

workers' compensation. Although Select Committees appointed by Parliament achieve a certain amount of good as a result of their inquiries and by the reports that are published, the members of them cannot possibly have the full knowledge possessed by persons who, in their every-day walk of life are directly concerned with one aspect or another of workers' compensation.

For this reason I suggest the formation of a committee to investigate the whole of the Act. On that committee there might well be representatives of the insurers; self-insurers; employers; employees; the medical profession; and the legal profession.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: The worker would be in the minority, wouldn't he?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: By this means the Government would be able to obtain expert advice on the various aspects of workers' compensation and so tidy up a measure which at present is causing a good deal of concern in industry. There is no need to labour this matter unduly, and for that reason I hope the Government will take heed of my suggestion. I trust the House will not agree to the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Hon. C. R. Abbey, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.47 p.m.

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Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 6th November, 1958.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.25 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

No. 1. *This question was postponed.*

DIESEL FUEL.

Tax Paid to Main Roads Department.

2. Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What amount was paid into the funds of the Main Roads Department from the tax on diesel fuel, during the year ended the 30th June, 1958?

(2) What amount is likely to be received from this source during the current financial year?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

(1) £475,000.

(2) £475,000.

CANNING BRIDGE.*Cost of Old and New Structures.*

3. Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the cost of the original Canning Bridge?

(2) What was the cost of the new duplicating bridge?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

(1) £17,103.

(2) £38,284.

CLOVERLEAF SYSTEMS.*Cost of Provision on Causeway and Narrows Bridge.*

4. Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What was the then estimated cost of providing a cloverleaf system at either end of the Causeway during the year in which the new Causeway was completed?

(2) What is the estimated cost of providing this form of traffic dispersal at the Narrows bridge?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

(1) No firm estimate was taken out in the year in which the new Causeway was completed—that is, 1952—but estimates prepared in 1946 provided for the following:—

(a) Victoria Park or eastern approaches: £105,000.

(b) Perth or western approaches: £95,000.

(2) The form of dispersal of traffic at the bridge over the Narrows is by a system of grade separation which is not related to the normal type of cloverleaf treatment. Consequently, no estimates have been taken out for cloverleaf treatment.

RAILWAY PROPERTIES.*Installation of Septic Systems and Deep Sewerage.*

5. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Does the Railway Department intend to proceed during the current financial year on any projects involving the conversion on railway properties of various kinds, of the pan system of night-soil disposal to either septic systems or connection to deep sewerage?

(2) If so, will he give details of centres where this work will be carried out, and the cost and the source of the funds to be used for this purpose?

Mr. GRAHAM replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Installation of septic tank system or sewerage has been authorised at the following localities at an estimated total cost of £20,326, chargeable to General Loan Funds:—

Location; Particulars.

Bencubbin—Station, 3 houses and camping area.

Goomalling—Station.

Kalgoorlie—Three houses.

Narrogin—District offices and one house.

Manjimup—Station and two houses.

Collie—Two houses.

Hines Hill—Six houses and camping area.

Kellerberrin—Ladies' waiting room, barracks, three houses, camping area and pump house at dam.

Pinjarra—Barracks (completed).

Bayswater—Four houses.

Bassendean—Nine houses.

Kelmscott—Station and one house.

Armadale—Station, loco depot and one house.

Maddington—Station and one house.

Bellevue—Station and one house.

Victoria Park—Station.

Carlisle—Station.

Rivervale—Station and one house.

Karrakatta—Station and two houses.

Kondinin—Station, barracks, six houses and camping area.

Geraldton—Loco amenity building.

Pemberton—Station barracks and four houses.

Further installations depend on availability of funds.

SEWERAGE.*Commencement Date of Bunbury Scheme, Cost, etc.*

6. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Can he, at this stage, indicate when a start will be made on the sewerage scheme in Bunbury?

(2) If so, what are the details of the scheme?

(3) What total amount is to be expended on the scheme during this financial year?

(4) What portion of the work is to be completed by the 30th June, 1959?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) No expenditure is proposed this financial year.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.*Charges to Consumers.*

7. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

What is the amount charged by the State Electricity Commission to—

(a) metropolitan consumers;

(b) country consumers

for each 50, 100, 250, 500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, 7,000, 8,000, 9,000, 10,000 and over, units of electricity consumed?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

The rates schedules applying to the two areas are as follows:—

As from the 15th September, 1953.

Table "A" Lighting:

First 100 units per month—6.65d. per unit.

Next 500 units per month—6.15d. per unit.

Next 4,400 units per month—5.15d. per unit.

All over 5,000 units per month—4.15d. per unit.

Table "B" Industrial Power:

First 200 units per month—3.65d. per unit.

Next 4,800 units per month—3.15d. per unit.

Next 50,000 units per month—2.65d. per unit.

All over 55,000 units per month—2.05d. per unit.

Table "C" Domestic Power:

Private residences and purely residential flats only—not hotels, boarding houses or residences partly used for business—2.65d. per unit.

Table "D" Combined Domestic Lighting and Power:

For domestic purposes only—does not include flats, boarding houses, hotels or residences used partly for business.

For every 100 square feet of basic area $2\frac{1}{2}$ units per quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$ unit per month) are charged at the lighting rate; all the balance at the domestic power rate.

A fee of 7s. 6d. for inspecting, making plan and determining the basic area, to be paid on applying for this rate.

Table "E" Combined Commercial Lighting and Power:

Lighting and power for shops, offices, warehouses, theatres, public buildings, State and Commonwealth buildings and hospitals, or where light and power mains are not separate.

First 50 units per month—7.65d. per unit.

Next 950 units per month—6.65d. per unit.

Next 1,000 units per month—5.15d. per unit.

Next 3,000 units per month—4.15d. per unit.

Next 50,000 units per month—3.15d. per unit.

All over 55,000 units per month—2.05d. per unit.

Floodlighting: 4.15d. per unit.

All consumers to be charged one or another of the above rates. Each and every point of supply shall be taken separately for assessment on the above rates.

No master meter rents charged.

Minimum Charge:

A minimum charge of 3s. 4d. per month (10s. per quarter) will be made.

South-West Power Scheme.

As from the 21st September, 1953.

First 24 units per month—7.31d.

Next 24 units per month—4.31d.

Next 4,952 units per month—3.31d.

All over 5,000 units per month—2.31d.

Minimum charge—3s. 4d. per month.

No master meter rents charged.

Sub-meter rental charge—6d. per meter per month.

All accounts rendered quarterly.

SCHOOL DENTISTS.*Visits to Country Centres.*

8. Mr. LEWIS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How often are schools visited by a dentist?

(2) What was the date of the last such visit to the Watheroo school?

Mr. W. HEGNEY replied:

(1) Once in every two years in country districts, subject to the availability of dentists.

(2) August, 1955. Arrangements have been made for a dentist to visit schools between Bindoon and Watheroo early next year.

FIGS.*Imports from Eastern States Affected with Diseases.*

9. Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many pigs imported into Western Australia from South Australia during the past ten years, have been affected with any of the diseases specified under quarantine regulations?

(2) How many pigs imported into Western Australia from any other of the Eastern States during the past ten years, have been affected with any of the diseases specified under quarantine regulations?

Mr. KELLY replied:

(1) and (2) None.

KATANNING HOSPITAL EXTENSIONS.

Commencement, Apportionment of Cost, etc.

10. Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When is it the intention of the Government to call tenders for the new extensions to the Katanning hospital?

(2) When is it hoped to have the extensions completed?

(3) Have the local authorities agreed to meet a portion of the cost?

(4) If so, what is the amount?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

(1) The 18th November, 1958.

(2) December, 1959.

(3) Yes.

(4) £10,000.

No. 11. *This question was postponed.*

FREMANTLE WATERSIDE WORKERS.

Striking of Levy.

12. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Is it correct that a pick-up meeting on the 31st October, 1958, of Fremantle waterside workers struck a levy on each member of 5s. a head, to assist the A.L.P. election campaign?

(2) What action can the union take under its rules, if a member refuses to pay the levy, on grounds of conscientious belief or for any other reason?

Mr. W. HEGNEY replied:

(1) Not known.

(2) Kindly refer to the rules.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Capitalisation of Superphosphate Cost.

13. Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

Referring to question No. 27 (3) of the 5th November, is the capitalisation of portion of superphosphate cost confined to persons who have held leases no longer than three years, or has this capitalisation this year been extended to others as well?

Mr. KELLY replied:

The assessment policy provides for capitalisation of portion of superphosphate to all grazing lessees under assessment during the first three years of a lease.

Super capitalisation would be extended beyond three years if the property did not uplift by the normal progression.

In those cases where established pasture areas are in excess of 1,300 acres, the superphosphate required for the excess area will be capitalised up to the stage where cropping is or should be possible.

No. 14. *This question was postponed.*

ATTENDANCE MONEY.

Payments to Ship Painters and Dockers.

15. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

With reference to the answer given to parts 8 (a) and (b), question No. 11, asked on the 5th November, 1958, will he reconsider the answer given and advise the House the reasons for the difference between figures given to members of this Parliament by the Secretary of the Ship Painters and Dockers' Union, when Fremantle Harbour Trust attendance money legislation was before Parliament last session, recorded in Hansard, and which estimated an annual cost of £6,184, as against the current cost at an approximate annual figure of £17,000.

Mr. W. HEGNEY replied:

After reconsideration, it is considered the answer should stand.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

LICENSING ACT.

Printing of Parliamentary Committee's Report.

1. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Treasurer:

In view of the widespread interest in the parliamentary committee's report on licensing laws, will he authorise the printing of the report?

Mr. HAWKE replied:

Consideration will be given to the hon. member's suggestion.

FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

Royalty on Collection of Mallee Roots.

2. Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Is the Forests Department entitled to collect the royalty from mallee roots sold off farm land held on conditional purchase tenure?

(2) If so, is the power exercised; and if so, what royalty is charged?

Mr. GRAHAM replied:

I will preface my remarks by saying that it should be known to all hon. members that forest produce—which is an all-embracing term—is, in certain circumstances, reserved to the Crown, and the Conservator of Forests is the officer responsible to

see that effect is given to the law as decided by Parliament. The specific answers to the questions are as follows:—

(1) If the timber is reserved to the Crown under the conditional purchase lease, the answer is "Yes".

(2) This power is exercised only in the case of commercial firewood-getters operating under permit. The royalty charge in such cases is 1s. per ton.

FREMANTLE WATERSIDE WORKERS.

Striking of Levy.

3. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

Arising out of his answer to question No. 12, in view of his responsibilities for industrial matters in his capacity as Minister for Labour, would he take steps to acquaint himself with the situation arising from the question I asked?

Mr. W. HEGNEY replied:

I will act in my own way in regard to these matters. But I suggest that before the hon. member for Nedlands proceeds much further with questions of this nature, he should consult with the hon. member for Dale.

RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK.

Method of Construction.

4. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

When last I asked him a question whether the R. & I. Bank building would be built by day labour or by contract, and whether a decision would be made before the end of October, he replied, "Probably."

Could he advise whether a decision has been made; and, if not, when does he expect such a decision to be made?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

In reply to the hon. member for Nedlands, a decision has been made.

5. Mr. COURT: If the decision has been made, would the Minister please tell us what the decision is?

Mr. TONKIN: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will answer the question.

Mr. Brand: You have been a long time in making up your mind.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr. TONKIN: The Leader of the Opposition might not like the nature of the answer, but the decision is that the building will be erected by day labour.

Mr. Brand: I certainly will not!

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1. Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Hon. A. R. G. Hawke (Premier).

2. Swan River Conservation.

Introduced by the Hon. J. T. Tonkin (Minister for Works).

3. Licensing (Police Force Canteens).

Introduced by the Hon. E. Nulsen (Minister for Justice).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. May, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Gaffy (Caning) on the ground of ill-health.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Hon. A. R. G. Hawke (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.

Clause 2, page 2, line 23—Add after the passage, "or as 'quinellas'" the passage, "or as 'doubles'."

No. 2.

Clause 3, page 2, line 35—Add after the passage, "or as 'quinellas'" the passage, "or as 'doubles'."

No. 3.

Clause 4, page 3, lines 12 and 13—Add after the passage, "or as 'quinellas'" the passage, "or as 'doubles'."

