

Clause 25—Control of amount of table margarine to be manufactured:

Hon. W. J. MANN: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to paragraph (a) of Subclause (1): Provided that such maximum quantity of table margarine to be manufactured in any period of 12 months ending thirty-first day of December otherwise than for export beyond the Commonwealth of Australia shall not exceed three hundred and sixty-four tons."

The quantity represents seven tons multiplied by 52. Such is the corresponding provision of the Victorian Act. I discussed the matter with the Minister for Agriculture prior to his departure for the East, and Mr. Wise said he had no objection to the amendment, which, on the contrary, he thought was probably desirable.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understand the Minister for Agriculture did discuss this amendment with the hon. member and he was not prepared to raise any strong objection to it at the time. However, there is a reason for not mentioning the quantity. I think it would be safer to leave the clause as it stands. The carrying of the amendment would mean that possibly a manufacturer who had completed his quota some considerable time before the end of the year and would have to close down unless he had export business, necessitating loss to his employees, could bring pressure to bear in some quarter to be granted permission to go on manufacturing in order to keep his men employed.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He could not do that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We know those things are sometimes done. Personally I have no objection to the amendment, but I am looking at it from the aspect of pressure which might be brought to bear.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Stick to your Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Minister for Agriculture favours the Bill in its entirety. The quota is to be proclaimed through the "Government Gazette," and the Minister might proclaim less than the quota stated.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The object of the Bill is to restrict manufacture and sale of margarine. The Chief Secretary's argument is not in keeping with the Bill, since the hon. gentleman said that there might be circumstances under which it would be

necessary to extend beyond the maximum of seven tons per week. The matter should be settled straight away, in order that manufacturers of margarine may not put up fictitious cases.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	10
Majority against	..	..	..	2

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. L. Roche
	(Teller.)

NOES

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. L. B. Bolton
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 26 to 30—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.19 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st November, 1940.

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

QUESTION—PRODUCE MARKETS, BROADCASTING.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that details regarding a portion of the auction sales in

the Sydney markets are now recorded and broadcast, thus enabling growers immediately to estimate the needs of the market, and to be informed of bids received? 2, Will steps be taken to encourage the adoption of a similar practice in this State?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: 1, The results of auction sales conducted at the Metropolitan Markets are broadcast three times a week. 2, Any alteration desired is a matter for the consideration of the Metropolitan Market Trust after consultation with the Auctioneers' Association.

SELECT COMMITTEE—COMMON-WEALTH OIL REFINERIES, LIMITED (PRIVATE), BILL.

Report Presented.

Mr. Fox brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Bill.

Report read and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Hon. P. Collier (Boulder) on the ground of ill-health.

QUESTION—COLLIE COAL MINES.

As to Royal Commission's Report.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Approximately when will the report of the Commission on the development of the Collie coal mines be available to members of this House? 2, Is it his intention to deal with the recommendations (if any) as early as possible after the report has been received?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, It is expected that the report will be available to members early next week. 2, Yes.

BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: Paragraph (a) of Subsection (1) of Section 480 of the principal Act provides that a council may in any year expend out of the ordinary revenue of the municipality any sum not exceeding 3 per cent. of such ordinary revenue for any purpose connected with the municipality and for the benefit or credit thereof, although such purpose is not within the scope of the Act. The purpose of this short Bill is to add a new paragraph giving municipal councils power to utilise the 3 per cent. account for certain patriotic purposes. The Bill has been introduced at the request of the Perth City Council and the Local Government Association.

The Perth City Council had under consideration the question of making a contribution to the fund opened by the Lord Mayor of London for the relief of persons who have suffered in the bombing raids on England. Upon reference of the matter to their legal advisers the council was informed that before it could authorise expense out of the 3

"HANSARD"—INCORRECT DIVISION LIST.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I desire, Mr. Speaker, to draw attention to the fact that this House discussed the Life Assurance Companies Act Amendment Bill on the 30th October, 1940, and on page 1597 of "Hansard" there appears the record of a division on the motion for the adoption of the second reading. The division list shows that my name was included among those who voted against the Bill. The Minutes of the Proceedings that day show that I was absent. Apparently a mistake occurred in the inclusion of my name instead of that of Mr. Leahy, who does not appear as having voted in the division. I ask that a correction be made in "Hansard" accordingly, because of the feeling prevalent in the country that I opposed the Bill which was introduced by the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts).

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that a correction will appear in the bound volume.

per cent. account, the council must be satisfied that such expenditure was for a purpose connected with the municipality and for the benefit or credit thereof. Whilst nobody could conclude otherwise than that a contribution to the fund would be for the credit of the City of Perth, it could not be said, the council was further advised, that such a purpose was in any way connected with the municipality of the City of Perth. It was ruled, therefore, that the council could not justify the proposed payment under the section in question and that there was no other provision in the Act giving the council the necessary power.

To give members some idea of the expenditure from the 3 per cent. accounts, the following figures for the year ended the 31st October, 1939, relating to seven of the 21 municipalities are quoted:—

Municipality.	Amount. Available. £	Amount. Expended. £
Perth	5,798	2,091
Fremantle	1,038	1,109

Hon. N. Keenan: What on?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Three per cents. The fund was exceeded.

Municipality.	Amount Available. £	Amount Expended. £
Kalgoorlie	1,304	1,408
Albany	275	245
Bunbury	381	300
Claremont	370	296
Northam	268	261

Included in the requests received from the Perth City Council and the Local Government Association was a suggestion that the councils should be restricted by the Bill to an expenditure on the purposes mentioned in the proposed new paragraph, of an amount not exceeding 50 per cent. of the 3 per cent. account in any one year. The restriction has, however, not been embodied in the Bill. Obviously, if passed, the Bill will affect all municipalities in the State, and it was considered preferable to leave with each council the power to decide by resolution the maximum amount or percentage which should be expended in any one year from the account in question.

That is the reason for the introduction of the Bill, which merely adds this power to the authority already possessed with respect to the expenditure of the 3 per cent. The council's legal adviser stated that the municipality could not legally devote any of this money to the desired object, hence the introduction of this measure to enable the

municipality to do what it desires. I think members will agree that the object is a worthy one. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [4.42]: I see no reason for objecting to the course outlined in the Bill. The measure seems proper and necessary, and I have pleasure in supporting it.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [4.43]: In common with every other member of this House, I feel that this is a Bill that should be immediately passed. Unfortunately, I cannot reconcile myself to the drafting. The relevant provision begins—

During the continuance of any war in which the Commonwealth of Australia is engaged, either at the commencement of this paragraph or at any time hereafter, and for the period of six months after the termination of any such war, etc.

The words "either at the commencement of this paragraph or at any time hereafter" are wholly unnecessary. The words "during the continuance of any war in which the Commonwealth of Australia is engaged and for the period of six months after the termination of any such war" are quite sufficient. The carelessness shown nowadays in the drafting of Bills is astounding. The drafting department appears to be a machine into which something is put at one end and out of the other end of which something emerges when a handle is turned. The present measure may convey what is intended, but it does so in language which is entirely unnecessary.

The Minister for Works: Will this measure give the council the power it desires?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Of course it will.

The Minister for Works: Then let us get on with the job.

Hon. N. KEENAN: In a manner which is an insult to the English language! I do not propose to move an amendment. I merely draw attention to the fact that if we give power for a certain course of action to be taken "during the continuance of any war and for a period of six months after the termination of any such war," we give all the power sought and the words "either at the commencement of this paragraph or

at any time hereafter" are superfluous. However, the Bill is a worthy one and I am glad to be able to support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th November.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [4.46]: In effect, the Bill provides that certain doctors who may not have the qualifications required by the British Medical Association shall be admitted into this country. It is a particularly important measure. It has many ramifications and undoubtedly, although in its present form it may not be acceptable to everybody, is a measure that will open up a discussion in this Parliament as to the need for further medical assistance in Western Australia. For some time there has been a shortage of medical practitioners in this State, particularly in the country. To a large degree the war has accentuated that shortage. I do not know whether Western Australia is finding a larger quota of medical men for the Army than are the other States, but we know that, as usual, Western Australia is supplying to the Army a greater quota of soldiers per thousand of the population than are the other States. It appears that there is a tendency to take from each State that State's quota of medical men irrespective of the effect on the community.

Mr. Marshall: We have better medical men here than there are in any other part of the Commonwealth.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is no reason why we should get rid of them all. To give some idea of the position in Western Australia at the moment, towns that previously had doctors and are now without them are as follows: Koorda, Wyal-

katchem, Dowerin, Kununoppin, Wickepin, Dumbleyung, Narembeen, Kondinin and Toodyay.

Mr. Doney: What about Williams?

Mr. Stubbs: What about Ravensthorpe?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am speaking about the position in the last 18 months. Ravensthorpe has not had a doctor or a nurse for quite a long period. The places I have mentioned are towns with a considerable population, which until recently have had doctors. Ravensthorpe is a big district, but has not the population one could reasonably say—

Mr. Stubbs: It has over 500 people.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They could not support a doctor.

Mr. Stubbs: The nearest doctor is a hundred miles away.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That does not alter the fact that 500 people cannot support a doctor. Doctors will not work for nothing, any more than will other people. In addition to the towns I have mentioned, the Perth Hospital is short of two junior medical residents. These young doctors come to a hospital like the Perth institution and put in 12 months there, or two or three years according to the desire they may have to reach the position of chief registrar, for instance. Next month the hospital will be short of five junior resident medical officers. As a rule the institution carries 11 junior residents, under a superintendent, and in addition there is the attendance of honorary medical men. The mental hospital is one short and next month will be two short. A doctor is required at Marble Bar. At a place like that a doctor has not to go out and take his chance of anyone being sick. A doctor appointed to Marble Bar and other places in the North-West receives a salary of £1,000 a year. The department collects the fees and whatever debits are raised by the doctor are collected by us. The Marble Bar doctor is not in the position of a colleague in one of the poorer wheat belt centres, where there would not only be sick people but difficulty in getting money from them because they would not have any money to give. The doctor at Derby left and the position has been temporarily filled by a locum. There is no immediate prospect of inducing another man to go there. Dr. Adams at

Onslow is about 80 years old. He has intimated that his health is failing, that he may break down completely at any time, and that he can no longer continue to do the work. We have failed to find anyone to succeed him. At Roebourne Dr. Drew is entitled to a holiday, but we are unable to relieve him because there is no one to take his place. We thus have eight towns without a doctor, we are five junior doctors short in our hospitals, and there are three short in the North-West, where the salary is £1,000 a year. When the next division goes overseas I am informed that probably five more doctors will go with it.

Medical service to the civil community seems to carry very little weight with the military authorities. An argument has arisen because of a number of our principal medical men who desire to get away are holding positions that cannot be filled. Only to-day we received a telegram from the Prime Minister with regard to one of our doctors whose services we have for some time been fighting to retain. He trained an Army Medical Corps. That is his baby, and he is anxious to go away with it. He can leave as a lieutenant-colonel in charge of the corps and is desirous of doing so. I do not blame him for that. Were I his age and had I his ability, I also would want to go away. Unfortunately, however, he is looking after 1,200 or 1,400 mentally affected people and cannot be spared. Members of the medical profession are the only people who can start off in the army with a rank no lower than that of captain. That privilege is not accorded to men belonging to the legal or architectural professions, because such men have to join up as privates. A medical man who may not have had much experience starts off as a captain, and if he has a reputation he may start off as a colonel. These are young men who are looking for adventure as well as the experience they can obtain in the army. We have great difficulty in preventing them from going overseas. The military authorities have absorbed many doctors for service abroad. In addition numbers of militiamen are now in camp. At the various military hospitals the men must have medical attention, and many doctors are engaged in that direction. We have a central co-ordination medical committee. An appeal has been made to that body, which has done everything possible to work out a ratio of doctors in accord-

ance with the demands from various centres within the State. Little or nothing has so far resulted from the effort. We have two alternatives. The first is to urge the implementation of the National Security Act, which virtually applies conscription to the medical profession. That would mean the nationalisation of the profession, something that is very unlikely of accomplishment. I do not intend to ask for the conscription of medical men, and would not be prepared to conscript anyone else. The other alternative is to consider how to bring about the appointment of suitable doctors.

In South Australia refugee doctors may under certain conditions be given credit for a three-year university medical course. Those are doctors who have come in from European countries, though not from Japan. Actually, there is no reciprocal arrangement between Great Britain and any other country to-day. I understand that the reciprocity between Italy and Great Britain has been annulled, whilst the reciprocity there might have been between Japan and Australia becomes of no value because Asiatics are not permitted to land in this country. Other than Japan there is no reciprocity between any other country and Great Britain. Irrespective of how highly educated men may be, or how able they may have been as medical men in their own countries, refugee doctors are unable to register in Great Britain or any of the Dominions, and consequently are unable to practise. In the early stages a large number of them went out from Germany and over-ran Europe. Many of them went to Great Britain and attended the Edinburgh University. After 12 months several of them obtained diplomas. That, however, was soon stopped, though I think 2,000 out of many thousands got through. The remainder of those people have come to Australia but are unable to practise. Whatever qualifications they may possess as medical practitioners are useless to them in Australia except under certain conditions. The South Australian Act has been amended to provide that, under certain conditions, these men may be credited with three years of university training, and they have to put in another three years at the South Australian University before they can become eligible for registration. In Victoria and Queensland there is no legislation on this subject. The New South Wales Act was amended in 1938, and provides for various alternatives

as being applicable to refugee doctors. The provisions are—

(a) Similar to that of South Australia.

(b) In the case of a person with special qualifications the Medical Board may recommend the Minister that such person be registered.

(c) A person engaged in post-graduate teaching or research work for three years may be registered

If one of these men wanted to do post-graduate teaching or research work for three years, he could then be registered. The last provision is exactly what is suggested in the Bill before the House. It means that when the Governor is satisfied that there is a district in need of a medical practitioner, he may declare that a regional district, and the Medical Board, as it is constituted to-day, will then invite applications for a doctor to fill the position. On being satisfied as to the qualifications, the Medical Board will appoint one of the applicants. We can assume that only refugee doctors, as they are termed, would apply for such a position. The appointee would then be engaged for one year.

Mr. Seward: The qualifications required are set out in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But here is the catch for the profession in Western Australia. The qualification is that of the British Medical Association or that of the applicant's own country. It means that he is supposed to have had five years' or more training in his own country and to have secured the necessary diploma there.

Mr. Hughes: Not necessarily in his own country. In any part of the world. Either the British Medical Association's diploma or a diploma from some other country.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Having satisfied itself on that point and put the applicant through an examination other than a written one, the British Medical Association can register him for the particular region for one year, with a right of yearly renewal for five years. Upon the completion of the five years he would be entitled to registration as a fully qualified medical practitioner in Western Australia.

Mr. Stubbs: Does this apply only to male doctors?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. It applies to doctors irrespective of sex.

