

The Minister for Lands: We are all bored!

The Minister for Railways: Can the member for Swan suggest a board that would be fairer?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, I have indicated that in my amendment. If the Commissioner of Railways does not like the man who is to be chairman, he may not accept him. I have every respect for the Commissioner, but none for legislation that is so lopsided.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must not reflect upon legislation.

Mr. SAMPSON: The legislation has neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be damned, so I am justified in damning this Bill. What hope has the unfortunate local authority in whose district the railway crossing is located? If this provision is made in the name of democracy, then—without reflecting on the Minister—democracy has been given an entirely new name. The provision proposes to give the Commissioner power to close crossings by a majority vote, when two of the three members of the board are appointed by the Commissioner.

The Minister for Railways: They are not.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	22

Majority against 13

AYES.

Mr. Cross	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Latham	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney
Mr. Sampson	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. North
Mr. Fox	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Seward
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styant
Mr. Holman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Point of Order.

Mr. Thorn: Mr. Chairman, can you advise me how much time the Standing Orders allow for members to resume their seats?

The Chairman: A reasonable time.

Mr. Thorn: I wish you would be reasonable.

The Chairman: I remind the member for Toodyay that he must not reflect on the Chair. This is my final warning to him on that point.

Mr. Thorn: I am not reflecting, Sir.

Committee resumed.

Clauses 9 to 12, Title—agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: I move—

That the Bill be read a third time this day six months.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may not move such a motion at this juncture. He may do so on the motion for the third reading.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 27th September, 1939.

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

QUESTION—PERTH HOSPITAL.

Lotteries Commission Grant.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the report appearing in the "West Australian," dated the 26th September, correct, wherein the Premier states that

a cheque for £20,000 has been paid by the Lotteries Commission as a first instalment toward the erection of the new Perth Hospital? 2, What are the "certain conditions" entered upon between the Commission and the Government whereby the Lotteries Commission has agreed to pay interest and sinking fund upon £445,000, being the estimated cost of the first section of the Perth Hospital? 3, Will the same "certain conditions" apply to all hospitals erected or proposed to be erected in areas outside the metropolitan area? 4, By what section of the Lotteries Act do the Commissioners pledge the future policy and financial operations of the Commission?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Prevention of illegal lotteries within the State and alteration of system of conducting lotteries, so as to enable the Commission to assist the Perth Hospital without impairing the assistance being given to country hospitals. 3, The Commission assists all country hospitals to the utmost extent that its finances will permit. 4, Section 2.

QUESTION—METROPOLITAN MILK BOARD.

Tabling of Balance Sheet.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the balance sheet of the Metropolitan Milk Board for the year 1937-1938 been laid upon the Table of the House? 2, If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, It is regretted that through an oversight, due to the papers being referred back to the Board for further comments, which were not received before Parliament had risen, these papers were not laid on the Table of the House last session. The matter is now rectified.

MOTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulation.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter (East):—

That Regulation 19 made under the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-1938, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the

12th May, 1939, and laid on the Table of the House on the 8th August, 1939, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.36]: I shall not hold up the debate on this motion very long. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Baxter for having given me a chance to say a few words on the matter. From the tone of the debate it appears to me that members have a misconception of the actual meaning of the regulation. The view is apparently held that the regulation has to do with the commencement of the payment of compensation. Consequently, many points have been introduced into the debate that are entirely foreign to the purpose of the regulation. Summed up, the regulation actually provides that in the event of the suspension of payment of compensation to a worker already in receipt of such payment, he will have power to demand further payment within 24 hours of a claim being made. That is the sum and substance of the regulation, which protects the employer in the event of his being able to produce a medical certificate in support of his action in discontinuing payment. I ask members whether they consider it right for an employer, on his own initiative and without the backing of medical evidence, to discontinue the payment of compensation to an employee who has established a claim to the money. The regulation seeks to prevent that being done.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The State Insurance Office does it.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not care who does it; it is not right and should not be done, and the regulation will prevent the practice.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Twenty-four hours will not afford much time for an inquiry.

Hon. G. FRASER: Why should a person discontinue payment without first having obtained medical support? When a person claims compensation his case is investigated, and eventually the insurance company decides that the claim is genuine and pays the amount due to the claimant. But evidently in the past some employers or insurance companies, without receiving any professional advice, have ceased the weekly payments to employees.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Suppose a man will not be examined?

Hon. G. FRASER: It is no offence if he will not be examined; but I have not

known a case in which a man has refused to present himself for examination when requested to do so.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: You do not know much about the matter then.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have handled hundreds of cases under the Workers' Compensation Act, and I have not yet had an instance in which a person has refused to submit himself for examination upon being requested to do so by an insurance company. If he did not present himself, he would expect payments to cease.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That would not happen under this regulation?

Hon. G. FRASER: The regulation seeks to give the employer the opportunity to cut off the employee's wages if he has not presented a doctor's certificate.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Is there anything in the regulations to say what shall be done when a man does not submit himself to the doctor?

Hon. G. FRASER: Not in this regulation.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That is the trouble.

Hon. G. FRASER: I know what trouble would befall a worker if, when ordered to present himself before a medical man, he refrained from doing so.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You cannot order him to go.

Hon. G. FRASER: If a man's money was cut off he would practically be forced to go. Most men have to submit themselves frequently for medical examination.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: If they fail to do so, their money is cut off.

Hon. G. FRASER: The worker will always present himself lest his money be cut off. This regulation will give the necessary protection to those concerned.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker interjected.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will have an opportunity to reply to Mr. Fraser.

Hon. G. FRASER: The regulation protects both the employer and the employee. Evidently what has happened is that a man who has been drawing pay weekly has suddenly been cut off from it. The regulation gives the employer the right to take that course provided medical evidence has been obtained. I see no objection to the regulation on that score. Many instances occur in which a man receives payment by the month

and not by the week. The monthly interval is altogether too long. The regulation will cover that phase.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Payment is made according to the report.

Hon. G. FRASER: Generally speaking men are not called up for medical examination every week; but when a case has been established payments are made weekly, fortnightly, or monthly.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Payment is made after the certificate is received.

Hon. G. FRASER: The regulation is satisfactory, and I hope will be permitted to stand.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulations.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. H. Seddon (North-East):—

That Regulations Nos. 85, and 134 to 139A, inclusive, made under the Native Administration Act, 1905-1936, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 8th September, 1939, and laid on the Table of the House on the 12th September, 1939, be and are hereby disallowed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.45]: The first regulation that Mr. Seddon desires this House to disallow is No. 85, which reads as follows—

The Commissioner may direct that so much of the wages of any native, not exceeding 75 per cent. of the total, shall be paid to him in trust for such native in any manner he may think fit, and the wages shall be paid by the employer accordingly.

On this occasion the honorable member did not go to any great length in attempting to justify the disallowance of the regulations. On a previous occasion when these regulations were discussed by the Chamber, much debate ensued concerning No. 85. I went to a great deal of trouble to give the House information which I feel sure, in the opinion of the majority of members, justified that regulation. I do not intend at this time to speak at any great length upon the subject. It is necessary, however, I should inform the House that while it is not a rule of the department to put this regulation into operation as far as adult natives are concerned—

except on rare occasions—more often than not the rule is to put into operation this regulation where wards of the department are concerned. Members probably know that all natives under 21 are wards of the Department of Native Affairs. In many instances, younger boys and girls particularly, when sent out from various institutions into employment, are required by the department to agree—the employers as well—that a certain percentage of their earnings shall be paid into a trust account held in their name. The reason for the 75 per cent. deduction—it appears to be a large amount—is that in many cases boys and girls earn only, say, 7s. 6d. or 10s. a week. It is the department's view that both for boys and for girls, pocket-money amounting to 2s. 6d. a week is sufficient.

Hon. L. Craig: Have they to clothe themselves out of that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They are clothed out of the trust funds.

Hon. L. Craig: Do the regulations say that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They need not state it. Usually the employer and the department agree what shall be provided, particularly for the younger natives. In practice the employer agrees with the department to pay into the fund a certain proportion of the wages, and the money is banked to the credit of the individual native in a separate account in his name.

Hon. L. Craig: That applies to orphan boys and girls.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig: Except that the orphanage has the money that in the case of the natives is paid to the department.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amount varies in accordance with the particular orphanage concerned. I can quote instances showing that the hon. member's remark does not apply. I know of cases where it has been insisted that a larger amount should be paid to the orphanage, and this amount has not necessarily gone into a trust fund on behalf of the individual child.

Hon. L. Craig: Do orphanages clothe the children?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the instances of which I speak, all the trust accounts are audited by the Auditor General. Where the wages are more than 7s. 6d. or 10s. a week and keep—they may amount to 30s. or even £3 a week—the percentage

agreed upon is naturally much lower. The percentage paid into the trust fund may be 25 or even 10, as the Commissioner or the department may determine.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Is the money paid to the native when he reaches 21 years of age?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As I previously explained, immediately the native reaches the age of 21 years the account is transferred to him, if he so wishes. In some instances there is no desire that that course shall be adopted. Members will agree that the department is not likely to make statements of this kind unless they are absolutely correct; and I say emphatically that it is in the best interests of natives, particularly those who are wards of the department, that there shall be a check, in the direction I have indicated, upon the money they earn. One or two persons have been sufficiently interested to prosecute inquiries at the office of the Commissioner of Native Affairs regarding the application of the regulation under discussion, as well as of other regulations. I have not yet met one individual who, having made personal inquiries along these lines, has not been absolutely satisfied with the methods adopted. Notwithstanding that fact, the House is asked to consider a motion to disallow a regulation because something may happen! That the authority provided in the regulation should be given to the Commissioner of Native Affairs is absolutely necessary, although the authority is not exercised with regard to adults, except on rare occasions. In one or two instances the department has had knowledge that the employer was not carrying out his obligations and was not paying the wages agreed upon. We must always remember that the department exists for the protection of the native, and in instances such as I have mentioned the Commissioner has insisted that a certain percentage—be it 20, 25, or 50 per cent., it matters not—shall be paid into the trust account on behalf of the native concerned. By that means the department ensures that the native shall receive the payment to which he is entitled. There have been odd cases where the department has been satisfied that the natives concerned were not sufficiently careful regarding their wages. In order to protect them and, in some instances, their relatives, the department has insisted that a percentage of the wages shall be paid into trust accounts. I could talk for an hour or more on instances of that description, and

so I say that the regulation is absolutely necessary. That does not mean that should the regulation be approved, every native will be called upon to pay a certain percentage of his wages into a trust account, but that the department will have the right to protect the interests of natives concerned should the necessity arise to do so.

Let me deal with another aspect of this particular regulation and make a comparison between what obtains here and the practice elsewhere. Queensland is probably the State most comparable to Western Australia from the standpoint of the number of natives under the care of the department. In the northern State an entirely different system operates. An Arbitration Court award covering natives has been issued. I can imagine some members of this House who from time to time have employed natives, holding up their hands in horror at the thought of an Arbitration Court award for natives! In Queensland, instead of the department being able to arrange for a percentage of natives' wages being paid into trust funds, the whole of the money earned by aborigines has to be paid to the department. Contrast that with the position in Western Australia! Again I remind members that when discussing this important question, or when viewing the regulations as a whole, they must bear in mind that the Department of Native Affairs was established for the protection of natives.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What access has the Queensland native to the fund to which you refer?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A certain percentage is taken from the money paid into the fund and is used in the interests of the natives generally. As a result, a huge sum has been accumulated, and that enables the Queensland department to do many times more for these people than we can possibly do for the natives in Western Australia.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The fund in Queensland amounts to over £300,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not sure of the total amount, but I believe it is over £250,000.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then the native in Queensland does not receive any of the money at all?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. The employer must pay the full wage to the department, which retains a percentage for

the purpose of making provision for the aborigines generally. The individual native is entitled to whatever balance there may be in his account. When members regard as rather strange a provision under which we endeavour to protect natives by a regulation such as that under discussion,—I think some were rather inclined to listen to certain representations by Mr. Seddon—I hope they will consider both sides of the question and reach a decision that the regulation in question is essential. I can speak with considerable experience regarding the application of that and other regulations. I was not in charge of the Department of Native Affairs for a few years without having many unusual and, in some instances, very strange experiences. I can vouch for the accuracy of my statement that I do not know of one instance where a complaint has been lodged regarding money paid into a trust account in compliance with the regulation, whether that complaint was lodged by the native himself or by someone acting on his behalf, in which the complainant has not been quite satisfied with the position when explained to him. The department has quite a considerable organisation dealing with the affairs of natives who have trust accounts kept for them. There are officers whose duty it is to visit the various stores in the metropolitan area to buy the requirements of the natives. In most instances they can buy under better conditions than the natives themselves could possibly hope to do. We have letters of thanks and congratulation from scores of aborigines who have expressed the appreciation of what the departmental officials have done on their behalf. If the regulation in question is disallowed, the department will not be empowered to carry on work of that description.

