this measure. Its members do not treat this new branch of the profession as being rivals to themselves, but welcome it. They say—

> The main provision of the Bill is for three years' training of a type new to this State. The course of training and lectures is very comprehensive as you can see by the attached curriculum and is given with the object of enabling these trained persons to assist a dentist in his work both with office routine and in his dentistry.

There again I find that Mr. Parker's light-hearted treatment of the subject hardly did himself and the measure credit. I have a young niece who recently qualified as a general nurse at the Children's Hospital. She is only 22 or 23 years of age. I had the opportunity of transacting some business for her, and her total ignorance of business matters absolutely astonished me. I therefore see nothing wrong in the fact that these girls are to learn something about the Arbitration Act, taxation measures, and general office procedure; and I only regret that that training is not extended to more girls in other professions and in other walks of life. We all know that when we were at school we learnt Latin and geometry, and a lot of other subjects which we thought at the time—and probably still think—were totally extraneous to the occupation we subsequently followed.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They were only to train the mind.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: We learnt Latin at school, and I think he is a fool who says that the hours and the weeks that we spent in studying Latin verbs and

declensions did not prove of some value in after life. This curriculum is certainly very long; but when one examines it, it does not amount to very much.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It still occupies three years of training.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes, it occupies three years; and if there are girls who want to devote their nursing experience to service in the dental profession, I think there will be plenty of employment for them. From my observations, I am sure they will receive excellent training at the dental hospital that we are blessed in having in this city. I am positive their training will be of the highest order, and I hazard the guess that the dental profession will avail itself of their services. I am also convinced that if it does, the public will benefit, and it will be a good thing for all concerned.

There are aspects of the Bill which Dr. Hislop has pointed out and on which I am not prepared to trespass. But I think there is a lot of merit in the measure, and because it is supported by the official body representing the nurses in this State; because it is also sponsored by the Dental Hospital; and for other reasons I have given, I propose to accord the Bill my fullest support.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [8.41]: I do not think this is a very good Bill, and I originally proposed to vote against it. But I have changed my mind, because there is no compulsion on any dentist to employ any girl who has been trained. If a girl wants to train as a dental nurse, we should not do anything to prevent her; and if girls are trained, we should give them some status. They should be able to say, "Here is a diploma which I hold and which indicates that I am qualified as a dental nurse". That is all this Bill provides for. It does not say to any dentist that he must or should employ any of the girls. The qualifications set out are far greater than a dentist ordinarily requires of a nurse. But again, there is no obligation on any dentist to employ a girl with these high qualifications; and if such girls are going to demand higher wages than are paid to the girls who are already fairly skilled, they will not get the jobs.

But there are certain places such as clinics—and I suppose there are one or two in the State—and dental hospitals, where their services would be useful; and in special cases where surgical operations have to be performed. I have no doubt that the dental surgeon might ask for a trained dental nurse. So there will be work for girls who wish to be trained. Under those circumstances, it is not unreasonable that some status should be given to girls who undergo training. If there were an obligation on a dentist to employ a trained nurse, I would certainly vote against the Bill, but there is no such obligation.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But will there be in the future?

Hon. L. CRAIG: That rests with us. If we do not think there should be, we will not agree to it. If on the other hand, Parliament in its wisdom thinks that dentists should employ only trained girls, then at some future time we can impose that condition. But I cannot see it happening in my lifetime. Not only that, but a trained dental nurse will not find employment as easily as a trained medical nurse because there will not be the opportunities. So the number of girls who will engage in dental nursing, which appears to be almost as difficult as medical nursing, will be comparatively few. Possibly girls who have a special aptitude will undertake this sort of nursing. At least we might take the Bill into the Committee stage.

Hon. A. R. Jones: How will they be paid when they are trained?

Hon. L. CRAIG: That does not come into the Bill, which provides that they shall be trained only if they so desire.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: The Bill gives them some status if they are trained.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes. If they go into a dental hospital—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There is only one dental hospital in Western Australia.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so. If they can get a job there, no doubt they will be paid accordingly. All the Bill does is to give some status to a girl who wishes to be trained as a dental nurse. I do not think there is anything unreasonable about that. As Mr. Parker pointed out, there are some rather foolish things in the curriculum. A girl must have a knowledge of soldering.

