

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 5th December, 1939.

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to make the amendment requested by the Council, now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment requested by the Council, declined by the Assembly, pressed by the Council, and again declined by the Assembly, is as follows:—

The Schedule—second part:—Delete the word "ten" in the third line of Clause 3 and substitute the word "twenty."

With the return of the Bill, the Council's Standing Orders—I am speaking subject to correction—are exhausted, and I think that is also the position from the point of view of the Assembly's Standing Orders. Our Standing Order 240 sets out various motions that may be moved when a Bill is returned to the Council by the Assembly with any request not agreed to or agreed to with modifications. The amendment has not been returned with a modification but the Assembly has merely declined to accept the Council's pressed amendment. The stage we have reached is rather supposititious, just as is the stage that the Assembly has reached. The Lower House has continued to decline to make the requested amendment pressed by this Chamber. The Committee would be in order in sending the Bill back to the Assembly with a notification that it continued to press its requested amendment.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Should not the Assembly have asked for a conference?

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly could have asked for a conference; it was also not within the province of the Committee to recommend the Council to request a conference.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If we send the Bill back, could the Assembly ask for a conference?

The CHAIRMAN: Of course it could; the Assembly has done so before.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the requested amendment be no longer pressed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The best course is for the Council to continue to press its requested amendment, leaving the Assembly, more or less, to secure the release of the deadlock.

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

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT MOTOR VEHICLES.

As to Cost, Traffic Fees, etc.

Hon. A. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary: When may I expect to have placed on the Table the return asked for on the 14th November, dealing with the name and type of Government vehicles supplied to each department, etc.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: I have no knowledge of the stage reached with the report in question, but I told the hon. member at the time that he was asking for something that would be expensive and would take a long while to prepare.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Assembly's Further Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it continued to decline

Question put and negatived; the Council's requested amendment again pressed.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.

Assembly's Further Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it continued to decline to make the amendments requested by the Council, now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are in the same position regarding this Bill as we were with the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill. As I understand the attitude of members, they are not prepared to alter their decision regarding this measure until such time as the Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill has been dealt with. I propose to follow the same course as I did regarding the previous Bill, and I move—

That the requested amendments be no longer pressed.

Immediately we have dealt with this measure, members will have an opportunity to deal with the Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I trust the House will continue to ask for this amendment to be made. No plea has been advanced as to why we should not press this request.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot allow the hon. member's remarks to pass without comment. He said that no plea had been put up as to why we should not continue to press for this amendment. I think the hon. member is aware why I have not precipitated a debate.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not mean that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is what the hon. member said. Consequently I have to justify my motion. I have previously told the House that this Bill is in accordance with Government policy. The Government desires to relieve those on the lower incomes, of 1d. in the pound financial emergency taxation. The House, in accordance with Mr. Baxter's suggestion, decided that we should

relieve all financial emergency taxpayers of 1d. in the pound, irrespective of what their earnings might be.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He wants the matter to go to a conference.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is all right; but I cannot allow the hon. member to suggest that no plea was put up. I put forward the fact, not as a plea but as a justification, that Government policy, as approved by the electors at the last general election, is to the effect that those on the lower grades, with family responsibilities, are entitled to some relief. The measure provides for that relief to be given, but the Government cannot possibly accept an amendment providing for everybody to be relieved, because that would result in the loss of additional revenue running into thousands of pounds.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I assure the Leader of the House that I did not intend to cast any reflection on him. He certainly put up a very good case against the amendment, from the point of view of the Government. What I wished to convey was that when returning the Bill disagreeing with the amendment another place did not trouble to give any reasons for its attitude.

Question put and negatived; the Council's requested amendment again pressed.

RESOLUTION—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

To Inquire by Joint Committee—Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the provisos made by the Council to the Assembly's resolution that a Committee of members of both Houses be appointed to consider alternative sites for the erection of public buildings; and that Mr. Patrick had been appointed to the Committee as the fourth representative of the Assembly.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th November.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [4.53]: The measure is similar to that which has been introduced each session for some years past, and is rendered necessary by the desire of the Government to provide exemption covering the basic wage. The Bill simply provides that the exemption shall be raised to £4 3s. per week in respect to wage-earners and £216 per annum in respect to salary-earners. There is no need for me to enter upon a lengthy explanation as to why the Government has submitted the measure, which is in accordance with the Government's policy, exercised for some years past.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 4:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in lines 5 and 6, of paragraph (i), the word "sixteen" be struck out and the word "thirteen" inserted in lieu.