Mr. HAWKE: The three amendments made by the Legislative Council all contain exactly the same principle. That principle is to include doubles totalisator investments, together with jackpot and quinella totalisator investments, in the provisions of the Bill. The point of including the doubles totalisator turnover was discussed during the second reading when I gave an undertaking that the possibility of including this form of betting was being investigated; and if the Government could see its way to approve of its inclusion, a move would be made in the Legislative Council by the Government to insert the amendments. That has been done.

In the event of the Committee agreeing to the amendments, the racing and trotting clubs in the metropolitan area will derive a higher percentage from totalisator investments in respect of quinellas, jackpots and doubles betting. I move—

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr. WILD: I am glad that the Treasurer, obviously following the decision of Cabinet, was able to agree to the request to include doubles betting, as well as quinnella betting in the Bill. I did raise the point of including triella betting. I have subsequently been informed by the Secretary of the W.A. Turf Club that, although this form of betting had been suggested for inclusion, it was a complete innovation. The club felt that if doubles betting could be included, its request would be met to a large extent; and it does not wish to press for the inclusion of triella betting.

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

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

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE HON. H. E. GRAHAM (Minister for Transport—East Perth) [2.48] in moving the second reading said: Experience with the Traffic Act indicates that quite a number of completely separated principles are embodied in that statute, for which reason it is not possible to give anything but a disjointed description if amendments are being made in any number. It will become apparent that the same set of circumstances applies in this instance in respect of the amendments now being submitted.

Several of the proposals are designed to correct mistakes which were made during the last session of Parliament. In addition to that, experience has shown there are certain weaknesses in the Act. The amendments in the Bill will not have the effect, in any way whatsoever, of altering the procedure, but will merely give statutory authority to what has been the accepted practice.

The Bill seeks to amend that portion of the Act which applies to motorcar dealers. It will be recalled that, subject to the definition of motor dealers, all who trade in vehicles in excess of a certain number, may be required by the Commissioner of Police to enter into a bond. Experience has revealed that quite unwittingly Parliament so worded this provision that if a motor dealer breached any portion of the Traffic Act or regulations he was liable to forfeiture of the bond. In other words, if he overstayed his parking time for a few moments and was found out by a traffic inspector, he could legally be called upon to forfeit his bond.

It will be seen that Parliament, unintentionally, so worded the provision that if a dealer committed a breach of this Act, then the bond became forfeitable. So, obviously, the idea was that if a dealer committed any substantial breach in

respect of his dealer's licence, he would be subject to forfeiture of the bond, not as a penalty but as some recompense to the persons being defrauded.

The upshot of the legislation in its present form is that no insurance company, quite understandably, will undertake the bond in the terms which are necessary in conformity with the Act. Therefore, whilst motor-vehicle dealers are registered at the present time, they are not subject to the bond. This, of course, to a very large extent, defeats one of the main purposes of the legislation. Consultations have taken place recently between representatives of several Government departments and the Chamber of Automotive Industries, and the Underwriters' Association—if that be the correct term under which to include the insurance people—and I am informed that all parties are agreeable to the half-dozen or so requirements in respect of which the bond becomes forfeitable. I will, for the information of hon. members, outline them as follows:—

If there is any defalcation of moneys.

If there is any misappropriation of moneys.

If the sale is not in accordance with the owner's instructions.

If there has been misrepresentation by the dealer regarding ownership.

If the vehicle has been wrongly described in respect of the year, model or efficiency, or the year of registration when new.

If there has been fraudulent removal of parts or accessories from the vehicle.

The bond, or a portion of it, could be estreated for any deliberate attempt to defraud in a general sense, as well as in regard to the specific items I have mentioned.

A principle in respect of tests for alcohol content of the blood in order to ascertain whether a person was under the influence of alcohol was agreed to by Parliament recently. A reference to the statute will show that it is stipulated that measurement of the alcohol content should be by weight. I am now informed by technical and scientific people and those engaged in the analyses, that it is a combination of volume and weight; and therefore the proposal is that in the Act we should express it as "percentage of alcohol in the blood" without necessarily stipulating whether by volume or by weight. Incidentally, the same result, by and large, is arrived at if it is measured either way; but the process that is used is, in fact, as indicated earlier, a volume and weight combination; and if this provision is included in the Act it will enable this process to be continued.

Hon. members are, no doubt, familiar with the yellow registration plates carried by vehicles in the possession of dealers.

They are usually referred to as demonstration plates. Strangely enough, there is no provision in the Act to allow these to be used when a new vehicle is being delivered. Reference to the Act will show that these demonstration plates are to be used by dealers when they are endeavouring to make a sale, but for a firm in Perth which wants to deliver a new car to an agent in a country centre, there is no provision in this Act, and there is no coverage in the law if anything should happen to the vehicle en route. In fact, the firm has no right to have the car on the road. This is an omission which should be rectified at the earliest possible opportunity, and this present legislation seeks to do just that.

Hon. members—and particularly the hon. member for Blackwood—will recall the debates last year in respect of tractors. Unfortunately, the private member's Bill and the Government's Bill both found their way on to the statute book, and licensing authorities have found themselves in considerable difficulties; and while suggestions have been adopted, the situation is still most unsatisfactory. Therefore, it is the intention, through this Bill, to make available to the persons in the above category the more generous provision.

To refresh hon. members' minds, the private member's Bill which now comprises part of the Traffic Act stipulated that half of the prescribed fee for tractors of two ton or less, with a maximum of £10 per annum, should be payable provided the tractor is used solely or mainly for hauling.

I ask hon. members to note the exact terms I have just indicated, and measure them against the provisions which I will now outline, and which will become operative in all cases. They are—

25 per cent. of the prescribed fee with a maximum of £5 for any tractor not generally used on roads.

It will be noted immediately that the maximum is reduced from £10 to £5; and accordingly, I think hon. members will agree that a certain amount of contentment will be afforded both parties who are contriving to reconcile different procedures.

Another provision which might surprise hon. members, covers the situation where a motorist cancels his licence. This is done on many occasions; but in point of law, the licence still continues. The motorist hands in the plates; and, if only a portion of the year has passed, he obtains a refund, but legally, he still holds the licence in respect of those plates. This might sound a small and technical matter, but it is something which, I believe, no-one envisaged would apply; and for reasons which I need not outline at this stage, it is now sought to tidy this section of the law.

Hon. members will appreciate that it is an offence for any person to represent himself as a member of the Police Force. How we have got on all these years, I do not know; but there is nothing to make it an offence for a person to represent himself as a traffic inspector; and as traffic inspectors, and not police, are on the job in the country centres—and in more recent times, traffic inspectors have been employed by the Perth City Council—all will agree it is highly desirable that persons should not be permitted to represent themselves as being one of these public officials.

Mr. Brand: What has prompted this action after so long? Was it because of some case?

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not think it has been caused through any case, in particular. Something I was going to say at the end of my remarks, but I might mention it now, is that I have asked that attention be given to a complete redrafting of the Traffic Act. I feel it is at present an all-embracing document covering practically everything we would require, as we see traffic at this stage. But the Act has gradually increased in size through amendments being made over the years. I am certain that if anyone got on the job—it would be a long one, too—of redrafting the measure, without seeking to introduce any new principles, we could have a far more compact statute; and as it is one that applies so intimately to so many and to such an ever-growing number of people, it would be most useful because it would then be more easy of reference.

When, several years ago, the Minister for Lands returned from the United States, he brought with him a code of traffic rules that applied in one of the States of the U.S.A. I daresay the requirements of traffic regulation in one of the United States would be at least equal to what is necessary in W.A.; and if they can achieve what they desire in a much less bulky document than ours, then I consider we should aim at the same thing here.

Mr. Brand: I think that is a most commendable move.

Mr. GRAHAM: When that is done, I hope we can have a holiday, for a period, in the matter of amendments to the Traffic Act.

Mr. Brand: And that we can understand the law.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so. It is not only a question of understanding the law, but of having matters which bear some relationship to one another grouped under the one heading, instead of countless pages having to be turned over to look at different sections of the Act. Just to conclude on that point, the traffic regulations are about four or five times as bulky as the Act. Of course, the regulations are—so far as the

motorist is concerned—largely the operative rules. The motorist must know and understand them.

I have requested that an attempt be made to bovrillise them as much as possible, and to weed out many of them which refer to habits which applied in the horse-and-dray era rather than in the motor period that we are experiencing at the moment. I suppose that by the time we have everything tidy, in respect to motor vehicles, we will be in the sputnik age, or something of that nature, and will have to start all over again.

Mr. Brand: I hope the authorities will err on the side of taking out or cutting down the regulations while they are on the job of "bovrillising"—to use your term—the regulations.

Mr. GRAHAM: That would be the intention. At the moment we have in existence a regulation which empowers the Commissioner of Main Roads to mark streets with white lines. He has been doing this for some time. I am afraid, however, that the regulation does not conform with the Act, because under the Act the Commissioner of Police is the man responsible. When this function—for obvious reasons—was handed over to the Commissioner of Main Roads exclusively, so that there would not be two Government departments getting about with a whitewash brush—I think a very sensible change in procedure—the regulations were amended, but no authority existed for the amendment.

Accordingly, the Bill seeks to repair the damage. I do not know that anyone is likely to enter into litigation over the matter. In other words, between now and the eventual passing of the Bill, and assent thereto, it is the intention that the Commissioner of Main Roads shall go ahead with his job of marking roads.

Mr. Brand: Did he get the job because he had the money to buy the paint?

Mr. GRAHAM: No. An allocation is made for the purpose. The funds for lights and signs also cover road markings. In other words, the cost comes from traffic fees.

All hon. members will agree, I am certain, that it is highly desirable that motor-vehicle engines should have serial numbers. Serial numbers apply, generally, to vehicles, and the motorcar and motor truck manufacturers enter into the spirit of the arrangement throughout the entire Commonwealth. But there are some engines—replacement and remodelled engines—which for certain reasons do not have serial numbers stamped on them. It is felt that legislation should be enacted to ensure that reconditioned engines, etc., should be stamped with a serial number.

Mr. Hearman: Some of them now have two numbers—the original factory number and a reconditioned number,

Mr. GRAHAM: Such a state of affairs is a little confusing. I suggest that when an engine is renumbered, the original number should be removed. However, we can, perhaps, have a little bit of fun on the point in Committee. The Bill seeks to prohibit the use of a motor vehicle which has an engine without a number affixed to it.

No doubt hon. members—particularly country members—are aware of the fact that not all local authorities—who are the traffic authorities outside the metropolitan area—are giving attention to signs in respect of speed limits and other matters. It is thought necessary and desirable that an overriding authority should be reposed in the Minister, in the final analysis, to order local authorities to remove or amend their road signs which do not conform with the law of the land.

There is a simple procedure to be followed by local authorities who desire to establish speed limits. Incidentally these speed limits must be approved by the Minister and the Governor in Executive Council. But, if there is a change and the local authority, through neglect or oversight, or something of that nature, refuses to make the change, or adopts a "could-not-care-less" attitude, then it is fundamentally wrong. A sign in a certain area might indicate a speed limit of 20 miles per hour, and the law of the land might say the maximum speed is 35 miles an hour. Surely we should not allow a public authority to erect, or to allow to remain in existence, a sign that has local significance, and which is misleading so far as the public are concerned.

If there were too much of this, we could ultimately reach the stage where motorists would not be certain whether they should take seriously what appeared on signs erected by public authorities. I do not want to make a song and dance about this; but I might mention that the country traffic committee of the Road Board Association is most anxious that all local authorities should give effect to the very thing I have just mentioned. Periodically this committee issues a bulletin to the local authorities, where such local authorities are the traffic authorities. The most recent bulletin was placed on my table only this morning; and, among other things, it calls on local authorities to give attention to the very matter I have just outlined.

I can assure everybody that there is no intention or desire to push local authorities about. But I think it speaks for itself that if a road sign is erected it should not be in conflict with the law of the land. We have already laid it down that it is an offence for anybody but the local authority to erect a sign, unless some person has the permission of the local authority. That is a desirable state of affairs to keep the matter under control and so that every

person along the road does not make his own interpretation of what should happen on that particular roadway; therefore it is most necessary that the signs should conform with the Traffic Act and regulations made under that statute.

Mr. Nalder: Which authority is responsible for signs directing people to pleasure resorts and so on around the metropolitan area?

Mr. GRAHAM: What places does the hon. member have in mind?

Mr. Nalder: On the road leading to Canning Dam there is a sign which says, "To Canning Dam." The printing on it is practically undiscernible. All the paint has been washed off.