The Chief Secretary: That is not in the Bill.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is in the curriculum, and the training is set out in the Bill. Perhaps some people's teeth are so loose that they have to be soldered in; perhaps some patients need a bit of plumbing. I do not know. The nurse has to know about insurance, industrial arbitration, and other things, but she needs only to have a smattering of those subjects. The theory of book-keeping is included. A lot of play has been made on that, but it only amounts to a knowledge of how to deal with cheques and how to send out receipts. Any girl employed by a dentist today requires to have that knowledge, because we all get our accounts written in a female hand. Obviously a girl is making out the accounts and sending out the receipts.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Does she want a three-year training for that?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No. The Bill does not impose an obligation on anyone at all.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: A girl would be much better off if she were trained for domestic duties to help her in her future life.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so; but it is for her to say. If she wishes to be a dental nurse, the Bill provides that if she is trained as a dental nurse she will be given some status. At least she will have a diploma saying she is fully trained.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Where does it say in the Bill that she gets a diploma?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Does any nurse get one?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Yes.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Well, a certificate.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Where does it say that?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not know; but when a girl passes her final examinations she gets a certificate. The hon. member knows that. He is weakening his case. I was with him for a little while. Under these conditions I support the second reading.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [8.48]: I support the second reading, and I am astounded that there should be any opposition to it. The main purpose of the Bill has been largely overlooked. I do not know that the measure is intended to give status to a nurse, but it is designed to give protection to the public. It is high time something in that regard was done as far as the dental profession is concerned. At present girls engaged in a big percentage of the dental surgeries have not the faintest idea of their responsibilities. I was surprised to hear Mr. Parker say that the Dental Board knew nothing of the Bill. I was talking to the Superintendent of the Dental Hospital, and he knew a lot about it.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I said, the Dental Board.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Do not tell me that the Superintendent of the Dental Hospital would not have consulted the board in some way or other!

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I am informed he did not.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: He strongly supported the measure. I made a tour of the Dental Hospital to acquaint myself with the requirements for the training of these girls; and if other members had done the same thing they would be convinced that the girls, to be of assistance to the dental practitioners need a special type of training. A dental nurse only fulfils the same obligations for a dental practitioner as a general nurse fulfils for a medical practitioner. A dental nurse must be competent to assist the practitioner as he requires to be assisted. People will leave a dental surgery with a swollen face and say that the dentist did not know his work, or that he used an anaesthetic that he did not understand; but they do not stop to think that the dental nurse who was supposed to sterilise the needle had not done her job, and the dentist did not have the time to look into it, so that the infection resulted.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That has happened with qualified people, too.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I do not doubt that. The Bill asks that a specific type of nurse shall get recognition. Dr. Hislop quoted midwifery, mothercraft, tuberculosis nurses, and so on, and it is considered that the dental nurses should come under the provisions of the Act in the same way as other nurses in medical science do. The dental nurse assists in a highly modern type of surgery—oral surgery. Today, with the establishment of a Chair of Dentistry at the University of Western Australia a lot of oral surgery is carried out by many practitioners. There was a time when it was done by surgeons who had not specialised in it. The general practitioners welcome the oral surgery that can be done today by the specialists who have qualified at the different universities of Australia. Under the principal Act the right type of girl will be engaged in dental nursing. She will be of good fame and standing, and in good health. At present a dentist can engage a girl whose health is substandard —she may be suffering from tuberculosis. Goodness knows what damage she might do through not coming within the scope of an Act like the Nurses Registration Act!