The other provisions that Mr. Seddon seeks to have disallowed are Regulations 134 to 139 (a) inclusive. There is no necessity for me to read them. Members have read the regulations for themselves, and know the purport of them. First of all, it is provided that before a mission can be established, it is necessary that a permit be obtained from the department. We go further and provide that whoever shall be in charge of a mission shall also obtain a permit from the department before assum-

ing control of that mission. Other regulations provide that those engaged in the mission field shall also have a permit if they wish to carry on their work with the natives. A good deal has been said about the iniquity of this proposal, and there has been a lot of unfair propaganda spread through this State, the Eastern States, New Zealand and the Old Country. I wish to assure the House that nothing has occurred since the last discussion that took place on the subject of these regulations to alter the opinion of the Government concerning the necessity for them. Let me deal first of all with the establishment of a mission. One would assume from the remarks of Mr. Seddon that no person, no matter who he might be, would have the right to establish a mission wherever he pleased and under whatever conditions he liked, so long as there was to be Government supervision. There have been instances within recent times of established missions complaining that other persons have endeavoured to start missions and have attempted to take from the already-established missions the natives that were there. Further, some of those people did not bear the best of characters, and I think that those members of this House who have a fairly good knowledge of the North will not require me to give to this House information about the particular places or individuals concerned. Suffice it to say that there are concrete instances of men who perhaps were not associated with any, shall I say, recognised mission authority, going through the North country and claiming that they were missionaries; and because they made that claim, they considered they were entitled to do things in some cases that no self-respecting individual would attempt to do anywhere else.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Because a man puts his collar on back to front, he should not be permitted to go anywhere he likes amongst the natives.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I agree with the honorable member, and so I suppose he will be in sympathy with the regulations in question and will agree that they are necessary. The honorable member put the position pithily in his interjection. Because an individual describes himself as a mission worker or a missionary, does not necessarily mean that he is a most desirable person for work amongst the natives. Mr. Seddon said that there should be no distinction in respect

to the teaching of the Gospel amongst the natives. I cannot quote his remarks word for word, but I think that is the substance of what he said. It was something to the effect that no matter who the individual might be, or what he was professing to teach, there should be no distinction. Later on he qualified this statement by adding, "So long as they were Christians."

Hon. H. Seddon: On a point of explanation. I contended that it was a recognised principle of the British Empire that there should be no interference with religious teaching, and later I spoke of teaching the Christian religion. That is different from what the Chief Secretary has said.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I thought I had qualified my remarks with reference to the honorable member's statement. Suppose a Chinese who had been in this country for a few years decided to become a missionary and that he intended to teach, not the Christian religion, but some other religion, would the honorable member say that that Chinese would be entitled to go along to the natives in the North and spread his particular Gospel?

Hon. H. Seddon: I said a member of the British Empire.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not intend to deal at length with that point, except to say that the department has had many years' experience on these questions. It has no objection to missions being established in places where it is recognised that they can be of some value and so long as they are not competing against some other established mission. In instances of that kind, missionaries will not encounter much objection from the department. That is a reasonable attitude to adopt. On the other hand, if a mission is established in a district and someone else comes along with the object of enticing natives from that mission, the department will prevent him from doing so. Then there is the person that an honorable member referred to, the person who more or less has an association with some established society, and who goes to the back country. I have the utmost respect for some of those men; I know them, but there are others for whom I have nothing but the greatest contempt. While I was in charge of the Department of Native Affairs, individuals of that type had extreme difficulty in getting a permit to enable them to associate with the natives, as they are

empowered to do once they are recognised as missionaries. Let it not be forgotten that we do not interfere with religious teaching in any shape or form. All we have to do in connection with these regulations is to see that those engaged in mission work are men and women of good character, people who can be relied upon to do a fair thing by the natives. I think this is apt to be overlooked, that with the amendment of the Native Administration Act the same power was given to missions and missionaries as is held by the Child Welfare Department, and all that we are asking of members of missions is that those concerned, or the people employed by them, shall be subject to conditions similar to those applied to our own officers. I remind members that these missions are given authority to teach native children, and authority to establish hospitals, and in fact to do everything that is done for white children by our own State Welfare Department. I think I said enough last session, when dealing with these regulations, to give members food for thought in that particular connection. And so it does seem to me that if members support Mr. Seddon in his desire to disallow the regulations in question, they should have due regard as to what the results might be.

Ever since there has been in this State an Aborigines Department, later known as the Department of Native Affairs, it has been an offence for any person to be found on a native reserve without a permit. We have been particularly lenient towards those who profess to be mission workers, and we have never taken exception to their going on reserves. We have never asked that they should have authority, provided of course we knew that they were operating there. Except in those cases where we have had information concerning a certain type of individual and the practices that were being carried out, authority to enter reserves has not been withheld. If these particular regulations are disallowed, we shall have to fall back upon the Act, and the Act says that nobody, except the superintendent of reserves, shall be entitled to go on the reserves without written authority. Is the department to take that particular action and prosecute those men simply because a wrong idea may exist about the regulations, an idea that they are interfering with the teaching of the Bible? There is no truth whatever in that, and I have

the assurance of the Commissioner that since he has been Commissioner of Native Affairs, he has not heard any complaint regarding the teaching of the Gospel, unless some member would like to quote that the department has taken exception to certain individuals continuing to engage in missionary effort.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: By that you mean undesirable men.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the opinion of the department men who are not suited for the work and undesirable from the point of view of character.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The Commissioner of Native Affairs would have to get the Minister's authority before taking action.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are instances where the Commissioner has had to take action without delay. Probably the Minister's authority was obtained afterwards. Even in those cases he has not the power to remove an individual except by prosecution. The regulations the hon. member desires to disallow will overcome that difficulty. All that we ask is that before a mission is established, a permit shall be obtained from the department, and having secured that we say to those engaged in the work, that they too must have a permit. The regulations are not framed because these people are preaching the Gospel, but because they are being given permits under the Act to deal with the natives who are being looked after by particular missions or missionaries.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Have you authority to cancel the permits at present?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, these permits can be cancelled, and in order to meet the desires of what I thought and still believe was a majority of the organisations engaged in missionary effort amongst the natives, we have provided for an appeal board. Therefore I cannot understand why there should be any objection to the regulations. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the granting of a permit would be purely a formal matter. Take an Anglican mission; there has been a good deal of complaint about one or two employees of Anglican missions at various times, just as there have been complaints about employees of other missions. Suppose the Archbishop of Perth submitted to the Commissioner of Native Affairs that he was engaging a certain individual, say,

for the Forrest River Mission, and the Commissioner, knowing the individual and his or her character, suggested that the services of somebody else should be secured because the individual proposed was not satisfactory from the departmental point of view: The Archbishop would naturally want to know the reason, and the Commissioner would tell him. I venture to say that the Archbishop would adopt the attitude, "Very well, if that is the case, it is something of which we have no knowledge, and we shall be only too pleased to substitute another individual." That is what would take place. Suppose, on the other hand, the Commissioner of Native Affairs did not know the individual concerned, he would accept the Archbishop's word and issue a permit, and if the individual proved unsatisfactory from a departmental point of view, the Commissioner, through the Minister, of course, would cancel the permit.

Hon. L. Craig: Or see the Archbishop again.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Certainly. In the event of the Archbishop, the organisation or the church being dissatisfied, we provide, by Regulation 139A, for an appeal board. The following is the constitution of the appeal board:—

Where any person has been refused a permit as a superintendent or manager of a mission or mission worker, or, being the holder of a permit as a superintendent or manager of a mission, or mission worker, has received notification of the revocation of such permit, then, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in Regulations 135 to 138, both inclusive, of these regulations, such person shall, subject to this regulation, have a right of appeal to a board of reference against such refusal or revocation, and the following provisions shall apply:—

(a) The person desiring to appeal shall, within one month after the refusal of the permit or after the receipt by him of the notification of the revocation of his permit, as the case may be, serve upon the Commissioner in writing under his hand notice of appeal stating therein the grounds of such appeal.

(b) Upon receipt of such a notice of appeal, the Commissioner shall forthwith inform the Minister thereof, and the Minister shall, as soon as reasonably may be, cause a board of reference to be constituted to hear and determine such appeal.

(c) A board of reference for the purposes of this regulation shall consist of five persons, namely—

(i) The Commissioner of Native Affairs or his deputy;

- (ii) one person nominated by the governing body of the Church of England in Perth;
- (iii) one person nominated by the governing body of the Roman Catholic Church in Perth;
- (iv) one person nominated by the governing body of the Presbyterian Church in Perth; and
- (v) one person nominated by the governing bodies of all the nonconformist churches in Perth acting together as one body for the purposes of making such nomination.

Then follow machinery clauses.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What could be fairer?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The board would consist of representatives of the various religious bodies actively engaged in missionary efforts among the natives, plus the Commissioner of Native Affairs. What could be fairer? Yet we find representatives of one or more missionary organisations disseminating propaganda regarding what might be termed the iniquity of these regulations. If I remember rightly, when I dealt with the disallowance of regulations last session, I was called upon to speak for several hours. Whenever this subject is introduced, I can still find it possible to talk for hours, but on this occasion I do not propose to do so.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do the missions receive any Government funds?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Most of the missions, not all, are subsidised on the basis of so much per head, generally speaking, but not for all inmates. The amount involved is a few thousand pounds a year. This is not as much as we would like to give, but is the best we have been able to do.

Hon. G. B. Wood: In any event the natives would receive the benefit of the few thousands of pounds?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course. I again submit to members that, even though there may be objection to the individual occupying the position of Commissioner of Native Affairs, he is the head of a department and has a statutory responsibility to look after the interests and affairs of the natives in this State. He has had many years of experience; he has a very efficient staff, and his field officers would compare, I believe, more than favourably with many of those engaged in the mission work. Before we disallow regulations of this kind we should have some regard for the viewpoint of the department. I have heard members

in this Chamber express remarks derogatory of the Commissioner, but I venture to assert the time will come—and I think it is not far distant—when members will realise that whatever the Commissioner has endeavoured to do in matters of this kind, he has done in the interests of the natives. The Commissioner is not likely to be much longer in the service of the State; he is approaching the retiring age. Therefore it cannot be suggested that he is proposing these regulations with the object of ensuring that conditions will be made easier for himself or of securing more power than he has had heretofore.

Many of the regulations to which exception was taken last year on the ground of the Commissioner's being called upon to do certain things have been amended to provide that the Minister shall do those things. Personally, I do not agree with the alteration, but it has been made.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It means the same see-saw.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It will give the Minister more work.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: And will place more responsibility on the Minister.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, because in all such cases the Minister accepts the responsibility, at any rate, when any serious question is involved. Mr. Seddon referred to the Canberra conference and quoted resolutions of the conference that he thought justified his motion for the disallowance of the regulations. I think the tables can be turned on the honourable member. What does he know of the discussions at the conference held in Canberra? He is aware that the details of the discussions have not been published.

Hon. H. Seddon: The resolutions have been published.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some of the resolutions have been published, and the resolutions quoted by the honourable member, in my opinion, support these regulations rather than having the opposite effect, as was suggested by him. Surely there is no hardship in requiring a mission organisation to submit to the department, which is responsible for all natives under 21—and most of the inmates of missions are under 21—the names of persons proposed to be employed, not necessarily to preach the Gospel, but in the various undertakings that represent part of the missions' activities. We

have already provided by regulation that if the Commissioner is of opinion that a permit should not be issued, an appeal can be made to a board of reference, and no board could possibly be fairer than the one proposed. If what I say is true, I cannot for the life of me understand why there should be such objection to these regulations. I do not propose to enter into any more details. Members have sufficient knowledge of the subject from the debates which took place last session, and if they care to refresh their memories, they have the "Hansard" reports to refer to. These regulations are absolutely necessary in the interests of the natives themselves. The Act provides for certain things, and the regulations constitute the machinery by which those things shall be carried out.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do not those things become automatic? Are there no regulations leading up to them?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The individual concerned would have to submit his appeal in writing in one month.