Mr. GRAHAM: It has the words "To Canning Dam" and a pointing finger?

Mr. Nalder: Yes.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am only guessing, but I think the body responsible would be the Water Supply Department, the Tourist Bureau, or some authority of that nature. I am not too certain, but I would venture to say that the roadway itself is actually within State forests or on Crown land. It may not be a public road in the ordinary sense.

Mr. Nalder: I mention that because I believe that signs such as that should be quite clear so that the public can read them.

Mr. GRAHAM: I agree that that is highly desirable; but it is not sought to go as far as that in this statute. I repeat that all I want is to have a final authority somewhere to see that in those cases, which I hope will be exceedingly rare, in which a local authority does not give attention to bringing the signs into conformity with the law, it shall be done in the interests of respect for the law and for the guidance and information of the motoring public. Surely that is the intention and purpose of the signs!

Mr. Owen: What about a case where a road was dangerous, with steep hills and sharp bends, and the local authority had a notice erected to keep the speed down below 35 miles an hour?

Mr. GRAHAM: The local authorities cannot do that of their own volition. If they seek some reduction in the maximum speed limit, they have machinery, which I outlined a few moments earlier, for that to be done. The present policy is not for speed limits, varying from 35 miles an hour maximum here, 20 miles there, and 15 miles somewhere else, but rather for warning signs indicating danger or the necessity for additional care to be taken.

I think that on other occasions I have indicated that under certain circumstances it is dangerous to travel as slowly as 25 miles an hour; but on other occasions, and perhaps on the identical street, it is quite

safe to travel at 35 or 40 miles an hour. In other words, I say quite frankly that if we were better motorists than we are, I would be in favour of no speed limit, but rather would have the emphasis placed on dangerous and negligent driving.

Mr. Brand: Hear! hear!

Mr. Owen: I agree with that, too.

Mr. Bovell: How will this cover a restriction on speed when a motorist is passing a school situated on a country highway?

Mr. GRAHAM: There is no such thing as a restriction when passing schools.

Mr. Bovell: But the notice says "20 miles an hour limit."

Mr. GRAHAM: That is precisely what I am complaining about. There is no law under which that can be done.

Mr. Bovell: Don't you think it desirable that a speed limit should be imposed when schools are situated along the highway?

Mr. GRAHAM: No. If we look at this matter logically and not over-emotionally, I think it will be agreed that there is no necessity for that if there is a warning that the school is there. In that case any motorist worthy of the name would keep his eyes well open for the possibility of children running out on to the road. We must have regard for the fact that schools are open only five days in the week; and for approximately only 35 to 40 weeks a year—

Mr. Nalder: Like the banks.

Mr. GRAHAM: —and lots of other places—and that it is only at certain periods that there would be any likelihood of children racing across the road. Forgetting about the morning playtime, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon there would not or should not be any children scampering across the road near the school any more than they would be running on to the road in any other part of the township or district as the case may be. I quite agree that a sign indicating that there is a school nearby, or a narrow bridge or a dangerous corner, should be erected. But I repeat—the emphasis should be on dangerous driving.

When our accident record in Western Australia improves substantially, and if I still have something to do with traffic, it is my intention to move towards that objective. When I say that, I do not mean that we will increase the maximum from 35 miles an hour to 40 miles an hour, and then to 50 miles an hour, because I am afraid that were there a speed limit—say, of 45 miles an hour—too many people would take that almost as a command to travel at 45 miles an hour, irrespective of the circumstances of the road they are travelling over at the time.

One of the difficulties, I am informed, is that the police experience some trouble in establishing "dangerous driving," to the

satisfaction of the court; whereas it is comparatively simple in the case of exceeding the specified speed limit. As is well known—and this action was taken by the previous Government, and I commend that Government for it—on country roads outside established townships, etc., no speed limit applies. It is unfortunate that we have so many accidents; but the fact that we have no speed limit in the wide open spaces, and that certain other States have a maximum of 50 miles an hour, in my opinion has not meant a disproportionate number of accidents in Western Australia as compared with the other States where there is a limit. Therefore it is the dangerous, the reckless and the negligent driver who is the menace.

I will confess—though I will not say when I did it—that I have driven around the streets of Perth at 50 miles an hour without feeling there was danger to anybody in the circumstances. But there could be other circumstances applying to the same stretch of road which would make it extremely dangerous to drive at 20 miles an hour. For example, let us consider the road following the railway line near Claremont. If people were disgorging themselves from the Royal Show it would probably be extremely dangerous to be travelling more than 20 miles an hour.

There are, of course, also to be taken into consideration the factors of darkness against daylight; the number of bends on the road; and the question as to whether it is a level or an undulating road; that is to say, whether it is a type of road with a restricted vision and a number of inter-sections. The density of the traffic must also be considered; and the motorist who has road sense is able to appreciate these circumstances and adjust his driving accordingly.

But there are far too many who operate at the wheel at the moment who are entirely oblivious of all these considerations. If they know that from Point A. to Point B. they are permitted to travel at 35 miles an hour they will do so, irrespective of the circumstances applying at the time.

We are hoping that, as a consequence of a stiffening up in the tests given to persons applying for drivers' licences, there may be ultimately some improvement. But here again we have the situation—as is only to be expected—of the motorist behaving himself perfectly when undergoing the test. He will observe every regulation to the finest detail while being tested; but the moment he is left to his own devices, after getting his driver's licence he becomes completely irresponsible.

Mr. Brand: A lack of concentration is the greatest contributing factor to accidents. We should encourage drivers to concentrate.

Mr. GRAHAM: That undoubtedly is important; and that is why the new venture of the motor-driving school in Mt. Lawley

has been established. It is hoped that, with the assistance of public-spirited citizens, and of the Rotary Club at Subiaco, before long a driver-training school will be in operation. It is also hoped that another will be established south of the river, and that the senior pupils attending schools will be given courses in road sense and handling of vehicles and so on. In other words they will be trained for something they will undoubtedly encounter during their lifetime. This training will be along the lines of that which they receive in many other matters. Perhaps I am getting away from the matter of signs being in accordance with the law.

Mr. Brand: Would the law apply to the King's Park Board?

Mr. GRAHAM: I should say "yes" and "no."

Mr. Brand: You are not the Minister for Labour.

Mr. GRAHAM: The circumstances in King's Park are entirely different from those of practically any other part of the metropolitan area inasmuch as, apart from other things, the roadways in the park are not designed for through traffic as a short cut from the vicinity of Nedlands, shall we say, to the city of Perth. These roads were constructed for the sightseers and tourists who enter the park for the purpose of enjoying it in one way or another.

Mr. Brand: While the car is moving.

Mr. GRAHAM: It would appear that quite a number of hon. members in this Chamber have their own experiences of enjoyment in King's Park. I will leave it at that.

At present, there is power in the Traffic Act to impose conditions on taxi-drivers, or drivers of passenger vehicles, who are employed in the industry. There is some uncertainty in respect of the term, "employed in the industry." I think it was intended, and it could be construed as "Persons engaged in the industry."

I say quite frankly that I have no fixed conclusions in my mind as to what should be done. I might mention—and it could be addressed to answers to questions yesterday—that under the Transport Co-ordination Act both Houses of Parliament have agreed that there should be some limitation to the time that a commercial driver should be continuously at the wheel over a period of 24 hours, and at different intervals, without a break.

That gives some indication as to the feelings of Parliament in this matter. Quite honestly and conscientiously I will say that I have no final conclusion in this matter; but it is felt, and it has been stated in many parts of the world, that if for any reason—and we need not go into the niceties—persons engaged in commercial carrying are to remain, around the clock,

at the wheel of a vehicle they could be endangering their own lives, the lives of passengers, those of other motorists, of pedestrians and the rest. It is only to grant controlling power that the amendment is sought.

There is a further amendment which perhaps appeals to the country members, because the complaint has come from country sources. It has to do with the damage to the road caused by certain plant or equipment. As the law stands at present, it states that it shall be an offence for extraordinary damage to have been done. There was a case comparatively recently where a piece of machinery was being hauled along a country road. The tyres were down and they were scratching great marks in the roadway. But the court held that this was damage which was to be expected, and therefore it was not extraordinary damage. Accordingly, the prosecution failed.

Mr. Hearman: What about the farmer who used a cultivator to remove the corrugations on a road?

Mr. GRAHAM: If that was his intention, the local authority would no doubt be obliging and accommodating if he made any request to that body.

Mr. Hearman: It happened on the main road. The main road engineer saw it, and the result was that there was a grader on that road about twice a week after that.

Mr. GRAHAM: As was mentioned, the Bench ruled the damage was not extraordinary considering the type of vehicle used. The amendment seeks to delete the word "extraordinary." No responsible local authority would seek to take action against a person unless some damage of a material nature was done. If it could be established in the court that it was of comparative insignificance, as a consequence, then, no doubt the case would be dismissed or some very low penalty imposed. But if anybody is so careless or unthinking as to proceed with a vehicle with some sort of projection causing damage, perhaps running into many thousands of pounds, the local authority should have power to take such a person to court and let justice be done.

That broadly embraces the contents of the Bill. I might mention that there were some half-dozen other amendments suggested to me with the majority of which I agreed, but felt they could wait for another occasion and perhaps be welded together with some of the existing provisions of the Act. If it be my good fortune to be associated with traffic next year or the year after, —

Mr. W. Hegney: You will.

Mr. GRAHAM: —and depending on how long it takes to do the job, I hope hon. members will be able to heave a sigh of relief when they see a comprehensive, yet

consolidated and concise document covering all of the essential requirements under what we call the Traffic Act at the present time. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hearman, debate adjourned for one week.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th October.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [3.33]: The Opposition adheres to the undertaking it gave when the previous State Government Insurance Office Bill was before this Chamber earlier this session.

Mr. Graham: What an Opposition!

Mr. COURT: On page 608 of Hansard, the 4th September, 1958, I had the following comments to make:—

We have a proposition to submit to the Government in regard to this question of school children's insurance so as to indicate that we are not playing dog in the manger as the Minister always implies we do; and the proposition is this: That we will support an amendment to the State Government Insurance Office Act to permit the State Government Office to extend its school children's policy to cover school children 24 hours a day, seven days a week, if there is provision for equal opportunity for all those seeking to indulge in such business. I have not used the words "equal access" because I think there are many objectionable features associated with anybody having to visit schools for this purpose.

This undertaking was repeated again on page 615 of the same day. Therefore, it is proposed to support the second reading of this Bill; and, in Committee, to move an amendment to bring it into line with the undertaking given by the Opposition both in this Chamber and in another place.

Hon. members will notice that this measure has gone far beyond the undertaking given by the Opposition. The existing Act, under an amendment passed in 1954, provides in Section 2, under the interpretation of "insurance business", for a paragraph known as (b3) dealing with school children's insurance. The significance of this particular paragraph is very important. It provides indemnity for the parent or guardian of a child or person enrolled at a University as an undergraduate against moneys paid by him or on his behalf in respect of medicines, medical requisites, surgical requisites, medical, surgical, den-

tal, optical, hospital nursing or other necessary treatment supplied or given to the child or person or services of whatever description, including first aid, ambulance or other transport service to carry the child or person to a place of treatment.

As the principal Act stands at the moment, this applies where the moneys are so paid as a result of the child or the person suffering bodily injury by accident whilst he is attending a school or University where he is enrolled as a pupil or undergraduate, and this includes sport or entertainment organised by the school or University. It also applies in respect of whilst travelling to and from a place of abode to school or University, again including organised sport and entertainment.

There is further provision under the principal Act that where death results from the injury, burial expenses are included in the interpretation. Provision is made for a child to be defined as a person under 21.

The restrictive factor in the present legislation is the provision that the indemnity exists only whilst a child is attending school or University or organised entertainment and sport; or whilst the child is travelling to and from a school, University or organised entertainment or sport. It is our idea that the restriction as to time should be removed, but the other provisions of the legislation should be retained.

The Bill provides for a complete personal accident cover. In other words, it attempts to step into a completely new field of business as distinct from the defined type of indemnity set up in the existing paragraph (b3) in the interpretation section of the principal Act. It is in respect of any person who is a student or trainee of any educational or training institution. No attempt has been made to define what would be a "student or trainee" if the Bill became law; and also, what would be an "educational" or "training" institution under the Government's legislation.