My object is to bring the basis down to last year's figure. The Government has always complained that it cannot get enough revenue, and now it is trying in every way to reach out for amounts outside the usual sources of revenue and at the same time it is extending the exemptions to one particular section of the community. That section more than any other section, is enjoying free services, and that is not right. Step by step the exemptions have gone on year by year. I hope the House will support the amendment.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: In opposing the amendment I need not say more than I have already said in this Chamber. If we agree to the amendment it will mean that a large number of people who for some years past have been exempt from financial emergency taxation will find themselves compelled to pay. That is entirely opposed to the

policy of the Government and, for that reason, I shall strenuously oppose the amendment. From past experience, however, I realise that I am only beating the air in trying to convince members that the policy of the Government should be put into force against the ideas of some members of this House.

THE CHAIRMAN: I ask members to turn to page 131 of the Standing Orders, where they will find that Section 46, Sub-section (3), of the Constitution Act sets out—

The Legislative Council may not amend any Bill so as to increase any proposed charge or burden on the people.

By carrying the amendment submitted by Mr. Baxter we may be imposing a burden on someone. There is really no need for the amendment. If members will bring themselves up to date, they will find that the Bill before the House amends a permanent statute, the assessment Act of 1932-38. That is different from the taxing Bill which comes before Parliament every year. If we reject the Bill now before us, the position will be that the Act of 1938 will prevail and the amount of £213 set out in that statute will remain.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: My object is to keep the exemptions at the figure at which they stand today. In view of the Chairman's remarks, all that may be necessary will be to vote against the Bill, and then we shall be back to where we were. That is the position I wish to create and I hope the House will support me.

THE CHAIRMAN: May I add to my previous observation that there is no obligation on the part of the Council to pass the second reading of a Bill such as this. The Council can always reject a money Bill on the second reading; but when we have agreed to the second reading, there are Constitutional phases to be considered.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No one will disagree with the Chairman's contention because Section 46 is abundantly clear. There is this position however; we have two other Bills and both have been considered under separate messages. Our reply has been that we have sent them back to another place. So I think it would be only fair to give the Assembly the opportunity to consider the message we have sent back in response to its messages, and in the meantime

in this House report progress and hold over the Bill now before us until a decision is actually arrived at with regard to the other two measures.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In view of your ruling, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: I have not given a ruling, but I suggest that the further consideration of the Bill be postponed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Then I shall say in view of your remarks, Mr. Chairman, and as this House is desirous of carrying out its own policy, as indicated to me on several occasions, there is only one thing to do, and that is to report progress. At the same time I wish to point out that on more than one occasion, while money Bills have been under discussion, it has been said that there was no likelihood of this House altering its opinion until such time as the other measures were dealt with. As it is the desire of the Council that all these Bills should be dealt with at the one time, I will meet the wishes of members and ask that progress be reported.

Progress reported.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.15] in moving the second reading said: This is the annual Bill which formally appropriates the amounts required for the services of the year as detailed in the Estimates of Expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and the General Loan Fund. Two Supply Bills have been passed this session granting, in all, £2,950,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £450,000 from the General Loan Fund and £300,000 from the Public Account for Advance to Treasurer. Clause 2 of this Bill grants further supply up to the total amount of the Estimates, and also a further £200,000 for Advance to Treasurer. The total amount required from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year is £11,217,300. Of this sum, £4,404,386 is permanently appropriated by Special Acts; and Clause 3 of the present Bill appropriates the balance, namely £6,812,914, as detailed in Schedule "B." The estimated expenditure from the General Loan Fund is £2,210,863, and from the Public Account for Advance to Treas-

urer, £500,000. These amounts are also appropriated by Clause 3 for the purposes set out in Schedules "C" and "D" respectively. Clause 3 further confirms the appropriation of expenditure from Advance to Treasurer, 1938-39. Details of this appropriation appear in Schedules "E" and "F."