Mr. Stubbs: But you used the masculine only.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That matter is governed by the Interpretation Act.

Mr. Stubbs: I am asking because I know an English woman doctor who wants to register here and cannot do so.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The term "medical practitioner" includes both sexes. To-day I had to see a deputation from the British Medical Association. I am sorry to say that it was a rush job, and that I had to hurry away in order to arrive here by half past four. The British Medical Association is particularly concerned about this Bill. I am convinced that we need additional medical officers in Western Australia. Just whether this is the right way to get them is for the House to decide. In view of the fact that the consideration of the Bill was on the notice paper for to-day and that I had secured the adjournment of the debate, a deputation from the British Medical Association came to interview me and, in the usual courteous manner, furnished me with a written statement embodying the association's views and requested me to read it to the House. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall now read the association's letter, which is addressed to the Minister for Health—

For some time past the British Medical Association has been concerned with the fact that certain country towns were without the services of a resident medical practitioner. The association has on many occasions stressed the fact that this was due, not to a shortage of doctors in this State or in Australia as a whole, but to the fact that conditions of practice in these towns were not sufficiently attractive to men of suitable qualifications.

In particular the fact has been stressed that the guaranteed gross income of £600 provides, when all expenses have been paid, something under a bare living wage for the practitioner.

The necessity of increasing the guarantee, if practitioners were to be obtained for certain country districts, has been pointed out on numerous occasions.

Perhaps I had better explain that paragraph. In this State for many years members of the medical profession were in the position of having to go into the country without any guarantee of £600 a year. A doctor going to, say for example, Kununopin has to become acquainted with the district. To that end the Medical Department guarantees him £600 a year gross. Strange to say the department has never

had to make a payment under that guarantee. The association asks that the amount of the guarantee be increased to £750.

Mr. Patrick: I understand that there are vacancies where the department has guaranteed £1,000 a year.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am stating the argument that is put up. I do not agree with it. The letter continues—

The council feels that the difficulties under which a practitioner labours in sparsely settled country districts are imperfectly realised by members of the general public. The isolation, the difficulty in obtaining locums to cover essential holidays, the lack of medical and dispensing equipment, and the lack of professional co-operation, all combine to render practice in these districts singularly unattractive to well qualified men.

Other States of Australia have recognised that extra inducements must be offered to induce men to practise in such districts; e.g., New South Wales has guaranteed an income of £1,000 per annum in isolated country districts.

My department has had three positions with salaries of £1,000 a year irrespective of guarantee open for a long time.

It is more than possible that men who would otherwise have come to practise in country districts in Western Australia have been attracted by more favourable economic prospects in the other States of the Commonwealth.

This situation has been further complicated by the outbreak of war. Heavy demands have been made on members of the medical profession and out of 300 members of the profession in Western Australia more than 50 have been absorbed into one or other of the services. It is a striking commentary on the economic reason for the scarcity of medical practitioners in certain country districts that, despite this large depletion of members, only about five or six districts have been completely deprived of a local doctor.

That is not so according to the Medical Department.

No appointment to the services is made without the approval of the State Co-ordination Committee, and every attempt is made not to deprive country centres of essential medical service. This has necessitated considerable organisation, but on the whole, apart from minor inconveniences, the health of the civil population has not suffered or been neglected. Much more can still be done on these lines by increasing transport facilities, whereby the patient is brought to the nearest medical centre instead of the doctor wasting his time in futile travelling.

The Medical Act of 1894 is designed primarily to protect the public from unqualified persons. Under the Act any per-

son practising medicine must be registered, and registration is only extended to graduates of approved universities and colleges within the British Empire or in those foreign countries which reciprocate with Great Britain, namely, Italy and Japan. The Italian reciprocity has been annulled, and the Japanese is for all practical purposes a dead letter.

The purpose of registration is to ensure to the public that any person practising medicine or surgery shall, after an appropriate period of study and examination, have satisfied expert examining bodies that he is a fit person to practise medicine within the British Empire. His training includes not only technical instruction but also the inculcation of those standards of honourable professional conduct which are so eminently desirable in a medical practitioner.

The proposed amendment of the Act will admit to registration a number of people who have not been trained along these lines, who have not attained the standards of knowledge or conduct which are required from a British medical graduate, and who are not eligible for registration in the Mother Country.

It is a matter of common knowledge that standards of medical practice in Germany, Austria, Italy and Poland in particular, vary very greatly, and the type of competent and well-trained general practitioner required for country districts is almost unknown.

The regrettable experience of New South Wales, which made a similar amendment to its Medical Act, has provided ample proof of the truth of this statement.

Exactly what is meant by that last sentence I do not know, because the New South Wales Act has never been proclaimed.

Mr. Seward: There has been no application in New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I understand that a few doctors came in who were not quite reputable; they had become registered in other States.

The examining bodies of the medical schools in the Eastern States of Australia, recognising these defects in the training of alien practitioners, have wisely insisted that they should undergo a period of three years' training in an Australian medical school, and at the end of that period should pass a qualifying examination. Only thus do the universities feel that they can guarantee to the public reasonable standards of medical service.

The association finally desires to draw your attention to the obligation owed by the community to members of the medical profession who are on active service. Much difficulty was experienced after the last war in rehabilitating in practice men who had been absent on service. This difficulty is likely to be considerably increased if any appreciable influx of foreign doctors takes place during the war, more particularly as it will ulti-

mately prove impossible to prevent the newcomers, once registered, practising wherever they please.

This association assures you that it will support any action by Parliament designed to safeguard the health of the community, but it considers that the present amending Bill is not the most desirable way of attaining that end.

The association respectfully suggests to you that before the amending Bill comes before the House: (1) The State Co-ordination Committee, which has fully investigated this matter, should draw up a report upon the medical requirements of country districts throughout the State. (2) The fullest inquiry should be made concerning the remedying of the present situation, by the provision of increased transport facilities. (3) Every possible step should be taken to safeguard the interests of doctors on active service. (4) Serious consideration should be given to the desirability of the guarantee in the country districts concerned.

Those are the considered opinions of the British Medical Association. I put the association's statement before the House in fairness to that body. The Bill provides that the Medical Board shall, other than by a written examination, examine any of these applicants. The board contends that it is not in a position to examine applicants, never having been trained to examine them.

Member: It should be done by the University.

Mr. Seward: The Bill does not say that. It says the board shall appoint examiners for the purpose.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are no examiners in this State. That is the argument of the British Medical Association.

Mr. Watts: It is a pretty thin argument.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: My interview with the deputation from the association was hurried, as I have indicated. The association says it is not competent to examine these people, and that they should be examined somewhere else. The only places where they could be examined elsewhere would be places having a University with a Chair of Medicine.

Hon. N. Keenan: Surely examiners could be brought to this State.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There might be only one applicant in six months, and it would prove expensive to bring examiners over here for each applicant. I suggest there are very few of those men

in Western Australia to-day; most of them are in the Eastern States. I myself know of only two in Western Australia, one of whom is on the "Gorgon." He could not obtain a permit to land, but I believe the permit was granted to-day. There may be more of these men roaming the country doing work not connected with their profession.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Some of them are canvassing.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As most of them are in the Eastern States there is no reason why they should not be examined in Sydney, Melbourne, or Adelaide. I understand that they are not granted a certificate of registration, but what is termed a regional certificate, which entitles them to practise in a particular region.

Mr. Seward: For 12 months.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Having behaved themselves for the 12 months, they would probably be granted the right to continue practising for another 12 months. We cannot, however, ask the medical authorities in Adelaide to give these doctors a certificate permitting them to practise in Western Australia. They should be given a certificate of competency enabling them to practise in a particular region. Another question arises, as to whether we should in this Bill restrict the number to be admitted, either altogether or per annum. In New South Wales the number is, I think, restricted to eight per year. That point might be taken into consideration. Another suggestion has occurred to me, and I have given notice of an amendment with regard to it. It is that the term "hospital" or "institution" should be deemed to be a region. These doctors would then be available for duty in our mental hospitals or sanatoria. If the Bill reaches the Committee stage, I propose to move an amendment to that effect.

Another point that the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) might take into consideration is this: We must be able to determine whether these medical practitioners are up to our Australian standard. This result could be achieved by their serving a three or six months probation in an institution like the Perth Hospital, which has a superintendent and 93 honorary medical men who are specialists of all descriptions.

Mr. Berry: Could not they be examiners?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but it may be argued—and I say this not in any way in derogation of the B.M.A.—that that would be a method of preventing these refugee doctors from practising. But in my opinion the association would be fair. No doubt there is anxiety to prevent a large influx of these refugee doctors, as that might be detrimental to the interests of our doctors who have enlisted, and who should be assured of their practices when they return. Many of our young doctors are joining the army. Three young men at the Perth Hospital informed me to-day of their desire to join. I said to them, "We will have to put you under the Dog Act"—as we call it—"you cannot leave." They replied, "Very well, Mr. Minister, we will resign and join up." What are we going to do about that?

Mr. Fox: Train a few more.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Doctors cannot be trained in five minutes.

Mr. Triat: You might train some quacks in three months.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We are dealing with the immediate present. I have given the House the benefit of my opinion of this matter. We certainly require medical practitioners. At the same time, we should be careful not to give inefficient men the right to practise, nor should we flood the State with men who will occupy positions of doctors now serving overseas in the army. Of course that could be prevented by restricting the number of these medical practitioners whom we will allow to practise. I hope the Bill will be thoroughly discussed and not rushed through the Committee stage to-night. The question is a big one, and those immediately concerned—the members of the medical profession—should have an opportunity to look into the measure. I promised them that if the Bill was still on the stocks they would have an opportunity further to discuss it. We must be fair to everyone in this matter. I regret the Bill has come forward at a late stage of the session, when we may not be able to devote to it all the time that we would like. Personally, I am not impressed by the suggestion that a medical co-ordination committee should make a survey of the State. We are well aware of the conditions prevailing here and the disabilities from which some

of our people are suffering so far as health matters are concerned. That is not the way to overcome the difficulty. The Bill has my blessing. With one or two amendments, I think it ought to pass.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.22]: Undoubtedly a Bill of this type causes worry, not only to the Minister, but to everyone else. There is at present a scarcity of medical practitioners in country districts and this is giving country members cause for concern, as, of course, it does the Minister for Health. We have properly equipped hospitals in our country districts, but notwithstanding repeated applications for doctors, we find it difficult to obtain them. Vacancies do not fill rapidly. The shortest medical course occupies five years; and, as the Minister said, unfortunately there is a demand for doctors for military purposes. As soon as students have completed their course at the University, they are absorbed by the military authorities; and these young men are anxious to join, because they will obtain a training such as they could not expect to get except in a large hospital.

Mr. Marshall: It is the chance of their lifetime to obtain practical experience.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so. My anxiety is that country people should have proper medical assistance. We know there are large numbers of refugee doctors in Australia; probably they are possessed of high qualifications, but not qualifications recognised by the B.M.A. in any part of the British Empire. Unfortunately for these refugee doctors, there is no reciprocity between their countries and Great Britain; two countries would be excluded definitely because of our being at war with them. In Germany and Austria previous to the war there were medical practitioners, highly qualified, who were consulted by persons from Great Britain and Australia. Those medical practitioners are coming to Australia, but at present we are debarred from availing ourselves of their services. Do not forget that these men have diplomas, but there is this difficulty: who is to determine whether the person holding the diploma is in fact really the person entitled to it? I recall the instance of a person at one time employed by the Agricultural Department who to all intents and purposes had wonderful diplomas; but it was discovered that he was not the person

entitled to hold them. That is a problem which must be faced. I do know of some of these refugees who are attempting to qualify, and I give them every credit; but they, like other people, find it extremely difficult to master a foreign language. One such person at the Adelaide University who has completed the first year of his course finds great difficulty in continuing because he is unable to master English. He has trouble in understanding the papers submitted to him.

I agree with the suggestion made by the Minister—a suggestion that occurred to me. It is that these refugee doctors should be put through a probationary course at the Perth Hospital or some other institution where their work could be supervised, and where it would be possible to ascertain if they were possessed of the necessary qualifications to permit of their practising medicine. Members will realise how essential it is that properly qualified medical practitioners should be sent to our country districts, because we cannot afford to allow our people to be killed. Many of them are being killed in motor and other accidents, so we cannot afford to take unnecessary risks. Another thing we must guard against is that if we give these doctors a start by allowing them to practise, we must not do anything that will stand in the way of our own doctors who have enlisted having every opportunity to practise on their return. They must not be supplanted even by men so unfortunate as to be refugees. Should one of these men be permitted to practise in a particular region, I am wondering whether his license to do so may be cancelled.

Mr. Seward: Yes. That is provided for in the Bill.

The Minister for Health: That could be done by Act of Parliament.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would be disturbed if I thought these doctors could go on to the Terrace and put up their plates. Some of them are highly qualified; and, once they demonstrate that fact to the public, there will be a demand for their services. That will be another difficulty to face, because the Minister knows as well as I do how difficult it would be to deter the public from consulting these doctors once they had established themselves. I am well aware what a close preserve the B.M.A. has made of the profession. I know of no preserve closer

than is the medical profession, and therefore I do not want to leave it in the hands of the B.M.A. to decide whether a man shall or shall not practise. I am also concerned about the examining authority. I remember that when I was Minister for Health very highly qualified men, surgeons and other practitioners, came to Western Australia once a year. I do not know for what purpose, but I think they came to attend a conference. I remember on two occasions meeting two specialists in that way.

The Minister for Health: All those conferences are now being held at Canberra.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then we are losing an opportunity that formerly existed. If two men could be brought over every six months—that would be often enough—and the people of the country could be assured of having the services of a doctor, that would meet requirements. Medical men belong to one of the closest preserves, as I have mentioned, the British Medical Association, and people have to put themselves in the hands of those men. The member for Pingelly proposes to give the individual the right of appeal, which will probably help materially. I admit that this is a problem not easy of solution. It is one of those problems which members should turn over in their minds in the endeavour to arrive at a right conclusion, bearing in mind that people in the country need medical attention. Everything possible should be done to supply that need. Associated with that phase is the need for ensuring that we do not sacrifice the practices of the doctors who are serving with the forces overseas by allowing men to come in to fill the gap.

Mr. Hughes: How will you keep the patients alive until those doctors return?

Mr. Abbott: Does not the same apply to engineers and everyone else?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They are differently placed.

Mr. Abbott: Not much.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: On no occasion have we said that we were going to have engineers of whose qualifications there was any doubt.

Member: We could do without lawyers.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then we would have to get a bush lawyer, who might "put it over" Parliament sometimes.