An Opposition amendment appears on the notice paper, and during Committee I propose to explain it in more detail. However, it is in accordance with the principle I have just stated. A further point is this: That when the Opposition made its proposition to the Minister, or to the Government, on the 4th September and subsequently, it was based on equal opportunity for both the private people interested in writing this type of insurance, and the State Government Insurance Office.

Mr. Graham: Would you agree with that most commendable principle for insurance generally?

Mr. COURT: That point was raised by interjection when I made my second reading speech on the previous State Government Insurance Office Bill. What the Minister overlooks is this: We are offering

a concession. We do not agree that the State Government Insurance Office needs to extend its franchise, as there is an adequate service.

Mr. W. Hegney: The people in Western Australia did.

Mr. COURT: They did nothing of the sort.

Mr. W. Hegney: They indicated it by two elections.

Mr. Graham: You step back two paces, and then forward one and think you have made progress.

Mr. COURT: This is not going back at all; it is offering something.

Mr. Graham: You are so far behind what the public requires.

Mr. COURT: I think that the Minister must admit the Government has been given a very fair go with the State Government Insurance Office. But it wants more in accordance with its policy, and we are not surprised when it asks for more. But, I repeat, we are in fact making a concession.

Mr. W. Hegney: Your policy is to abolish it.

Mr. COURT: I have never said that.

Mr. W. Hegney: Your leader said he would get rid of all State instrumentalities if he got the opportunity.

Mr. COURT: The Minister should again read what he said. I think it would be desirable, before entering into argument on that point, for the Minister again to read what my leader said in that regard.

Mr. Potter: You are out of step with the other States in this.

Mr. COURT: We are not.

Mr. Andrew: The Commonwealth General Assurance pays out 60 per cent. of its premiums in wages—

Mr. COURT: After the exposition the hon. member gave on workers' compensation percentages the other night, I would want to have another look at the figures to see which part of the total income he is dealing with. The other night he dealt with claims and ignored all the other expenses and costs of workers' compensation. The point under discussion is the question of equal opportunity. We agree that the term "equal access" is not a desirable one; and I was careful to phrase our proposition at that time on the basis of equal opportunity.

If hon. members examine the Bill they will appreciate that what the Minister seeks to achieve is something in excess of the matter under discussion when we suggested that he bring down a special amendment to extend the school children's cover, as we know it at present, to a 24-hours-a-day and seven-days-a-week cover.

Mr. W. Hegney: We do not have to bring down what you tell us.

Mr. COURT: That is so. But I am tidying up our side of the story; because we have put forward a proposition, and we adhere to it. There were some aspects of the Minister's speech to which I would like to refer, because he touched on this question of preferential treatment for the State Government Insurance Office and claimed that it did not receive preferential treatment. I say it does, and I have here an extract from a letter or notice sent out by the headmaster of one of the schools. It reads—

School Children's Insurance Scheme.
Renewal of old and commencing new
premiums for period from 1/7/1958 to
30/6/1959.

Note:

The forms handed out at the school gate by representatives of the Commonwealth General Assurance Corporation Ltd. recently have no connection with the P. & C. scheme which is conducted by the State Government Insurance Office.

Green coloured forms are being sent home to you by the school for the insuring of your children by the State Government Insurance Office and only these should be returned to the school with the premiums.

The following is an extract from a letter received this week:—

Teachers are reminded that the only insurance scheme for school children which has departmental sponsorship, and on behalf of which teachers are authorised to distribute cards, etc., and collect money, is that conducted by the State Government Insurance Office in conjunction with the Parents and Citizens' Federation.

(Sgd.) T. L. ROBERTSON,
Director of Education.

Please forward forms B and C with money to the school any day up to and including Wednesday, 25th June.

It then sets out the rates that have to be paid and concludes by stating that premiums cannot be accepted after the 25th June, 1958, and that the P. & C. receives commission on all premiums. The Minister well knows that there is a degree of discretion shown in the schools as to who is allowed into the schools.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Mr. COURT: From the illustration I gave a few moments ago, it will be apparent that there is an arrangement whereby the State Government Insurance Office obtains the benefit of the help of the teaching staff even if it is, as the Minister has said, voluntary help. The fact remains that from within the school there is assistance—obviously officially recognised—given by the teaching staff in respect of the State Government Insurance Office scheme. It is an important point, because in his speech

the Minister emphasised the fact that the Government office did not receive any preferential treatment.

Earlier, I mentioned the discretion that is used by headmasters on the question of any person entering the schools. Many cases can be cited to show that people are allowed to enter a school at the discretion of the headmaster because it is considered to be in the interests of the pupils or the school itself. Some of these cases include film shows of an educational nature, often sponsored by a proprietary firm. We have also an example of straight-out advertising within the school boundaries such as the advertisements printed on milk bottles. We do not want to lay down a hard-and-fast rule that no discretion can be shown by headmasters; but at the same time, a degree of equity should be achieved in regard to people with comparable interests who visit the schools.

The private company that wants to transact its business is not asking for any great help from the teaching staff. All it is asking for is an equal opportunity to put its proposition before the parents and guardians of the school children themselves. There are cases which show that the parents and citizens' associations wanted to enter into this type of insurance and make an arrangement with a private company that is interested in doing this business, but they were denied the facilities to conduct the scheme. The answer given was that the business had been given to the State Government Insurance Office, and therefore it was impracticable for arrangements to be made.

In his speech, the Minister went on to comment as follows:—

The Federation of the Parents and Citizens' Associations is the initiator of this scheme because that body communicated with the State Government Insurance Office and requested it to undertake this form of insurance. The Federation was able to obtain the co-operation of school teachers in the implementation of the scheme, and that co-operation was given entirely on a voluntary basis.

We are not saying that they should not co-operate, but there should be equal opportunity for co-operation.

Mr. W. Hegney: What do you mean by "equal opportunity"?

Mr. COURT: Equal opportunity for co-operation the same as applies now between the teaching staff and the State Government Insurance Office. At present, cards are given out, and collected by the teaching staff, and, furthermore, the actual claims are primarily handled by the teaching staff. They then go to the Parents and Citizens' Association and, in turn, to the federation of that body; and eventually the State Government Insurance Office actually settles the claim. But there is

that degree of co-operation within the school itself. That is not unofficial co-operation, I am sure.

The Minister has mentioned it in his own speech; although, at the same time, he said that no preferential treatment was given to the State Government Insurance Office. As I understand it, the private company has asked only for the equal right to distribute and collect cards within the schools. It is the practice of this company in other States, only where a request is made, to make staff available to the schools to handle these functions. That again is an arrangement with the schools, if they want some staff to handle the business so that the teachers will not have to be bothered with it. The private company handles claims direct with parents and guardians of the children, rather than through the teaching staff and the parents and citizens' associations.

A further point raised by the Minister referred to the payment of commissions. He said he understood this private insurance company offered commissions to State school teachers, and that was objectionable to the teachers concerned. I have been unable to find any evidence of commissions being offered to teachers. What that company did was to offer commissions to parents and citizens' associations. It offered a donation of 6d. per pupil in order to defray out-of-pocket expenses and assist the funds of the parents and citizens' associations.

I cannot find any evidence, written or in any other form, to show that this company offered commissions direct to the teaching staff. If the Minister has any such evidence I would be pleased to hear it. The written and other form of evidence I have been able to obtain is very definitely on the basis of an arrangement between the company and the parents and citizens' associations.

Subsequently the State Insurance Office, under date the 22nd May, 1958, made a proposition to the parents and citizens' associations for the payment of a commission on all these policies; in other words, it adopted the same principle, even though the amounts were different, because the premiums were different. The principle was the same as that put forward by the private insurance company.

It is important that we should have the record straight in regard to these matters; because if it did offer commissions direct to teachers, then I have been misinformed, and my evidence is wrong. I am sure if the Minister made that statement, he had some grounds for so doing.

Mr. Potter: How long has that company been operating in this line?

Mr. COURT: It has been operating much longer than the State Insurance Office.

Mr. Potter: When did it start in Western Australia?

Mr. COURT: It came into Western Australia this year. Actually it was operating a similar scheme, providing exactly the same coverage as the State Insurance Office, in South Australia in February, 1954. That was before the State Insurance Office made its first arrangement with the parents and citizens' associations in Western Australia.

By interjection, I asked the Minister whether he could give any indication of the premiums proposed by the State Insurance Office. He was not prepared to make a statement in that regard, and said he would leave that to the management of that office. As that is a Government instrumentality, the Minister should give us some indication of both the types of policy and the premiums proposed.

In his speech the Minister said all he was asking was as follows:—

The private company has offered insurance cover for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and the object of this Bill is to enable the State Government Insurance Office to insure on the same basis.

That is exactly the proposition which we put to the House, and which we shall try to achieve in an amendment I shall move later. The Bill introduced by the Minister has gone much further than that; it is an attempt to enable the State Insurance Office to enter into the field of personal accident insurance in respect of students and trainees.

In conclusion, I want to make this point: The State Insurance Office—whilst it might have been the first in the field in Western Australia to offer this restricted type of coverage—was not the first in the field in Australia to offer school children's insurance. In fact, it was not the first in the field in this State by a long way. I dealt with this phase at some length in my second reading speech during the debate on the previous Bill to amend the State Government Insurance Office Act, and I have no intention of repeating what I said in detail.

Suffice it for me to say that the first record I can find of this type of insurance in Australia goes back to a report in 1951. The local discussions were highlighted in about October, 1952. The private insurance company that wants to operate in this State commenced this type of insurance in South Australia with a small premium policy in February, 1954, with a premium of 3s. 6d. per capita, 6s. 6d. for two members of a family, and a graduated premium for the whole family. The State Insurance Office entered into this field in Western Australia after that time.

I support the second reading of the Bill with the intention of moving an amendment appearing in my name on the notice paper.

MR. ANDREW (Victoria Park) [4.15]: I would not have spoken on this Bill, had it not been for the unwarranted and uncalled-for remarks made by the hon. member for Nedlands in regard to the figures I quoted the other day concerning workers' compensation. That is the aspect with which I wish to deal shortly. I want to make a few brief comments before doing so.

Like the Minister, I cannot understand why the hon. member for Nedlands referred to equal opportunity, because at present the Commonwealth General Assurance Company has more than an equal opportunity. By having greater facilities it has been able to obtain a very large portion of that business in this State. If it can offer better conditions and facilities it will continue to obtain business. When the parents and citizens' associations of this State requested the form of insurance under discussion, and the State Insurance Office was the only company prepared to offer it, I do not see why—

Mr. Court: That is not correct.

MR. ANDREW: I approached the State Insurance Office to ascertain that fact. Had the parents and citizens associations been able to get a better deal they would have gone to it.

Mr. Court: I explained all the facts when we were dealing with the Bill the last time.

Mr. Johnson: You don't think we will accept your evidence?

MR. ANDREW: Often members of the Opposition have made statements irrespective of whether or not they were founded on facts. The Opposition has adopted its usual attitude in regard to this matter. It seems that no matter how efficiently and how much more favourably a Government concern can offer insurance coverage to the school children of Western Australia, the Opposition is prepared to support the private company which takes 60 per cent. of the premium in costs. That is the part with which I wish to deal, because of the unwarranted statements made by the hon. member for Nedlands.

The hon. member stated that when I said by interjection that 60 per cent. of the premiums of the Australian General Insurance Company went towards the costs, the figure was like ones I gave the other night in regard to workers' compensation. I say that my figures apparently came from the same source as the figures given by the hon. member—that is, from the Workers' Compensation Board. I did not get them direct. Some of my figures appear to be the same as those given by the hon. member for Nedlands, and surely he should not question his own figures or say they were wrong. If my figures are out, so are his.

Mr. Court: You left out all the costs of workers' compensation, in addition to the straight-out claims.

MR. ANDREW: I gave the costs in regard to workers' compensation premiums. I also gave the figures for New South Wales where the "to and from" clause operates, and they indicate a 53 per cent. gross profit. That is the part which our Liberal friends do not like. He questioned my figure of 60 per cent. and cast aspersions on me.

I now wish to quote from the 12th annual report of the Commonwealth Insurance Commission for the year ended the 30th September, 1957; and I wonder whether the hon. member for Nedlands would question this.

In regard to ordinary business, the Australian T. & G. costs in percentages were 17.4. The costs of the Australian & Provident Society, the biggest company in Australia, were 15.2; those of the City Mutual Life Assurance, 16.7; and those of the Commonwealth General Co. for which the Liberal Party is battling—

Mr. Court: We are not battling for any particular company.