Revenue for the year 1938-39 amounted to £10,949,660, compared with an estimate of £11,039,091, a net shortage of £89,431. The principal decreases were Departmental £84,468 and Public Utilities £221,540, while Taxation was greater than the estimate by £192,473, and Trading Concerns by £28,694. The poor season experienced in the outlying agricultural districts last year, coupled with the very low price of wheat, was largely responsible for the decrease in revenue collections. Thus interest collections by the Agricultural Bank were reduced to the extent of £70,817, while railway earnings fell £213,987 below the estimate. Other departments showing decreases were—Agriculture £5,805, Lands £2,652, and Titles Office £2,785; and here again drought conditions, low prices, and depressed business conditions were the contributing factors. The returns from other departments closely approximated the estimate, as also did those of Public Utilities other than railways. Metropolitan Water Supply, Electricity Supply, and Caves House, showed increases of £3,762, £6,519, and £2,312 respectively. The increases in the two first mentioned utilities were the result of normal expansion of the services; while as to Caves House, the completion of the new premises naturally attracted more custom. Other Public Utilities recording decreases were: Other Hydraulic Undertakings £7,945, Goldfields Water Supply £3,006, and Tramways £6,646. The fall in receipts from Other Hydraulic Undertakings was yet another result of the bad season and low prices, many farmers being unable to meet their commitments.

The total expenditure for the year was £11,170,102, being £111,665 greater than the estimate. Expenditure under Special Acts was £9,192 less than the estimate, while Governmental was £28,251 less, and Public Utilities £149,108 more. Interest on Australian Debt was less by £4,826, and there was a saving of £5,000 on the estimated cost of the North Australia survey. Other minor variations brought the net saving

under Special Acts to the figure I have stated. The reduction in governmental expenditure was mainly due to the amount of £25,000 provided for contributions under the Commonwealth National Insurance Act not being required. Other differences of little consequence either way accounted for the remainder. With regard to Public Utilities, increases in the basic wage were largely responsible for heavier expenditure on the transport services. Increases of £116,677 and £26,071 were incurred in respect of Railways and Tramways; Electricity Supply increased by £12,719, while the various Water Supply Undertakings recorded decreases totalling £7,674. Action has been taken by the Railway Department with a view to reducing expenditure, and it is expected that the current year's transactions will show a better result.

The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the current year have been framed on the assumption that there will be a greater demand for our primary products; and provided that shipping is available to carry our goods, the realisation of this anticipation will materially improve our position. The estimated revenue for the year is £11,186,012, and estimated expenditure £11,217,300, giving an estimated deficit of £31,288. Compared with last year, the Revenue budgeted for was expected to be greater by £236,352, the main items contributing to the increase being—

	£
Territorial	11,728
Departmental	137,724
Commonwealth	25,000
Public Utilities	159,740

There will be a probable falling off in receipts from Taxation to the extent of £71,523, and from State Trading Concerns £26,679.

Taking the foregoing items in order: Under Territorial, Land Revenue should return £19,324 more than last year owing to the better prices prevailing for wool and wheat. Mining will be about the same, but we expect that timber revenue will decline by £7,395. The position in regard to the timber industry is obscure at present; but it is possible, if shipping is available, that there will be considerable improvement in the export trade. Our estimate, however, is on the conservative side. In general, departmental collections are expected to be

approximately the same as last year. It was anticipated, however, that Treasury revenue would be increased by £120,000, owing to the transfer of motor license fees. As members know, this anticipation will not be realised, and the total departmental increase of £137,724 will be reduced accordingly.

Receipts from the Commonwealth will be greater this year owing to the increase in the Disabilities Grant of £25,000 recommended by the Grants Commission and approved by the Commonwealth Government. The increase of £159,740 shown under Public Utilities will be contributed by all the undertakings except the Fremantle Harbour Trust, where a small decrease is anticipated owing to uncertainty as to the quantity of shipping that will be using the port. The continually increasing services provided by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department and the Electricity Supply Department naturally result in a steady growth of revenue, and the collections from these services are estimated to exceed those of last year by £28,238 and £24,481 respectively.