Mr. SPEAKER: How do lawyers come into the Bill?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am disussing the question of qualifications. There is a difference between medical men and men in other professions. The medical man is absolutely essential to our social welfare, because he preserves the health of the people, which is a very important matter. If it were not out of consideration for what we owe to our doctors who are on service overseas, I would say that by all means we should go ahead with this Bill and give registration to the men in question in the easiest way possible, having due regard to their qualifications. I support the second reading of the Bill, and hope we shall be able to provide some relief for people in the country while, at the same time, safeguarding the practices of doctors who have gone overseas to render medical service to our troops.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [5.33]: The Minister for Health made it quite clear to the House that there are people in the country who are not receiving the medical attention to which they are entitled. We all know that the dearth of doctors has been caused partly by the war, but I venture to suggest that there was a difficulty in obtaining medical practitioners in certain country districts even before the war.

Mr. Watts: That is quite right.

Mr. ABBOTT: I have been told that there are fewer doctors per thousand of the population in Western Australia than in any other State in the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Health: We are well down in that respect.

Mr. ABBOTT: Therefore I suggest that the medical profession has little to fear from this Bill, and should not grudge the people in the country receiving reasonable medical attention. The B.M.A. has made some comments about Germany and Austria, but that did not prevent members of the profession before the war, when they wished to become experts, journeying to Austria and Germany to get specialist training. Undoubtedly many of the men who imparted that training have had to leave Germany, Austria and other parts of Europe. If some of those highly qualified men could be induced to practise in Western Australia, it would be beneficial not only to the medical profession but also to the State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You must admit that they would have to be identified with their papers.

Mr. ABBOTT: Quite so. I am referring only to those who are fully qualified. Nobody wants to encourage quacks. I suggest that the Bill affords ample protection. First of all, the men in question could be admitted only after they had been passed by the B.M.A. Even after they had been admitted and had practised in a regional area, the Minister could cancel that authority for any cause he thought fit. Therefore I suggest there is ample protection in that respect both for the medical profession and for the people. There is a suggestion that the B.M.A. has nobody qualified to ascertain whether these men have sufficient medical knowledge to justify their being allowed to practise. I have never heard a more ridiculous argument.

The Minister for Health: That is the B.M.A.'s argument, not mine.

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes. If the B.M.A. is incapable of ascertaining whether a man is competent, surely its members themselves are not competent to practise! If they do not know whether a job is done competently, how could they do it themselves? It is a weak argument and I am surprised at the B.M.A. putting it forward. The board may make a test of any nature it likes. If its members stipulated that the proposed licensee must undergo a test of three months at the Perth Hospital, there is nothing to prevent that test from being applied. When the suggestion is made that the test should not be a written one, I say that is all to the good. We do not want men who can merely pass a theoretical test. We want to ensure that these men are thoroughly practical and efficient doctors capable of carrying out the duties that would be required of them. Perhaps some university professors would be able to pass the theoretical tests, but would be incapable if they had to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical work. What I consider to be most desirable is that the test should be of a practical nature. For those reasons I intend to support the Bill—

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.39]: I propose to support this measure and have few if any reservations in supporting it. I have heard it said that doctors of this State who are about to leave on active service or have

already gone overseas must be protected, and with that statement I am in full agreement, but I am not in agreement with it to the extent that while they are absent, there should be no professional men to attend the people they have left behind; and I think we ought to consider these two questions, the one with the other. This Bill, which has been introduced by the member for Pingelly, very reasonably, I think, attempts to do that. It provides that the Governor must be satisfied that there is an area where adequate medical service is not being provided. When the Governor has arrived at that conclusion, he may declare that area a region, and if he comes to the conclusion later on that there is other adequate medical service for that region, he may revoke the proclamation and the region would cease to exist. If a region ceased to exist, the certificate to practise in that region must also cease to exist.

The Minister for Health: It would be fairly hard for a Minister to cancel registration.

Mr. WATTS: It would be difficult for any Minister to cancel the registration of a region, but if considerations became so weighty that it was apparent that an injustice was being done to practitioners other than those who held a regional certificate, I venture to suggest that the present Minister or any other Minister, upon being satisfied of that, would exercise the power rather than see an injustice continued. If we do not have some such measure as this, we shall perpetuate the present injustice to a large number of people in country districts who, on the evidence of the Minister, need medical service, and in the months to come will probably need it even more. We can go further in regard to this measure. The certificate, of course, will have to be renewed from year to year, provided that the medical practitioner holding the regional certificate is well behaved. If he holds the certificate for five years and is satisfactory during that period, he may get an ordinary certificate of registration, but if during that period of five years—if the period is not long enough, we can make it seven years—the Governor-in-Council comes to a determination that no regional certificates at all shall be issued, he will simply

revoke the proclamation in regard to all the regions, and there would be no one left to establish himself as a general practitioner upon the regional certificate basis. That seems to me to make the position perfectly plain. We have a reasonable safeguard in the measure to prevent any general practitioners being unnecessarily registered under the Medical Act as it stands to-day. A long period will elapse before that general certificate can be obtained, and I would be prepared to extend the time by a couple of years if the House so desired.

I agree with the member for North Perth as I indicated by interjection, that the shortage of doctors in country areas arose before the war commenced. The difficulty of obtaining medical practitioners for some of those areas is not, as the B.M.A., in its letter, would lead us to believe, a product of the war. Before the war I discussed with the Minister the position in the district of Tambellup. Admittedly a position there was temporarily filled, but it is again vacant. When I discussed the position with the Minister, there was no medical practitioner in Western Australia who, either on a permanent basis or on a temporary basis appeared to be available, but I believe that through the energies of the Minister, a doctor was found for the time being. He is not there now: the position is again vacant. Prior to that arrangement being made, the local authority had guaranteed the minimum remuneration and allowed the medical practitioner to collect all he could above the guarantee for the work he did as I believe is done in other cases. However, it was impossible to find a suitable applicant for the vacancy in that district where there is a reasonably good hospital. Two persons applied, one was a refugee and the other a British subject qualified to practise in Australia in the ordinary way. Reports were obtained about both the gentlemen but both were not of a satisfactory nature. Regarding the refugee, the advice was that he was a man of considerable experience and thoroughly competent, while the other was said to have charming Irish manners but was, they thought, a rolling stone. Which of the two would have been preferable for the people of Tambellup to have practising in their district, the refugee or the man who would have been a rolling stone? They could not take the refugee

and they would not take the rolling stone, and had it not been for the efforts of the Minister there would have been no medical practitioner there. Anyway there is none there now. We cannot continue to place the local authorities, who are genuinely anxious to have efficient medical service in their districts, in a position such as that, and we shall do so unless we pass legislation something similar to that which is before us now.

It appears to be supposed that a benefit is likely to be conferred upon refugees only, people who may have come to us from enemy countries. There is nothing in the Bill to say so; I do not doubt there are many excellent medical practitioners and surgeons who come from British countries, and countries including those at present overrun by the German people. We have to give consideration to them also. If we have any objection to those who come from enemy countries, we should not have similar objections to those who are our allies. I do not think there are any of the latter here now, but they are eligible for consideration if they come forward. So we must not regard this as a measure which seeks only to assist refugees from enemy countries or indeed, refugees at all, because I think there are countries which actually form part of the British Dominions where at present reciprocal arrangements do not exist, and from where practitioners may come and obtain certificates of registration under this measure. So there are many aspects to consider. Further, I submit that one of the greatest mistakes made—and the course of time will prove it to be so where Germany is concerned, as well as other Governments with like ideas—is that those enemy countries have driven out men who, had they remained there, and continued to be regarded as part of the population, would have been of great service in a scientific way. We read every day in the English newspapers that find their way out here that the Press is calling upon the Government of Great Britain to take advantage of the services of these highly qualified people who have been driven out of their country and for whom there is no place. There are only two conclusions that we can arrive at. One is that we want practitioners in the country districts and, perhaps, elsewhere, and we know that we cannot obtain them at the present time from amongst our own people. The

doubts that I had on that aspect have been resolved by the remarks of the Minister for Health. The other is that it is not unreasonable for us to fill those vacancies subject to the safeguards set out in the Bill. If we did not give careful consideration to the Bill and make it a reasonable and practicable measure, we should be lacking in our duty to a substantial portion of our people who are entitled to medical services. For the reasons I have given, I propose strongly to support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [5.50]: I appreciate the necessity that exists for the appointment of medical practitioners in country districts, and I also appreciate the concern displayed by the British Medical Association. There are many dangers in a Bill of this type and in my opinion it is the thin end of the wedge. I do, however, take some comfort from the fact that the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward), in having the Bill drafted, has taken precaution to provide every safeguard, and I hope further that the amendments the Minister intends to move—and there may be other amendments—will still further safeguard the position. We can quite understand the concern of the British Medical Association because that is a body which naturally wants to protect the interests of the students who are leaving our universities as qualified men. That is their job, and, I consider, everyone's job is in the first instance to protect our own people who may be engaged in practising the profession of medicine or surgery. We know that in some country districts the services of medical men are badly needed. In that respect the Bill shows a way out. There is one point I should like to raise on the subject of the shortage of doctors, particularly in connection with the retiring age. Although we are unable to fill vacancies in the country districts, we find that qualified men in the Government service are being retired on reaching the age of 65 years. The Government is still adhering to that policy, even in those cases where it should be relaxed. Many medical men at 65 have had vast experience and in many instances as specialists. Even at 75 years a highly skilled practitioner is definitely not an old man. So often we find them at about that age in full possession of their faculties and able to exercise their skill in a markedly success-

ful way. Yet in our Government institutions they must go because they have arrived at the age of 65 years. This is a matter that the Government should well consider. What harm would there be, particularly at this time when there is such a shortage of medical men, in permitting them to continue to carry on their duties?

I should like to draw attention to the danger associated with a Bill of this description. We have had instances, in other industries, of Europeans assuming control, and we know with what energy and perseverance those people have worked to retain that control. If foreign medical men were permitted to practise, it might not be an easy matter for the Minister for Health, or the British Medical Association, or anyone else, to retire those men once they succeeded in getting a foothold. Our first responsibility is to our own people, and that is how I feel about the position. We have a definite responsibility to them and when our own practitioners return from the war and again assume control of the practices that they left temporarily, we may be faced with many difficulties. I hope that will not be the case, and it may not be because the Bill provides safeguards by which we can ration very strictly amongst refugees or others, the vacancies that may exist. I suggest to the House that we watch the Bill very carefully and that if it is possible to include in it further safeguards, we should not hesitate to do so. I shall support the second reading.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [5.57]: The Bill seems to have been introduced mainly for the reason of finding positions for refugee doctors in the country districts. My experience of country practices is that they call for a class of medical man possessing the highest degrees. Take the patient who may be living in the city or the metropolitan area. We find that when he consults his medical adviser it is a simple matter for that adviser to consult a specialist, if he finds it necessary to do so. In isolated country districts, however, it is utterly impossible for the medical man who may be practising there to call in the services of another practitioner for consultation, because the man on the spot may be the only doctor within miles. Therefore I contend that the man practising in the country should possess the highest possible qualifications. Now we propose to put a Bill through to

enable refugees to practise in our country towns, refugees who may not be able to speak English. That is wrong. If we are going to permit refugee doctors to practise in the State, we should confine them to the metropolitan area, where there are other doctors who could consult with them or with whom they could consult. It would be utterly wrong to send such people into the back country, which certainly is no place for them. They would carry on their labours there under decidedly adverse conditions. Anyway, why cannot these foreign doctors, whom it is sought to admit, join the forces against the enemy as our Australian doctors have done?

Mr. Patrick: They would not be allowed to do that.

Mr. TRIAT: Personally I consider that any man who is permitted to practise in Western Australia should have the highest qualifications and he should undergo a probationary period in our own hospitals, a period which I suggest should be two years. Let us make it a condition that they must practise for a certain period in one or more of our hospitals before they are permitted to go into the country. We have serious accidents in outback mining towns. There may be an explosion or a big fall of rock. A man may be seriously injured or may have his eyes affected. Anything may happen in such circumstances. We do not have to send to Perth for a St. George's-terrace doctor to attend to him. Our local medical practitioners look after our injured and carry out their duties satisfactorily. We do not want our injured workers to be sent to Perth for medical attention nor do we want medical men from the city to be sent to the country districts for that purpose. On the other hand, if we are to have refugee doctors sent out into the back country, I am afraid we will have a great number of men maimed for life or dead as a result of the treatment given by the foreigners. I shall not support the second reading of the Bill unless it is amended to provide that these refugee doctors must practise in the metropolitan area first and not be sent straight away into the back country.

Member: Try it on the dog first!

Mr. TRIAT: If a man cannot speak English properly, how can he carry out such work in the country districts?

The Minister for Health: Surely the Medical Board would not pass such a man!

Mr. TRIAT: I do not know about that, but I have heard of a man at the University who cannot get his degree because he is unable to speak English sufficiently well. These men from foreign countries should not be allowed to go out into the country in such circumstances.

Mr. Patrick: We have imported some mining engineers from foreign lands.

Mr. TRIAT: That is quite right, but we have just as good engineers in Australia as may be found in any other part of the world. I heard an American mining engineer declare that we have not a miner in Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is getting right away from the Bill.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I feel that I would like to get away from it altogether. I regret that we are suffering from a shortage of medical men, and that the Commonwealth authorities do not class the medical profession as a reserved occupation thereby preventing doctors from leaving our shores. However, I shall not support the Bill in its present form.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [6.2]: The Minister for Health has set out most adequately the considerations for and against the Bill, and there is no necessity for me to traverse those grounds. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) referred to the position of doctors in relation to reserved occupations. In point of fact, the medical profession is classified as a reserved occupation and, as the Minister indicated, the State Co-ordination Committee goes thoroughly into the question whether the services of a doctor who desires to enlist can be spared and whether his practice can properly be looked after. While we all recognise the necessity to provide the civilian population with an adequate medical service, we are under an equal obligation to ensure an adequate service to the troops who go overseas. So the necessity arises to effect a balance between the requirements of the civil population and the needs of our armed forces. That course has quite definitely been pursued all the time. I believe there is a shortage of doctors in country districts and that is one thing that the State should guarantee to the best of its ability, namely, that all people residing

in country districts shall have reasonable facilities for medical attention. If there are available in other directions doctors who at the present time have not the right to register, that avenue should be explored by the Minister so as to relieve some of the difficulties country districts are at present experiencing. With the Minister, I feel that the Bill requires further examination and I think we should allow more time to the British Medical Association, as representing the medical profession generally, to put forward its views. We should defer the Committee stage till next week. The Minister will then have had an opportunity to meet representatives of the British Medical Association, as he told the House he proposed to do.

There are a few further observations I shall make to indicate the necessity for some revision. For example, under the provisions of the Bill, after spending five years in a regional area, a doctor will become entitled to be registered and will be allowed to practise anywhere he likes. That is the position as I read the Bill. Many of these foreign doctors are specialists, and possibly after their period of five years in a country district, we will find them returning to Perth and setting up as specialists. In that event we will have the old difficulty all over again, and the country districts will be without adequate medical attention. There is the further aspect that after the five-year period, the doctors will return to Perth and set up as specialists, by which time our own doctors who have been away at the war will return only to find that there are no openings for them except in country districts, where the opportunities of improving their medical skill are comparatively small.