Hon. W. J. Mann: To whom?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To the Commissioner.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And the Commissioner would call the board together?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The Commissioner has no power to disallow a permit?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That seems fair.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: "The Commissioner shall forthwith inform the Minister thereof and the Minister shall, as soon as reasonably may be, cause a board of reference to be constituted to hear and determine such appeal." Included in the machinery clauses are the following—

(i) If the appellant fails, without reasonable excuse, to attend before the board of reference at the time appointed for the hearing of the appeal, such appeal shall be forthwith dismissed; but if the board of reference is satisfied that the failure of the appellant to attend at the time appointed for the hearing of the appeal is excusable, the board may adjourn the hearing of the appeal as it may think fit.

(k) On the hearing of the appeal the board of reference may either allow or dismiss the appeal, and in every case the decision of the board shall be final and binding upon the appellant and the Minister.

(l) Where the board of reference allows an appeal the Minister shall forthwith give effect to the decision of the board in accordance with the terms thereof; and where the board of

reference has dismissed an appeal against the revocation of a permit, the Minister shall forthwith thereafter publish notification of such revocation in the "Government Gazette" as required by Regulation 137.

There are one or two other clauses that I have not read. I reiterate that the fact that strong objection should be raised to these regulations passes my understanding and particularly that the people concerned should be the ones who are endeavouring to have the regulations disallowed. I oppose the motion and I hope members will support me in endeavouring to secure the retention of the regulations.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [5.30]: I do not intend to speak at any length, but I do wish to explain my vote on this occasion. I shall deal first with Regulation 85, which has been so fully dealt with by the Minister. Last time this and other regulations were before the House on a motion for their disallowance, I was taken to task by many of my friends for having voted for Regulation 85, which allows the Commissioner to have a certain proportion of a native's wages deducted and sent to the department to be taken charge of. I explained to my friends that unfortunately the Act deals with the entire State, and that when regulations were gazetted they had to be wide enough to cover the entire State. I have made inquiries regarding the present position under the regulation; and I am told by the Commissioner—moreover this is confirmed by the Minister in charge of the department—that in the whole of the North-West there are only two wards affected by the regulation. They are two lads, aged 16 and 17, employed in the Kimberleys. They are wards of the State, and half their wages is in each case sent down to the Commissioner, who banks the money in the native's own name for him.

Hon. H. Seddon: What about adults?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I say that those are the only two natives affected by the regulation in the whole of the North-West. I want to make that clear, because it shows how little some of my pastoral friends knew of the facts when they thought I was wrong in supporting the regulation on the last occasion of its coming before the House. I consider it an excellent regulation. To me the Commissioner appears to

be acting in the way a wise father would act in the case of children. Further, as the Minister has assured us, the regulation affects only wards.

The Chief Secretary: No. However, those are the only cases.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The only cases so far as my Province is concerned. I can only go by what has happened. In the whole of the North-West, where we have more natives employed than in the rest of the State, there are only two young lads of 16 and 17 years whose wages are in any way affected by that regulation.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Being wards of the State, they are under the regulation.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The money is banked by the Commissioner in their own names on their behalf. I repeat, we can only go by what has happened; and I am assured that that is the present position. My remarks refer to the whole district from Geraldton to the Kimberleys.

Hon. H. Seddon: Do you say that there are no natives apart from those in your electorate whose money has to be sent down to the Commissioner?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The position is as stated in my protest, so I am assured by both the Minister and the Commissioner.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You must have misunderstood them.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I have not heard of another case.

The Chief Secretary: What were you assured of?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I was assured by the Commissioner that in the North-West there were only two wards affected by the regulation.

The Chief Secretary: But there are many affected by it outside the North-West.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes. I think I made myself clear.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Do you know that the Commissioner can deduct up to 75 per cent. of the wages?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: If he thinks it necessary. However, as the Minister has pointed out, the Commissioner is placed in charge of the important work of taking care of all natives in the State. He functions under an Act, and he has to frame regulations which enable him to carry out his duties. I have no fault to find with Regulation 85. Now regarding the regulation as to permits for establishing missions: I

must also support the Commissioner's policy in that respect. The Minister has stated reasons why it is necessary that the Government should say when a new mission is to be established. On one aspect of the matter the hon. gentleman did not touch, and I will do so briefly. May I say that I went up to the North 52 years ago and lived there for many years, including 20 years on the Gascoyne. Probably I have seen more of the native life of Western Australia than has any other member of this Chamber. On numerous occasions—both recently and years ago—I have had talks with natives on religious matters. In many cases I have found that there is confusion in their minds, and bewilderment, as to what they are being taught. This applies especially to nomad natives. A nomad native goes to one mission and is taught certain doctrines. He goes to another mission and is taught other doctrines. I remember one native saying he went to a mission where the father in charge took him to church and talked a language which was not English. "I no know what he talk. Then I go to another mission, and there they make prayer out of book different to other fellow." Then the native goes to yet another mission, and there also the teaching is altogether different. Is it not fair and right for the department to declare that it is not to the native's benefit to receive these conflicting teachings?

Hon. A. Thomson: What about white people?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Does the hon. member understand why there is all this difference of religious opinion?

Hon. A. Thomson: No.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I certainly do not know. The department says, "Let the Anglicans have their mission here, and the Roman Catholics can go to another part of the district, and the Presbyterians to yet another, and so on."

The Chief Secretary: There are zones.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes, and that is what the position should be until the churches come together and prepare for the natives a simple ritual covering the main principles of the Christian religion. But I fear we shall never get the churches to do that.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The missions find all the money.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: No; they do not all find all the money. The hon. member is mistaken. Some missions find all the money; others do not. It is undoubtedly advisable for the Government to have a say where missions should be started. I come to a further point. A good deal has been said by people connected with religious bodies, and also by Mr. Seddon, to the effect that no license should be required for teaching the gospel. I entirely agree with that. Every person should be able to go out and preach the Christian religion wherever he so desires. If I thought that that was not being permitted, I would have to support Mr. Seddon's motion. However, I again have the word of the Commissioner and of the Minister controlling the department, that that is not the case at all, but that anyone can go out and preach the gospel anywhere provided he does not go on to a native reserve. If anyone is to blame in that case, Parliament is, because the Act distinctly states, in Section 14, that it shall not be lawful for any person other than a native to enter or remain upon or be within the boundaries of a native reserve for any purpose whatsoever unless he is a superintendent or a person acting under his direction or an inspector or a director authorised in that behalf under the regulations. That is why the regulations are framed enabling the Commissioner to allow people to go upon native reserves. The Commissioner assures me that he has no objection whatever if he knows the person, but that he certainly considers it his duty to the Government, to Parliament and to the people of the State to be quite satisfied as to who is going on native reservations. He has no trouble whatever with the recognised missions controlled by churches. There it is simply a matter of form. A church says, "Mr. So-and-so is going to such a place," and the Commissioner says, "All right." But the Commissioner has to be extremely careful to see who else goes on reservations and is not connected with these religious bodies. Perhaps it is a pity that the word "permit" crept into the regulation. The object could have been achieved in a much more friendly manner by stating that the religious bodies affected should write to the Commissioner saying, "a Mr. So-and-so is leaving for such and such a place". The word "permit" seems to stick in the throats of many people.

The Chief Secretary: What about the word "license"?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The Act distinctly says what is to be done. Parliament has laid down that no one can enter a native reserve unless he first obtains the Commissioner's authority to do so. With all my experience of the law, all my experience of natives, besides my experience of a good many people who have gone on native reservations under the pretence of doing their duty by the natives from a religious aspect, I am convinced that the regulations are quite correct. Therefore I regret that I cannot support Mr. Seddon's motion.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.43]: My remarks will be few, but I want to draw the attention of the House to some questions which I asked the Chief Secretary on the 21st instant. My first question was whether a conference had been called between the Honorary Minister, then in charge of the Department of Native Affairs, and the mission and church organisations as to regulations disallowed by the Council. The reply was, yes. Another question was how many persons attended the conference, and the Chief Secretary indicated their number and named them. My last question was what motions, if any, were carried at the conference. The Minister's reply referred me to the account of the proceedings which appeared in the "West Australian" of the 16th and 17th February last, as well as the official account, copies of which were laid on the Table. I quote from the report that on the motion of Mr. Tulloch the conference decided that Regulations 134 to 139A, relating to licenses and permits in respect of missions and mission workers, be rejected, and that the department be asked to submit alternative proposals. The motion was carried with only three dissentients. The point I make, however, is that the department apparently treated the conference with scant respect.

Hon. J. Cornell: There was not much Christian charity shown at it.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: In speaking on the regulations last year I suggested that a conference should be held—a round-table talk. I do not know whether the conference I have mentioned resulted from that suggestion; but the conference was held and, to use Mr. Cornell's words, a spirit of Christian charity did not mark the proceedings.

The Honorary Minister: It did on our side, but not on the side of the churches.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: The department's attitude seems unbending. The resolution I read was carried by 37 of 40 representative people.

Hon. J. Cornell: Many of them were unbending, too.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: That is sufficient justification for me to support the disallowance of the regulations.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 2, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.
- 3, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 4, Toodyay Cemeteries.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.52]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Profiteering Prevention Bill and the War Funds Regulation Bill to pass through all stages at one sitting.

I regret the necessity for having to introduce such legislation, but experience guides us in matters of this kind. Experience shows that it is necessary to introduce legislation to deal with the subject matters of these two Bills. The question may be asked why we seek authority to deal with them at any one sitting of the House. All I need say in reply is that after war was declared the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth—within 24 hours—notified the Premiers of the States that he desired to meet them in conference in order to discuss matters connected with the war. One can well imagine the importance of the questions requiring his attention and the attention of the Premiers when I say that within a few minutes of the opening of the conference the Prime Minister introduced the subject of emergency legislation to deal with profiteering. The conference was

called so urgently that our own Premier had to leave Parliament House by motor to catch a train that had already left Perth, some distance further up the track. That is my reason for asking that authority be given to deal with these measures irrespective of the Standing Orders. Every day lost will make a considerable difference to our people. The matter is entirely in the hands of the House. If members decide there is no hurry for this legislation of course I must submit to their will; but I point out that the Commonwealth Government has made it clear that no time should be lost in passing this legislation. That should be sufficient justification for the passing of the motion. All the other States are following the Commonwealth's lead in this matter.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But not passing the legislation at one sitting.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As a matter of fact, I believe a deputy commissioner has been appointed in each of the States. Mr. Nicholson shakes his head.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is not so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Premier informed me just before we met this afternoon that a deputy commissioner had been appointed in each State. The hon. member is aware that we nominated a certain gentleman to fill that position. He was sent away hurriedly to Canberra to take part in a conference at which the deputy commissioners were to be present.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Minister refers to the deputy commissioners appointed under the Commonwealth Act, which is a totally different thing from the State Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member is right. A deputy commissioner is acting for the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Minister in another place said he was prepared to accept amendments from this House. Why is it necessary to rush the Bills through in a day?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Apparently there is some misunderstanding. Members do not quite appreciate what the motion really means. I have not said that the Government is not prepared to consider amendments; it will be only too pleased to do so.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And yet you desire authority to pass the legislation in one sitting.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The motion does not say that the Bills shall be passed at this sitting of the House.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: They could be passed at the next sitting.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course they could.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why suspend the Standing Orders?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Let me submit this to the hon. member. To-morrow is Thursday, and if we reach the Committee stage tomorrow evening and the Standing Orders are not suspended, then the third reading cannot take place until next week, which is Show Week. Possibly some delay will ensue on that account.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Profiteering Prevention Bill will control the trade of the State.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill is complementary to the Commonwealth legislation. The Commonwealth considered it to be necessary to pass the legislation in minutes, not hours. The Assembly suspended the Standing Orders to allow of the measure passing through in one sitting.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is not much of a guide.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If we suspend the Standing Orders we shall be able to deal with the measure in one sitting, just as the House thinks fit. That is the position. If I am wrong the President will correct me.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The Commonwealth Act applies to all the States equally. This Bill applies to one State only. It may be used to a disadvantage.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am surprised at the hon. member. He is aware that some of the States have already got this legislation on their statute-book. They have price-fixing legislation, which is being utilised by the Commonwealth in this connection. For our part—I know I am not dealing with the subject matter of the motion, as I suppose I should do—our intention is to utilise the same officers and machinery as are employed by the Commonwealth. I submit the motion to the House in the belief that members will agree that if

the Commonwealth Government considers this an urgent matter we should consider it urgent too.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: If the Standing Orders are suspended, shall we be given an opportunity to consider the Bill overnight before continuing the debate after you have made your second reading speech?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Certainly. I thought I made it clear that the Bill will be entirely in the hands of hon. members. The motion does not say that the Bill shall be passed through all stages at this sitting, but provides for its being passed through all stages in any one sitting. That might be tomorrow, or next Tuesday, or a month hence. What I am endeavouring to impress upon members is that we should lose no time over the matter. I think that shows the Government is well aware of the need for having legislation of this kind on the statute-book as early as possible. When the Bill, in whatever form, is placed on the statute-book rests entirely with hon. members and not with the Government. For that reason I feel I can move the motion in the confident belief that the House will support it.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [6.2]: While I find myself in accord with the Leader of the House regarding the importance of legislation of this nature, I disagree entirely with the rest of his statements. The Profiteering Prevention Bill is one of tremendous magnitude. What will it do? If passed, it must necessarily lead to the establishment of a big Government department, the duties of which will be to control absolutely the whole of the commercial trade of the State. From the time such an Act receives the Royal assent, all people engaged in commercial pursuits in Western Australia will have to bow to the dictates of the department.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And the Bill is retrospective.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In addition to that, as Mr. Macfarlane has stated, the application of the Bill will be retrospective to the 31st August. The measure contains 34 clauses that will necessarily be very far-reaching; yet we are asked to suspend Standing Orders. Days and days will be required for us to digest the measure and to do justice to it. If we rush it through, we shall probably inflict great injury on the commercial life of Western Australia; and

that is not what is wanted. Did not the Prime Minister declare that business should be carried on with as little disturbance as possible in all trades and callings? If we rush the Bill through, what will be the position? One glance at the measure reveals how dangerous it is. For eight different transactions, a person can be fined £200 or imprisoned for six months with hard labour or be subjected to both penalties.