To meet additional costs owing to the rise of the basic wage last year, increases in railway freights have been made in certain classes of goods; and these increases, it is expected, will return an extra £50,000 this year. With larger quantities of wheat to be transported this season, the total receipts from the Railways will probably be about £94,000 in excess of last year's figures. Taxation collections this year will be affected by the lower incomes of last year, and also by the reduction of Financial Emergency Tax by 1d. in the pound on the lower scales, which will account for about £35,000. The Government's proposal to reduce the rebate on income tax from 20 per cent. to 10 per cent. will turn what would otherwise have been a decrease into an increase of £8,822. Another proposal is to increase the rates of probate duty, and this will convert an estimated decrease of approximately £9,000 into an increase of £26,202, thus offsetting the reductions due to the amended scale of payments of Financial Emergency Tax. Receipts from Gold Mining Tax have been set down at £117,500, or £18,240 less than the actual amount for last year. This reduction is due to the fact that collections last year included arrears

from the preceding year, and that the out-standings this year are not nearly so great. The reduced amounts to be transferred to Revenue from the State Trading Concerns is accounted for by a reduction of £23,000 in profits of the State Saw Mills due to bad trade conditions during last year. There were fewer orders for building materials and the export market was also weak. It is anticipated, further, that the estimated contribution by the Wyndham Meat Works will be £7,000 less on account of the uncertain outlook due to war conditions. The position of the State Quarries, however, is expected to improve this year, as certain contracts have been entered into, and further orders are anticipated which, it is estimated, will permit the payment of £3,000 to Revenue.

The estimated expenditure for 1939-40 is greater by £47,198 than the actual expenditure in 1938-39. Under Special Acts the increase amounts to £133,483, and under Governmental to £47,291, while Public Utilities show a decrease of £133,576. Interest and Sinking Fund on the Public Debt are mainly responsible for the increase under special Acts, and these charges, of course, must continue to grow so long as we keep on spending loan money.

A new item under this heading is Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, 1938, for which the figure of £4,000 is set down this year. Government contributions to the fund established by the Act will increase from year to year for some time to come, but the expenditure will be offset to a large extent by a progressive reduction of the amount paid out for pensions under the Superannuation Act of 1871.

Under Departmental the principal item calling for comment is the provision of £20,000 for unforeseen expenditure arising out of the war; and while at this stage it is impossible to estimate what additional costs we may be called on to meet, it is considered advisable to make this provision.

In most departments a comparatively small increase over last year's expenditure is anticipated, almost entirely due to the higher basic wage and increases payable to the officers following on decisions of the Public Service Appeal Board. In the Education Department the increase amounts to £11,899, a considerable portion of which is the result of expansion of the service. As popu-

lation increases in different centres, new schools become necessary, and with the growth of the State a gradual increase in the Education Vote is inescapable. The decrease under Public Utilities is mainly the result of economies effected in the Railway Department where a saving of £158,177 is indicated. Other concerns such as the Metropolitan Water Supply, Tramways and Electricity Supply, show increases which are mostly due to expansion of the services. In these cases the extra cost is offset by greater collections. Clause 4 of the Bill, and Schedule G, deal with expenditure from the Reforestation Fund established under Section 41 of the Forests Act, 1918. Approval is sought for the expenditure of £60,000 from this fund on the items listed in the schedule. This expenditure covers works connected with the improvement and reforestation of State forests and the development of forestry generally. Details of the scheme have been laid upon the Table of the House.

I have dealt sufficiently with the important items; and my remarks might be given careful consideration, particularly by those members who have been so critical of the position of several of the departments to which I have referred, notably the Railway Department. Careful consideration to my remarks should also be given by those members who have so strongly criticised the desire of the Government to increase revenue during the present year by means to which this House has taken exception. I emphasise the absolute necessity for the Government's receiving at least the amount of revenue for which the Treasurer has budgeted. There is but one alternative to the suggestions put forward, and that alternative is increased taxation. The increase would, of course, take place under our Land and Income Tax Act. The Government is determined, as far as it can, to carry out the promise it made to the Commonwealth Government to balance the Budget, if it be at all possible to do so. I do not think it desirable at this stage to enter upon greater detail; most of the items have been referred to on other occasions in this Chamber and members should be clear as to the significance of the figures I have quoted. Those figures put an entirely different complexion on the position when compared with the figures which have been and are now being quoted by responsible members to justify the action of this