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What is in the Bill to prevent that?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Nothing, but there is something in the principal Act.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: There is nothing in the principal Act.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Yes; it makes provision for all girls to undergo a medical examination before taking on nursing, and as these girls will come within the scope of that Act they will have to undergo a medical examination.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do they have a compulsory x-ray for t.b.?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Yes, and so do general nurses. There is the possibility that a nurse in general practice will develop the disease through working in her profession, and the same possibility applies to a dental nurse. At the Dental Hospital there is an annual examination not only of the nurses, but of the surgeons engaged there. One of the most important features of the Bill is that the girls will be qualified to assist not only the dental surgeons, but also members of the medical profession who attend the surgeries of

dental practitioners to administer anaesthetics. It is only logical to conclude that if a girl is to handle anaesthetics she must have some training.

It was said by Dr. Hislop that the work on books is limited. Well, she will be trained to do that work, whereas at present she has no knowledge of it. A large portion of dental practice is concerned with x-ray work. A general nurse does not have to undergo a three-year course to know something about x-ray. She learns it in her general training, and the same thing will apply to the dental nurse. In addition, she will learn how to handle patients. A patient has to be prepared before being put on the table for an anaesthetic. After the operation he is taken into a room where he waits until he goes home or is transferred to a hospital.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That would only apply at the Dental Hospital and not in a surgery.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: Medical practitioners sometimes perform operations in their surgeries, but they do not do it very often because the facilities are not available. The average anaesthetist would not go to a dentist's surgery because the nurse would not have the necessary knowledge to assist him.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: They know they are much safer in a general hospital.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: They may; but a number of minor operations are carried out in medical practitioners' rooms, and I say that a number of minor oral operations can be carried out in a dentist's surgery if the dentist has a properly trained nurse. She must understand how to look after an operating table, to sterilise the instruments for the operation, and so on.

A good deal of stress has been put on the matter of the clerical training. It seemed to amuse Mr. Parker quite a lot, but I point out that it has been introduced into the training of pharmaceutical chemists. The whole training in book-keeping is completed in a very short time during the apprentice's first year, and the chemists consider it to be a godsend. Doctors and dental practitioners also consider it a godsend to have a girl who has a rudimentary knowledge of the principles of book-keeping. At the average surgery in St. George's Terrace the receptionist is the nurse. The majority of doctors do not employ a receptionist to look after their books. We are not making these girls accountants.

Members would get a warm welcome if they went to the dental hospital and had a look over it. I was there just after one of Perth's leading dental surgeons, if not the leading dental surgeon, was leaving the theatre after having completed an operation. He was still in his gown. He welcomed the Bill and said he thought it should have been introduced years ago, and hoped it would go through Parliament on this occasion. This man did pretty well all the oral surgery in Perth until the university decided to have a Faculty of Dental Science.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Did he have a qualified nurse to assist him?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: A fully-trained dental nurse, according to the curriculum, receives no recognition because she has no chance of getting it under the Act at the present time.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: She can be given a diploma.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: The matron at the hospital is fully trained in dental and general nursing. A specialist would not work with a nurse who was not competent, and neither would an anaesthetist.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: A dentist today can get the services of a qualified nurse if he wants one.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: That is so, but she is not specially trained in dental surgery. The hon. member would not go to a dentist if he wanted a kidney removed. The same thing applies in reverse. If he wanted a tooth taken out he would go to a dental surgeon, or to a dentist who knew something of dental surgery. As far as poisons are concerned, they are limited, as Dr. Hislop said. A dentist could not prescribe morphia for a patient outside of the Dental Hospital because that is the doctor's prerogative. The dentist would call in a specialist, which, as a matter of fact, the great majority of medical practitioners do. If a dentist considered he did not know what treatment to give he would send for a specialist.

The Bill will not debar any other nurses from getting employment in a dental surgery, but if there are nurses trained in accordance with the Bill the dentists will prefer to have them. I suggest that members get a copy of the curriculum and have a look at the Dental Hospital. I am certain that then not one of them would oppose the Bill. I do not doubt that Dr. Hislop will move some amendments, and they may improve the measure. But I support the Bill as it has been introduced.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It depends upon how easily you fall for this sort of thing.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: The hon. member has not studied it.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I have.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: The hon. member has not even read it, and I doubt whether he has even been to a dentist. I do not think there is anything more that I want to say, but I support the measure whole-heartedly and I hope other members will do the same. Before members vote upon it I think they should take the opportunity to visit the Dental Hospital, speak to the matron, the superintendent, and the dental surgeons, and

obtain their opinion on this measure. They want these trained nurses and I do not think members of Parliament are competent to express an opinion. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [9.1]: I do not propose to cast a silent vote on this measure. If I thought any useful purpose would be served by agreeing to it, I would be glad to support it.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: But it will be of use.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member's assurance is worth very little to me. These girls will spend three years of their lives studying, and what are they going to get out of it?