Mr. Watts: And the remuneration correspondingly small.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so. We do not want these refugee doctors to desert the country districts after spending a few years there and then set up practice in Perth while our soldier doctors on their return will have to take over work that the refugee doctors have scorned. Further, I rather like the idea of the Minister who suggested it might be possible for the Perth Hospital to require the foreign doctors to undergo a probationary period. That may be an easy and effective way to ensure that those

men have the necessary knowledge and acquaintance with local conditions in our country districts, where necessarily they will have to rely to a large extent on their own resources. Another matter for consideration is whether we should not impose some limit upon the number who will be admitted under the Bill, some form of quota in relation to the population.

The Minister for Health: I think we should.

Mr. McDONALD: The quota could be enlarged later on if that course should be found necessary. For the time being, we might act wisely to ensure that opportunities for our own doctors who have gone to the war shall be preserved. Unless we adopt that course, young medical practitioners who otherwise would leave our shores, might be reluctant to do so seeing that they would merely afford opportunities for their practices to be taken over by refugee doctors from foreign countries. We do not desire that impression to be formed, and, therefore, we should take action that will enable doctors to feel that while they are on active service their interests will be cared for and their future prospects of advancement preserved for them.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: That would apply to fitters and turners.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, I think it applies to all.

The Minister for Health: We might make them casual employees for five years!

Mr. McDONALD: At any rate, we need not go into the details of the proposal at this stage. I consider the whole measure requires looking into rather more carefully, and I hope the Committee stage will be deferred until next week.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [6.9]: I have every sympathy for the people who live in the country districts and recognise that they are entitled to adequate medical attention. More particularly am I sympathetic because in 1914 I was in a district where there was no doctor within a radius of 50 miles. I thoroughly understand the position. At that time I was associated with the local hospital committee. Although that body was prepared to guarantee a salary of £750 a year, it was impossible

to induce a doctor to take over the practice. That was just before war broke out. I was in Perth at about that time.

Mr. Patrick: Under normal conditions those difficulties exist.

Mr. FOX: As I say, I was associated with that hospital committee for some years, and I know that when our doctor left, the only medical practitioner we eventually got to replace him was a young man who had just completed his studies in Melbourne. When he came to us, he had some sort of instrument for extracting teeth, but I do not think he had ever undertaken that task before. However, he carried out all the duties imposed upon him remarkably well, and he remained at that centre for some years. He moved on to another centre and improved himself as he went. Many men who have undergone that experience have proved to be tip-top practitioners. At the time to which I refer, when we could not induce a doctor to take over the practice, we asked the then Minister for Health to allow the nurse at the hospital to visit patients, but that permission was refused. The nurse was afraid to undertake the duties lest she should fall foul of the medical profession. Some provision should be made to meet such cases. If it is found impossible to provide for medical attention, then if a qualified nurse be available, she should be allowed to undertake the necessary duties. That would be much better than having no doctor at all, and, in some instances, even better than if a qualified doctor were available. That, of course, would not apply in every instance. As to the refugee doctors, I consider the health of the community should be our first consideration. If we have highly qualified specialists in Australia, we should take advantage of their services. I do not know why we should be so anxious to look after the practice of the medical profession; I think the British Medical Association is quite able to do that. I have nothing to say against doctors in any shape or form, for I hold them in the highest regard. I have known many instances of doctors carrying out their medical duties without recompense. They are not concerned about fees when treating people they know to be in straitened circumstances. I have known dozens of such instances, and the poor

people concerned have not been troubled about fees at all. They have received just as much attention from the doctors as if they had been able to pay high fees. If we are to afford protection to the medical profession, what is wrong with extending equal consideration to other professions and callings? We do not prevent refugees from opening shops and entering into competition with our own business people. We know their standard of living is lower than that of Australians, but we do not object to painters and other tradesmen getting a footing in industry here. In fact, in the early days of the mining industry, to be a foreigner was to possess a qualification for a job. Take the instance of the Sons of Gwalia Mine. Many of the men employed there were not able to speak English at all.

The Minister for Mines: But now their sons are working there.

Mr. FOX: That may be so. I am not saying anything against those people or suggesting that they should not migrate to Australia. The point I make is that if we set out to safeguard the interests of one profession, we should make that course general. If we allow these refugee doctors to enter the profession and practice for a while, it will be extremely difficult to prevent them from doing so later on, nor would it be logical to attempt to do so. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [6.14]: I support the second reading of the Bill, and I hope that when we deal with it in Committee we shall be able so to amend it that it will be somewhat different from its present form.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. WARNER: I intimated that I intended to support the second reading. I hope the outcome of the Bill will be that our country people will receive reasonable medical attention and that our country hospitals will be served by qualified medical practitioners. Like many other Country Party members and country members, I have taken up much of the time of the Minister for Health when visiting him with deputations from country hospitals in my district to discuss the problem of securing the services of medical practitioners. It

would appear that even then they were unprocurable. I trust the Bill will have the effect of softening the B.M.A. to the extent that it will admit into its august organisation medical practitioners who at present do not seem to be permitted to join it. But surely we should not have to accept only foreign doctors; are there not others qualified to carry on this important work? I do not question the attitude of the B.M.A. Its duty is to fix proper allowances for its members serving in country hospitals. Taking into consideration the education, study and sustained effort required to become a doctor, one must concede that he should receive fairly high remuneration for his services. There is a shortage of doctors in country districts; there was a scarcity even before the war. This has occasioned much trouble and annoyance to country residents. I am unable to explain the reason for the shortage before the war, but I believe that the remuneration offered to medical practitioners was the main reason why doctors were not attracted to country districts. The cause of the shortage is now definitely the enlistment of our doctors. I am in agreement with the view expressed by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat), who said that doctors should be submitted to a test before being sent to the country. They should have had service in the metropolitan area first; but I believe the Health authorities will watch this point. I also agree with the member for Mt. Magnet that doctors should not be sent to the country unless they understand and speak English. Probably they will not be permitted to go if they cannot; but if they are, I am convinced they will soon learn how to demand a fee of 10s. 6d. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) sounded a note of warning with which I agree. He said that once foreigners got a footing in a particular district, they had the happy knack of persuading others of their countrymen to come into the locality, and in this way foreigners get what is termed "well dug in." This point must be borne in mind when considering this measure. Once they become established in a country district, it will not be so easy as some people consider to get rid of them, even if their predecessor left his practice to join the army.

When the Bill reaches the Committee stage, I hope an amendment will be carried by which all German doctors will be excluded

from practice, whether they came to Australia before war broke out or since. Some of them may have been sent here by a man with a little "mo" and I hope they will be watched. If born in Germany, they could not be loyal to Australia, whether they were persecuted by Hitler or came here of their own free will. Through an act of Fritz I had to go to hospital while on active service. I got satisfaction on my return to active service after my recovery, because I made angels of a few of them, that is, if I did not send them to another place.

Mr. Thorn: You were known as the Hun killer.

Mr. WARNER: I may have had that reputation; I am not sorry if I did. The only decent Hun I have ever known is a dead one!

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting away from the Bill.

Mr. WARNER: We are dealing with foreigners under the Bill, I believe.

Hon. N. Keenan: They cannot be refugees if they are dead.

Mr. WARNER: And when they are dead they stink.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must discuss the Bill.

Mr. WARNER: By the time the British have finished with Fritz, the German doctors will have ample work to do for their own countrymen. Many persons of rank, ability and science have left Germany and come to Australia, but I sound this note of warning: the more brainy they are, the better spies they make. That is a point we must constantly keep in mind. I do not like Germans, they will never make Australians, no matter how long they may live in Australia. I hope that as the result of the Bill we shall secure the services of medical practitioners from British possessions or from nations more sympathetic to the Empire than is Germany, a nation I do not love. I sincerely trust some measures will be taken to protect Australia along the lines mentioned by the Minister for Health, to whom the question of country doctors is giving grave concern.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [7.40]: This is undoubtedly a very important matter, but it would almost appear as if we were more or less letting it go by the board. There could be no more important matter. The health of a community is of the gravest

concern. A great many years ago—so long ago that one hesitates to recall it—a British Prime Minister went to the country merely on the issue of the health of the people. That was his only cry and he won his election on the ground that he was prepared to take steps to ensure the health of the community. It has been said that there is a dearth of properly-trained medical men in country districts, but the fact is sometimes forgotten that that dearth has not arisen since the war, but has been in existence, to my knowledge, for a great number of years. The reason is that the remuneration obtainable by a medical practitioner in the country is unfortunately not attractive. At one time when the country was more prosperous and there were many more people living in it, the medical practitioner, if he had a guarantee of a certain minimum sum sufficient just to keep going, was very glad to take up a practice and did well. That day, however, has passed, because to a large extent the population of the country has declined and to a still larger extent those who have remained there have become impoverished and cannot pay the fees that a medical man might reasonably expect for the work he does. So altogether apart from the war there has been a dearth of medical men offering themselves for country appointments and particularly in the far North where the climatic conditions are severe and where, therefore, a medical man expects a higher reward. I wonder what would have been the answer of this Chamber if, before the war, it had been suggested that we should throw the door open to persons having qualifications but coming from countries that are not recognised within the British Empire. I submit that the suggestion would not have been tolerated for one moment.

Mr. Cross: It should not be tolerated now, either.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I seem to have one strong supporter. Such a suggestion would have been received with absolute contumely had it been made at any time other than the days we are now passing through. I admit with grave regret that in the days through which we are now passing we are obliged very largely to endure makeshifts, not only in this matter of services to which the people are entitled in the hospitals, but in every other regard. We are obliged to "make things do" even though we may know

that they should be better than they are. Consequently it may be that the proposed remedy for the dearth of medical practitioners in country districts is, in the circumstances of these particular times, justified.

First of all, however, attention has to be given to a note of warning that was very well sounded by the Leader of the Opposition concerning identification. No circumstance concerning refugees has been more marked than the fact that they left their countries in an extreme hurry and when they left they did not have any passports or any visas or anything which in the ordinary way would enable them to be identified. They arrived in this country and said, "We are refugees." That is all we know about them. Of course they bring papers but those papers may belong to anybody and the identification of individuals presenting themselves for acceptance as medical practitioners will be a matter of very grave difficulty. When Russian refugees first began to arrive in England, they were subjected to a severe examination by the Customs authorities who endeavoured to find means of identifying them. It has since been found that 50 per cent. of the papers submitted were forgeries and most of the refugees concerned are now internees because it was found they were not the people they represented themselves to be. The difficulty is to secure the desired information. There is no means of satisfactorily examining a refugee or of finding any person who can identify him. Even though a refugee might be telling the truth, he would be in the position that it would be almost impossible for him to be properly identified.

There is a second fact to which we cannot close our eyes: that the medical profession is not merely a profession to deal with illnesses and other physical disabilities, but that it is also a profession with a wonderful moral record. There is no doubt that patients confide with absolute confidence in doctors who are brought up on the English standard. They are warranted in doing so by a long tradition. Of course there are some unfortunate examples to the contrary, but they are few and far apart. Of the profession as a whole, it can be said that its members are to be relied upon absolutely to preserve any knowledge given to them of any matters concerning a patient which the patient considers it necessary to dis-

close, but which he does not want the world to know or does not want to be used subsequently for purposes of blackmail. We do not know that the people who come here—even though they be genuine and possess degrees—have that moral character. Yet it is proposed to let them loose amongst our population. The Minister seems to think it is absolutely necessary to let them loose.

The Minister for Health: I would not go that far.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not know that I can describe his attitude in any other way. If he does not think that this is the best way to let them loose he is prepared to adopt other means. In any event they are to be let loose.

The Minister for Labour: Let loose tied up.

Hon. N. KEENAN: There is no tying up about it, but I intend to suggest some tying up. They are to be let loose on the terms proposed in this Bill. What are those terms? It is quite true that in the first instance there is to be a region determined within which the person, who is a refugee or someone who may come from any foreign country, is to be allowed to practise, and after he has practised for five years, he is to become entitled to practise in any part of Western Australia. Thus at the end of five years he will acquire exactly the same standing in the profession as any other medical practitioner in Western Australia. If the Bill is taken into Committee, I intend to move for the deletion of that provision. Some day or other—it may be soon; we all hope it will be soon—peace must come, and then those countries from which these people have run away must be capable of receiving them back. Why should not they go back? Are not we doing sufficient in the way of generosity if we give them an opportunity to earn a living in the meantime?

Instead of their having an absolute right to remain here, I suggest and ask the Minister to consider whether they should, on the contrary, have no absolute right whatever to remain, unless such a right is granted by the Minister for Health if he is satisfied that their remaining here would be to the advantage of the people of the State. That would be some precaution against being flooded by these people and remaining flooded for the rest of the existence of the present generation, at any rate. I hope my suggestion will receive the Minister's careful consideration.

As I have already remarked, I have the greatest sympathy with the country people who at the present moment and in many instances are deprived of proper medical attention. I would like to see that want supplied, but I do not wish to see it supplied by foreigners who come here and take up the practice of the profession in this State. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) commented on the fact that no guarantee was given to the working man that, on his return from the war, his job would be available to him.

Mr. Fox interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is entirely disorderly in interjecting when out of his seat.

Mr. Fox: I did not say that at all.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I have heard that remark from the seat usually occupied by the hon. member. I do not know of one decent employer whose employees have volunteered for service at the front, who, if they return, have not been promised their jobs again. I know of dozens of cases in which this guarantee has been given in writing. If the man has the good luck to survive the dangers of the war and return to the State—we all hope he will—his job will be available to him again. Yet, if we pass this Bill in its present form, we are calmly going to wipe out the jobs of all the medical men, particularly young men, who have volunteered for service at the front. There is no question about that. No man has a greater gift for worming his way in and, when he has wormed his way in, remaining there, than has the wily foreigner.

Mr. Cross: The German Jew.