House in connection with other measures that have been before us. Some hon. members may be desirous of obtaining more detailed information than that which I have given in introducing the Bill; as usual, I shall be only too pleased to supply whatever information is required when it is available. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned till a later stage of the sitting.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th November.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [5.39]: Some members will no doubt be under the impression, because another Bill was rejected by the House, that this Bill will automatically go by the board, but that is not the position. This Bill, as I explained when introducing it, contains a provision for the expenditure of money which is received from the additional $\frac{1}{2}$ d. tax collected by the Commonwealth, which money can be used for work connected with transport. Members will perhaps recollect that I stated the Bill deals with the appropriation of moneys paid into the Main Roads Trust Account under and for the purpose of Sub-clause (2) of Clause 2 of the Federal Aid Roads Agreement. As hon. members are aware, the States are allotted 3d. and 2d. a gallon from customs and excise collections from the petrol tax. While the agreement states that $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. of each 3d. and $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. of each 2d. shall be specifically spent on roads the clause I have mentioned provides that the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ d. payment may be applied to the following purposes:—

The reconstruction, maintenance, or repair of roads or other works connected with transport, as the State may think fit.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is not provided in the Main Roads Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. I am trying to get it inserted in that Act, so that the money may be paid out. Although authority is thus given under the agreement with the Commonwealth for the State to expend a proportion of its Federal Aid Roads

Grant on "works connected with transport," no power is given under the Main Roads Act to appropriate moneys in the Main Roads Trust Account for purposes other than "defraying the cost of and incidental to the provision, construction, maintenance and supervision of roads." That is the point I desire hon. members to bear in mind. It is now desired to insert a provision in the Act which will enable the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. payment to be appropriated for any of the purposes authorised under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement. This proposal, if agreed to, will enable assistance to be given to local authorities in various parts of the State in providing "works connected with transport," such as aeroplane landing grounds. Already a certain amount of assistance has been rendered in this direction, and we are therefore seeking to make the new provision retrospective to this extent. In short, the position is that we collect the money and it is paid into the trust account; but we have no authority under our State Act to devote the fund to any purpose other than roads. Therefore we are not able to devote a certain part of the fund to works connected with transport. It is necessary to validate the payments already made and this we will do by the present measure, which will also give us the authority which we have not got at the present time to disburse the money for the purpose for which it is intended.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 31:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Amendment of the Bill has been rendered necessary following the rejection of the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2). We wish to ensure that we shall have authority to use the proceeds of the extra halfpenny on works connected with transport. I move an amendment—

"That all the words after the word "Act" in the last line of paragraph (iii) be struck out.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: By an amendment of Section 31 made in 1932, the funds shall be used and applied in such manner and proportions as the Governor, on the recom-

mentation of the Commissioner, shall from time to time determine in and for the purpose of defraying the cost of and incidental to the provision, construction, maintenance and supervision of roads, whether main or developmental roads under the measure or not, and of any other work executed and provided under the measure. The Chief Secretary, by his amendment, will practically be re-enacting provisions already in the Act.

The Chief Secretary: Why waste time?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Minister should not suggest that I am wasting time.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Bill was introduced to cover two points, and the repeal of Section 31 was necessary. Certain parts of the proposed new section must be retained in order to permit of funds being disbursed to local authorities for works connected with transport, and we must delete the balance, as I have indicated. If Mr. Nicholson had his way, we would have to introduce a new Bill. Why split straws about the manner in which the Bill has been drawn? The matter can be put right by passing the amendment, and I have been advised that that is the more desirable course to adopt. Until we have authority to pay out the money we have collected, no further assistance can be given to local authorities in that connection. Some members fail to understand the position, but I am afraid I cannot make it any more clear. We collect the money but we have no power to pay it out. That is the authority we require.

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

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Testator's Family Maintenance.

2, Guardianship of Infants Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

BILL—LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Further Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it no longer disagreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 2-9, 11-13, and 15 made by the Council, but had disagreed to Nos. 1, 10 and 14, now considered:

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

No. 1, Clause 2. In definition of "land" add at the end of the definition the words "save and except lands comprising a farm, grazing area, orchard, or dairy farm."

The CHAIRMAN: The reasons given by the Assembly for not agreeing to the amendments made by the Council are "As this is a war-time emergency measure, it is considered the farmers concerned will require at least equal protection with other persons in the State in connection with rents."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

The amendment with which the Assembly has agreed would exempt from the operations of the Act all the land described therein. The Government desires to have the right under this legislation to embrace all land so that no section of the community may be debarred from having rents dealt with where an exorbitant amount is being charged.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If this amendment be not insisted on, many people in the country will be placed in an awkward position, will be subject to much inconvenience, and be put to considerable expense. Properties of this type are not subject to increased rentals in the ordinary way, and are excluded from the Federal legislation dealing with this subject. The Government should want to limit the operations of this Act only to rents charged in populous areas.