Several hon. members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Court: He is not sticking to facts.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! There are too many interjections. The hon. member for Victoria Park has the right to speak, and I am going to see he gets it. Will he please resume his seat? I would point out to him that the information he is submitting to the House has reference to a debate that took place. Unless he is connecting it up with the Bill, it is not relevant to the present discussion. However, the hon. member for Victoria Park will now proceed.

MR. ANDREW: Mr. Speaker, I contend that these particular figures are in connection with this company which does business in regard to school children's insurance in Western Australia.

Mr. Oldfield: It is not of high repute, is it?

MR. ANDREW: No; it is not. The costs of this company in regard to general insurance were 58.2. I will now compare the industrial costs. Australian T. & G. costs were 36.6—and school children's business is regarded as industrial business. These are higher costs because, when industrial premiums are being collected, direct contact has to be made with the people.

The Australian Mutual Provident Fund costs were 29 per cent.; the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Co's, 32.6 and the Commonwealth General Co's, 60. Therefore, for every 100 shillings or £100 that the Commonwealth General collected

by way of premiums its cost was 60 per cent., 60s. or £60, whichever way it is worked out.

I mainly rose to refute the foolish statement made by the hon. member for Nedlands and I think I have succeeded in doing so.

Mr. Court: You have not.

Mr. Brand: You have confused the issue.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [4.22]: As mentioned by the hon. member for Nedlands, previous promises have been made in this House by the Government with reference to legislation covering school children for the full period of 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I just rise to state that we are in agreement with the suggestion, and also will be prepared to support the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Nedlands. I give the assurance to this House that hon. members on this side are prepared to support the second reading.

THE HON. W. HEGNEY (Minister for Labour—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [4.23]: I do not propose at this stage to reply to the second reading debate, because of the nature of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Nedlands, which seeks to replace the proposal submitted by the Government with another. I think it would be agreed that the subject matter of the amendment is such that I would be duplicating my remarks if I were to discuss at this stage the contents of the Bill and the proposed amendment, which are interwoven and I will therefore save time by reserving my comments for the Committee stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Hon. W. Hegney (Minister for Labour) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—put and passed.

Clause 2—Section 2 amended:

Mr. COURT: During the second reading debate, I gave a fairly lengthy explanation as to the objections held by the Opposition in respect of this Bill and I do not propose to go over all that detail again. An amendment to give effect to our proposal is shown on pages 6 and 7 of the notice paper. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I do not propose to read it in full; but I would like to make the comment that in line 20 of the proposed new paragraph (b3) the two words "or person" have been omitted—due to lack of checking before the amendment was handed in. This line should read "child or person if the same opportunities and" and I would like to point out that when I move the amendment I will include those two words.

The amendment is nothing more nor less than a deletion of the restrictive time factors from the existing paragraph (b3) in the principal Act. If hon. members refer to Section 2, paragraph (b3) of the principal Act they will find that there are two paragraphs which have a limiting effect in regard to the cover of a child when at school or attending organised sports and entertainments, and travelling to and from school or such organised sports and entertainments. Therefore, if these two paragraphs are deleted, so will the limiting time factor be deleted.

The addition of the proposed paragraph (b3) will provide equal opportunity for other companies who might want to write a similar type of business. I want to make it quite clear that the Opposition has no particular company in mind when submitting this proposition. The principle is that if companies have not the same terms, the one with the best proposition will get the business; and I cannot see why the Government should be particularly concerned in that regard. But it is not a question of advocating a particular company.

I have said before, when discussing this matter in the House, that the originators of this type of insurance were neither the State Government Insurance Office nor the company seeking business in Western Australia. It was another reputable company altogether—in fact, one of the most reputable in Australia—and it still writes that type of business though in a different form. Quite frankly, I do not think that form would be competitive in Western Australia; but that is for the public to decide if equal opportunity is given to write the business. I move an amendment—

Page 2—Delete all words in lines 8 to 11 and substitute the following:—

(b3) indemnifying the parent or guardian of a child or a person enrolled at a university as an undergraduate against moneys paid by him or on his behalf in respect of medicines, medical or surgical requisites, medical, surgical, dental, optical, hospital nursing or other necessary treatment supplied or given to the child or the person or services of whatever description, including first aid, ambulance or other transport service to carry the child or the person to a place of treatment, where the moneys are so paid as a result of the child or the person suffering bodily injury by accident and where death results from the injury the moneys so paid for the burial of the child or person if the same opportunities and facilities for communicating with children and university undergraduates their parents

and guardians through the schools and the University of Western Australia for the purpose of distributing and collecting literature, proposal forms, claim forms, discharges and premiums relating to policies are granted to persons and companies desiring to issue like policies to the policies referred to in this paragraph as are granted to the State Government Insurance Office, its servants, agents and representatives but not otherwise. In this paragraph "child" means a person under the age of twenty-one years.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I oppose the amendment, and I hope the Committee will defeat it. It is restrictive and unnecessary. The hon. member said he was not concerned about any particular company, but I have noticed a trend of antagonism against the State Government Insurance Office. This was indicated when the major Bill was introduced into the Chamber, and it has been amplified in these discussions. The hon. member said that the private company in question did not offer commissions to school teachers. The circular implies that commissions were offered.

Mr. Court: Read the circular.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It states—

In Western Australia the C.G.A. was the first insurance office to offer commissions for school children's insurance.

Mr. Court: Read the whole circular. In fairness to these people, you should clear up the question of commission. They offered it to the parents and citizens' associations.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am not going to read three or four pages of the circular. I have read the relevant part. From what the hon. member has said, I understand that the commission was offered to the parents and citizens' associations. That is neither here nor there so far as the general principle is concerned.

The State Government Insurance Office did not initiate this scheme. The Parents and Citizens' Federation of Western Australia, which is representative of all parents and citizens' associations throughout the State, approached the State Government Insurance Office and asked it to initiate a scheme. After quite an amount of negotiation the State office launched this scheme; but before it did so, the co-operation of the teachers was sought.

Teachers have a multiplicity of duties; and I understand some would be hesitant about the matter. However, in view of the objects behind the scheme they agreed to co-operate with the Parents and Citizens' Federation to see that it was a success. As

late as 12.45 p.m. today I checked with the manager of the State Insurance Office and learned that no officer of his office has had access to the schools, in connection with this scheme; and that no representative of the office has visited the schools for the purpose of distributing literature.

Mr. Court: Because you have an arrangement with the teaching staff.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Hon. members can see how hostile the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is to any advance by the State Government Insurance Office. He is trying to obstruct the scheme, which has been implemented in co-operation with the teachers and the parents and citizens' associations. The hon. member talks about equal opportunity. We cannot direct the teachers to distribute literature and collect premiums for every company in the State. The teachers are acting entirely in a voluntary capacity. The hon. member for Nedlands is trying to put the skids under the State Government Insurance Office scheme. He implies that unless the private insurance companies have the co-operation of the teachers, the Education Department should withdraw the authority from the teachers. Is that so?

Mr. Court: All we ask is for equal opportunity.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member will not answer the question; but that is what it means. Do I understand him to indicate that unless the private insurance companies have the teachers at their beck and call, he wants the Education Department to withdraw the authority from the teachers?

Mr. Court: Where do you get this "beck and call" business?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: If all insurance companies are going to operate in the schools, the teachers will be at their beck and call if they are going to be directed to act on behalf of all the insurance companies in Western Australia.

Mr. Johnson: You cannot get an honest answer from him.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Let us get back to the question of equal opportunity which was mentioned by the hon. member for Nedlands. It is all right when equal opportunity is going to advance the claims of the private insurance companies; but when the Government, in accordance with its pronounced policy, and after having fought and won two elections, introduces a Bill to provide for the State office to engage in all forms of insurance, what becomes of the hon. member's equal opportunity? He does everything he can to sandbag our Bill. He has been instrumental in having it defeated in another place since the first year he entered this Parliament—1953. This means he has had it defeated six times in succession.

Mr. Brand: Not a bad record!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I would say it was humbug. I will deal with the Leader of the Opposition before I finish. I indicated to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that if he had his way he would abolish the State Government Insurance Office.

Mr. May: He would not be game.

Sir Ross McLarty: You would abolish private enterprise if you had your way.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member for Murray does not want the meatworks abolished. He wants more Government meatworks established. I shall now deal with the actual proposals in the Bill. The measure, in 1954, enabled the State Government Insurance Office to engage in a school children's insurance scheme within limits. All hon. members know the restrictions. Certain benefits were enumerated in the provisions mentioned by the hon. member for Nedlands. They included medical and hospital benefits and so on, and a certain amount for funeral expenses. I do not know whether the hon. member for Nedlands is so innocent as to think we would swallow his proposal hook, line and sinker.

If one reads the amendment recently submitted by the Government, one will find it is what could be called reasonably comprehensive. But if one closely examines the amendment, one finds that it is still restrictive. We propose to remove much of the limitation; but the hon. member for Nedlands wishes to retain the age of 21 years.

Mr. Court: Only for a child.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: A full-time University student is entitled to insurance cover until he reaches the age of 21 years. Why should he be denied the right of insurance cover for the rest of his course?

Mr. Court: You don't even know your principal Act.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member still retains the age limit of 21 years. We propose to remove that limitation.

Mr. Court: Not for an undergraduate.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: If we accepted the amendment, the position that obtains today would continue in the future. The major Bill sought to bring about the removal of the restrictions that apply under the present section, and to put the State Government Insurance Office on a far more competitive basis in regard to the comprehensive nature of the school children's insurance scheme. And that is why the Bill was defeated.

The Liberal Opposition still desires to have limitations in regard to particular benefits. If we were to accept the amendment, the private insurance companies, having no restrictions, could offer, in addition to what the State Government Insurance Office could offer, a weekly allowance to the parents while a child was

off sick. In addition, they could offer to make payments in the event of a polio case. They could offer some inducements over and above those that the State office could offer, because of the Act by which it is bound.

Talk about fair competition! Why not let the State office have the extra authority so that it can carry on in the same way as the private companies? I intend to mention some of the institutions and schools which it is proposed to cover. I do not think there will be any quibble about these. They are—

Government or private schools or colleges.

University.

Agricultural colleges.

Technical schools.

Kindergartens.

Orphanages and homes.

Child welfare homes or centres.

Legacy wards.

Spastics.

Seventh Day Adventist schools.

Slow learners' group.

Mentally deficient children.

Schools for the blind.

Schools for the deaf.

The argument of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on his amendment does not hold water. We say that the State Government Insurance Office should be entitled to engage in all forms of general insurance. Another place has, at least six times, defeated our objective and frustrated our ambition. But we have now come with a minor Bill for the purpose of putting the State office on an equal basis with the private companies in respect of the comprehensive nature of the insurance for school children. I hope the Committee will defeat the amendment and will allow the Bill, as drafted, to proceed.

Mr. BRAND: The Minister was most fluent when he really got on to his band wagon about the ambitions of his party in respect of the State Insurance Office. He said that his party's ambition was to give it an open go in competition with all the other insurance offices. I am sure that if hon. members on this side could be certain that the State office would operate only in fair competition there would be no controversy in regard to the matter.

When the Parents & Citizens' Federation of Western Australia approached the Government for some insurance cover for children attending schools, the State office decided that the premium would be 2s. 6d. per head, with a limited coverage of hours. But within two years, if not a shorter period, the State office decided to impose

a 100 per cent. increase and made the premium 5s. for the same coverage. I think it is only fair and reasonable that a private insurance company, be it any company, should be able to enter the field in open competition with the State office; in this case it offered a better coverage of 24 hours a day for a premium of 10s.

When the parents in the area I represent first brought the matter to my notice, there appeared to be a belief that some restriction was placed on the teachers with respect to the co-operation which they might give to the private company, even though the parents of the children were anxious to take advantage of the 24-hour coverage. The Parents & Citizens' Federation's central office sent out a circular advising that it still supported the proposal of the State Government Insurance Office, and it was suggested that, because of the limitation placed on the State office, it could not compete with the private company but, in the event of an amendment being passed during the present session, that office would be able to offer the same proposal. That was exactly the suggestion put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party when they spoke to the first Bill introduced this session to amend the parent Act.

We were prepared to support an amendment which would give similar conditions and similar authority to enable the State office to make the same offer as was being made by the private company—that, no more and no less. The Minister made great play on the fact that we would put the skids under the State office, or place some limitation on it.