The Chief Secretary: A fine of £2,000 would not be too heavy in some instances.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Some of the transactions are of only a minor character. A corporation can be fined £500. Are we to deal lightly with matters of that kind? We should not display any indecent haste in passing the Bill. The Prime Minister—together with some Premiers of other States—was seized with the importance of introducing such legislation; but I would point out that the Prime Minister has taken action that to a certain extent renders similar action unnecessary here. The House should call a halt and then go very slowly, with a view to ascertaining exactly what is our position. There may not be the slightest need for the Bill to be placed on the statute-book.

The Chief Secretary: That is an interesting statement for you.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If the Chief Secretary will wait a minute, he will understand why I made the statement. Already the Federal Government has made tremendous strides in controlling prices and preventing profiteering. Section 59 (1) of the Defence (National Security General) Regulations Statutory Rule reads as follows—

A Minister, so far as it appears to him to be necessary in the interests of the defence of the Commonwealth or the efficient prosecution of the war or for maintaining supplies and services essential to the life of the community may by order provide (a) for regulating the production, treatment, keeping, storage, movement, transport, distribution, sale, purchase, use or consumption of essential articles, and in particular for controlling the prices at which the articles may be sold.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Where is that from?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is a Federal statutory rule. That was an important matter discussed at a conference between the Federal Government and the State Premiers, and the Federal Government has gone ahead with it since. I saw in the Press that the responsible Minister in this State said the

Federal Government was controlling only 12 items.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The number has been increased.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I will deal with that in a moment. The Minister was probably correct when he made his statement, but the list at present contains 58 items. It will be well for me to read them to members in order to indicate how far the Federal Government has taken control, and to show there is no reason for a suspension of our Standing Orders, or for us to evince any haste in passing this measure, which ought to receive mature consideration. The schedule of goods the prices of which are controlled by the Federal Government is as follows:—

Piece goods, viz., cotton, silk, artificial silk, hessian and jute, bags and sacks, including wool packs. Petrol, kerosene, fuel oil, crude petroleum, mineral lubricating; plate and sheet metal, viz., tinned aluminium; dyes and dry colours; tea, coffee and cocoa; crude asbestos; cream separators; fertilisers; tractors; paper, viz. absorbent (copying), blotting boards, carbon and stencil, cartridge, electrical insulating, felt, filter, fruit wrapping, newsprinting, parchment, printing, sensitized surface, coated, tissue, transparent, cellulose, wrapping, writing and typewriting, gummed, other paper; fish in tins; rubber, crude; rubber tyres and tubes; coal and coke; Portland cement; knitting needles for hosiery manufacture; building materials, viz. bricks and tiles, timber—dressed and undressed, door and window frames, plywood wall and ceiling boards, iron and steel—sheet, black galvanised, flat galvanised, corrugated, structural beams, galvanised troughing, paints and varnishes, lime, plaster of paris, paper hangings, builders' hardware, sanitary articles of earthenware; leather; flexible shafting and casing for same. (This order also provides that the prevailing price of petrol, fuel oil, crude petroleum, mineral lubricating oil shall be as defined in prices order of eighth plus the actual amount of additional duty paid in respect of such goods as a result of Customs or excise proposals introduced to House of Representatives on Friday, 8th September, 1939.)

Baking powder; candles; cornflour; dates; plain and self-raising flour; dried and canned fruits; infants and invalids' foods; fish paste; jams and fruit jellies; canned meat, extract of meat; matches; milk and cream, viz. condensed, concentrated and powdered, including powdered skim milk; castor oil; olive oil; oatmeal, wheatmeal and other prepared breakfast foods, consisting of processed grain; biscuits; rice; sago; salt; household soaps; tapioca; canned and dried vegetables; cream of tartar; tartaric acid and citric acid; bicarbonate of soda; bread; butter; butchers' skewers; sausage casings; reaper and binder twine; drugs and chemicals, viz. bismuth, carbonate, phenazone, sodium bromide, ammonium bromide, potas-

sium bromide, sodium iodine, potassium iodine, potassium citrate, sodium salicylate, methyl salicylate; sugar; surgical lint gauzes and bandages; cotton wool, medicated or otherwise; camphor; glycerine; mercury; linseed oil; wire netting.

The Federal Government has practically covered the whole field already. The man selected to represent the Federal Government in this State is a Western Australian Government employee. Why should we in this State display indecent haste with a Bill covering matters already being dealt with by the Federal authorities? We know very well that it is not the operation of such an Act that will be effective; it is the moral effect of the mere existence of the Act that will count. The knowledge that there is such a measure will keep people up to the mark and prevent profiteering. The moral effect is the most important aspect of every Act of Parliament. I think I am right in saying that during the whole period I have been in this Chamber, this is the first occasion on which I have raised objection to a motion of this character. I regret that such an action has been forced upon me, but I cannot sit here and allow motions of this description to go through and a Bill like this to be submitted without raising some protest. It is all right for the Minister to say that it rests with the House as to when the Bill is considered, but there is not the slightest need for the suspension of Standing Orders, and I hope members will not agree to the motion. I trust we shall be able to give quiet consideration to the Bill before it is placed on the statute-book. If the Federal Government is going into the matter to the fullest extent, why should we pass a redundant Act?

Hon. W. J. Mann interjected.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That may be so but the Commonwealth is taking action. Here is a copy of its work. The Federal Government has seen fit to take the matter into its own hands; so why should we agree to this legislation?

Hon. H. Tuckey: The Federal control is not operating in this State yet, is it?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is operating in every State of the Commonwealth. Officers of the Federal Department are dealing with the matter every day. The work here will be taken over by Mr. White. The Federal Government's action will result in uniformity throughout the Commonwealth, and that is much better than each State attend-

ing to its own price-fixing. Uniformity, placing all engaged in commercial pursuits on an equal footing throughout the Commonwealth, is very desirable. Many people in commercial life here transact much of their business in the Eastern States; and if they are able to transact such business under uniform price-fixing legislation, much worry and expense will be obviated.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [6.14]: I propose to support Mr. Baxter's objection to the suspension of the Standing Orders. If there were any need for this rush, I would be found supporting the Minister. In view of the fact that if this legislation is passed its provisions will be retrospective to the 31st August, I do not consider that the Bill should be rushed through, as is being proposed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Before tea I was saying there was no need to rush this legislation through, owing to the fact that whatever we did would be retrospective to the 31st August last. We shall not hurt anyone or do anyone harm if we make a proper study of the Bill, and deal with it under the Standing Orders. The measure is practically a repetition of that which this House rejected last session. Very little difference is noticeable between the two. The Bill was rejected by 19 votes to eight, making 27 votes; you, Mr. President, would have made the 28th; and two other members paired. The whole House, therefore, was interested in the voting, and the Bill was thrown out. Whilst I admit it may be necessary to pass legislation of this kind to satisfy the public, I hold that, as the Federal Government is dealing with the matter in a comprehensive manner, we should not finalise this Bill until we know where the Federal legislation will begin and end, and we ascertain what is being done in the other States. The Bill as presented to us will bankrupt those traders in Western Australia who comply with its conditions. We cannot afford to have our traders bankrupt, for that would mean the bankruptcy of the State. Confusion may arise, because any legislation we pass must be subordinate to Federal legislation; and our legislation must harmonise with that passed in the other States; otherwise we shall have confusion

unending. In any event there must be some determining date, either the end of the war or so many months after the end of the war. That date must be fixed by the Federal Government and the Governments of the States. If we rush this Bill through, complications impossible to rectify will arise. When we ascertain how far the Federal authorities are going with their legislation, and what the other Parliaments of Australia are doing, we must bring our legislation into line. From that point of view nothing can be lost and everything gained by delaying this Bill until we know where we are, more especially as anything we do is retrospective to the 31st August last.

I understand the Bill proposes that one man shall control all price fixing in Western Australia. So far as we know, he is also to be the officer controlling profiteering as defined by the Federal legislation. I defy any one man to control the trade of this or any other State. The Government has not considered the effect of placing the control of this business in the hands of one man. I am not talking without my book. It may not be generally known that for eight years I served a hard apprenticeship with universal traders in this State. I sold everything from dungaree trousers, turkey twill underclothes, epsom salts, dynamite, and Beecham's pills to split sheoak shingles. No one who has handled shingles in a stack will forget having done so. I know from experience the difficulties that will arise under the Bill, especially if we have interests of a conflicting nature in the different States. Were I a merchant in South Australia and found that an article in Western Australia was fixed at 4s. a lb. or 4s. a yard as the maximum price, and at 5s. in South Australia, I would present a cheque to the merchant here for the whole lot. Should he refuse to accept my cheque he would be punishable by law.

The Chief Secretary: Not at all.

The PRESIDENT: We are not discussing the Bill at this stage.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am combating the arguments of the Chief Secretary as to urgency. I have shown that this Bill must be analysed from A to Z, turned upside down and inside out before we can convert it into an equitable measure. After study-

ing the Bill and the conditions, I can honestly say that if I were in business in this State, with a thousand lines such as some merchants and retail shops carry, I would rather go out of it than attempt to carry on, restricted as I would be by the provisions of this measure.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Not if the Prime Minister told you to keep going?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Whatever legislation we pass applies not to this State alone but to the whole of Australia, because of the intra-State trade conditions under which we work. Unless we harmonise our legislation with that of the other States, confusion will be inevitable. We are told this Bill is designed to prevent profiteering. In my opinion the greatest profiteers—they are not provided for in this Bill—are members of the medical profession, and unionists who, after getting an award from the court framed on the evidence supplied, refuse to carry on without an increase of wages, and sometimes secure the support of the Government in their efforts. If this House thinks it can pass a fair Bill, it will do so in its own time. Last session a similar measure was debated from all parts of the Chamber. True, we were not then faced with war conditions. That Bill was debated and defeated. The Honorary Minister, who was in charge of it, made a reply to the debate occupying only half a page of "Hansard."

Hon. J. Cornell: He showed good sense in doing so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: He pointed out that the only necessity for the Bill was that it had been part of the Labour platform for the previous 15 years. I admit that in war time we must make sacrifices, but this is not the time when we should rush through this House legislation that may cripple one section of the community to the advantage of another. From the Prime Minister down, everyone has said, "Business as usual." The Government has said, "Continue employment." How could this House expect, after rushing legislation of this kind through without proper consideration, that merchants, robbed of their profits, would continue to provide employment and be solvent at the end of the war? I propose to say no more, except that I oppose the motion.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [7.43]: The few remarks I have to make I will precede by an emphatic assurance to the Chief Secretary that so far as I am concerned, or any other member of this Chamber is concerned, there is no desire to do anything to impede the passing of legislation that is deemed by this House to be truly urgent and necessary to meet the present crisis in which the nation is involved. I also say emphatically that the last thing any of us desires is to give an opportunity to any persons or person to make a profit out of the calamity of this war.