The Minister for the North-West: They do not have to do that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No; but why should we hold out something to them when they are not going to get anything out of it? I have frequently been to dentists, unfortunately, and I have never seen a girl in a dental surgery do anything more than hand the instruments to the dentist, make up some amalgam, or carry out odd jobs such as that.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They want to be trained for that sort of work.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: But not for three years. They do that work efficiently now.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: But if they train for three years they will become more efficient still.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think it will be a waste of time. These girls will spend three years training as dental nurses, and during that time they could be doing more useful work. Probably at the end of the period most of them will get married and then go out doing some other kind of work. I am a member of an association, and a number of complaints have been made because we carry out work which enables married women to enter employment. As far as I am concerned, if we can look after children while the mothers go out to work, we are doing a useful job; but I do not want to encourage that sort of thing.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: You want to debar girls from entering any profession.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think these girls could be given training for more useful occupations. For instance, I think if girls employed in chemists' shops were trained, we would be doing a more useful service to the community than by passing this Bill. If I am suffering from a bad cold and I go into a chemist's shop, the girl will look at me seriously and give me some medicine; but how am I to know whether it is the right medicine or not?

Hon. R. J. Boylen: It might be the way you walk into the shop.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I might be given a proprietary medicine; but if it is necessary for me to have a mixture made up, the girl has to go to the qualified chemist.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: If the girl were qualified, she could mix it herself.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think we could make a start on girls employed in chemists' shops.

Hon. H. Hearn: And give them three years' training in book-keeping.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They would be serving some useful purpose. Frequently if a person goes into a chemist's shop, the main idea is for the girl behind the counter to sell something.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: That is why she is engaged.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Whether the medicine is useful or not, does not seem to matter. We want people in chemists' shops who can serve some useful purpose, and in whom we can have some confidence. Frequently people go along to chemists and use them as doctors, and later have reason to regret it. Dr. Hislop set out the case quite clearly. I do not think this Bill will serve any useful purpose. It will certainly help build up the nurses' organisations. I think we could use these nursing aides who are now registered. They could be used in this regard.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That is what we said you would try to do—use them in higher positions within a couple of years.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: These are not higher positions. It is more important for a girl to be nursing the mentally or physically sick than it is for her to work in a dental surgery. The most that can happen in a dental surgery is for a patient to have a jaw opened up in order to take out a relic. All the girl has to do is to hand the instruments to the dentist after seeing that they have been properly sterilised. All we are doing is to hold out a bait to these girls; but they will receive nothing extra for it.

Hon. H. Hearn: What about the design and choice of stationery?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They would be able to pick out a nice floral design for the stationery, and in that direction they would be more artistic and satisfactory than a man. But in my opinion there is no need for this Bill. Do not let us build up a lot of artificial positions and hold out a bait to these girls, because they ought to be serving the country in a better way.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: How?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In many ways. There are many directions in which these girls could give assistance. Many mothers in this State cannot get help