Mr. Graham: You can say that again!

Mr. BRAND: It is obvious that if the Minister had his way he would create a monopoly for the State office in respect of all forms of insurance.

Mr. Graham: No!

Mr. Johnson: Be honest! That is not true.

Mr. BRAND: We know the policy of the present Government in respect of this matter.

Mr. W. Hegney: If you had your way, would you abolish the State office?

Mr. BRAND: Perhaps it would be considered that there is a place in the scheme of things for the State Government Insurance Office. But I am sure that nobody envisaged that the State office should have a monopoly in this State. However, from the actions of the Government, it can be seen that it has directed in so many ways that the State Government Insurance Office should be used by Government instrumentalities. Indirectly the Government is influencing everyone

in its aim to ensure that its employees use the State Government Insurance Office rather than permit them to decide for themselves which office and type of insurance they would like to have.

The Minister for Labour was most excited about the fact that the State Government Insurance Office was not getting its own way in imposing upon the people generally a monopoly insurance scheme. We only want the State Government Insurance Office to operate in open and fair competition with private companies in respect of insurance coverage of children attending school. I think it also includes undergraduates.

Mr. Graham: This week's funny story!

Mr. BRAND: Nothing of the kind! The funny story is the pious statement made by the Minister for Labour that the present policy of the Government is not towards making the State Government Insurance Office a monopoly.

Mr. JOHNSON: I, too, oppose the amendment for much the same reason as indicated by the Minister. The crocodile tears of Opposition members affect me not at all. They seem to have a certain distaste for accuracy. The Leader of the Opposition neglected to tell the House that there was an increase in coverage related to the increased premiums.

Mr. Brand: I said coverage was extended for 24 hours.

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member did not.

Mr. Brand: Have a look at Hansard. You must have missed it while weeping over the bank officers' Bill.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Leader of the Opposition is sore because his counterpart in another place turned the best somersault I have ever seen.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member should get back to the amendment.

Mr. JOHNSON: I say the Leader of the Opposition was inaccurate.

Mr. Brand: He was not.

Mr. JOHNSON: The statement that he was inaccurate is not an opinion but a fact. We expect inaccuracies from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but not from the Leader. His inaccuracy in regard to the figures is something of which Mr. Burleigh or Mr. Gossard would have been proud. I object to the restrictive portions of the amendment. They are not intended to promote competition, but to ensure that in no case can the State Government Insurance Office have access to business unless the private people have it.

Mr. Court: Nothing of the sort! That is not in the amendment.

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member should read what has been prepared for him by the private companies, and he will see what I mean.

Mr. Court: It is only opportunity. They do not have to take the opportunity. Just read it fairly and squarely.

Mr. JOHNSON: I do not believe what the hon. member for Nedlands says in this Chamber, so I read everything fairly and squarely for myself. The amendment means that every time an official of the P. and C. or the Education Department takes a form for a State insurance proposal he must also take one for a private firm.

I have not the slightest doubt that in the case of the secretary of the local P. and C. who attends one of the schools in my district to do the work and relieve the teachers in the early part of the insurance year it could be held that, because all the policies were varied, and the claim forms, discharges, and premiums, etc., not given at the same time, this could invalidate the whole policy. There is no doubt that is the intention of the amendment. I object to the amendment.

I regret the earlier Bill giving the State Insurance Office the right to compete on equal terms with private insurance in every field was not granted. I am surprised the Liberal Party did not take the opportunity, when this Bill and the previous one were before Parliament to expunge the proposal to cover the people journeying to and from work. They were most upset at the cost of the "to and from" clause. As parents, we are aware it is more likely that a child will run into an accident going to and from school, than will an adult going to and from his business.

Mr. Brand: How could you exclude "to and from" if you were to be covered 24 hours a day for accident?

Mr. JOHNSON: We cannot exclude travelling for 24 hours; but this has been in the Act for years and statistics show that the accident rate of people in motor accidents—and that is the major proposal covered in "to and from" insurance—practically excludes people between the ages of eight and 55.

Pedestrians in particular, lie in two classes in respect of accidents—the quick and the dead. The school children lie in the first group. The worker going to and from work is excluded almost completely. I am surprised that the Liberals, who are sometimes quoted as being consistent, but who very seldom are consistent, did not take the opportunity to ensure that the "to and from" clause was excluded years ago.

I am surprised to find that the hon. member for Nedlands, who was the director of a hire-purchase company which did not believe in competition to any wide extent in respect of those who came within its clutches, is desiring competition when it happens to be against a State concern. He believes in competition against the State, but never by the State. He is inconsistent, and so are all members of the Liberal Party in respect of competition. The objective of competition is monopoly. Competition of all kinds competes towards the objective of monopoly.

Mr. Roberts: There is no doubt you are talking a lot of rot.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have no intention of replying to that inane interjection.

Mr. Roberts: We must get a record of it.

Mr. JOHNSON: If the hon. member has completed his stupid and inane speech, I shall continue. The whole objective of competition is monopoly at all times. Any person who holds a theory on thinking, but ceases thinking partly along the line of thought cannot lay claim to be a thinker. Nobody can claim that competition is safe at all times. Competition can have a useful effect during the period before monopoly is reached, but the object of competition is not competition itself.

I wish to put forward that thought in simple words, difficult as it is to penetrate the minds of some hon. members opposite. Those words are simple. Nobody competes for competition's sake. Competition is not an objective.

Mr. Brand: Isn't that proof positive of the danger of a State monopoly or a State trading concern?

Mr. JOHNSON: A State monopoly is far less dangerous than any other form of monopoly, because it is subject to the control of the ballot box. All monopolies are dangerous.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is that your objective?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes, the ballot box. I believe in democracy.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is that your objective: to achieve a monopoly?

Mr. JOHNSON: It is not my objective. It is something natural and it is an automatic growth. It is as natural as the fact that when rosebushes are planted, as long as they do not die through the Liberals' parsimony to supply fertilisers, roses will be grown.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should confine his remarks to the amendment before the Chair and not refer to roses.

Mr. JOHNSON: The theory of competition which is sustained in the long, wordy and difficult proposition of the hon. member for Nedlands, is a false theory, out-moded and disbelieved by anyone who stops to think about such matters as economics.

Mr. Brand: You are embarrassing the Minister for Labour.

Mr. JOHNSON: The whole theory of competition has been discredited for a very long time, and we should turn our thoughts to using the existing situation to the best advantage of those for whom we are responsible. We are responsible for the people of Western Australia and not for a company which has come from outside the State. The people who can serve the folk of this State best are naturally those whose thoughts, interests and homes are in the State. The people who can serve this State best are those who have the control here. Parliament itself is under control of the people of this State; and it shows its responsibility every three years, at least in this Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is wandering right away from the amendment.

Mr. JOHNSON: Parliament is directly responsible to the people, at least through this Chamber. Concerns, including the State Insurance Office, which lie under the control of Parliament, are very closely related to the people, and it is the people of the State who are served by the State Insurance Office. In this way the people become its masters, not its servants. I regret that this amending Bill is not wide enough to cover other principles which are involved. I certainly object to the amendment which the hon. member for Nedlands has put forward.

Mr. COURT: It is very easy to determine in this Chamber when one hits the bull's-eye, because hon. members opposite resort to the well-known tactic, when they have no sound argument to advance, of abusing the other fellow. That is precisely what happened in this instance.

Mr. Johnson: If you think that truth is abuse, you should think again.

Mr. COURT: On reflection the Minister will agree that the proposition put forward by the Opposition is a fair and honest one; he will also agree that the proposition put forward by the Government goes further than he has indicated in his speech. The Minister has used these words—

The private office has offered insurance cover for 24 hours a day, seven days of the week. The object of this Bill is to enable the State Insurance Office to insure on the same basis.

Further on in the speech he said—

and all that this Bill seeks to do is to enable the State Insurance Office to provide insurance cover for school children on the same basis as the private company referred to.

Any legal practitioner who is consulted will say that this amendment of mine sets out exactly what the Minister has put forward in his speech. It seeks to place the State Insurance Office on exactly the same basis as the private insurance company.

Already the advent of this company into Western Australia has had a beneficial effect, because it has alerted the Government, as is shown by the fact that it wants to extend the insurance coverage of the State Insurance Office. The legislation under discussion has been on the statute book since 1954. In spite of the comments made by the hon. member for Leederville about the wordy nature of my amendment, he will find fewer words in proposed paragraph (b3) than in the existing paragraph in the statute. It took the entry of the private company into Western Australia, and its offer of a better proposition to arouse the State Insurance Office into competition and into giving a wide coverage. That in itself is an indication of the importance of allowing equal opportunity.

The Minister made great play on the fact that we would want the school teachers to be at the beck and call of every insurance company that desired to write this business. That is nonsense. We are not suggesting that the teachers be involved at all. The fact is that, by direction of the Education Department, the teachers are involved in the State Government side of this insurance.

Mr. W. Hegney: Not at the direction of.

Mr. COURT: If it is not by direction, they are doing it with the consent of the director.

Mr. W. Hegney: It is because the Parents and Citizens' Federation has the co-operation of the teachers and the State Government Insurance Office.

Mr. COURT: All we are asking for is equal opportunity.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is it not a direction that they can deal only with one insurance company?

Mr. COURT: They can only handle the State Government Insurance Office business; but I think I would be wrong if I said it was as a result of a direction from the Director of Education that they handle it. The direction is that they do not handle business other than State Insurance office policies. The object of the amendment is to give equal opportunity to all companies.

Mr. W. Hegney: What do you mean by "equal opportunity"? You have used those words about 50 times.

Mr. COURT: If the Government is going to allow teachers to give out cards and collect cards, it should allow them to do it for other companies. The matter is as simple as that. If the Government says that the Parents and Citizens' Federation has to handle the business of all companies and offices, then that is fair enough. There is no suggestion that the teachers should be at the beck and call of any particular company or companies.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Leader of the Opposition was wide of the mark in the figures he quoted in regard to premiums. If I understood him aright, he indicated that the State Government Insurance Office premium was firstly 2s. 6d., and that some time afterwards it was doubled. I would like to inform him that originally the premium was 3s. 6d. with a maximum of 10s. 6d. per family; and the maximum benefits were £50.

I am speaking from memory, but I think I am right in saying that later on the maximum amount was stepped up to £85 with restrictions regarding payments by the hospital benefit funds or Commonwealth insurance. Later on the premium was increased to 5s. with a maximum of 15s. per family; and the benefits were increased to £100 with the restrictions regarding payments from hospital benefit funds.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition quoted me as saying that I want to enable the State Government Insurance Office to engage in business in regard to the school children's insurance scheme on the same basis as the private companies. I would ask him: If we agree to the amendment, will the private companies be restricted to what is in the amendment?

Mr. Court: I cannot answer that.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: If we agreed to the amendment we would find that the private companies would be able to offer further inducements and the same position would then obtain as prevails today. The amendment is designed either to give all companies free entry into schools or to prevent teachers carrying on a scheme which was asked for by the Parents and Citizens' Federation of this State.

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

Ayes—15

Mr. Bovell	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. I. Manning
Mr. Lewis	

(Teller.)

Noes—23

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Molr
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
Mr. Marshall	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Gaffy
Mr. Watts	Mr. Brady
Mr. Mann	Mr. Evans
Mr. Crommellin	Mr. Lawrence

Majority against—8.

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE) BILL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th October.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [5.20]: The House has already been informed that the purpose of this Bill is to extend the life of the Egg Board for another 10 years which, in effect, makes it 25 years from the inception of the board in 1946. That, of course, will extend it to 1971 and gives it an approximate life of 12 years from now. The Minister told the House that it was necessary to grant an extension for 12 years in order to give the board an opportunity to repay the £200,000 it has been estimated will be necessary to build new quarters and cool stores. He also explained that the Commonwealth Bank is quite willing to advance the money if the State Government will give a guarantee for that amount. From that angle I think it is advisable that the board's life should be extended to cover that period.

I am not altogether in agreement with the hon. member for Dale who said that there was no need to do this and that it was only necessary for the Government to guarantee it. I imagine that the Government would have to take the risk of the Egg Board's activities being discontinued at the end of, say, another seven years. In that case, the Government would be left with the building which, although altogether admirably situated for the activities of the Egg Board, would possibly be of very little use to any other

industry unless it were very much modified; and this would depend very much on where the building was built, particularly the cool storage section. It would be in a district or locality which would be most inconvenient for the storage of other products.