The Chief Secretary: It is being done at present.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have been assured by people engaged in various local industries that as a body they are not seeking to practise the art of profiteering, but on the other hand are seeking to adhere, so far as circumstances permit, to those prices which ruled on the date set out in the Bill. We all know that to warrant such a motion the essential element of urgency must be disclosed. The Minister has said that on the outbreak of war, an immediate summons was sent by the Prime Minister to the Premiers of all the States to attend a conference at which decisions would be reached regarding the legislation necessary in view of the existing crisis. Such a course of action was quite appropriate and proper on the part of the Prime Minister and it was what was expected of him. The Chief Secretary also pointed out that one of the first matters mentioned at the conference was profiteering. That, too, was quite proper and appropriate, and constituted a phase that would probably occur to every member of this Chamber.

The Chief Secretary: Not according to the discussion to-night.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have heard nothing so far to suggest justification for the Minister's assertion. I feel sure he can rely on a full measure of support for any Bill introduced for the important purpose that the measure he will ask us to consider, seeks to achieve. With others who have spoken, I believe members are entitled to give expression to certain views they hold, which they have sought to indicate to-night, from the standpoint of urgency. I cannot see that the question of urgency arises in this State. On the other hand, if we rush legislation through it may be destructive of

the very purpose that the Premier, his Ministers and every member of Parliament have sought to urge, namely, the maintenance in motion of the wheels of industry. If we were to rush the legislation through, we might impede progress and development and retard employment. We should seek to prevent as much dislocation of trade as possible. That is the proper course to pursue. If such a measure as that in contemplation is rushed through, I am afraid it may be attended with disastrous results, such as those I have indicated. That would be harmful to the Government and to the State, and especially disastrous to those engaged in all forms of industry. Viewing the matter as I do, I cannot possibly agree to the motion before the House.

I would like to be able to tell the Minister that I endorse the views he expressed, but he has my assurance that my earnest endeavour will be to do what I can to ensure that profiteering is avoided, without causing damage to industry and employment. I have studied the problem and I realise there are many reasons that can be advanced—probably it would be improper to deal with them in discussing the motion—with full force and effect when the Bill is under consideration. I hope the Minister will allow the measure to be dealt with in the ordinary way. I am sure that when all the arguments have been advanced, he will be convinced that wisdom attaches to the deferring of such an important piece of legislation for wise consideration. Even assuming the House agreed to the motion and the Bill were dealt with, the House could still exercise certain rights of guidance respecting the measure itself. However, to unduly rush the Bill through would be most unwise, particularly when it could be dealt with in the ordinary course. If we deal with it precipitately, mistakes will possibly be made, involving harmful effects that could not be rectified until the mischief had been done. Holding such views, I must record my vote against the motion.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [7.51]: Reference was made at the outset to the rejection of the price-fixing legislation last session. I voted against that Bill. I now realise—I am not a Jeremiah—and I hope other members will appreciate the fact too, that we are living under the shadow of a great war. In the final analysis we shall probably be lucky if we emerge from the period of hostilities with our worldly goods.

The two essentials that are really important are our liberty and the right to live our normal lives. At a time when the nation is under the shadow of war the element of urgency is present. That fact cannot be disputed. Price-fixing legislation finds no place in my estimation in normal times; but in the abnormal period of war, it does. I have in mind the experience during the Great War. Despite protests to high heaven, certain parties did prostitute their trading to their mutual advantage. I have yet to learn that human nature has altered. When the opportunity offers, advantage will be taken to advance selfish interests. That is all I desire to say regarding the question of profiteering.

As to the suspension of the Standing Orders, I do not know that the Minister has been wise in seeking the approval of the House for such a proposal. What is the position? If any vital consideration were outstanding, the second reading of the Bill could be put through to-night. There is the safeguard in the Standing Orders that enables their suspension to be approved without notice provided that 16 members rise in their places in support of the suggestion of urgency. After the second reading stage, the House automatically resolves itself into Committee and, if no amendments are made, the report of the Committee can be adopted at once, the third reading stage being taken at the next sitting. The Minister will agree that two days only are in the balance. In the circumstances, I do not know that he would be wise to press the motion to a division. The other point to be stressed is that, notwithstanding the Standing Orders being suspended—I do not think for one moment that the Minister will desire to push the Bill through unduly—the House will still be master of itself, and even though the Minister might not like it, members could still adjourn the debate. That is the actual position. I shall vote for the suspension of the Standing Orders if the Minister calls for a division, but I do not think that course is worth while. If there were any real urgency about the matter—

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: We would all respond and put the Bill through all stages.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Of course, if the Minister should prove adamant, seeing that it is not usual to take the business out of the hands of the Government, he may have his way. Nevertheless, the matter is in the

hands of members themselves. If the Minister wishes to push the Bill through and members do not desire that course to be followed, they can decide the issue for themselves.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.57]: All members will be in complete sympathy with any measure that seeks to prevent exploitation of the present international situation. We are all antagonistic to the unscrupulous trader who may seek to secure excessive profits under the conditions obtaining today. The Federal Government has legislative power to fix prices and has already exercised it in respect of about 53 commodities. We may reasonably expect that the Federal authorities will continue to fix prices and gradually bring more and more commodities under that heading. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Federal Government has appointed a Price Fixing Commission and has established deputy commissioners in each State. Assuming that the Bill under consideration becomes an Act, the traders in Western Australia will be in the unfortunate position of having to operate under dual control.

Hon. J. Cornell: Nothing of the sort!

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The Federal Act will over-ride State legislation.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: In that event, is there any necessity for the measure in question?

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member not to discuss the Bill, but to confine his attention to the motion to decide whether or not the Standing Orders shall be suspended.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Parliament should not be precipitate in discussing this question, but should await action by the Federal authorities and a lead from the larger States. As far as I have been able to ascertain, and despite what the Chief Secretary stated, it would appear that no other State has forecast similar legislation. I have a number of telegrams showing what the other States have done. New South Wales states, "Nothing definite has been done but there is some talk of price-fixing." Queensland telegraphs, "Price-fixing has been in force in Queensland for years. See Profiteering Prevention Act, 1920." South Australia's position is, "Price-fixing, anti-profiteering legislation contemplated but

nothing definite done yet." Tasmania wired, "State undertaking to implement Commonwealth policy; no State legislation except as to rent contemplated at present." Victoria wired, "Legislation referred to has been mentioned in the newspapers but only generally; nothing definite so far." I wish to make my position clear, that I am completely in accord with the principle of the prevention of profiteering but I contend that there is no urgent need for the suspension of Standing Orders and therefore I shall vote against the motion.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [8.2]: I confess I cannot follow the reasoning of some of the previous speakers in opposing the motion. The way I look at the position is that it does not matter whether we pass the motion tonight or not; it will not necessarily follow that we must pass the Bill tonight, tomorrow, next week or the week after. I cannot see that the passing of the motion tonight will have the effect that some members fear. If by tomorrow evening members are satisfied that everything is all right, and the way is clear for the measure to be passed, well, they can assist to pass it then. I shall support the motion.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.3]: The Chief Secretary mentioned in his opening remarks that the Prime Minister had declared that profiteering would be dealt with by legislation immediately. That was the information that was given to us on the declaration of war. Since then, however, there does not appear to have been the same urgency, and as there is co-ordination with the Commonwealth, it would be far better for us not to rush through legislation that the Government proposes to submit. How do we know that the Commonwealth will not take full control of all commodities? We might be putting up legislation that would prove detrimental to many of our industries, and we must not forget that we have been told, not only by our own Minister for Industries but by the Prime Minister as well, that we must continue to develop our industries and keep our people employed. Therefore to attempt to rush through legislation as the Government proposes to do might prove harmful. I shall oppose the motion.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [8.4]: While I intend to support the motion, I express regret that the Chief Secretary thinks fit to attempt to rush the measure through. I cannot see any reason for haste; a week or so would not make any difference. The Profiteering Prevention Bill can be submitted to us and we should be permitted to deal with it in the ordinary way. We have been told that the Commonwealth has already passed legislation of this type and in that event it would not make any difference if the Government of our State held up its legislation to deal with profiteering for a little while. I consider it wrong to ask the House, which is composed mostly of business men, to consider a Bill like this and pass it at one sitting.

The Chief Secretary: There is no such intention.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Any way we are asked to deal with it very quickly.

Members: No, we are not.

Hon. J. Cornell: But we could do so if we liked.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: We are asked to deal with the matter in a hurried way. If I may be permitted to read the motion, I would draw attention to the words "to pass the Profiteering Prevention Bill and the War Funds Regulation Bill through all stages at any one sitting." So we are told it will have to be done at the one sitting.

Hon. J. Cornell: No; we can discuss it for a month if we like.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: In any case we must deal with the question of profiteering. We do not want a repetition of what took place during the last war, and I desire that the Government shall have power to stop anything in the nature of profiteering, as it comes to light. But we should not deal with the subject with any haste because we do not want to injure any person. Our sole desire should be to stop profiteering.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [8.7]: Briefly, I may be permitted to give my reasons for opposing the motion to suspend the Standing Orders. Like other members, I readily agree that in times like the present we require something in the nature of price-fixing methods; but notwith-

standing the reply to my interjection by the Chief Secretary, I am firmly convinced that that is more a Federal matter, and the Federal Government, having taken the initiative, it would have been better to delay the question until such time as we knew what action was being taken by the Commonwealth. Then our Parliament could proceed with the legislation suggested by the Government. Mainly for that reason, and because I consider Federal price-fixing would be better for our industries, I shall oppose the motion.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [8.8]: We have the assurance of the Chief Secretary that we are to have whatever time we consider necessary to discuss the Bill. I think I can visualise what the Chief Secretary is out for in submitting the motion. Perhaps if we pass the second reading and the Committee stage of the Bill after it has been submitted to us, then unless we pass the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders we will have to defer the third reading until the next sitting on Tuesday. If the motion is agreed to, the Bill can pass through its various stages tomorrow, and it can be proclaimed and come into operation straight away. I shall support the motion.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [8.9]: At the risk of raising the ire of some members for continuing this discussion a little longer, I feel that the matter should not go to a vote without my replying to some of the statements that have been made. Certainly this motion has given members the opportunity to express their views on the question of the urgency or otherwise of profiteering legislation. One member suggested that we should wait until the Federal Government finalised its arrangements with regard to what it intended to do respecting profiteering. I may point out that the Commonwealth Government wasted no time, very few minutes in fact, in passing the Act; but that was only an Act to provide for certain regulations, without consulting Parliament at all. Those regulations are now being put into force. The Government of this State has not attempted to take power of that kind, but is presenting a measure to Parliament. In another place the same procedure was adopted as I am submitting to the House to-night. While it is our desire to

have the Standing Orders suspended, the object is not to stifle criticism or to prevent amendments being moved by members. I desire to know whether some members stand on the side of profiteering that is already operating in the State, or whether they stand on the side of the people who are entitled to be protected. Some members raised the question of urgency. I ask those members whether they are in line with their colleagues elsewhere, or in line with the Prime Minister. Are they in line with their own party, which held a meeting only a day or two ago, and carried a resolution that there should be no delay in the passing of a measure of this nature? We cannot do what the Federal Government has done, and that is the reason for the legislation that we are submitting. One of the resolutions agreed to at the conference between the Prime Minister and the Premiers of all the States was that they should submit legislation to their respective Parliaments for the purpose of controlling prices, that the State Parliaments should pass any legislation considered necessary. Now by means of this legislation we are endeavouring to implement what was agreed upon at that conference by our own Premier. Some members have said that there is no need for urgency in the passing of the Bill. Is it not a fact that there are many traders in this community who do not know where they stand regarding legislation of this kind, and that they are asking that the position be clarified as early as possible? Their desire is to know what they can do. What is the use of saying that there is no urgency about a matter of this kind during war time? I tell the House that with regard to profiteering the Federal Government has taken the proper attitude, and it has been pleasing to hear from members expressions of appreciation in that connection; but the Federal Government does not intend to deal with every commodity. That has been indicated very clearly, and it is necessary that we in this State have complementary legislation in order to deal, as early as possible, with those commodities not covered by Federal activities. There is no reason for entering into a lot of detail on a motion of this kind. I do not suppose it matters to the Government whether the House agrees to this motion for the suspension of Standing Orders or not. I believe that a majority of members will assist, as far as lies in their

power, to get this legislation through, but why should we have a delay of even 24 hours unnecessarily? There has been a delay of about a couple of hours in discussing this motion—a delay that might well have been obviated.

I have already said that members will be given an opportunity to introduce any amendments desired. To Mr. Wittenoom I point out that when he read the motion, he missed out a most important word. The motion does not ask for the suspension of Standing Orders in order that the Bill might be passed through all its stages at the present sitting.