The Chief Secretary: Does it matter where the increases take place if they are unfair in their incidence?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not want to see people in the country involved in additional expense and inconvenience by reason of this legislation, and I trust the amendment will be insisted on.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Nicholson spoke about this Bill being costly to people, but I would point out that it provides that no costs shall be allowed to either party. In no case would action be taken unless the rent charged was exorbitant.

The CHAIRMAN: I will suspend the sitting until the conclusion of the conference which begins at 7.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 8.27 p.m.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Conference Managers' Report.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I desire to report that the managers appointed by the Council met the managers appointed by the Assembly and failed to arrive at an agreement. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed; Bill dropped.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS).

Assembly's Message—In Committee.

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Prior to the tea suspension, the question before the Chair was that amendment No. 1 made by the Council and disagreed to by the Assembly be not insisted on.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: From knowledge that has come into my possession, I think the Committee should insist upon its amendment. I know of an instance in which a husband died and left farming property to his wife and children. I am interested in the matter as director of a trustee company. We have to do the best we can with the farm. In such instances properties are let at almost anything that can be obtained by way of rental. In some instances the amount

is little more than would be paid to a caretaker. This legislation is to operate for the duration of the war and, in the face of recent events, we may expect it to continue for a considerable period. I think, in view of the increased prices that will probably be received for primary products, executors should be in a position to let properties at reasonable rentals. I think that farms, orchards and so on should be excluded from the application of the legislation.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	.	..	..	10
Majority for					2

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. V. Plasse
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. G. Fraser

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon

(Teller.)

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

No. 10, Clause 5, Subclause (1) in paragraph iii) on page 5:—Delete the words "farm, grazing area, orchard, market garden or dairy farm" in lines 5 and 6, and substitute the word "land."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The same argument applies in this instance. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	10

Majority for 2

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. V. Plasse
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. E. H. H. Hall

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. J. A. Dimmitt

(Teller.)

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

No. 14. Clause 13—Insert after the words "apply" in line one, the following words:—"to any lease or agreement for lease of any land made prior to this Act in which the rent reserved is subject to a provision for reappraisal at any time or times and is determined in accordance with such provision or whereby the rent is fixed at varying or specified amounts during any one or more periods of the term of the lease or agreement and further shall not apply."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

The amendment is unnecessary.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment is of great importance and it is essential that we should insist upon it. If the Act is to apply to cases in which leases, by the terms of the contracts, are subject to reappraisal, the question arises whether the parties will be bound to go to the court and have a higher rate fixed. In most cases when a lease is granted for a long period, say 21 years, an agreement is reached between the two contracting parties—the lessor and the lessee—for a certain rental for the first seven years, and for the rent to be reappraised at each seven-year period thereafter, the reappraisal to be determined either by mutual agreement or by a certain method of arbitration laid down in the lease. Such contracts should be given full effect to, and the only way in which that can be done is by the amendment being insisted on.

Question put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before tellers are appointed, I will give my vote with the ayes.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	11
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	1
				—

Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. Hall
Hon. W. R. Hall

Hon. W. H. Kilson
Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. T. Moore
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. M. Heenan
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo
Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. J. J. Holmes

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
(Teller.)

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

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

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [8.52] in moving the second reading said: The object of the Bill is to amend the Bills of Sale Act, 1899, by inserting a new section after Section 29, the effect of which will be to exclude from seizure or sale, bed and bedding to the value of £10, household furniture to the value of £10, implements of trade to the value of £15, and all family portraits. As the Act stands at present, a person in need of money may grant a bill of sale over practically every article in the house. If he makes default in payment of the principal or interest the grantee can seize and sell those articles. Such a state of affairs frequently causes great hardship, especially amongst the poorer classes. The Bill will really protect poor persons and will make it impossible for them to mortgage the bare necessities and household furniture, bedding and tools of trade. On a former occasion this House agreed to the principle involved, and I feel confident members will agree to this Bill as well. The Bill does not apply to bills of sale already in existence. I think I have made myself quite clear, and need scarcely repeat that at the present time there is nothing to prevent a person who is short of money from granting a bill of sale over practically every piece of furniture and every tool of trade he has in his house. It means that if he does not pay the amount he has borrowed, or the interest he owes to the person who has taken the bill of sale, that person can seize and sell the various articles that the Bill proposes to exclude. If the Bill comes into operation, no one will be the loser; it will not inflict any hardship on a person who lends money; it will simply have the effect of preventing a poor person from pledging the essentials of his home. If a person goes to a moneylender to borrow, say, £50, the moneylender will realise that the articles mentioned in the Bill cannot be taken into account when calculating the value of the security. The effect will be