Hon. N. KEENAN: He might be a German Jew or a foreigner of any other kind. The only foreigner for whom the member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Warner) seems to have any regard is the one who has been placed underground. This Bill would mean that we are absolutely endangering in the highest degree, if not abolishing, the practice of the profession by those young men who have voluntarily offered their services to the nation. I do not want to be a party to that sort of thing, and I am sure no other member does, either. Therefore I should like provision to be made that, although these men are given the right to practise in certain regions and although that right is renewed from year to year, there shall be no absolute right for them at the end of a fixed time to obtain the right of general

practice, unless the Minister for Health is satisfied that the retention of their services will be of advantage to the people of the State; but unless he is satisfied, they should not be allowed the right of general practice in any part of the State. On those conditions, I am prepared to support the second reading.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [7.56]: I support the second reading of the Bill. Members on these benches and members who come from outback districts, with the possible exception of the member for Mt. Magnet, are in full agreement on one matter, and that is the lack of proper medical attention in the far-flung portions of the State. We need not go quite so far as the eastern goldfields for instance. Along the eastern goldfields line, between Northam and Southern Cross, there are only three medical officers. In the town of Merredin, which has a hospital with an average of 33 beds occupied, one of the biggest inland hospitals in the State, there is one overworked medical man who has to include in his care 100 men working in the Edna May mine at Westonia. We all know of the dangers that beset the miner in his daily vocation; yet in that district there are a hundred miners at work and the only doctor available is an overworked man 35 miles away. From Kellerberrin to Westonia, a distance of about 70 miles, there is a doctor at Kellerberrin, but the second doctor at Merredin has enlisted. Is it seriously contended by the member for Nedlands that a Bill of this sort, which is a wartime emergency measure, would lead to the opening of a sluice gate and a flood of medical men? The greatest trouble in the State to-day in endeavouring to keep men on their farms is the lack of medical attention for their wives and families. As I have pointed out, in one of our largest inland railway junction towns, we have one overworked medical officer—certainly one of the best men we have ever had there—but I do not think he is physically capable of standing the strain indefinitely. So far as I am aware, he cannot obtain relief or help. Going further north, the Minister mentioned Kununoppin, probably because the phonetics of the name appealed to him, rather than from a medical point of view. However, he struck a point where a medical officer tried for years to make a living. The last doctor who was stationed there

is now practising in Perth. It is usual for country doctors to remain in their districts only until such time as they can afford to buy a metropolitan practice. The city is full of good men who find the country work most unattractive. It is a great pity the subsidy system was ever departed from. The Minister said that £600 a year was guaranteed, but that on no occasion had the guarantee been called up on the part of his department. I know of doctors who have made a sufficient income to earn just above the amount of the guarantee, but they have had to pay for their drugs and the upkeep of their cars, with the result that they have not been netting even as much as the basic wage. We have regarded with too much complacency the position in the country from the medical point of view, and the Government has regarded with too much complacency the lack of medical men in those parts of the State. The Flying Doctor in the North-West, with the aid of an aeroplane, gives a better service to the surrounding people than is given in many of our wheatbelt areas. The member for Pingelly is to be complimented on bringing down a Bill of so concrete a nature. It has been said that a good deal of fraud will occur, that we will not be able perhaps to check the credentials of these new men. That is a difficulty common to any system of diplomas. In Tasmania there was a doctor who had a fairly good practice, and he had many diplomas but no qualifications.

Mr. Watts: What about Dr. Stewart?

Mr. BOYLE: He was another such instance. The records are full of similar cases.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You mean Dr. Stewart, of the Agricultural Department, not the medical man?

Mr. BOYLE: A similar case occurred in Sydney recently. The checking that would be required should be the duty of the British Medical Association, a body that is by no means backward in most directions. It should take some responsibility in seeing that the country districts are supplied with medical men. The principle contained in the Bill involves the temporary admission of medical men into our country areas. If later on they qualify to remain there they may have become perfectly good medical officers. The State is big enough to take them all. One of the greatest difficulties people inland have to contend with is the

lack of skilled medical attention. If they can get that medical attention it will be the means of bringing a good deal of solace and comfort, especially to the women and children of our outback areas.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [8.4]: As a representative of a country district, I am keenly interested in this Bill, and have listened with much attention to the speeches of members. After the remarks that have been passed, especially by our legal members, I wonder whether the Bill could be carried into effect if passed in its present form. Difficulty will be experienced in policing the regional areas, even if we are able to get qualified medical practitioners to work there. In the Eastern States are to be found many evacuees, both men and women, who are thoroughly qualified in medical practice. Numbers of these have been evacuated from countries that are not engaged in the present conflict. Because of the close preserve maintained by the British Medical Association those people are not allowed to practise their profession. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) referred to an over-worked doctor in his district, who had to look after a hundred miners working 30 miles away from his town. At Ravenshorpe in my district families have to travel 130 miles to get a doctor. They are over 100 miles from the Lake Grace hospital. Recently an attempt was made to develop the mining wealth that has been lying idle for many years at that centre, and numbers of men are now working underground. The company has been employing 30 men for the last few weeks, and there is a prospect of 40 or 50 more being put on in the near future. The hospital there is fully equipped with beds, bedding, surgical instruments and other things. It is not possible, however, to obtain the services of a nurse at five guineas a week, let alone those of a doctor, notwithstanding the attempts that have been made both in the Eastern States and Western Australia to fill the position. The difficulty I foresee is that there will be a large influx of country people to the city unless the Government and Parliament agree to pay higher salaries to induce nurses and medical men to take up residence in the backblocks.

The Minister for Health: It would not be possible to-day to get a doctor for Ravenshorpe at £1,000 a year; there are no doctors available. It is not a question of money.

Mr. STUBBS: If the information I have received from Ravensthorpe is accurate, a fully qualified woman doctor is prepared to come to Western Australia and take charge of the hospital.

The Minister for Health: What is preventing her from coming here?

Mr. STUBBS: She is a Pole.

The Minister for Health: Well?

Mr. STUBBS: She has been permitted to enter Australia. Provided she has the necessary qualifications what should it matter that she is a Pole? She is not an enemy subject and comes from a country that never has been at war with England. Surely the Government desires that the country should be developed, and the people there should be contented instead of flocking to the metropolitan area. That influx will undoubtedly occur, as sure as the sun rises to-morrow, if the present position is allowed to remain unaltered. People will not continue living in the backblocks a hundred miles from a doctor, and it is not fair to ask them to do so. Two or three bad seasons have been experienced at Ravensthorpe, and people have not the money with which to pay for medical and hospital attention. I sometimes receive letters asking what Parliament is doing to relieve the position, and can only reply that medical men and nurses are not available. If there are in Australia fully qualified evacuees, their services should be used in the country districts. I would be the last to suggest that any person provided only with a diploma, who is not capable of performing operations, should be allowed to practise on unfortunate country people. I would much prefer to let things remain as they are rather than have a quack going out to minister to country people without so much as understanding the meaning of the word "pharmacy." I do ask hon. members to carry the second reading. If it is possible to amend the measure in Committee so as to give opportunities for pro-British evacuees with the necessary qualifications to be admitted even if only for the duration of the war, that will be a step in the right direction. I hope the measure will be placed on the statute-book in a form acceptable to our people and to the medical profession. That is highly desirable if such evacuees as I have described, evacuees with the necessary qualifications, are now in Australia and are prevented from practising.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [8.12]: I support the second reading, but cannot undertake to support the third reading unless the measure is amended in Committee. After the last war a great many doctors came to this country, and it was highly difficult for them to make a living. In England, after that war, there were doctors actually starving. They could not get work anywhere. I am in a position to know that that is true. The reason may have been that in England students were then allowed to become qualified after a course of four years. Thus a great number of students became suddenly qualified and many of them came out to Australia. Thus we had an influx of medical men who found the position here difficult. It would therefore be a wise precaution to do something to safeguard the practices vacated by doctors who have gone to the war. Six hundred pounds a year has been mentioned as a guarantee as sufficient to secure the services of doctors. If members know anything about the medical profession, they will realise that £600 a year is absolutely absurd as a guarantee.

The Minister for Health: Is there any reason why a doctor should be given a guarantee any more than a lawyer or an architect or anyone else?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes, absolutely. The doctor protects life. The lawyer merely gets people into debt. Six hundred pounds a year is an absurd guarantee. If it were given by way of grant or subsidy, the doctor being allowed to make in addition what he can, that would be a very good thing.

Mr. Fox: On £600 a year a doctor would not go short of a meal or a good suit of clothes.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: On £600 a year a doctor could go short of a meal in some circumstances. A politician also might go short of a meal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Hon. members have not been doctors, and do not know how hard it is. I was a doctor's wife in country districts, and therefore know exactly what I am talking about. In a country practice it is very often necessary for a doctor to run two cars, because there is not a mechanic near enough to attend promptly to one that may happen to go

wrong. Again, in some districts the doctor must, in addition to a car, also have a horse, because the car will not cover a hills district. He has to pay for his drugs—a tremendous expense. Hon. members have no idea of the cost of instruments. They are tremendously expensive if a doctor keeps up to date. Frequently, too, he must keep a nurse on the premises, there not being a nurse in the town. To make his practice effective he must have a nurse available. Thus it is ridiculous to talk of £600 a year as even giving him a vestige of the expense he must incur.

Mr. Patrick: With his guarantee, he can make as much as ever he likes.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Let me tell a little story.

Member: A bedtime story?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask hon. members to keep order.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I should like hon. members to maintain a little dignity.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on members.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Is that a reflection? When my husband and I first came to this country, many years ago, we went to see a medical practice with a guarantee of £850 a year. Having seen the practice, we realised that it would be absolutely absurd to take it with a guarantee of £850, because there was very little else there. It was a district with a small, scattered population. The £850 would have absolutely gone in motors, rent, and a few drugs. Certainly it would not have given a living to a doctor.

Mr. J. Hegney: How long ago is that?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If only hon. members would try to be just a little decent! I know it is difficult, but still they might try. The Bill provides that students may be taken from any University in the British Empire or elsewhere. I believe that in India there are a number of universities. I do not know how many of them have chairs of medicine, but I believe some of them have. I do not think that any hon. member who had visited those particular universities and seen the class of students attending them would care to have them in Australia as medical men, notwithstanding their being British subjects. That is a point which should be noted. The Bill

ought to provide that students shall be taken from approved universities only. To take students from any university would be dangerous. I am quite sure that all hon. members would like to see our country districts provided with doctors. Undoubtedly the Bill provides many safeguards, but in my opinion it needs an additional safeguard. We should allow refugee medical men to practise perhaps for the duration of the war, as the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) suggested, and for a certain period afterwards; and after that there should be a revision of the measure to decide whether such doctors should remain in Australia or not. It has been said with regard to some of these doctors that difficulty would arise in country districts owing to their not speaking English, but I have never met an educated foreigner on the Continent, whether he was a Pole or an Austrian or a German, who could not speak English fairly well.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A lot of these men cannot speak English.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: That would render them suspect to me. I have never met a medical man in a decent position in any country that I have visited who could not speak English sufficiently to make himself understood.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There was a professor at Parliament House in Rome who could not speak English.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Such a case is very rare. In Poland, five languages are spoken even in the ordinary schools, such schools as we would term State schools. Many of the Poles speak English fairly well and French fluently. Most educated foreigners can speak English sufficiently for us to understand them. Otherwise if they could not speak English, I would be inclined to suspect them. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but not the third reading unless amendments are agreed to in Committee that will place a limit upon the duration of this privilege to refugee doctors, so that they shall not be let loose on society after our own men return from the war.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [8.21]: The Bill is somewhat dangerous. It includes provisions that surprise me and will astonish

many people when their effect becomes known. One of the provisions is that if a person can prove to the satisfaction of the board that he has passed through a regular accredited course of study, extending over five years or so, at any school of medicine in the British Empire, or some other country, he may be allowed to practise in a specified region. The Bill sets out the details applicable to the situation. The truth of it is that the Bill will provide the right of entry to any man from any country, provided he has the educational qualifications enabling him to satisfy the board. The very fact that such a man can gain entry into one of the highest and most respected professions of the community, would give him, even though he be an alien, access to the highest circles in the Commonwealth. I can just imagine Nazi Germany being able to make use of this privilege. The history of espionage shows that in every country of the world doctors have been employed as enemy agents. I cannot imagine many European countries, even in times of peace, agreeing to such a legislative enactment. If we agree to such legislation as a war-time measure, its operations will continue in days of peace and give these foreign doctors a footing in the community. After spending five years in a regional district, they will be able to practise in any part of the State and, I presume, in any part of the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Health: No, not at all.

Mr. CROSS: It is certain that if we agree to this proposition, we shall find that, as these doctors will be able to earn only low salaries in the country districts, they will soon be attracted by the bright lights and higher emoluments of the city. Even if the Bill be agreed to, I am doubtful if it will serve to provide medical services to the country districts. There are hundreds of people who live considerable distances away from townships. There may be a score or two living 40 or 50 miles from the nearest township, and it is most unlikely that a doctor will be content to reside in their midst and cater for their requirements. That they should do so is just as unlikely as it would be for somebody to erect a picture theatre to provide for the requirements of such a small community. People in remote areas cannot hope to enjoy facilities similar to those available in townships. We are asked to adopt wrong methods in our attempt to

overcome this problem and cater for the medical requirements of the people outback. Rather than attempt to cater for the needs of foreigners we should make use of our own universities and train young men for the medical profession.

Mr. Berry: But we want the doctors now.

Mr. CROSS: The Bill will not have the effect of supplying doctors now. How many alien doctors are available at the present moment to fill these positions? I suggest there is none.

Mr. Patrick: Then the Bill can do no harm.

Mr. CROSS: When the war ceases and peace conditions return, we know that inevitably hard times will follow. If this legislation is agreed to, there will be an influx of foreign doctors to Western Australia. It has been said that lawyers can hide their mistakes, but doctors bury theirs. While I would be agreeable to making provision for the admission of doctors from other parts of the Empire, I am totally opposed to the admission of doctors from any foreign country, seeing that they may be Chinese, Japanese or men from any other country. Some of them may be highly undesirable. Some may form part of an espionage system, and so be a menace to the safety of the Empire.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Get away!

Member: Forget it.

Mr. CROSS: It is all very fine for members to talk like that; they should remember that there are too many doctors in some centres under existing conditions. There are three or four doctors where the services of only two are required.

Members: Where are they?

Mr. Seward: Name one place.

Mr. CROSS: I have not the register with me, but there are people who could name some of the places. For instance, take Collie. There are three or four there.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There are two.

Mr. CROSS: No, I think there are four.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, there are four.

Mr. CROSS: The member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) confirms my statement.

The Minister for Health: And all are kept busy.

Mr. CROSS: There have not been many accidents at Collie, nor much sickness.

The Minister for Health: Not many accidents! Tell Tom Lowry that.

Mr. CROSS: Collie is a healthy township, and if three doctors were to remain there, the fourth could be transferred to another centre. Then again, I think there are too many doctors in the metropolitan area. If we attempt to cater for the whole of the people of the State, why not tackle the position like they did in Great Britain, where they nationalised the profession and sent doctors where they were required? That is the only fair way of tackling the problem. Obviously the metropolitan area provides greater attractions and higher incomes for medical men. In those circumstances, the city is likely to attract too many doctors while the sparsely populated areas will not prove equally attractive. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but shall strenuously oppose the introduction of doctors from foreign countries. I shall be quite prepared to agree to the admission of medical practitioners from other parts of the British Empire.

Mr. Patrick: No Bill is necessary to achieve that end.