Hon. J. Cornell: One sitting.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, it says "at any one sitting." As has often been made clear, the business of the House is always in the hands of the House, and would be even if the motion were agreed to. Therefore, why quibble about it? Surely if we can do some good by saving 24 or 48 hours, we should do it! I have reached the stage when I simply inform the House that the State Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, is very anxious indeed to have these facilities, which can be given only by means of legislation, to deal with profiteering at the earliest possible moment. That is the sole reason for the motion I have moved. If we took Mr. Holmes's advice, and waited until the Commonwealth Government definitely decides how far it is going with price-fixing, I do not know what would happen.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We would have uniformity.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member might prefer that to the Government's method. Mr. Dimmitt read telegrams from the other States, including one from Tasmania. True, it suggested that so far the Tasmanian Government has no intention of introducing legislation of this kind. The point is that, under the Commonwealth legislation, the Tasmanian Government can, by regulation, take the right to deal with any commodity.

Hon. J. Cornell: By regulation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. That is what the Tasmanian Government proposes to do. We do not consider that that method is necessary or desirable. We prefer to have our own legislation in order to deal with commodities not covered by Federal legislation at any particular time. Of course, our legislation will be complemen-

tary to the Federal law, and if any commodity is included in the Federal proclamations or regulations, that commodity will automatically be taken from the control of the local price-fixing commission. We propose to utilise the services of the assistant commissioner appointed for the Commonwealth, and as I mentioned when moving the motion, we intend to use the same machinery. Why there should be all this quibbling as to whether we should or should not suspend Standing Orders passes my comprehension. Still, it has given some members of the House an opportunity to air their views, which I do not think are in conformity with the views generally expressed by representative members of the community.

Question put and passed.

BILL—WAR FUNDS REGULATION.

Leave to Introduce.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.20]: I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to regulate the raising or collection of money for war funds, and to make provision for the administration and control of moneys raised wholly or partly by private subscription for purposes connected with the present war and for purposes incidental thereto or consequent thereon.

Let me explain that the self-same conditions apply to this measure. I am not desirous of rushing the Bill through at this sitting of the House, but in view of the experience in previous years, particularly during the period of the last war, it is essential that we should have this legislation as soon as it can be passed.

Question put and passed.

First Reading.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

As to Second Reading

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: In view of the fact that Standing Orders have been suspended, I think I shall be in order in moving the second reading at this stage.

THE PRESIDENT: In view of the motion just passed for the suspension of Standing Orders, the Minister will be quite in order in proceeding.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.22]: in moving the second reading said: This is not a long

Bill—it contains only 13 clauses—but it is important, and I hope members will agree with my contention that not only is legislation of the kind necessary but also that the contents of the Bill are necessary. The measure speaks for itself and calls for little explanation. However, I shall deal with its provisions briefly. The Bill has been brought forward to ensure the exercise of proper supervision over patriotic funds that might be raised in connection with the war. The administration of the proposed Act will be in the hands of the Chief Secretary, and any person desirous of conducting an appeal in aid of a war fund will be required first to obtain permission from the Minister. This provision, however, will not apply to any general appeal that might be made to the public at a public meeting.

When a fund is established, it shall be incumbent upon the trustees to furnish to the Minister, within 30 days, a written statement setting out full particulars of the nature of the fund. These particulars will include details of the objects of the fund, the name, address and description of the trustees and administrative officers, the name of the trustees' bankers, and any other particulars that may be required. At any time the Minister may require further statements to be furnished setting out details of the amount of money or goods held and distributed, the persons to whom the distributions have been made, obligations incurred by the trustees, and other matters. Provision is made for the audit of accounts by the Auditor General or his officers, who will forward to the Chief Secretary a report of each examination. It does not follow that the Auditor General or his staff will conduct the audit. He might be satisfied with the audit of a reputable firm of chartered accountants. If the Minister so directs the report may be published in any newspaper.

The Governor may, by proclamation, vest any war funds in the Chief Secretary if satisfied that there has been mal-administration, or if a three-fourths majority of the trustees have consented to the transfer. We also provide for the transfer of funds no longer required for the purposes for which they were originally raised. Money so transferred shall be—

- (a) applied by the trustees to other purposes connected with the present war;
- (b) vested in some other fund; or

(c) transferred to the Chief Secretary for allotment.

Before the Governor issues any proclamation in this connection, approval of the transfer must be secured by way of a resolution passed by both Houses of Parliament. The other clauses to which I have not referred are of a machinery character. Members will appreciate that, after the experience gained during the last war, we are anxious to obviate a recurrence of some things that then took place.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did I understand you to say there will be no supervision of money collected at public meetings?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No permit will be required in order to make an appeal at a public meeting.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And there will be no control over the money collected?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I did not say that. The Bill provides that before a fund may be opened, application must be made to the Chief Secretary for a permit.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Then all Red Cross bodies will have to make application?

Hon. J. Cornell: No.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, all societies.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think you will find that the Red Cross Society will not be covered by this Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think the Red Cross Society will be covered. That, however, is a recognised organisation, and there will be no difficulty about its obtaining a permit. We are not afraid of what will happen in regard to the Red Cross Society, or one or two similar organisations.

Hon. H. Tuckey: But they will have to comply with this law?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. We are concerned about the activities of people not authorised by the Red Cross or other society, and we are taking steps to ensure that practices previously indulged in, many of which I could enumerate, are not resorted to on this occasion. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—METROPOLITAN MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [8.31]: This is merely a continuation Bill. In this Chamber the Milk Board has been discussed frequently, and I am sure the general opinion is that the board has done good work. It has operated now for about seven years. It came into being when the metropolitan milk supply was in a chaotic condition, and has altered that chaotic condition to an orderly condition. There is a general admission that the supply of milk to the metropolitan area is not controlled as closely as it will be at some future date, when we may hope to see the zoning system in force. However, that will take time and take money. All that the Bill proposes to do is to continue the board's operations for another five years, give it another five years of life. That is the longest term which has yet been granted to the board. Originally it had one year's life. That was extended to three years. The present Bill proposes to extend the period to five years. Thus the board's operations will cease in 1944 if Parliament desires that it shall not exist longer. Without adding more, I hope hon. members will support the Bill, because the board has done good work.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [8.33]: The only feeling I have about the Bill is that it should provide for a five-yearly period. The board has justified itself, and I should have preferred to see the parent Act made permanent. As my colleague, Mr. Craig has just indicated, the board—although at times we have not seen eye to eye with it in some directions, and although there has been dissatisfaction in some quarters, most of which has been cleared away—has undoubtedly placed milk distribution in the metropolitan area in a position one hundred per cent. better than that prior to the passing of the Act. I feel sure members will realise that today anything which would prevent the continuation of the better conditions prevailing would be simply disastrous. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the second reading of the Bill. At the same time I repeat that I am sorry the Act is not to be made permanent.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.34]: I regret extremely that the Bill before the Chamber is merely a continuation measure. The proposal to continue the Act is proof that the board has done good work, but I hold that a grave injustice is being done by not granting recognition to a highly important section of the milk industry. Some consideration should be extended to a section not provided for on the board at all. I would gladly have supported a Bill bestowing permanency on the board. While supporting the second reading of the Bill, I can only voice my protest against the lack of recognition.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.35]: Before the Bill passes the second reading, I wish to enter an emphatic protest against the farcical execution of that part of our Standing Orders which permits a measure to be made temporary. This Bill itself is absolutely farcical. It is the only Bill of a temporary character going beyond one year. It is not comparable to the lotteries legislation or the financial emergency enactment. Those are temporary measures from year to year. Originally the term of the Metropolitan Milk Act was intended to be seven years. By way of reconciling conflicting interests, another place made the term five years. That, I emphatically repeat, is absolutely farcical. The measure should either be made permanent or be wiped out. My object in making these protests is that a similar exploitation may not again be tried on the dog.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

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—PROFITEERING PREVENTION.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.39] in moving the second reading said: On this Bill we have already had a fair amount of discussion today. It

may be some satisfaction to Mr. Holmes if I mention that there is a period attached to the measure. The Bill seeks to prevent profiteering in commodities during the continuance of the war and for a period of six months thereafter. Experience has shown that the abnormal conditions prevailing during a period of emergency, are all too frequently utilised by a certain class of individual for the purpose of profiteering at the expense of the community. I am pleased that the fact is acknowledged, implying that legislation such as this is needed. Practices of that character, whether viewed from an ethical or economic standpoint are strongly to be condemned in peace time. At a time when the country is engaged in hostilities, they are doubly undesirable; for apart from promoting a sense of injury in the community, they undoubtedly tend to undermine the stability of the price structure. That of course, is what Mr. Holmes, Mr. Nicholson and others desire to prevent. This measure has been brought forward in accordance with a decision reached by the conference of Premiers that met in Melbourne earlier in the month to discuss measures to be taken to meet the situation brought about by the declaration of war. As I have stated earlier, the conference decided that legislation should be introduced without delay for the purpose of controlling prices and preventing profiteering during the war. In this connection, the conference passed ten resolutions, as follows:—

1. That existing Commonwealth and State instrumentalities for fixing prices be as far as possible retained, subject to the determinations of the Commonwealth Price Controlling Authority.

The conference had in mind the necessity for legislation of this kind.

2. That the Prices Commissioner in Queensland be appointed as agent for the Commonwealth in Queensland.

That State has had prices fixing legislation for many years, and the fact that it has operated successfully is evident from the selection of the Queensland Prices Fixing Commissioner as the Commonwealth's agent.

3. That in the five other States Prices Commissioners be nominated by the State Governments for appointment as Agents for the Commonwealth.

4. That the Agents of the Commonwealth in the States shall exercise such powers and

functions as are conferred on them by the Commonwealth, and shall consult with State instrumentalities dealing with fixation of prices, and make recommendations to the Commonwealth Price Controlling Authority concerning the prices of commodities referred to the Prices Commissioner by the Commonwealth Government.

There we have another proof of the desire for co-operation between Commonwealth and State instrumentalities.

5. That State Price-Fixing Authorities be free to take such action as the State Governments think fit outside the price control scheme in operation by the Commonwealth.

It is recognised that the Commonwealth scheme will not cover all phases of the subject.

6. That the co-operation of trade associations and of consumers in all States be sought in implementing the scheme of price control.

This Government is extremely hopeful of securing the co-operation of all associations and firms interested in or connected with these matters.

7. That the Commonwealth Government will consider requests by the States to refer to the Commonwealth Price Controlling Authority the question of fixing the price of any commodity specified by the State.

On that point I may mention that the Tasmanian Government has already taken action in regard to rents, by way of regulation.

8. That the scope of price fixation include rationing of commodities where supplies are deficient.

There is not only the question of prices to consider, but also the question of supplies. That covers the point raised by Mr. Holmes when he said that some person or other in another State might desire to purchase the whole of a commodity in this State, because the price here was lower.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Does not paragraph (b) of Clause 14 insist that the storekeeper shall sell any commodity on demand?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member will find certain amendments on the Notice Paper dealing with the question of what is a reasonable quantity. It is not desirable on the second reading to enter into too great detail. In Committee I shall be only too pleased to give the hon. member all the information I can.

9. That the scheme of price control include the consideration of quality in relation to the price charged, and where the Prices Commissioner is satisfied that goods of in-

ferior quality are being sold at excessive prices he may determine a lower price for such goods.

10. That States at present without authority to control prices or rentals should pass legislation considered necessary for that purpose.

This Bill represents the legislation which we consider to be necessary in the existing circumstances. Control of prices by the Commonwealth will be restricted to a comparatively small number of commodities. It is interesting to note that between 50 and 60 articles have been brought under the Commonwealth scheme. I feel sure it will not be long before the number of commodities coming within the scope of the Commonwealth scheme will be considerably increased, that is, if the war continues. A much larger number, I think, will be dealt with under State legislation. In view of the fact that our intention is to utilise the services of the Commonwealth officer and his staff, we shall have that uniformity which some member said he considered was necessary. I am in receipt to-night of a communication from the gentleman appointed to act as Commissioner in this State on behalf of the Commonwealth authorities, in which he indicates some of the methods that will be adopted. While I cannot enumerate them now, they cover many of the objections that have been raised and also objections which I feel sure will be raised during the passage of the Bill. When arrangements are completed, I believe the State will be asked to undertake the financial responsibility of providing accommodation for some of the staff of the Commonwealth Prices Commission. That is by the way, but it is another indication of the co-operation which is being asked for and which I can unhesitatingly say is being very willingly given where it is possible for the State to give it.