to protect the poor person against himself, and it will prevent him from mortgaging the articles I have already enumerated. It is a simple Bill, and the principle should be adopted by this House, as it adopted a similar measure last session. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [8.56]: I do not look upon this as a simple Bill at all. I did not agree with the Bill that went through last session. A bill of sale is a registered document; it is an agreement between the vendor and the purchaser, and as far as I can see there is nothing in the Bill to prevent a person going to one of the furniture shops, getting £100 worth of furniture, giving a bill of sale over it and agreeing to pay so much per week. Then at the end of the period, the purchaser finds himself unable to pay, and the vendor who has taken the bill of sale may find that under this proposed legislation £35 worth of the furniture is excluded from the bill of sale, or he may find that the purchaser has sold the bedding or the furniture, or he may have sold the sewing-machine, which would be regarded as an implement of trade. Thus perhaps £35 worth of furniture included in the bill of sale had been disposed of. The Bill provides that if the man who has taken the bill of sale seizes the furniture, he will be met with a penalty of £25. If he returns the goods, there will be expenses to meet, and if he does not pay the penalty, imprisonment will follow. The mover said that the person concerned will not be allowed to include these items in a bill of sale; but there is nothing in the Bill to prevent him from doing so, or giving them as security. The man who holds the mortgage will endeavour to get his money or his goods back. This is a breach of contract, and the House should not agree to it.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It will apply only to future bills of sale; not those in existence.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A bill of sale, when registered, is a contract. I hope Mr. Parker and Mr. Nicholson will agree on that at any rate. This measure proposes to exclude out of £100 at least one-third from that contract. If the mortgagor—he can be called the mortgagor of his effects—cannot fulfil his contract, one-third of his assets can be excluded under this measure. I look

upon the Bill as a nasty piece of work, and propose to vote against it.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.1]: The measure, although it reads very pleasantly, as designed to prevent unfortunate poor people from losing their beds and bedding and household furniture, will not do that. It is a double-edged sword. The object of the Bill is to protect the unfortunate individual against the unscrupulous moneylender, who will secure everything, having obtained a bill of sale over the various chattels; and he will do so when the money is not returned. In effect it will prevent a poor person who is in urgent need of money from borrowing at all. Obviously, the moneylender will not lend money if he cannot get security, and so another class of individual will arise, of a similar type to the moneylender, if not the moneylender himself, who will operate in this way. When that selfsame poor person finds that he cannot borrow money because of the existence of this measure, the other man will say, "Instead of lending you £5"—or £10 or £50, as the case may be—"on your bed and bedding and household furniture, I will buy those articles from you." Then the unfortunate poor person, instead of borrowing money, will sell his effects at a ridiculously low price for the amount that he or she wants from the unscrupulous person whom the Bill is designed to check, a small sum of money for a short period. Next the unscrupulous person says, "You need not worry; I will give you an option of repurchase at one month. I will lend you £30 and give you an option to repurchase at the end of three months or six months at £35 or £40." If at the end of that period the option is not exercised, the lender will seize the goods. They will not be seized under bill of sale, but will be seized automatically as being the property of the unscrupulous person.

Although the Bill is designed perhaps to effect an excellent purpose, it will to my mind make the evil worse than it is now, if it does exist to any great extent now. The person who is pressed for ready money will be forced to sell the furniture, and the person who buys the furniture will be a secondhand dealer; and I fear a class will arise who will take advantage of poor people. A similar thing to this arose in

France, with the result that that country started pawn shops to eliminate the type of people with whom I am concerned.