and are prepared to pay for girls to look after sick children. Girls could not be used for that work unless they had some qualifications; but they could be trained for the purpose, instead of being trained for dental nursing. These girls could be sent out into the country to help our young men who are producing food for our people.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It is not much use producing food if the people are not fit.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The time is not far distant when there will be insufficient people employed in the production of food. We are employing people in all these small avenues, and they are not being used to the best advantage. Many of these girls should get married to the young fellows on the farms to help keep them there to produce food for the people. They could make the lives of these young fellows sufficiently attractive to keep them in the country districts, because the production of food is a problem which is facing Western Australia and the rest of the world. It is a serious problem and one to which I have given a good deal of attention. Half the population of Western Australia is situated in the metropolitan area, and very soon that will be increased to about three-quarters.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: It has now.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: When that happens, the problem will become even worse. Yet we are introducing all these fancy names, such as "registered dental nurses," "nursing aides," and so on, and that will not get us anywhere. I have lived long enough to appreciate that a lot of common sense is required in dealing with these problems; but we are trying to fill positions with highly qualified people and give them fancy names. I have had a look at the curriculum which I received a few moments ago, and a number of the items listed are absolutely useless. I cannot connect a good deal of it with the dental profession.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I do not think you know much about it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If I had the little knowledge which the hon. member possesses I would have the lot. I know my limitations but, because of my age, I have had a good deal of experience, probably more than the hon. member. I would like to hear his opinion as to why these girls should be trained as dental nurses. It is an absolute waste of time. We should use them in some other occupation; as mothercraft nurses or something that would be beneficial to the people of the State in the future. This Bill is only playing with the game and pretending that these girls will have some future; whereas it will be nothing but a dead end. I know that what I am saying will offend some people who are listening to the debate, but what I have said is the truth, and I think that my age qualifies me to express an opinion.

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

BILL—FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Second Reading.

THE PRESIDENT: I wish to make an explanation with regard to this Bill. Members may recall that I declared the second reading carried, but Sir Charles Latham moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, and in the confusion the second reading was not carried out. The House then decided that the Committee stage be deferred until the next sitting of the House. So as to put the matter in order, I shall ask the clerk formally to read the Bill a second time.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [9.12] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small Bill which has been on the notice paper for a week or so, and I am anxious to move the second reading so that members may have an opportunity to study the measure and debate it when we meet again. No doubt a number of members will greet this Bill as an old friend—probably some of them as an old enemy—and I think that they will agree that they have discussed it on previous occasions.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Some of us know it, I think.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are only half a dozen amendments. The first one provides that the age at which a person may qualify for election as a member of this House shall be 21 years instead of 30. The next amendment seeks to extend the franchise to the husband or wife of a person who possesses the qualifications to vote. A definition of "householder of a dwelling house" is included in the Bill as is a clarification of the householder's qualifications.

The Bill then goes on to provide that a person may be registered as an elector in respect of only one province. Where he has qualifications which entitle him to be registered as an elector in more than one electoral province he must select the province in which he will be registered as an elector. A subsequent selection may be made by the elector once within a period of twelve months next following a biennial election for the Legislative Council. The elector is bound by his selection until he is no longer qualified or is disqualified.

The last amendment seeks to remove from the Act the prohibition against voting imposed on a person receiving relief from a Government or from a charitable institution. It also clarifies the disqualification from voting in regard to any person convicted of a "felony or any infamous offence". These expressions are now out-moded and are not definite enough. The Bill proposes that a cause for disqualification shall be conviction and sentence, or the awaiting of sentence, for an offence punishable by law in any part of Her Majesty's Dominions by imprisonment for one year or longer. That generally is the whole sum and substance of the Bill, and I feel sure members will give it the consideration it deserves. I said earlier that this was an old friend. It is an old friend, and it is about time members adopted it as such.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Have you got it streamlined?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think the hon. member will probaly attempt to do a bit of streamlining himself.

Hon. L. Craig: It will need a face-lift.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: At times we have heard mention made of party Bills. But this is an all-party Bill. It is a Bill that has been promised on the hustings by every party in the State. In 1947-48, the Government of the day, now the Opposition, introduced a similar measure; there was very little difference between that and this. Since that time, the present Government, then in Opposition, has also, through its Leader, introduced a similar measure. Accordingly, I can quite honestly claim that it is an all-party measure; one which all parties in this State have promised the electors. There is nothing in the Bill to which anyone can take exception. There might be some debate on the question of the age of a person entering this Chamber, though I cannot see why we should retain the old bar that a candidate should be 30 years of age.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Was it good when it operated in your time?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, it was not. With the educational facilities available to people in the last half century, is it not logical to assume that a young man of 21 today knows as much as a man of 35 did then?