Mr. CROSS: I suggest that the opportunities for our own young medical practitioners should not be handed over to foreigners. Nothing of that sort would be tolerated in Germany. Thirty-five years ago a head tax was introduced in that country and every foreigner had to pay £10 a year while other provisions applied if they took up residence in country districts. I do not agree that Western Australia should be thrown open to alien doctors, and I shall fight against that tendency as strenuously as I can.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore) [8.29]: I was interested in the speech of the member for Canning (Mr. Cross). If his contentions were correct, and we could supply the medical requirements of country districts with our own men, no necessity would arise for the introduction of this legislation. The Bill has been presented because there is a definite need for it. We are not joking when we say that country districts are without proper medical attention, nor are we joking when we say we are prepared to share the responsibility for rectifying that position, because this Bill is a responsibility. To say otherwise would be ridiculous. The Minister told us that at present nine of our country towns are without doctors. I assure

the Minister that there will shortly be ten, because in my electorate another doctor is leaving a country town.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There are vacancies for 21 doctors.

Mr. BERRY: The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) and the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) stressed the economic side of this question. I agree. If members consider that a doctor will go to practise in a country district for the small allowance or salary of £600, less expenses, then members have another "big think" coming to them.

The Minister for Health: As a matter of fact, no guarantee is made.

Mr. BERRY: Moora, I think, is not guaranteed. I know of one doctor who has had enough of country practice and is returning to Perth for a few of its fleshpots. Is it reasonable to expect that a man who has gone through a University course of five or six years and then spent two or three years more gaining experience in a hospital, at practically no salary at all, will be satisfied to work for so low a remuneration?

The Minister for Health: Most doctors start practising after a short period of "walking" a hospital.

Mr. BERRY: But doctors do not, after a short period in a hospital, go out to practise. They go to England or elsewhere for further training.

The Minister for Health: But scores of them do put up their brass plates after a short period in a hospital.

Mr. BERRY: Most of the doctors trained in the Eastern States go to England for further study for some years, at great expense to themselves. Such men are ambitious and will not work in the country for £600 a year. I know I would not do so in similar circumstances, in spite of what the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) said about the princely salary of £600. It is a peanut salary to a man who has spent years of his life in study and training for the benefit of the people.

Mr. Rodoreda: But the doctors get the benefit. They do that to get a living for themselves.

Mr. BERRY: If that is all, why have a medical profession at all? I said the Bill was a grave responsibility. It is. That can

readily be understood from what has been said in this Chamber to-night, but the Chamber's shoulders are broad enough to carry that responsibility.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BERRY: Well, the responsibility is not too heavy for the shoulders of members on this side of the House. We will carry it, because we are desirous of obtaining adequate medical attention for country people. I know quite well the risks we run. A friend of mine recently brought down some internees from Singapore, one of whom was, oddly enough, a refugee doctor who had gone to Singapore before the war. He went into practice there and was so successful that many patients were consulting him in preference to their own doctors. Fortunately, a reason was found to intern the doctor, who was a highly qualified and brilliant man. Surely, when one comes to consider this question, one must realise that the Minister will have sufficient power to say whether or not a person shall be allowed to practise as a doctor. The member for Nedlands and the member for Subiaco suggested that a time limit should be placed upon the activities of these doctors. I would go even further and say to these regional doctors, "We are giving you a refuge; you may practise for a period of years, or for the period of the war and a certain time thereafter, if we think fit, but you must cease practising when our doctors return from the war." I would go still further and provide these doctors with fares to their own country, provided there was no war in Europe at the time, and inform them that there was no longer any necessity for us to find an asylum for them. After the last war, as was pointed out by the member for Subiaco, we certainly had a glut of doctors, and that will probably happen again if the same course is followed on this occasion. I was a medical student before the last war broke out, and am sorry I was physically unable to continue my studies at the conclusion of hostilities. Many students at that time who had passed through a course of anatomy and physiology were taken from active service to return to the universities. Many were killed before being able to return to their studies. I trust man power is alive to this and that no medical students will be allowed to enlist in this war as line soldiers.

I strongly favour the Bill with the reservation that has been expressed by most of the members who have spoken to it, namely, that we should not hurry into the Committee stage, but give the Minister an opportunity to tell us exactly what the position will be, and so that we will be able to preserve for our soldier doctors the practices they temporarily gave up on their departure.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly—in reply) [8.37]: I thank the House for the favourable reception it has given to the Bill. I also thank the Government for affording me the opportunity to bring it forward at this stage. I shall not say much in reply, because I believe we shall have ample opportunity to revise the Bill when it reaches the Committee stage. I followed closely the speeches of members, and can only conclude—referring particularly to the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat)—that on this occasion he failed even to read the Bill. Usually, he is a cautious and reliable speaker. Does he really suggest for one moment that a board of medical practitioners who are appointed by the Governor, would send out a man to practise in the country who could not even speak English? The Bill precisely stipulates that first of all the applicant must prove to the medical board that he holds the necessary qualifications which, to a great extent, are set out in the Bill, that is, five years' study, the passing of examinations necessary for him to be licensed by his university, and that he be legally licensed to practise medicine in his country. Again, I point out to hon. members that the Bill provides that the whole matter of licensing rests entirely with the medical board, as it should do. Under the Bill the board also has power to constitute a board of examiners to determine further the qualifications and experience of these doctors. It has been stated that we have not got the examiners here. However, one speaker to-night mentioned that our medical practitioners are probably more highly qualified than are those of the Eastern States. If that be so, and I agree that we have highly qualified men here, surely our medical men would be capable of prescribing a practical examination in order to determine whether a man measures up to our standards. I cannot accept what has been said in this connection as reliable

criticism or an argument that carries any weight at all. The board will further decide whether the applicant is a suitable person to whom a certificate should be granted. Therefore, every possible precaution has been taken to ensure that a man who obtains a regional certificate is qualified to hold it.

A question was raised—strangely enough by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan)—that there would be an influx of these doctors; the State would be flooded with them, as it were. The member for Canning (Mr. Cross) said he did not know whether we would get enough of them to fill our requirements.

Mr. Cross: They would not go into the sparsely populated districts.

Mr. SEWARD: I sincerely hope that between the two extremes we will strike the happy medium. How can there possibly be an influx when, as was pointed out by the Minister, there are so few vacancies here at the present time? Even supposing the Minister's amendment to include the Perth Hospital and mental hospitals is agreed to, there will be the possibility of only 12 declared regions, or only 12 vacancies. That will prevent any influx. A region cannot be declared unless it is proved to the satisfaction of the Governor that there is no medical service in the area. Unless an area is declared men will not be licensed for that area and at the present time licenses cannot be issued for more than 12 vacancies if and when they are declared regions.

As I indicated during my second reading speech, the Bill follows the amendment made in the New South Wales Act. I previously read the letter I had received from the Department of Public Health in Sydney to the effect that not until an area has been proclaimed in that State can a regional doctor be appointed, and that up to the present no area has been proclaimed. So I do not think there is any need for us to worry about any influx of aliens. The member for Canning (Mr. Cross) and possibly one or two of the members visualised a sudden influx of Japanese, Chinese, Indians and all kinds of people, but those people cannot enter the country unless they have first obtained the right to do so. The Minister himself indicated that there was one alien doctor whom he has employed, but who is not permitted to land.

Mr. Watts: What about the White Australia policy?

Mr. SEWARD: Aliens need to have permits to land long before they can apply for a certificate, so I am not worrying about that aspect. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) stressed the necessity for ensuring that an applicant for registration is the person mentioned in the diploma he presents. That is a duty which we must throw on the Medical Board. In fact, it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth authorities to satisfy themselves as to a man's identity before they allow him to land here.

The Minister for Health: I understand that no more will be permitted to land.

Mr. SEWARD: If it is a case of a man who is already in the country, it will be the duty of the Medical Board to ensure that the applicant and the person mentioned in the diploma are identical. I take it that if the applicant were not able to prove to the satisfaction of the board that he was the man referred to in the diploma, the board would not regard him as a suitable person. In my second reading speech I referred to one of these men. It still would remain to be seen whether the board considers his qualifications are satisfactory. That man is guaranteed by a practising doctor in Sydney who met him in Vienna in 1935 and knows that he is actually the individual mentioned in the diploma. I am not concerned about that particular matter now. In any event, it will be the duty of the Medical Board to satisfy itself of a man's bona fides.

Reference has been made to limiting the measure to the duration of the war but, as has been pointed out by members on this side of the House, there has been a shortage of doctors in country districts for the past ten years. I for one would have no hand in undermining the position of those of our doctors who go to the war. It is our duty to see that they are restored to their practices on their return, but I do not think any member mentioned any country area which has no doctor by reason of the fact that that doctor has gone to the war. Unfortunately, doctors left country districts long before the war. In any case the war would have to last five years from now before such a position could arise because while the Lieut.-Governor may declare an area he may also revoke that proclamation at any

time, even within three months of declaring it if he has reason to believe any of our own doctors are available for such a district. In that event, the certificate of registration would be cancelled and a vacancy would be available to a returned man.

As I understand we shall have an opportunity to consider amendments during the Committee stage, I will not delay the House any longer except to thank members for the reception afforded to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 14th November. Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 4 to which the following amendment was moved by the member for Kataning:—

That in lines 4-7 of subparagraph (vii) of paragraph (d) of Subsection (4) of proposed new Section 5 the following words be struck out:—"or that for any reason which the Chief Inspector deems sufficient the applicant ought not to be granted the licence applied for."

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I oppose the amendment. This clause sets out certain definite grounds upon which the Chief Inspector may refuse to grant, transfer or renew a license or may cancel an existing license. It cannot, however, be successfully argued that the definite grounds set out are all the grounds that may exist to justify the Chief Inspector in refusing to take such action. It is quite conceivable that there may be many other justifiable grounds but that the Chief Inspector would take serious action on grounds other than those stipulated in the clause unless those other grounds were very important and very serious is unlikely. Whenever the Chief Inspector takes action regarding a license, he will do so with the knowledge that the applicant has the right of appeal to a magistrate. Therefore no risk would be run by retaining the words. If this provision is deleted, the Chief Inspector will be stultified in his activities in dealing with licenses.

Mr. WATTS: I regard the amendment from quite a different angle. I do not suggest that there are not reasons other than the six or seven specified upon which it would be justifiable to cancel or refuse to transfer a license, but we have heard frequently from both sides of the Chamber, and particularly from the Government side, objections based upon departures from the principles of British justice. One of these principles we have argued is the onus of proof. Another is that a defendant is entitled to know before he is put on trial the offence with which he is charged. If this Chamber is not capable of determining the things that should result in delicensing an employment broker or refusing a transfer of license, it should not include in the measure a general statement of this kind. An employment broker might be carrying on his business strictly in accordance with the conditions set forth in paragraph (d), except for sub-paragraph (vii) when suddenly some action he has taken, without knowledge that it is wrong, might be regarded by the Chief Inspector as a ground for refusing transfer or renewal of the license. A man should not be placed in the position of having some officer entirely of his own volition and without instruction from Parliament calling upon him to answer, before a magistrate, a charge of which he previously knew nothing. If the Minister knows of other grounds upon which licenses should be cancelled or not renewed, they can be considered, but I shall not allow these words to remain without entering a strong protest and doing what I can to induce members to prevent their inclusion. The Minister said the broker would have the right of appeal to a magistrate. That would merely be inviting the expenditure of money, possibly quite unjustifiably. We have no right to put a man to that expense, or the possibility of that expense, without telling him the things on which he is likely to come into conflict with authority. If he knows of those things and does them, he is deserving of punishment, but if he does not know, he should not be charged merely on the say-so of some officer who has received no instructions from Parliament.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The grounds enumerated for dealing with licenses are reasonable, but the words proposed to be struck out are of such a general character that, if

they are retained, there is no need for the rest of paragraph (d). It would be sufficient if it read that the Chief Inspector may refuse to grant a license, etc., for any reason that the Chief Inspector deems sufficient. The words proposed to be struck out cover everything, and what is the use of including the other reasons? No one could imagine a provision of the kind being inserted in any measure with intention to do justice to the subject. I hope the Minister will reconsider his objection to the amendment.

Mr. ABBOTT: Had these words been inserted by the Chancellor of Germany, I would not have been surprised. I am not greatly surprised that the Labour Government is proposing them.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect upon any member of the Chamber.

Mr. ABBOTT: Is that a reflection?

The CHAIRMAN. If the hon. member disobeys instructions from the Chair, he will not have an opportunity to continue to address the Chair.

Mr. ABBOTT: Then I will try to be more politic.

The Minister for Labour: Try to be more sensible.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister should not admonish an hon. member. A better example is expected of him.

Mr. ABBOTT: This is a most autocratic provision, entirely unreasonable. I understand it is the policy of the Government to endeavour to be democratic on all occasions. It is with much surprise I find the Minister urging this Committee to pass such a provision. Usually it is this side of the Chamber that is regarded as favouring conservatism and autocracy, but the views of members have been reversed when the Minister supports a provision of this kind.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for North Perth seems recently to have developed the idea that if he gets up and makes a lot of noise he is assisting in our deliberations.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for North Perth is not mentioned in the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: In view of his advocacy of lower wages to workers in factories we need not be surprised at his attitude.

Mr. Abbott: That is not correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister must confine his remarks to the amendment. I will permit of no discussion that is not connected with the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for Nedlands and to some extent the member for North Perth sought to ridicule—

Mr. Abbott: Not at all.

Mr. Needham: Who is making the speech?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: —the retention of these words. The member for Nedlands suggested that if they were retained there would be no necessity for the previous portion of the clause. I submit that it is very essential we should retain the previous portion. We set out definite grounds to guide the inspector of factories in the decisions he shall give. Who, however, can say how many additional justifiable grounds there may be for the refusal or cancellation of a license? Because no one can set out those additional grounds we propose to give the chief inspector discretionary power so that he may, when justifiable grounds are shown to exist, take the action he is entitled to take.

Mr. WATTS: I am not so distressed over this matter as one or two other members appear to be. The Committee, however, should consider whether it is right to depart from the principle that the defendant is entitled to know before he is charged with an offence what that offence is. A man is allowed to carry on business under a license granted by the Chief Inspector. That official may say when the time comes to renew the license, "You are doing something wrong and I refuse to renew your license." Say what the Minister will, that will be the effect of the paragraph. I do not suggest the Chief Inspector is autocratic or unreasonable, but I say that the principle that has been adopted on many occasions by this Chamber should not be departed from.

Mr. WITHERS: The paragraph merely extends to the Chief Inspector powers that are not set out elsewhere. Something is frequently overlooked in an Act of Parliament, and these words are intended to cover anything that is overlooked in this measure. I agree with the logical views expressed by the member for Katanning, but I hope the amendment will not be accepted.

Mr. SEWARD: Circumstances alter cases. I am reminded of a section of the King's regulations which has some bearing on this matter. When it is desired to catch a man in the army, and no particular section can be found to cover the case, he is usually charged with having acted to the prejudice of good order and discipline. This is a provision of the kind to which members opposite have in the past objected strenuously. The subparagraph empowers the inspector to refuse a license on any ground he may be able to think of.