Hon. J. Cornell: And, above all, necessary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Commonwealth control will be exercised chiefly in respect of commodities regarded as essential for defence purposes, and foodstuffs and materials of overseas origin. The operations of the complementary State legislation will extend to all essential commodities not brought within Commonwealth control. The Bill proposes to set up machinery to ensure adequate control of prices during the continuance of hostilities and for a period of six months thereafter. Commodities or substances within the ambit of the Wheat

Products (Prices Fixation) Act, 1938, or any essential or other article covered by the regulations made under the Commonwealth Defence Act, 1903-1909, are specifically excluded from the operations of the proposed legislation. The reason is that the persons who deal with those matters are specialists and can be depended upon to do the right thing. Apart from these exceptions, the provisions of the Bill extend to the following:—

- (a) Articles of food or drink,
- (b) Firewood and other fuel,
- (c) Clothing,
- (d) Articles used in the preparation of the foregoing,
- (e) Agricultural implements (except tractors) and seeds for sowing,
- (f) Any public utility,
- (g) Freight and transport charges, and
- (h) All goods and services rendered to the public which are declared by proclamation to be commodities for the purpose of the proposed Act.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why except tractors?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Because tractors are covered by Commonwealth legislation. Provision is made for the appointment of a commissioner of prices, who shall be subject to the direction and control of the Minister. The duties of the commissioner as to investigations are set out in Clause 11. He will be required to investigate and report to the Minister from time to time what should be the maximum selling price of any commodity for the whole of the State or for any particular part of the State. The Bill authorises him, inter alia, to investigate and report upon the following matters:—

- (1) The state of prices of any commodity in the State or in any part thereof,
- (2) The quantity, situation, demand, supply, or possession of any commodity,
- (3) The means or sufficiency and cost of the supply or transport of any commodity,
- (4) The probable requirements of the people of the State in regard to any commodity,
- (5) Any act or attempt by any person to raise or maintain the price of any commodity, and,
- (6) The necessity or advisability of the exercise of any powers conferred by the Act.

Until such time as the Governor, acting on the advice of the commissioner, proclaims the maximum price or prices at which any commodity may be sold, it will be an offence for any wholesaler or retailer to

sell such commodity at a price higher than that current on the 31st August, 1939.

Almost a month has elapsed since the 31st August. Trade is being conducted, and the longer this legislation is delayed the more difficult it will be for traders and consumers to ascertain their position. Adjustments may have to be made in respect of a commodity, and if there should be inordinate delay in the passing of the measure, one can well understand the difficulty that will arise in giving redress to people entitled to it, whether they be traders or consumers.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where is the commissioner now?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I believe he is back in Western Australia.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: He arrived this morning.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I received a report from him this evening. Every effort is being made to instal him in office without delay. The Bill also provides that it shall be unlawful for any trader to refuse to sell a commodity at a declared price. There is, of course, the question whether a trader should be compelled to sell all his stock at a particular price. As members are aware, the Minister who will be controlling this legislation has already had a conference with persons having trading interests. He was certainly under the impression that he had disabused their minds regarding some difficulties which they expect to arise under this measure. If we are to believe what we read in the Press this morning and heard from some members this evening, the Minister apparently has not succeeded quite to the extent that he thought he had. However, he has given an assurance, which I am prepared to carry out, that this Chamber will have every opportunity of considering amendments that may be moved. At the same time, I again express the hope that members will assist me to get the legislation through with as little delay as possible.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You mentioned profiteering was going on now. Can you give us some idea of the nature of it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think I would be justified in giving the information I have. I say without hesitation that in some cases prices have been raised far beyond what one would consider—without investigation—to be reasonable.

Hon. J. Nicholson interjected.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Suppose I was supplied with goods and paid a particular price for them, and that then a delay of a month or two months occurred before the prices commissioner could act, in the event of the commissioner finding that the price charged was too high, what redress would I have?

Hon. L. Craig: He might be a retailer and have re-sold the goods.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course. Consequently, there is real urgency for the passage of the Bill. The report of the commissioner states that provision will be made for consideration of many matters that may arise, such as increase in cost overseas, increase in cost of transport and so on.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Insurance, etc.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The question of replacement has also been exercising the commissioner's mind. The Bill provides that it shall be unlawful for any trader to refuse to sell a commodity at the declared price. Illegal concessions, refusals to deal, and monopolies of proclaimed commodities are prohibited under Part III. Dealings such as these are contrary to public interest and will render offenders liable to the general penalty set out in Clause 29.

The Bill proposes to vest in the commissioner all the powers, rights and privileges of a Royal Commission. He will have the power to issue orders to take evidence, and in the exercise of any of his functions to act in conjunction with any person or body appointed and acting under any Act of the Commonwealth or of any State having objects similar to those of this measure. He will also be empowered to delegate authority for the making of investigations either to some organised body or some individual who has an expert knowledge of a particular commodity or commodities under consideration. The provisions are such as should prove generally satisfactory. Of course it is impossible for legislation of this kind to please everybody.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Is that delegation of authority expressed in the Bill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think the hon. member will find there is authority for it. Thus many of the objections some members would like to press against this legislation will be overcome. The commissioner will be authorised to demand returns of proclaimed commodities from traders, and, in certain cases, he will have power of

entry and seizure. The remaining provisions are of a machinery nature and relate, inter alia, to such matters as— (1), Power to publish information. (2), Obstructing and similar offences. (3), Bribery and fraud on witnesses. (4), Dismissal by employer of witness. (5), Recovery of penalties and forfeiture. (6), Offences by corporations and so on. It may be recalled that shortly after the outbreak of the war in 1914, Parliament passed the Control of Trade in War-time Act, a measure with a purpose similar to that of the present Bill. I was not in the House at that time, but am given to understand that members approved of the principles contained in the measure, and I therefore anticipate the House will not object to the principles of this Bill. While it would be futile to indulge in prognostication regarding the future trend of hostilities, it does not require any effort of the imagination to realise, even at this stage, that the conflict may resolve itself into a long war of attrition. It is necessary therefore that every endeavour should be made to ensure that essential requirements for civil purposes are made available to the public and to industry in sufficient quantities and at reasonable prices. The importance of this particular aspect of the defence needs of a country has been recognised by the Governments of each of the combatant nations. In Australia, for example, we find that the Federal Government has made regulations in pursuance of powers contained in the Defence Act, which provides for the general control of industry. They provide, inter alia:—

A Minister, so far as appears to him to be necessary in the interests of the defence of the Commonwealth or the efficient prosecution of the war, or for maintaining supplies and services essential to the life of the community, may by order provide—

- (a) for regulating the production, treatment, keeping, storage, movement, transport, distribution, sale, purchase, use or consumption of essential articles, and, in particular, for controlling the prices at which the articles may be sold;
- (b) for regulating the carrying on of any undertaking engaged in essential work, and, in particular, for controlling the charges which may be made by the undertakers in respect of the doing of any work by them;
- (c) for regulating, restricting or prohibiting the production, importation,

treatment, keeping, storage, transport, distribution or sale of articles other than essential articles;

- (d) for requiring persons carrying on, or employed in connection with, any trade or business specified in the order to produce to the authority or person so specified any books, accounts or other documents relating to that trade or business, and for requiring any persons to furnish to the authority or person specified in the order such estimates or returns as that Minister considers it desirable to obtain for the effectual exercise of any of his powers under paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this sub-regulation; and
- (e) for any incidental and supplementary matters for which that Minister thinks it expedient for the purposes of the order to provide, including, in particular, the entering and inspection of premises to which the order relates by persons authorised in that behalf by a Minister, with a view to securing compliance with the order.

This measure will deal with the class of essential goods not covered by the Federal price-controlling authority, and to avoid over-lapping, the State Commissioner will co-operate to the fullest extent with the Commonwealth body. Naturally much more could be said on the second reading; but I am sure members recognise the need for our getting down to tinctacks. When we reach the Committee stage—which I do not propose to attempt to reach tonight—I shall be in a position to give any information desired by members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.6]: I hope the Chief Secretary will realise that the few comments I propose making are intended to be of a constructive nature. There are certain difficulties in operating a measure of this sort and I am basing my remarks upon experiences I have gained in my own business. I hope that in my previous observations I made it clear that I am completely in accord with the principle of prevention of profiteering. I would like to point out to the Chief Secretary, however, that all goods now coming from America have already increased in cost. At the end of last month merchants landed from a boat called the "Somerset" thousands of lines manufactured in America. They were paid for in

New York at a conversion rate of 4 dollars 66 cents to the pound sterling. A boat known as the s.s. "Ward," due to arrive at the end of this week, contains many thousands of articles of United States manufacture. Many are goods similar to those landed a month ago. The conversion rate of that shipment will be 4 dollars 2 cents. This exchange drop will mean an increase of approximately 22 per cent. in the cost of those goods, plus exchange on the difference—that is, between Australian currency and sterling—plus increased freights and increased war risk insurance. So that all those commodities will arrive in Western Australia in about a week's time at a cost somewhere between 25 and 28 per cent. higher than that which applied to similar commodities which arrived a month ago. A similar condition will prevail in regard to goods from England. In my particular business we have had notifications, from five English manufacturers, of price increases ranging from 10 per cent. to 45 per cent. When one realises that prices which have advanced from 10 to 45 per cent. have to bear an added cost of 25½ per cent. for exchange—and duties up to 45 per cent. on the added costs—

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And increased freight and insurance.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Yes. In the circumstances are readily understood that many goods imported from England will cost from 50 to 70 per cent. more than similar goods cost a month ago.

Hon. J. Cornell: But the Commissioner will take all those facts into consideration.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I will deal with that matter shortly. In my business we have had notifications from eight Australian manufacturers of increases varying from 10 to 30 per cent. The point I make is that merchants and shopkeepers here have absolutely no control over those increases. What is going to happen when those goods arrive in Western Australia at the greatly increased prices? It will not be possible to sell them at anything except the prevailing price, which will be the price ruling on the 31st August. The alternative facing the merchant will be to apply to the Commissioner for permission to increase his prices. But members will realise that there are hundreds of merchants landing thousands of lines, so that there will be hundreds of

thousands of items in respect of which the merchants will find it necessary to apply for permission to increase prices.

Hon. J. Cornell: They had to do it in 1914.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I am inclined to think that the price-fixing commissioner will be so inundated with applications and so snowed under with requests for price increases that a very long time will elapse before he will be able to grant the necessary permission. That is the danger I foresee. If weeks or months pass before the price-fixing commissioner can deal with these numerous applications, the merchants will be compelled to leave the goods for which they have paid high prices nailed up in the original cases until such time as permission to increase prices is obtained. A merchant would not dare to sell at the old price because he would show a loss and he could not sell at the new price because it would be an offence against the Act. I am afraid, therefore, that this legislation will break down of its own weight.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What alternative do you suggest?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: The alternative I suggest is that the merchant be allowed to fix his own price and let Clause 11 of this Bill police the Act. Clause 11 states—

The commissioner may at his own discretion or at the request of any member of the public, upon good cause shown and shall, when required so to do by the Minister, investigate and report to the Minister upon all or any of the following matters:—

The “following matters” deal with prices, quantities, etc. This would relieve the price-fixing commissioner from the need for fixing prices. He would merely investigate complaints against unduly high pricing of goods. That is the alternative I suggest in reply to the question raised by Mr. Mann.

Hon. L. Craig: He would investigate complaints that prices were too high.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Yes. The suggested process would be reversed.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Otherwise he would not interfere?

Hon. J. Cornell: That is all right for the chap that is selling goods.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I would say it was all right for the chap who was buying, too. When all is said and done competition is the best price leveller I know of, or the commercial community knows of.

I am glad the Chief Secretary intends to amend paragraph (b) of Clause 14 to make better provision as to what constitutes a reasonable quantity. That is a sound move. Without that amendment the position would be anything but satisfactory. The Chief Secretary may not know that some of the greatest offenders in the matter of hoarding are Government departments, of one or two of which he is in control.

The Chief Secretary: Would you suggest the Police Department or the Education Department?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: The departments may not now be under the control of the Chief Secretary, but in the past fortnight some of them have ordered supplies greatly in excess of those called for under contracts for the whole of the previous year. The provision to which I refer will give traders an opportunity to regulate their sales.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Or call the kettle black.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I trust my remarks will be borne in mind. When the Bill is in Committee, I will move certain amendments to deal with the situations I have outlined. Meanwhile the measure has my support.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.17]: The Bill as it is drawn seems to me unworkable. Certain things have to be prescribed, certain regulations passed, “Government Gazettes” issued, proclamations made, and so many acts performed that it will be impossible to bring anyone to book for an offence under the Act. I have only just received a copy of the measure, and have not been able to go thoroughly into it. From what I have seen of it, I am satisfied it will be entirely unworkable. It also contains many flaws, which the Chief Secretary may be able to explain.