I would like to mention what happened in regard to a cool storage store at Kalamunda. It was built largely for the cool storage of fruit and the quick freezing of vegetable products. When this cool storage business went into liquidation, the building, valued at something like £15,000, lay idle for quite a few years. No-one wanted a cool store in that locality although there was a shortage of cool storage space in the metropolitan area and in the fruitgrowing districts five or six miles away.

Only recently has the building been utilised as a laboratory for the testing of the bauxite deposits in the Darling Range. But there was no demand for it as a cool store and a lot of money was necessary to adapt it for the purpose for which it is at present being used. The same situation could arise in regard to a building erected for the Egg Board, should the board go out of existence before the building was paid for. Therefore, I believe it is quite in order for the Government to ask for the extension to cover the next 12 years. At a later stage I intend to comment on the location of the building.

I quite agree with the hon. member for Dale who said that hon. members should have the opportunity to discuss the activities of the Egg Board. I am sure that hon. members will find the opportunity to do so. The hon. member for Dale certainly did last year when discussing the estimates; and I am sure that the Egg Board, or any other board being discussed or criticised, must give some attention to such criticism, if it is justified, and try to act upon it.

With regard to the extension of the life of this organisation for five years at a time, I would like to say that the board has been in operation since 1946 and its life has already been extended on two occasions. It is interesting to consider the debate which took place in this Chamber in 1945 when the first Bill on this matter was submitted. The Opposition then inserted the clause limiting the life of the board to three years. The Premier suggested that it be 10 years and the present hon. member for Avon Valley who handled the measure for the Opposition, said that he would split the difference and make it five years.

In 1951, when the life of the board was extended for a further five years, there was very little debate. In fact, the Minister in charge, the present hon. member for Toodyay, introduced the Bill, and there were two speeches from members on the

other side of the House—the then Opposition—including the present Minister for Works and the late Mr. Marshall.

In 1954, when the Bill again came before the House for a further extension of five years for the board, the then Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Hoar) spent five minutes explaining the Bill, and the hon. member for Dale took one minute to agree to the Bill on behalf of the Opposition. So I must say that in my experience there has been very little opposition to the extension of the life of the board. Therefore, we are not taking any great risk if we extend its life for another 10 years from 1961. The board has been in existence for 12 years, and I feel that it is working reasonably well. It has made mistakes, but it has profited by its experience and the working and administration of the board are improving year by year.

It was suggested in this Chamber that the board could be improved by having as its head a person who had been a successful businessman. Up to a point I agree with that, because one must have a certain amount of business acumen successfully to carry on the board; but all phases of the industry should be represented on the board if all are to have a fair go.

Many people have said that the Government of the State could be much better carried on by a panel of businessmen; and it has been said that they could balance the budget and do all that is necessary to run the country. However, if that were done, I think we would be getting away from democratic government, under which all the interests of the people of the State are considered. The Egg Board, as at present constituted, represents all phases of the industry, from the primary producer to the consumer, and each member of the board puts forward his own angle, with the result that it is doing quite a good job.

We who believe in orderly marketing, think it desirable that primary producers should have some stability in their industries, and there is no doubt that there is much more stability in the egg-producing industry now than was the case pre-war, when there was no statutory control.

I will now make a few observations on the industry and some of the difficulties confronting those who are endeavouring to make a success of the marketing and distribution of eggs. I think all members know that the variability of production from one season to another is most marked in this industry and that for approximately six months, from July to January, there is a great over-production of eggs, while in the other six months of the year there can be extreme shortages and every endeavour must be made to bridge those periods of short supply.

One of the difficulties confronted is that the Egg Board has no control over production and under the Act it is obliged to take all the eggs offered to it. As the hon. member for Dale said, to obtain completely efficient marketing of eggs it would be necessary to kill off most of the birds after the lean period and rear a fresh lot, in order to avoid a glut in the spring and early summer; but of course that is not practicable, because one has to maintain staff, buildings and equipment, which could not be allowed to remain idle for six months of the year. To enable the industry to carry on it is necessary to have over-production for one portion of the year and lower production or a shortage during the balance of the 12 months.

Because the board has to accept all the eggs offering, it must seek outlets other than through the local market and that has been arranged over the years by exporting a certain percentage of the production. The eggs are exported either in the shell or as pulp; but the prices obtained overseas are governed by world supply and demand and the board can only accept world parity prices, with the result that the eggs are often exported at a loss. To overcome the effect of that loss it is necessary for all egg producers to pay into an equalisation fund.

It has been suggested that the difficulty could be overcome to some degree by allowing eggs to be sold at a cheap rate during the period of over-production and then raising the price considerably during the period of short production. That sounds simple, but it is not so easy in practice, because when there are violent fluctuations in the price a big consumer resistance is built up.

It is doubtful whether, even if eggs were given away, the housewife would use many more than she now does. Enough is as good as a feast and, provided that eggs are made available to the consumer at a reasonable price, the board could not dispose of many more, even if they were given away for nothing. When we come to the necessity to increase the price it must be remembered that, when the price is raised by perhaps a shilling a dozen, there is an immediate resistance and consumption falls off considerably. It may be several weeks, then, before the consumer regains the habit of buying eggs and thus maintains the demand.

Although the board alters the price of eggs from season to season, the price to the consumer is usually kept within a margin of about 6d. and the result is a fairly constant demand by the consumers. I think the board realised that, to keep up the demand, it was necessary to provide the consumer with a better product and give better value for the money. Over the last 12 months there has been introduced a different system of grading. Previously the

small eggs under 1½ ozs. were in one grade and all above that in the other grade; but the board saw fit to grade hen eggs by weight so that the 1½ oz. to 2 oz. eggs went into one grade, and the 2 oz. to 2½ oz. eggs went into the other grade, the average difference in the price being from 6d. to 8d. per dozen. Under that system the housewife can get a large grade of eggs if she so wishes, by paying the extra 6d. or 8d. a dozen. But actually she is getting equal value for the money, and I feel that has done a lot to increase the consumption of eggs.

It has been claimed that our best eggs are sent overseas; but I would point out that one of the biggest factors in determining the export grade is the size and position of the air cell. If that is over a certain size the eggs are rejected for export. But in all other regards those eggs are equal to export quality. So it is unfair to say that the best of our eggs are exported because, in spite of the fact that the air cell might be a little large, the quality of the egg itself is in most instances the same as the export product.

There are other faults, and one could be a weakness of the shell. That could be a grave weakness because the egg with a weak shell does not keep as well as an egg with a sound shell. Eggs with weak shells are pulped and consumed locally or exported in that form. Personally I would like to see the grading of eggs extended to cover the colour of the yolk. We have all seen, particularly in recent years, many eggs which have a very pale yellow-coloured yolk; in fact, some of them are almost colourless.

Mr. Sleeman: Isn't that because of the way the hens are fed?

Mr. OWEN: Yes. Eggs from fowls which have been receiving a good ration of green feed have a rich orange-coloured yolk, although from the health angle there is no difference between the egg with the pale-coloured yolk and the egg with the orange-coloured yolk. But from the consumer's angle—and I have spoken to many consumers about this—the bright-coloured yolk is more attractive, and people have told me that they do not like buying eggs which have a pale-coloured yolk. If it were possible to extend the grading to cover the colour of the yolk as well, I am sure it would assist in the sale of eggs. Even if the eggs with good-coloured yolks were slightly dearer, I am sure they would find a ready market and the consumption of eggs would increase.

Mr. Nalder: Under the present system of grading is it possible to test eggs for the colour of the yolk?

Mr. OWEN: I understand that it is not possible to detect this in every case, because certain hens produce eggs with pale-coloured yolks, whether they have consumed a lot of green feed or not. Those

hens might be running with others that are producing eggs with a good-coloured yolk, although I think it would not be long before the board would know those producers who were marketing eggs with good-coloured yolks.

I understand that one of the reasons why we now have such a big proportion of eggs with pale-coloured yolks is that some years ago—towards the end of the war—it was found that the vitamins which are contained in green feed can be supplied to hens by adding certain fish oils to their feed. The Department of Agriculture, realising that this would be a much easier way to provide the necessary vitamins, advocated the use of these fish oils; and so many poultry farmers dropped the idea of growing green feed and adopted the department's recommendation.

However, I understand that there have been complaints from our overseas markets, and there certainly have been complaints from the local market; and the department, realising its mistake, now suggests that it would be better to feed the fowls with a ration of green feed. I think that a grade of eggs with good-coloured yolks could be marketed and controlled by the Agricultural Products Act. If that were done, I feel sure the eggs would find a ready market and consumers would be able to get the sort of eggs they want.

In stabilising the industry, the board has also stabilised retailers' margins: I think they get about 6d. a dozen. No doubt some retailers consider that that margin is not sufficient; but there are many others who think it is ample. All in all, I think that side of the business is quite satisfactory. There can be no complaint about the activities of the board as regards the costs of handling and administration. Those costs are kept at a reasonable level—something like 8 per cent. I understand.

Agents at the Metropolitan Markets, who handle the fruit and vegetables sold to consumers all over the State, work on a margin of 7½ to 8½ per cent.—I am referring to the produce agents and auctioneers—and so I do not think we can quarrel with the percentage charged by the board for the handling of eggs.

If the board has the opportunity of building new premises, with up-to-date handling machinery—and I understand that some of the machinery now being used is the most up-to-date in Australia—there is every chance that it will be able further to reduce handling and administration costs.

The hon. member for Dale told us about the recent happenings in Victoria; and there certainly has been some rather funny business going on over there. He also told us about the savage reduction, as he called it, in the cost of eggs in that State; and

he said it had resulted in an increase of 30 per cent. in the sale of eggs. Undoubtedly the figures indicated that; but from what I can ascertain, there has been a big price war in Victoria, and the position has been accentuated by the racket that is occurring in connection with interstate trading.

I understand that the Victorian Egg Board, in trying to do the best thing for its industry, was maintaining what it considered to be a good price for the producer as well as the consumer. But under Section 92 of the Constitution the board could not prevent eggs from being carried over the border from South Australia, or other States; and I believe that large quantities were being imported from South Australia and were being sold on the Victorian market.

The Victorian Egg Board could not control those sales; and, in order to try to overcome the problem and bring matters to a head, it made a big reduction in the price of eggs to the consumer. That reduction increased the sales by about 30 per cent. The position was farcical, because carriers were bringing eggs from South Australia to the Victorian market, and those same carriers were picking up Victorian eggs and taking them back to South Australia. I feel that 30 per cent. increase in sales is largely taken up with those sales that were made back to South Australia. So I am sure we could take that as a criterion of what would happen here if we were to have a big reduction in the price of eggs to the retailer.

Mr. NALDER: At this stage, Mr. Speaker, I move—

That the hon. member be granted leave to continue his speech at the next day of sitting.

Motion put and passed.

Bells rung.

RETIREMENT OF THE HON. J. B. SLEEMAN.

Tributes from Fellow Members.

THE HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Premier—Northam) [5.52]: I seek your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, to refer to the fact that the hon. member for Fremantle (the Hon. J. B. Sleeman) will not appear in this House again. We all know that he proposes to retire from parliamentary life at the end of the present Parliament. He proposes to leave on Tuesday morning next—I think it is—for a holiday boat trip which will take him to some distant and mysterious lands. Therefore, he will not appear in the Assembly again as an hon. member.

The hon. member for Fremantle was first elected to this Chamber early in 1924. He will, therefore, when this Parliament

is completed, have been here for 35 years. That is a wonderful record of parliamentary service for any hon. member to have established, particularly on a continuous basis and for the one electorate. All of us who have been here for any length of time know how faithfully the hon. member for Fremantle has carried out his duties and responsibilities as an hon. member of this Parliament. Without doubt he would be the most attentive of all hon. members to his duties, particularly when the House is sitting. He would easily take the crown—if one were available—for the best sitter in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Lawrence: You should put him on the Egg Board.

Mr. Brand: I'll pay that one!

Mr. HAWKE: He is the Father of the House in point of service, and someone has even dared to suggest that he is the Father of the House in point of age. However, I do not think we should worry about the second qualification. When the hon. member for Fremantle leaves Parliament, the hon. member for Murray, at least on an equal basis with one or two others, will be the Father of the House.