Mr. WATTS: In reply to the member for Bunbury, I am in entire agreement with the member for Nedlands, though I approach the matter from a different aspect. I consider that these words should not appear either where they stand or anywhere else. The preceding subparagraphs set out certain offences, and I do not object to them. On the other hand, if a license-holder offends against this particular subparagraph, he loses his license; and the subparagraph, being an all-in provision, is most objectionable. One ground for refusal or forfeiture is that the applicant has already suffered a forfeiture under the measure. To obviate this, the man must go to the expense of appearing before a magistrate and testing the matter. I feel sure this subparagraph will not be permitted to stand.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	19
Majority against	..	..	..	6

AYES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. North
Mr. Berry	Mr. Seward
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Warner
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Watts
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Doney
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Needham
Mr. Oross	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Raphael
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Triat
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Withers
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	

(Teller.)

AYES.	PAIRS.	NOES.
Mr. Patrick		Mr. Wise
Mr. Latham		Mr. Willcock
Mr. J. H. Smith		Mr. Styant
Mr. Stubbs		Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Mann		Mr. Holman
Mr. Shearn		Mr. Collier

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 23 of principal Act:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

That paragraph refers to Section 26 of the Act, which provides that if during the currency of a license the holder of such license has been twice convicted of a breach of the Act the magistrate "may" order such license to be brought into court for cancellation. Paragraph (b) requires that the license "shall" be brought into court to be cancelled. Thus the discretion of the court ceases to exist if the paragraph is retained. I object to the proposed alteration because the offences of which the license-holder has been or is being convicted may be of a trivial character.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: As Clause 4 has been approved by the Committee, there is merit in the reasoning of the member for Katanning. To demonstrate the reasonableness of the Government in connection with all matters debated in this House, I desire to announce that I shall not oppose the amendment.

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

Clause 8—Repeal of Section 25 and new section:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That after the word "inspector" in line 1 of paragraph (b) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 25, the words "who delivers to such employment broker an authority in writing addressed to him signed by the Chief Inspector" be inserted.

The clause will give any inspector, not necessarily the Chief Inspector, the power to inspect and examine letters, telegrams and other documents and to take extracts from them if necessary. Such power should be exercised only on the authority of the Chief Inspector, to whom complaints will be referred for inquiry. Extensive powers are to be vested in the Chief Inspector, and he is therefore the only suitable person to determine whether such an inspection should be made.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The position is as stated by the member for Katanning. The amendment is reasonable, and I propose to accept it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That after the word "inspector" in line 1 of paragraph (c) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 25, the words "who produces such an authority in writing" be inserted.

This amendment is really consequential.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to paragraph (d) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 25:—"and having reference to the engagement of any person as an employee."

The paragraph has reference to the employment broker answering truthfully and completely questions that an inspector shall put to him. The whole object of the Bill is to regulate the relationship between employment brokers and the engagement of employees. Nothing of a personal nature should be exposed to inspection, and that should be made clear.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The amendment is reasonable, and I accept it.

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

Clauses 9 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—New schedule:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in the Sixth Schedule all the words and figures appearing after the word "female" in line 8, on page 10, down to and including the word "employer" in line 10, on page 11 of the Bill, be struck out, and the following words inserted in lieu:—

"Where the weekly rate of wages payable by the employer does not exceed £1 with or without board and lodging: One half of the amount of the weekly rate of wages, excluding board and lodging (if any): One half of the amount of the weekly rate of wages, excluding board and lodging (if any).

Where the weekly rate of wages payable by the employer exceeds £1 with or without board and lodging: One third of the amount of the weekly rate of wages, excluding board and lodging (if any): One third of the amount of the weekly rate of wages, excluding board and lodging (if any).

The clause provides for the insertion of a new Sixth Schedule. This deals with the most contentious phase of the Bill, to wit, the maximum scale of charges to be levied by employment brokers. During the second reading debate I indicated that I considered this was a left-handed method of disposing of employment brokers and wip-

ing them off the map. If the Minister is really anxious to do that, I suggested the best course would be to introduce a Bill for that purpose. We would then have known the real point we were to discuss. As it is, we are not in possession of that information. All we know is that the Bill embodies a scale of charges which, from the information we have been able to obtain, and in the absence of any information from the Minister himself as to whether the charges are reasonable, we have come to the conclusion that, if imposed, these charges would have the effect of driving employment brokers out of business. I would not have the slightest objection to an employment broker being put out of business if he had proved himself unworthy or dishonest. Indeed, I would welcome evidence to show it was the intention of the department to put a period to the activities of such employment brokers as may have proved dishonest, if there be any such. At the same time I will not allow an indirect method of this kind to freeze out those agents who are not dishonest and have not annoyed the department sufficiently to put them out of business. I have received the following letter, which I submit as some support for the observations made by me, although I pointed out what is contained in the letter on the second reading—

In reference to the Employment Brokers Act Amendment now before Parliament, at a meeting of all employment brokers in the metropolitan area held tonight—15th November—it was decided to ask you to oppose the new schedule in respect to charges which may be made by employment brokers and which are set out on page 10 of the proposed new Bill.

In the past it has been the practice, though it is not inserted in the existing Act, to charge half the first week's wages both to employer and employee, viz., if the wages are 20s. per week, 10s. is collected from the employer and 10s. from the employee.

This is not extortionate if it is realised that to fill positions it quite frequently costs half of what the broker receives. The employment agents are at a loss to know how the Hon. Mr. Hawke made his decision in regard to the rate of charges which were apparently computed without any investigation, and which have never been fixed by any previous lists.

There is another point I would call to your mind, that is, there is no compulsion on employees to come to us for jobs unless they desire to do so. There are four other avenues from which they can obtain work, without paying fees, if they so desire, viz., Men's Labour Bureau, the Pastoralist Labour

Bureau, the Women's Labour Bureau, and the Boys' Employment Office. Surely, in a so-called democracy, men and women who have to seek for work, and employers who need their services, are entitled to have a choice and not be forced to apply only at a Government department.

The State Labour Bureau has been in operation for many years, and has had every opportunity to become an efficient instrument for the securing and placing of suitable men and women in the various avenues of employment offering throughout the country, but what is the position as we find it? Employers prefer to avail themselves of the services of the private offices and pay the fees which have been paid in the past. This also applies to the employees who feel that they can retain their individuality and have a free choice in the selection of their work.

The very fact of our existence over a number of years proves that we are rendering a needed service to the community, and also that on our books are the same clients, both employers and employees, who certainly would not return to us if they were not satisfied.

We are creating revenue, State and Federal. For instance, telephone, postages, taxation, hospital, financial emergency, etc., employment of labour, printers and others, as well as in many instances supporting a family.

The rank injustice of attempting to abolish, in this sinister manner, without even a hint of compensation, the businesses of a section of the community, does not bother Mr. Hawke in the slightest and goes to show the present trend of Labour legislation. If this act of confiscation is successful, some other branch of private enterprise will be slaughtered next, and so on ad lib.

That letter expresses, far better than I can—except for a line or two here and there—

The Minister for Labour: I will say!

Mr. WATTS:—my sentiments with regard to the schedule. I have received communications from both employers and employees who have sought the services of this agency, besides other communications, from which it would appear that this Bill, if passed, would ultimately drive private brokers out of business.

The Minister for Labour: Despite the fact that they have not seen the schedule?

Mr. WATTS: They have seen it. I wish it to be perfectly understood that my amendment does not seek to strike out the provisions relating to engagements at fixed wages and engagements of married couples. I pointed out on the second reading that considerable cost was involved in carrying on the State Labour Bureau. While it would be difficult to ascertain the amount that would be necessary to recoup that cost, it seems to

me to be apparent, from the figures I quoted, that the fee should be not less than 10s. per application. The Committee is well aware that no business can continue unless it makes a profit; and, in my opinion, if we admit that a substantial proportion of the work done would be in regard to contracts where the weekly pay is more than 20s., the average charge should be not less than 10s. It is on that calculation which I have made, and on the information furnished to me by the employment broker with whom I discussed the matter, that I contended the effect of this schedule, if it became law, would be simply to ask employment brokers to close down their establishments. But they are entitled to some consideration so long as they carry on their business honestly. Where the weekly wage, excluding board and lodging, does not exceed £1 per week, I propose to fix the fee at half of that amount; where the weekly rate of wage exceeds £1 a week, I think one-third of that sum would be a reasonable fee. I understand that the member for West Perth intends to move an amendment to make the minimum 10s. I have expressed the opinion that I do not think the job can be done for less than an average of 10s. so I am prepared to consider that amount.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Whenever Parliament proposes to disturb a condition of affairs that has existed for any length of time, there is always much opposition from those who are likely to be affected. The idea some people have regarding democracy is that it entitles them to do just what they like whenever they please. The idea they have about democracy as it affects this issue is that they should be entitled to do as they have done in the past, namely, themselves to fix the fees they shall charge people who have to deal with them. Any interference with that liberty is considered to be the very opposite of democracy, to be something in the nature of a dictatorship. I do not blame the employment brokers of this State for making complaints against the measure. They are entitled to do whatever they like in that regard. What members of this Committee have to consider is not so much the fact that a system of control is to be set up over the activities of employment brokers, but the reason for that system of control. Why is it that we are asking

Parliament to limit the fees that employment brokers may charge to employers and workers? It is because we consider the fees now being charged by several of them to be higher than they should be. We know from experience that some employment brokers have abused their powers and exploited unemployed men and women. If those people consider the Bill interferes with the measure of liberty they have previously enjoyed, the reply is that the proposed interference is being attempted in an effort to protect unemployed men and women. At present the law places no limitation on the fees that may be charged by employment brokers. They can ask for whatever they think they can get.

Mr. Doney: If the fees were unduly high the unemployed could easily exercise their right to go to the State Labour Bureau.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Some unemployed go to the State Labour Bureau and some go to private employment brokers, but the unemployed cannot decide through which bureau jobs are to be made available. That is decided by the employers and the unemployed have to go to the bureau to which the employers have sent their requests.

Mr. Doney: But the employers would equally side-step the private bureaus if their prices were too high.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The employers could side-step the private employment brokers if the charges to the employers were high, but they would not bother to do so if the charges of the brokers to the employers were low and those to the workers high.

Mr. Doney: This measure proposes to make them fifty-fifty.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes. Mr. Seward: That is what they are now.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Ostensibly; but we know of many cases in which the employees pay ever so much more than the employers are called upon to pay. There is nothing to compel private brokers to charge employers the same as they charge workers. They can please themselves. The time is long overdue for some strict law dealing with fees charged to unemployed men and women and to employers.

Mr. Doney: Have you ascertained by inquiry that the profits of private agencies are unduly high?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am not concerned about that.

Mr. Doney: You should be.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am concerned that the unemployed men and women of this State should not be subject to unduly high charges for the right to obtain a job that might be available. If hon. members feel that this schedule will not return to employment brokers sufficient to enable them to make a profit, I have no objection to their moving an amendment to raise the fees that may be charged to employers for services rendered by the employment brokers. I claim that the fees set out in the Bill as being the maximum that may be charged to workers are as high as any unemployed man or woman should be called upon to pay and higher than many of them are in a position to pay.

Mr. Doney: Have you compared your proposed fees with those obtaining for similar services in the other States?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: On the second reading I said that the schedule is based almost entirely on the schedule of maximum charges in Victoria. Somebody with a bright imagination countered that statement by saying that Victoria has a larger population, and consequently the volume of business in the offices of employment brokers there would be much larger than here.

Mr. Doney: That does not necessarily follow. There might be more brokers also.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Exactly. In Melbourne there are probably ten times as many employment brokers' offices as there are in Perth. In Melbourne rents would probably be three or four times higher, and other charges would be higher than they are here.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Is there a State Labour Bureau in Melbourne?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes; one in every State. The maximum fees proposed are reasonable, and no member would be justified in demanding that unemployed people seeking work should pay more than those fees. If any member demanded that higher fees be charged, he would be doing a grave disservice and injustice to the unemployed. If these fees will not enable employment brokers to carry on at a profit, let somebody move to increase the charges against the employers.

Mr. North: Would you leave the employers' column blank?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No, but the hon. member may move to increase by 100 per cent. the fees to be paid by employers. The member for Katanning could withdraw his amendment to enable the member for Claremont to move in that direction.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do you think the employer and the employee should pay fifty-fifty?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: My opinions are embodied in the Bill. The leading question asked by the hon. member will not evoke the answer he desires. The Bill sets out that employers and employees shall pay equal amounts, and we consider that the proposed fees will enable employment brokers to carry on at a profit. If members opposite are serious in the contention that these fees will put employment brokers out of business, let them increase the revenue of the brokers by increasing the charges against the employers.

Mr. Doney: You realise that the cost to the State Labour Bureau is a great deal more than the figures set down for private offices?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Doney: I tell you it is so.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: There seems to be a complete misunderstanding about the State Labour Bureau. A good deal of the expense of carrying it on is incurred because the officers spend at least half their time in dealing with clients whom employment brokers have sent to them to get free railway passes.

Mr. Seward: A private labour exchange has never done it in my case.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Every year we have hundreds of instances of workers being sent to the State Labour Bureau by employment brokers to get free railway passes to the country so that they may accept jobs to which the private agencies are sending them.

Mr. Seward: The fare has been refunded.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The fare is advanced on the understanding that it will be repaid in due course, but this does not lessen the amount of work that the officers of the State bureau are called upon to do. If they did not do all this work for clients of private agencies, the expense of

carrying on the State Labour Bureau could be cut down by probably 50 per cent or more.

Mr. Doney: Do they undertake this work with a knowledge of the facts?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes, in the interests of the unemployed. Superficial examinations of the activities of the State Labour Bureau do not make a good foundation on which to build argument. We say that the scale of fees proposed will permit private agencies to carry on at a profit. The schedule of charges will not allow them to carry on as profitably as heretofore, but to carry out their operations on a payable basis. There will also be greater protection for the unemployed men and women who seek the assistance of private bureaux. The main desire of the Government in this matter is to protect the unemployed men and women, but the chief desire of the opponents of the Bill is apparently to protect the status quo of private employment brokers.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The liberty of the subject!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The liberty of private employment brokers to exploit the unemployed to their hearts' content! That is the kind of liberty that develops into a gross license. It is something we want to see less of in this country. Too many people indulge in exploitation of that kind under the sacred name of liberty. What happens when their right to this exploitation is challenged!