The Chief Secretary: First of all you find it unworkable.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I cannot understand why there should be brought before us a Bill almost identical with one that was rejected last year. In effect, it is the more objectionable. If a person insults the office boy of the commissioner, he will be liable under this Bill to six months’ imprisonment and to a fine of £200. That provision was contained in the Bill of last year, but an amendment was made in an-

other place, so that people would not be rendered liable to a penalty for insulting the commissioner or any of his officers. Should anyone insult the commissioner referred to in this Bill, he may go to a place far more important than a concentration camp. Whoever comes into contact with any commissioner will undoubtedly insult him should he hear the remarks. In 1919 a very effective Prices Regulation Act, No. 53, providing for the regulation of the price of all foodstuffs and necessary commodities, both wholesale and retail, was passed. That measure stood the test to which it was subjected. It contained one or two flaws of which the Crown Law Department was aware. I was an officer of the department at that time and had to attend the commission and take action under the Act. The measure was very effective, except for one little flaw, which is repeated time and again in the Bill before us. As this legislation is so urgent, it is a pity not to adopt the law of 1919. That gave practically everything required, and did not contain matters that this House has found so objectionable. It seems that in the Bill before us rents can be included, although they are not mentioned.

The Chief Secretary: They are dealt with in a separate Bill.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: In the event of that Bill not going through, the matter may be dealt with in this one. The measure before us will apply to all goods, wares or merchandise, or services rendered to the public, or other things which by proclamation are declared to be commodities to which the Act applies. I do not know whether a house is a commodity. I assume members of the Government know about the Act of 1919. Under that measure nothing except foodstuffs and necessary commodities was referred to. I doubt whether "necessary commodities within the meaning of the Act" would cover rent.

Hon. J. Cornell: There were not so many motor cars in those days either.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not know that it is necessary to fix the price of motor cars. I shall not oppose the second reading of the measure. The Chief Secretary surprised me when he said that profiteering was being indulged in now. I have made inquiries and have been unable to ascertain that anyone was profiteering. That speaks well for the loyalty of the people at large.

Hon. G. Fraser: There were one or two serious attempts.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have not heard of them.

The Chief Secretary: In paper, for instance.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Not an ounce of paper is made in this State. What could this Bill do in regard to profiteering overseas? If members know of any instance of profiteering it is their bounden duty to make it public, and thus show their loyalty to their country. In these circumstances, no one is more disloyal than is the profiteer. If members know of such cases, they should inform the House and invoke our aid. There is no need to hide the names of such profiteers. We should blazon them forth. Sometimes we hear whispers that so-and-so is profiteering, but on investigation this is found to be incorrect. Many commodities have gone up in price, and must do so. The greatest profiteer at present is the gold miner, who is receiving an extra 8d. per shift owing to war causes having sent up the price of gold. I know of nothing that tends to rectify that anomaly. Half the extra price of gold is being taken by the Federal Government in the form of a tax. This means that 50 per cent. of the increased price is being taken by the Federal authorities.

Hon. J. Cornell: How much has wool gone up?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The miner obtains his increase as if the companies were getting the full price for their gold, irrespective of the fact that through the war the cost of mining has increased considerably by reason of the increased cost of overseas commodities required for the production of gold.

Hon. G. Fraser: The law of the land gives the miner that increase.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, but the Government is asking for the passing of a law to prevent profiteering, and I am asking for this other point to be included.

The Chief Secretary: You are not quite correct in your statement.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have no wish to say anything that is incorrect, but that is the way I read the Bill. Perhaps the Chief Secretary will correct me if I am wrong.

Hon. L. Craig: The price of gold is based on the London price.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I agree that profiteering of every description should be stopped, whenever possible, and I will do anything I can do to assist the Government

to that end. I trust that the Government in turn will endeavour to keep down the price of commodities, and will not allow departments to hoard commodities, as we are told they are doing.

The Chief Secretary: You should not believe everything you hear.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have heard outside this Chamber that the greatest boarders are Government departments that are buying up commodities.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I do not blame them.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Within reason it is the duty of the departments to purchase the commodities they require, but will the Government apply this Bill to public utilities and State trading concerns?

The Chief Secretary: Can you not trust the Government to do the right thing?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It should apply to all State trading concerns. Unless it does so, I fear that perhaps members of the Government will not appreciate to the full the significance of what traders have to put up with.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [9.28]: I have a few remarks to offer on this important Bill. The world has just commenced a great struggle and no one knows how long it will last, or what its effect will be. We can only judge what is likely to occur from what happened during the previous war. We know that profiteering occurred then. Prevention is better than cure. It is wiser to prevent prices from rising than to endeavour to bring them down when they have gone up. That is why I am pleased the Government has introduced this measure, for by means of it we may be able to keep prices where they are or as near to that as possible. I realise how very difficult that will be; but if a commissioner is set up to deal with price fixation, his duty will be to take into consideration all the applicable factors. I believe every member of this House appreciates that the commissioner appointed will act, as every such officer in the past has acted, so as to be fair to all concerned.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: He will have to live up to the requirements of the Act.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, and be fair. Do not let us raise bogeys about what are really little matters. There is one important phase to be taken into consideration. Before

the present war is terminated we shall have to call upon a large number of men to give up their excellent salaries and put up with low rates of wages. That is what is happening even to-day. Has that aspect been mentioned? On the other hand, we are afraid that someone who is dealing in goods and is likely to do pretty well out of the business, may not get every little bit to which he is entitled. Bigger factors than that have to be considered. Many of our men will be drawn from their present means of livelihood and will have to give up ever so much more. They will have to run all the risks that war entails. We must see to it that their wives and families are not the victims of profiteering. We should concern ourselves with matters of that description, and not become so agitated regarding the interests of some little merchants who may be called upon to make minute sacrifices before we emerge from the present war. Mr. Dimmitt's argument fell very short of my point of view. His idea was to allow merchants to sell their goods at what rates they thought fit, and if any customer were overcharged he could apply for a refund. Does not Mr. Dimmitt appreciate how that would conflict with the Federal provision? Such an arrangement would mean that the commissioner would have to act in one way under the State legislation, and adopt quite another course under the Federal law. I have had a lengthy experience in public life, and I am sure that the Government will act fairly. All will depend upon the good sense of the commissioner, and I believe the Government will select a man possessing the necessary qualifications to enable him adequately to fill the post. A man of that description will see to it that injustice is done to no one. When we get down to bedrock, we must appreciate the fact that we are always afraid of what is likely to happen, that someone may be appointed to a position in which he will not act fairly. Why cannot members realise that under our democratic system we have to put trust in the man appointed to do the job? I am perfectly certain that the officer selected will act fairly, and as promptly as possible, in order that prices may be kept down to a reasonable basis and not be permitted to increase unduly.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: But prices cannot be kept down. They are increasing every day.

Hon. T. MOORE: I emphasised that the commissioner would keep prices down as much as possible. Naturally prices will increase, particularly those applying to goods from overseas. No commissioner would attempt to keep such prices down. To attempt to do so would stifle trade altogether.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: We would have another depression.

Hon. T. MOORE: Such an action would be absolutely ridiculous. On the other hand, I do not want the lessons gained during the past war to be ignored completely. Unfortunately, in every walk of life there are those who, when they see an opportunity to make money, are only too ready to avail themselves of the advantage. That is what we must prevent. That is why the Bill has been introduced. I appeal to the good sense of members to consider the measure as it stands, and not raise small bogeys. We are up against a very stiff proposition, particularly when we view it in the light of what happened during the Great War. The present hostilities represent a greater calamity than that which we had to face in 1914 and the succeeding four years. When we are apt to take a selfish view regarding the little things that may happen to us, I urge members to concentrate on the much greater issue of what is to happen to the great bulk of our people. After all, it will be the people who will have to give up a tremendous lot while the present struggle lasts. We must conserve their interests. Do not let us worry about the small sacrifices that others may have to make in their respective spheres. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [9.35]: In offering a few remarks on the Bill, the second reading of which I shall support, I desire to emphasise that price-fixing is one of the small phases of the struggle confronting the State. I rather regret the facetious remarks of Mr. Parker, and I do not think he meant half what he said.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What do you mean?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I refer to the hon. member's selection of little details of the Bill which, after all, can be dealt with during the Committee stage.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You will be more astounded when you read the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am discussing the principle underlying price-fixing and the necessity for it. Whether adequate provision has been made in the Bill is a matter to be ascertained when considering the Bill in Committee. I was astounded to hear certain remarks regarding the element of danger likely to arise from undue injuries inflicted upon the mercantile section of the community. The Bill represents an entirely better proposition than the Federal Act under which the Commonwealth adopts an attitude worthy of Hitler or Mussolini and says to the States, "You must do this." Tasmania has fallen into line, but in this State Parliament has been asked to mould the price-fixing machinery. The major phase of the struggle with which we are confronted is what I desire to emphasise. In the Great War man-power was the main consideration. If any member has followed the history of Germany during the last 10 years, he must conclude that man-power will again be the deciding factor in the present war. What sacrifices are we to ask men to make? Tonight we have seen members, in fear and trembling, commenting upon the possibility of traders being interfered with by price-fixation. They will say to the younger members of the community, "You must shoulder a gun to preserve our liberties." That is the phase to which I have regard. Thousands of men in this State will be required to give up wages, home-life and all they hold dear, and will willingly do so, in order to take up arms to preserve the liberties we now enjoy. That is where the great sacrifice will be made. As one who had the experience himself in 1914-18 and even since the Great War, I assert that in many instances those who made the sacrifice in the earlier conflagration have had a very raw deal. That section of the community has no hesitation in saying that if the man power of this country is to be conscripted, so must be the wealth and material advantages others enjoy. That is the consensus of opinion of the Returned Soldiers' League of Australia. All sacrifices must be on an equal basis. If men are asked to bear arms and give up all in defence of liberty, others must share equally in the sacrifice. That is the point of view to which I subscribe, and I trust that members generally will take the longer view and in the present instance they will trust—the administration must be sympathetic—the man on whom will be imposed the

duty of determining what is a fair price for any particular commodity.

The suggestion advanced by Mr. Dimmitt, that the traders themselves should exercise that power and that those who depart from what is right and fair should be brought to book, carries no weight with me. That is what happened in Australia during the previous war. At that time it was a case of "Go for your life and devil take the hindermost." The only ones to derive any benefit from that war were those who supplied the requirements of the community in general. The principle involved in price-fixing is that machinery shall be set up to ensure that there shall be equality of sacrifice in relation to the sale and purchase of goods. That is what is behind the introduction of the Bill. Without more ado, I support the second reading, but I throw out this warning that unless safeguards are provided in the interests of those bearing arms in the present war, so that the lessons learnt during the Great War may not have been forgotten, there is an organisation in the Commonwealth that will raise in the minds of young men prepared to enlist, the suggestion that they shall think hard and long before doing so.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You do not suggest that anyone would do that?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do. The statement has been made authoritatively that there is a job to be done. We must see to it that wrong is righted and ensure that there shall be no inequality of sacrifice imposed upon the men who may be asked to accept the major risks. We should mould our ideas and direct all our efforts in directions that will not militate against the interests of those constituting the main factor in the decision of the issues confronting the nation, the man-power that alone will secure victory.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th September, 1939.

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

QUESTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

Waggons and Trailers, License Fees, etc.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that a number of farmers now transport their produce and superphosphate either on farm waggons or on pneumatic-tyred trailers which are drawn by tractors on the roads leading to the sidings? 2, Is he aware that the annual license fee on a horse-drawn farmer's wagon for example (a) with 4-inch tyres to carry up to 4 tons is £1 9s. and (b) with 5-inch tyres to carry up to 7 tons is £2 10s., while the license fees on such waggons used as trailers behind pneumatic-tyred tractors are stated to be £12 3s. and £25 13s., respectively, to which must be added the license for the tractor, which of 60 power weights and at a farmer's half rate costs a further £7 10s.? 3, Is it not a fact that there is comparatively little difference between the damage done to a road by a wagon drawn by horses and the same wagon drawn by a pneumatic-tyred tractor? 4, Is he aware that the license fee for a pneumatic-tyred trailer to carry 4 tons is at farmer's reduced rate £6 15s. a year? 5, As both types of vehicle when drawn by tractors are used only for short periods of the year, and in view of the great disparity in license fees, and the number of farms on which tractors have displaced horses, will he agree to a substantial reduction of the fees and amend the Traffic Act this session in order that such reduction may be effected?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The proportion of this class of traffic is relatively small. 2, The figures £1 9s. and £2 10s. should be £1 and £1 15s., being farmers' vehicles. 3, Yes. 4, Yes. 5, The subject is receiving consideration.