Hon. H. Hearn: He certainly thinks he does.

Hon. H. L. Roche: He certainly does, but about what?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He knows more about everything. When an attempt is made to introduce a measure into this Chamber, some members try to make a joke out of it. Is it not time we got down to serious business?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. G. Hislop: We have not had serious business put before us.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is serious business. It affects the franchise; and if there is anything in this State more serious than the franchise, I do not know what it is. All this Bill seeks to do is to make a certain little liberalisation, and in all the years I have been in Parliament I have not heard a logical argument against the proposal contained in it. I have not heard any sound argument advanced why the age should not be reduced from 30 to 21. In both Houses of the Federal Parliament, and indeed throughout Australia, 21 years is the accepted age. One would not say that this Chamber is more important than the Senate.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We think so.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: It is more effective.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I admit it is more powerful, but not more important. It is more powerful because we have powers that no other Chamber in the British Commonwealth of Nations—not even the House of Lords—possesses. There is every justification for me to say that this House is more powerful than the Senate; but I cannot say it is more important, because we deal only with State matters, whereas the Senate deals with matters affecting Australia as a whole. Another amendment attempted on many occasions—and again I have heard no justifiable argument against it—is to enrol the wife or husband of a person who has qualifications for enrolment in connection with the election of members to this Chamber. I will not go into the pros and cons of extending the franchise in some other direction, but will deal only with the wife or husband of a person entitled to be enrolled.

When one looks at it what, after all, is life? What is the qualification that gives a male the right to vote for candidates for election to this Chamber. It is the fact that he owns his own home, or that he is the householder. Can anyone tell me that a home has been purchased, in most cases, solely through the husband's efforts? Down through the years we find that homes have been purchased by the combined efforts of the husband and wife pulling together. Indeed, the person most responsible is the wife, because she is the treasurer.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why will not the husband let her join in the registration?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The old accepted idea is that the husband is the master of the house.

Hon. L. Craig: You will admit that is out of date now.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, it may be so; but in most cases a couple could not have joint ownership because the cost of the home was so high that they were lucky to have sufficient money to pay a deposit on it.

Hon. L. Craig: They could still be joint owners.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know that; but people are generally very young when they undertake these commitments. Mr. Heenan mentioned the lack of knowledge a woman has of business affairs.

Hon. H. Hearn: So there is something to be said for 30 years!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A woman is likely to know more about these matters after she is married. It has been the accepted practice that the husband is master of the home, and premises have generally been registered in his name. But it was only by the combined efforts of husband and wife that the house could be paid for. In many cases, there is as much justification for the woman to be enrolled as for the man. All this amendment seeks to do is to put husband and wife on the same footing and give them both the right to vote. Is there anything wrong in that? I cannot see that there is, and I shall be very interested to hear members trying to prove me wrong. I think they will have a job ahead of them.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They would have.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am very firm, but not obstinate. I always admit my mistakes when I am proved wrong. I think the hon. member should support me on this measure because there is justification for his support. There is a further provision making clear the household qualification, and later we have a clarification of this qualification.

I think Mr. Parker will agree that the wording of the Act in respect of "felony or infamous offences" needs some clarification. This Bill seeks to do that. It refers to the conviction or sentence, or the awaiting of sentence, for an offence punishable by the law in any part of Her Majesty's Dominions. Those are the minor amendments contained in the Bill, and I feel sure my persistent appeal to members will have the same effect as the proverbial dripping of water on a stone, though I feel certain that the hearts of members are not made of stone! I trust they will take a different attitude from that which they have done in the past.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 3rd November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 28th October, 1953.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Diesel Coaches and Use.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Of the 18 diesel electric railway coaches to arrive from England under order placed during the term of the previous Government, how many are designed for country services and how many for suburban?

(2) Were the numbers given in No. (1) those contained in the original order?

(3) If not, how many were intended for country services and how many for suburban?

(4) Who authorised the change and for what reasons?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The number of rail cars on order is 22, of which 18 are intended for suburban and four for country services.