Mr. Abbott: The right to strike!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: It is a pity someone has not the right to strike the hon. member silent. I am not impressed by the parrot cry of interference with the liberty of the subject. Parliaments in every democratic country have continuously to interfere with the rights of different sections of the community.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: With democracy!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: We are doing that all the time.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is getting away from the amendment. I suggest that he return to it.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I return to it with haste. The schedule has been framed to give the greatest possible protection against exploitation to the unemployed men and women, and also to allow sufficient income to enable private employment brokers

to carry on. Had we desired to put private employment brokers out of business we could have done so without bringing down a measure of this kind. If the schedule becomes law these people will all be operating five years hence and doing well. I offer no objection to the charges against employers being increased, but I do oppose the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister seems to be tilting at a few windmills this evening. No member has yet opposed the idea of regulating the charges made by employment brokers. That principle has been agreed to. The Government has also recognised employment broking as a lawful business, and its lawfulness and desirability are recognised by a specific Act of Parliament. If Parliament decides to regulate the remuneration paid in connection with any lawful business, its duty is to fix charges that are just and reasonable. That is not a question of democracy. We have to be just to all concerned. If employment is found for a person the broker is entitled to his remuneration for the services he has rendered to both parties. What we have to do first is to take the total figure paid by both sides according to this schedule. The first point deals with employment at wages not exceeding 5s. with board and lodging. The total remuneration for bringing about the contract for engagement is 3s. Is that a fair remuneration for the services rendered having regard to the other figures set out in the column? Having decided that question we should then see how that charge should be apportioned as between the employer and the employee. I have an open mind on that point. The Minister in his Bill has set up the principle that the contributions should be equal. The member for Katanning has accepted the Minister's principle, and in his amendment has also made the contributions equal, while somewhat increasing them. I am not convinced necessarily that the Minister's suggestion as to the employer paying more may not be right. It may be right, or it may be faulty. Possibly it would be right to say that the employer should pay double. But before we decide that, we may well consider the effect. There may be no adverse effect on the unemployed; on the other hand, there may be. Let us bear in mind that many employers are themselves by no means finan-

cially strong. A farmer in the wheat belt may be worse off than the man he engages. Small shopkeepers in the city and others who engage employees at small wages may be struggling just as much as the employees they engage. If we say that the employer shall pay half or two-thirds of the total fee, we may bring all the business into the hands of the State Labour Bureau, so that payment of fees may be avoided, or else we may find employers saying, "Instead of engaging somebody I will struggle along as best I can without anybody, because I may have to pay 7s. 6d. to engage a person at a wage and that person may leave in a week's time; and I cannot keep on doing that." I am not necessarily wedded to the idea of sharing half and half, though the Minister has set up that principle. We all agree that there should be a scale of fees in this particular case. I do not know why we might not have left the decision to the Price-Fixing Commissioner, because a Bill which the Minister has on the notice paper proposes to empower the Commissioner to fix fees. Under that Bill, if it passes, the Commissioner could fix the remuneration of employment brokers.

The Minister for Labour: He could not fix their remuneration at all.

Mr. McDONALD: He could fix the maximum.

The Minister for Labour: He deals only with proposed increases, as after the 31st August, 1939.

Mr. McDONALD: Under that Bill the Commissioner could not fix remuneration lower than obtained on the 31st August, 1939. If we set up a lawful occupation and fix the remuneration of people engaged in that business, we should see that they receive a living wage for their work commensurate with the skill they have to possess and the services they render. In the absence of further evidence, I am not satisfied that the schedule gives a fair return. As the member for Katanning has said, there has not been any evidence of that.

Mr. ABBOTT: I support the argument of the previous speaker. Had the Minister merely provided a maximum amount payable by the unemployed, I should have felt more inclined to support the schedule. Every man unemployed should be afforded every facility to obtain employment. In most

cases the employer going to the employment broker is better able to pay a larger fee than is the man he hopes to employ; but under the schedule the employment broker may not be able to do business for which the private employer may be prepared to pay him. Unfortunately such an amendment as would give effect to my suggestion is not feasible. As the matter stands now, I agree with the member for West Perth that a reasonable remuneration, irrespective of upon whom it is chargeable, is not provided by the schedule.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister has suggested that members on this side of the Chamber who have spoken desire merely to preserve the status quo. The Minister ought to know that that is not so. We have already agreed to substantial amendments of the law relating to employment brokers, and we have also agreed to the insertion of a schedule regulating the charges to be made by them. Such a schedule did not exist at any time in the Act. The only difference between us is as to the exact figures and words which shall go into the schedule. We have admitted the desirableness of regulating the charges. We conflict only as to what charges actually shall be made. We on this side have nothing to guide us as to what are reasonable charges. We are forced to the opinion, on fairly sound grounds, such grounds as we can discover, that the charges contemplated by the schedule are such as to render it impossible for an employment broker doing only reasonable business to pay the expenses of that business and to make a living wage. The Minister is anxious that the unemployed should make a living wage. We are most anxious that the employment broker should receive a living wage and not become unemployed. Those two states of mind ought to be capable of arriving at some compromise. I endeavoured to make the compromise by the amendment under discussion.

The Minister for Labour: That is putting up charges against the unemployed.

Mr. WATTS: Not so. It is reducing charges as at present made against both parties, because the Minister's intention is to make both parties contribute. I went so far as to read through the debates on previous Bills of this kind. There I found a suggestion by a previous Minister that only one party should pay the charges. When the present Minister did not

adopt that attitude, I inferred it was his considered opinion that both parties should pay an equal charge. If he did not mean that, why did he include equal charges in the Bill? The Minister threw out a sort of challenge to us that if we liked to amend the schedule in the manner he suggested and provide differential rates as between the employer and the employee—to the disadvantage of the employer—he would be prepared to give the matter consideration. My difficulty is that I do not know on what premises to work. The Minister may have a lot of information upon which to arrive at a conclusion as to whether certain charges are fair; I have not that information. I will make the Minister this offer—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not permitted to make bargains.

Mr. WATTS: Then I shall throw out this suggestion: If the Minister reports progress, I shall do my best to frame a schedule based on the idea the Minister submitted to the Committee. As the Minister will appreciate, that cannot be done in five minutes.

Mr. McDONALD: The suggestion made by the member for Katanning is worthy of consideration. The schedule and the amendment deal with the fixation of wages for a certain class. So far as my recollection goes, this is the first time we have endeavoured to arrive at a living or reasonable wage for an authorised class of workers. I am aware that in the Factories and Shops Act, we set out minimum rates of wages for certain people, but in this instance we are asked to fix the maximum wages. I cannot understand why Parliament should not be asked to fix minimum wages for every class of worker if we are to do so in this instance.

Mr. J. Hegney: We are not fixing their wages but the fees other people have to pay.

Mr. McDONALD: And those fees constitute the employment brokers' wages. We are asked to fix their maximum wages without allowing these people an opportunity to be heard. What sort of a noise would there be if we endeavoured to fix the basic wage without hearing representations on behalf of the workers?

Mr. J. Hegney: There is no analogy there.

Mr. McDONALD: Of course there is. The employment brokers have to live, and we are now asked to fix their wages. I have not objected to that course.

Mr. Needham: If we do not fix them, who will do so? Can these people go to the Arbitration Court?

Mr. McDONALD: I do not think so. If the Arbitration Court has no jurisdiction and we are to fix the wages, then do let us follow that elementary principle of justice that requires people to be heard before their wages are determined.

The Minister for Labour: They have been heard.

Mr. McDONALD: We have not heard them.

The Minister for Labour: We have heard them to-night.

Mr. Doney: Did they put their case to the Minister?

Mr. McDONALD: Let us hear their representations through a responsible officer like the Minister, or from any other source that may be convenient. I regard this matter as one of principle affecting a class of workers carrying on a lawful occupation who, while they may not come within the ambit of the Arbitration Court, are entitled to an opportunity to voice their views as to whether they should be starved or receive a fair remuneration for a fair service that is demanded by all concerned. I hope the Minister will accept the helpful offer of the member for Katanning.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The member for West Perth suggested that the employment brokers' views had not been submitted to the Committee. Most members will agree that the employment brokers have had enthusiastic representatives to submit their case to this Committee and that the member for Katanning read a comprehensive letter setting out their views. Prior to the introduction of this legislation, employment brokers were a law unto themselves. True, certain things had to be done by them, but there was nothing to prevent those brokers from charging any fee they desired.

Mr. Doney. Except the competition provided by the State Labour Bureau.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I would not regard that as competition. In the past employment brokers have charged half the first week's wages. I know of many instances of unemployed workers being sent to jobs that

were short-lived and the workers were soon back on the hands of the brokers for further employment. The suggestion has been made that there is no obligation on the part of the workers to patronise the employment brokers. In view of the fact that employers make use of the agencies for securing employees, unemployed men have no choice. Despite the view expressed by the member for Nedlands, I claim that economic circumstances force unemployed workers to the private employment brokers. The difference between the attitude of the member for West Perth and the matter we are discussing is that flesh and blood are concerned, and unemployed workers have had to pay considerable sums for the right to work. That is entirely unjust.

Mr. Doney: Are you referring to the union fee for the right to work?

Mr. Fox: The worker gets something for that.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The member for Williams-Narrogin is trying to misrepresent the position. I know of a recent instance in which a man, answering an advertisement for cutting firewood on contract, was obliged to pay not merely half the first week's wages but a fee of £5 before the employment broker would even advise him where the work was. If he accepted that employment, that would be the last he would see of the £5. To charge a person who is obliged to seek employment through these agencies half a week's wages is extortionate. Employers get off fairly lightly. The charges set out in the schedule are substantially the same as those fixed in Victoria. No worker in this State should be obliged to pay for the right to earn his livelihood. There should be a medium through which he may be engaged without having to pay a fee.

Mr. McDonald: We agree with all that.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: These agencies have grown up over a period of years and their activities need curbing to a considerable extent. Suppose the schedule is adopted, there is nothing to say that the business of the employment brokers will not increase. I certainly think the fees charged are too high, and brokers should not be permitted to follow some of their questionable practices. Piece-workers, clearers, and shearers are forced to pay substantial sums in order to secure short periods of employment. In many cases shearers going to

farming districts obtain work at sheds where they shear only 400 or 500 sheep. Their employment would last only two or three weeks. I hope the schedule will be passed.

Mr. Patrick: It would not take three weeks to shear 400 or 500 sheep.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I do not know what some of the shearers can do; some would not shear enough to make an Irish stew.

Mr. DONEY: We on this side offer no objection to the principle of fixing fees, but we desire that they should be fair both to the worker and to the person who finds the job for him. The Minister has asserted that the fees set out in the schedule are high enough to allow of a fair return to employment brokers, but I would like him to tell the Committee on what he bases that assertion. Has he made a thorough examination of the books, papers and accounts, including costs, of employment brokers? The Minister has the opportunity to give this information to the Committee, should he so desire.

Mr. WATTS: I draw attention to Section 15 of the Act, as amended by Act No. 11 of 1918. It reads—

No payment or remuneration for or in respect of any hiring shall be charged by any employment broker to the servant which is not equally charged to the employer.

That section, in my opinion, must be construed to mean that the fee charged to each must be equal. The Minister has not sought by the Bill to repeal that section; consequently consideration must be given to it if we pass the schedule. I think progress should be reported so that consideration might be given to that point. I would point out to the member for Pilbara that I discussed this matter with one employment broker and I have received a letter from the secretary for a number of other brokers. May I express the view that if a magistrate or a judge of the Arbitration Court were to arrive at a judgment on evidence of the type available to me—which is the only evidence available to the Committee—there would be few occasions on which justice would be done.

Mr. WITHERS: I can understand members on the cross-benches supporting the case for the employers and the brokers—

Mr. McDonald: We are not.

Mr. WITHERS:—in preference to the worker, but it is hard for me to understand members representing farmer interests doing so, and at the same time applying to employment brokers for workers.

Mr. Watts: Farmers mostly go to the State Labour Bureau.

The Minister for Mines: Only when they want a free pass.

Mr. WITHERS: With regard to the remarks of the member for West Perth, we will take the case of a broker finding employment for a person at the rate of 5s. per week; of that amount, 3s. would go to the broker, the employer paying 1s. 6d. and the worker 1s. 6d. I do not know how many people are employed through employment brokers at a salary of 5s. per week.

Mr. Watts: About one in half a million.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not have occasion to avail myself of the services of employment brokers, but I notice that frequently workers are applied for who earn fairly remunerative wages. They would come not under the 1s. 6d. part of the schedule, but more likely under the 7s. portion. Taking the schedule as a whole, employment brokers should have an opportunity to eke out more than a reasonable existence. If the 1s. 6d. section of the schedule alone were considered, they would be impoverished, but the schedule as a whole seems to me to be absolutely fair and reasonable, both to employee and employer.

Mr. SEWARD: In order that an opportunity may be afforded for the drawing up of a new schedule, I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	16
Majority against	..	..	..	..	4

AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Seward
Mr. Berry	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Warner
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Watts
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cross	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. WITHERS
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. McDONALD: The member for Katanning stated that I had in mind an amendment that the minimum charge be 10s. That is not quite correct. My amendment was to secure a gradual rise in the case of charges to be made under the hon. member's amendment.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The member for Bunbury said he was surprised that the farmers should be against this measure. I have a letter—which I have searched for but cannot find—from the Brothers at New Norcia in which they express the hope that the Bill will not be passed.

The Minister for Labour: Have they seen the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the hon. member that we are not dealing with the Bill but with the amendment moved by the member for Katanning.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The same applies to the amendment. They do not want that passed. I have shown the letter to the Minister. I have also had communications from Fairbridge Farm and other institutions asking that this schedule should be opposed. I want to correct the impression that there is opposition merely from the farmers. Opposition has come from all over the country and from institutions as well as individual farmers.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in the Sixth Schedule the figures "5.0" in lines 16 and 20 in the right-hand column on page 11 be struck out and the figures "10.0" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in the section relating to the engagement of married couples all the words after "engagement" at the end of the first paragraph be struck out with a view to inserting the words "an amount equal to one-third of the weekly rate of wages to be paid both by the employee and the employer. If the contract is not at weekly wages, the weekly rate to be ascertained by dividing the total remuneration by the estimated number of weeks over which the employment will continue."

The section begins with the paragraph—

Engagement of married couples as servants. (Every engagement of a married couple to be regarded as one engagement)—

My proposal is to strike out the conditions and rates following that paragraph and insert the words contained in my amendment. I regret that the Minister contemplates a rate of £50 a year for a married couple. I have not known a rate of that kind to be paid for white people. A better method of dealing with the matter would be to provide for the payment of one-third of the weekly wages by both the employer and the employee. If the contract is not at weekly wages, the weekly rate could be ascertained by dividing the total payment by the estimated number of weeks.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If the amendment was accepted, the maximum charges that could be imposed would be greatly increased wherever the rate was over £50 a year. If the rate was £150 a year, as it might easily be, a charge of one-third of the weekly rate could be imposed upon worker and employer, which would mean £1 each.

Mr. Watts: That would be cheap for a £150 contract.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Exception might not be taken to it if the engagement was guaranteed to last for a year, but if it lasted for only a short period, as many of these jobs do, it would be dear. I oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Schedule, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 16, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.