Mr. Sleeman is deservedly respected in his own electorate. He is very popular there, and he has won great respect and admiration from the hon. members of this House and from the hon. members of the Legislative Council—except on odd occasions when he has condemned some of them. I think that once he even moved to reduce the vote for the Legislative Council on the Annual Estimates to £1 to record a protest about something which had been done or not done in the Legislative Council.

Another measure of Mr. Sleeman's worth is to be found in the fact that he is highly regarded by all members of the staff. He has won that respect by virtue of the fact that he has always treated them with courtesy and dealt with them in a co-operative way, and on every occasion has appreciated the help and assistance which they have given to him.

The record of parliamentary service of the hon. member for Fremantle is not only a credit to himself, but also it serves as a very good example, I suggest, to all young men in this community. They could well look at and study his record of faithful and meritorious service and then come to the conclusion that in this country a young man has great opportunities in public life; and if he cares to take advantage of them, he can subsequently render good and valuable service to the electorate which he represents and to the community of Western Australia generally.

So I express the admiration of hon. members on this side of the House to Mr. Sleeman for his wonderful record of parliamentary service. We regret extremely

that he is leaving Parliament. We wish him well, not only on his forthcoming holiday trip, but also for many years in the future. We trust that good health and good cheer will remain with him, and we thank him for the wonderful friendship and cheerfulness he has shown to all of us over a long period of years.

THE HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.57]: In speaking on behalf of those who sit behind me, I gladly join with the Premier in paying a tribute to the wonderful service performed by the hon. member for Fremantle. Having been here some 13 years, I fully appreciate, with many other hon. members, what a 35-year record of service in this Parliament represents. As one of the younger members of this Assembly, I must admit to acknowledging that Joe Sleeman—if I may use that name—has set a wonderful example to younger men in the way he has attended to his parliamentary duties.

Seldom has he been absent from his seat in Parliament, and it is good for each and every one of us to take cognisance of the fact that he placed his parliamentary attendances on a very high priority in the service that he gave.

Mr. Hawke: During a period of 14 years he did not miss one sitting.

Mr. BRAND: That is further evidence of the emphasis he placed on and the priority he gave to his parliamentary life. Whilst sitting opposite him, as Minister for Works, I heard from the Hon. Joe many times on one particular subject—namely, the problem of upriver development and a bridge over the river. It would seem to me to be regrettable that, in spite of the change of Government, he is going out without the problem being solved. He certainly persevered and was insistent in his claim that a restriction should be placed on upriver development.

That, and the question of onus of proof, have been the two babies he has nursed here all through his parliamentary life. I also recall the occasion when, as a private member, he went to the Governor to request that he remove the commission from the then Premier for some breach of duty in accounting in respect to a certain cement deal.

The hon. member for Fremantle has been recognised as the most friendly and helpful of hon. members in this House. I take this opportunity of saying that I hope the holiday he has planned will be all that he desires; and that when he returns, he will enjoy good health and happiness; that he will look back on his parliamentary life as having been well worth while, and as having returned to him something for the service and good work he has given to the State generally, and to his own party and electorate in particular.

I understand he is going to Japan; and the Premier suggested an atmosphere of mystery. I am sure the hon. member for Fremantle will enjoy it all, and that he will come back full of beans. I regret to say that when he returns it will be as a private citizen, and that no more will his face be seen in this Legislative Assembly.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [6.21]: In the unavoidable absence of the Leader of the Country Party, I wish to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in expressing to the Hon. J. B. Sleeman the very best wishes of the members of the Country Party while on his trip abroad. Joe—as we have all known him—has been one of the friendliest and most courteous of the hon. members in this House. It was interesting to hear the Premier say that the hon. member for Fremantle was elected to this place in 1924. I was at school during that time, and it seems very long ago.

It is apparent that those 35 years have not drained the energy and effort from the hon. gentleman; because even as late as last night he put up a fight for a cause which he has presented on many occasions in this House. I do not know whether the hon. member will give us a solo before he leaves; but perhaps we could sing "Poor Old Joe", or "Gone Are the Days".

However, I am sure that we will all be very happy to see him and hear from him at any time he chooses to come back to this place. I have been hoping that he will take a camera along with him on his journey, so that when he returns he can show us photographs of the places he will visit while abroad. I am sure they would be most interesting.

I join with other hon. members in expressing my best wishes to the hon. member for Fremantle. We trust he will be spared for many a long day to enjoy his retirement in health and happiness. We wish him the very best of luck, and hope that he will have a most enjoyable holiday.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [6.4]: As a private member, and one who has more or less been a companion of the hon. member for Fremantle during my time in this Assembly, I would like to associate myself with the remarks made by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. What we have heard is evidence of the fact that whilst our politics might be diametrically opposed, our friendships continue; and after the battle and heat of the day we can all meet as firm friends. I count the hon. member for Fremantle—or "Joe" as he is known to all of us—as one of my firm friends. I think it should be acknowledged that though hon. members on both sides of the House have differing ideas on politics, they can still continue to cement

friendships that have existed while they have been here. I hope that will continue for all time. I wish the hon. Mr. Sleeman very many years of happiness, prosperity, and good health.

THE HON. J. T. TONKIN (Minister for Works—Melville) [6.6]: I am conscious of the time and of the necessity—

THE SPEAKER: I will allow an extension of time!

Mr. TONKIN: —to permit the hon. member for Fremantle to speak to hon. members on this last occasion that he will be with us as an hon. member. I trust I will be pardoned for saying a few words, because I am one of the members who have been very closely associated with him ever since I entered Parliament. At that time I represented the constituency of North-East Fremantle. The hon. Mr. Sleeman and I were very closely associated from the first day of my election; indeed, he assisted me materially in that election.

I learned very early that he was a man of great sincerity of purpose, and one who was the champion of the underdog. He is truly a man of the people; but nevertheless he was prepared to take up the case of any elector, no matter what his station, provided that elector had a case for presentation. He might not always have agreed with the case he was presenting. On occasions when he led deputations he made it quite clear that he was carrying out his duty as a member of Parliament, but his opinions were different from those being presented. That was characteristic of his work in his parliamentary career.

He was never one for sitting on the fence. He invariably declared unmistakably his views; he held to them very strongly; and he fought for them to the last. I do not know of anyone who has shown greater tenacity in dealing with a subject, and in pursuing it as far as possible, in the hope of accomplishing what he has set out to achieve.

The hon. member for Fremantle has accomplished a great deal for his electorate. We all recall the fight he put up for many years to get a new bridge over the Swan River. The old dilapidated structure had seen better days; it obviously needed replacement; but it took long and strenuous advocacy on his part to effect that replacement. The greatest of credit must reflect on the hon. member in bringing about the bridge's replacement; because having set his mind to the task, he did not sit back until the bridge became an accomplished fact. That has been characteristic of his attitude in dealing with various matters during his parliamentary career.

It may very truly be said of Joe Sleeman, without the slightest doubt, that Her Majesty may well, say, "Well done, thou

good and faithful servant"; because in his attention to parliamentary work, in his attention to his duties in this House, and in his attendance to the wants of his constituents, he never spared himself but gave of his best.

The hon. member has earned an excellent record, one of which he will be very proud. His name will be an honoured name in this Parliament for ever. He has already notched for himself a place of very great importance in the development of this State, which one day is destined to become a great State, and the name of Joe Sleeman will not be forgotten.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [6.10]: May I, on behalf of the Independents and quasi-Independents, present a small contribution on this the last appearance of the hon. Mr. Joe Sleeman in this Chamber. It can be said that, above all, a member of Parliament must do one thing; that is, he must retain his seat. Joe Sleeman has done just that, and we are here to say farewell to him on this occasion, after his 35 years of good and faithful service. The hon. member for Katanning has suggested that as a farewell gesture we might sing "Poor Old Joe." Seeing the hon. member in action last night it cannot be said that "the old grey mare ain't what she used to be." His contribution to the debate last night was just as effective as his debate when he first came into this House—and believe it or not, when I was only a small boy.

It can be said that Joe Sleeman has endeared himself to us all. He has been a friend, philosopher and guide to all new members, and none of us have hesitated to take our problems to him. In some respects his methods might have been a little unorthodox; but if they were, at least they were effective.

On behalf of myself, and I know all hon. members of this House are with me, I hope that the years which remain for Joe will be happy and peaceful.

THE HON. J. HEGNEY (Speaker—Middle Swan) [6.12]: I should not let this opportunity go by without saying a few words in support of the felicitations which have been extended to the hon. member for Fremantle. He was here a long time before I came into Parliament. When I was first elected he expressed very warm friendship towards me, and that friendship has continued right up till now.

He was a vigorous debater, and very forceful in putting forward the views that mattered to his electorate. It did not matter whether he was on the Government or on the Opposition side; it did not matter whether there was a Labour Minister

or a Liberal Minister in office; the hon. Joe Sleeman as the member for Fremantle fought for the rights of his electorate.

There was one particular characteristic about him. No matter how forceful or how heated he became in debate—and he got heated at times—he never retained any rancour or bitterness afterwards. Outside the precincts of this Chamber all hon. members could fraternise with him, because they knew he was fighting for the rights of his electorate. He has been returned at each election for a period of 35 years, and that is a great tribute to his record of service.

In addition, he was the Chairman of Committees in this House from 1933 to 1939, a period of six years. Subsequently he became the Speaker of this Assembly, and he held that office from 1939 to 1947. There is no question that during that period, although he was a strong party member when he was on the floor of the House, after he attained the high office of Speaker he endeavoured to the best of his ability to interpret Standing Orders and to observe the practice in this place of giving every hon. member an opportunity to express his viewpoint for the furtherance of his electorate.

I do not think that anyone can say that Joe Sleeman, during his six years as Speaker, was unfair. That is not an easy task required of a Speaker, who has to listen to debates in which he sometimes desires to intervene. The Speaker has to be trained to listen and listen. Joe Sleeman did that for a period of six years, and he did very fine work.

I am indebted to him because, in the earlier stages of my parliamentary life, he nominated me for the position of Deputy Chairman of Committees. I held that position for about six years under his leadership, as Chairman of Committees. I take this opportunity to convey to the hon. Mr. Sleeman the good wishes of everyone here, particularly of the clerks who were his advisers, as they are now mine. Undoubtedly they went to great pains to help him, as they have helped me, to ensure that the correct procedure was carried out.

Mr. Islip, the senior clerk at the table, was here nine years before the hon. Mr. Sleeman first entered Parliament, so it can be said that he is the real father of the House. On behalf of the clerks at the table and myself, I join in supporting the felicitations conveyed to the hon. member for Fremantle.

THE HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [6.15]: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Premier and all my other friends who have spoken this evening, I can only say that I am overwhelmed, because I do not think I deserve all that has been said of me. However, I have always done what I

thought was right. I have regarded all hon. members as my friends, even though we might have differed politically.

I remember that years ago I introduced a Bill on behalf of the Fremantle Trotting Association. Representatives of the churches came to me afterwards and said they wanted a deputation to the Premier. I said, "All right; you are entitled to be heard. But don't forget that I'm not supporting you." They said, "If you only introduce us, that will do." When I brought them to Philip Collier he said, "You have taken your deputation to the wrong person; you should have taken it to the member for Fremantle." The Fremantle paper said, "This Sleeman is a funny fellow. He introduces a Bill and then takes to the Premier a deputation against his own Bill." I think what I did was right; those people were entitled to be heard.

I would say that the members in the Parliament of Western Australia are more friendly than those in any other Parliament in Australia. In other Parliaments I have heard them say, "I would not have a drink with that Liberal B." That goes on in the other States, but there is none of it here. In this Parliament we say what we think, but we are all respected.

I am not getting out because I do not feel fit enough to carry on, but simply because I have had a good spell. Thirty-five years is a long time to which to look forward, but it is not such a long time on which to look back. A man should get out when he reaches my age in order to give a younger person a chance to represent a constituency in this House.

I decided to go for this trip before the session ends, because I think it would be better for me to arrive at the countries I intend to visit as the member for Fremantle rather than as a "has-been". I have from the Secretary of the Parliamentary Association, letters of introduction to people in which I am introduced as the member for Fremantle. If I left this Chamber at a later date they would say that this was the man who, some time ago, used to be the member for Fremantle.

Again I wish to thank all hon. members for what they have said and remind them that I will come up here to see them sometimes. If anyone would like a little Geisha girl brought back, I suggest he make application before Monday!

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 11th November, 1958.

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

BILLS (5)—ASSENT.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Amendment.
- 2, Municipal Corporations (Postponement of 1958 Elections).