Members: More State trading!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am not advocating that any member of Parliament should start a pawnbroking establishment for that purpose, or advocate State pawnbroking. Short of that, I do not think it possible to protect these unfortunate people from themselves. To my mind this measure will not protect them, but will impose on them worse difficulties than they suffer under at present.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [9.6]: In introducing the measure, Mr. Heenan indicated that the purpose intended to be fulfilled by it, should it pass into law, was something of a beneficial nature, helping to protect, I take it, the grantor of the bill of sale from himself. Mr. Parker has outlined clearly what the result of the passing of a Bill such as this may be, and will be. I quite endorse what Mr. Parker has said. I can only assume that this measure has originated from the fact that Parliament last year passed a measure effecting an amendment to the Local Courts Act; some members may possibly think that the introduction of a measure such as this applying to bills of sale will attain the same objective as the amendment to the Local Courts Act.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No breach of contract is involved in that Act.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No. I merely wish to point out, as Mr. Holmes reminds me, that there is a vast difference between the position of an execution creditor under a judgment obtained in the local court and the holder of a bill of sale. The exemptions given in the Local Courts Act are somewhat on the lines of what is sought to be incorporated here: but there is a great deal of difference between a person who is the grantee under a bill of sale, and an execution creditor. The execution creditor, as we know, is a person who has obtained a judgment in a court of competent jurisdiction and seeks to enforce that judgment by way of an execution. So he compels the sale of certain goods and chattels which may be seized by the bailiff, or perhaps the sheriff. In order to try to protect tools of trade and bedding up to a certain value—I think something like £5—an exemption was provided so that people would not be left absolutely bare of

everything, but would have those absolute necessities left if an execution creditor came along. The position in regard to a bill of sale is a totally different thing. In the case of a bill of sale a person applies for a loan, saying "I can offer you as security for this loan certain goods and chattels in my house. I only want the loan of £10"—let us say—"for two or three"—or perhaps five or six—"months, and I will undertake to pay it to you by instalments within that period." If the Bill be passed into law, the position will be that no one, although having the security and being possessed of certain furniture and chattels, will be able to obtain the loan of a sum of money on those goods and chattels, because no one will be prepared to lend him one sixpenny piece on them. As Mr. Parker pointed out, the position will be that the evil, which Mr. Heenan imagines would be prevented by such a Bill as this, would become a far greater evil; and the result will be that those people who find it necessary to borrow a small sum of money on their goods and chattels will be compelled, if the Bill passes, to sell their goods and leave themselves bereft of absolute necessities. I am taking a person who has nothing but the bare goods and chattels here referred to; and we are just now approaching a season when it is indeed common for people to raise a few pounds to tide them over Christmas and the New Year.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: What? On their beds?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I say, to tide them over Christmas and New Year. In order to get the necessary money, they borrow it on the security of those chattels.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: But not on their beds.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: On everything that is inside the house.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Well, they should not.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Those very same people, if they cannot raise the small amount of money they require, perhaps £10, will, rather than be left without that money, sell their furniture; and then the evil will be a greater one. This interference with the ordinary negotiations of life is one of the things that are foolish in the extreme. Instead of being beneficial, usually they have quite the opposite effect. I do sincerely hope that no such measure as this will ever enter our statute-book, because instead of the

measure being of benefit to the people it will prove one of those statutes that create a great deal of hardship and which we will regret having passed.

I may point out certain other results. One instance might be even to prevent the people to whom Mr. Holmes referred—people desirous of marrying and who seek to borrow the necessary money—from obtaining a loan with which the needful chattels could be bought. They would not be able to do that if the Bill were passed. These people would be debarred, because it would be illegal and wrong and any security that might be given over the chattel mentioned in the Bill would after its passage become void. Is that good for the community? It would be one of the worst things for the community. I sincerely hope, therefore, that the House will vote against the Bill.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [9.16]: My remarks will be very brief. In spite of what the previous speaker has said, I intend to support the Bill. To me it seems to be a sorry state of affairs when a person has to borrow £10 or £15 to tide him over Christmas and offer as security the final £10 worth of furniture, £10 of beds and bedding or £15 of tools of trade. If Parliament can do anything to stop such a state of affairs, it is Parliament's duty to do so. The Bill is a genuine attempt to deal with the unscrupulous money-lenders who take advantage of these poor people. We know they do so. It is our duty to protect such people from themselves.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [9.18]: I support the Bill. I think the three members referred to by the previous speaker have ruined their case by over-statement. Listening to them, one would get the impression that the Bill would destroy altogether transactions by way of bill of sale. When one comes to examine the Bill, however, what does one find? It merely excludes £15 worth of tools of trade, £10 worth of furniture and £10 worth of beds and bedding. Goods to the value of £35 in all will be excluded. If a person can offer no greater security for a loan upon a bill of sale, then I consider he would be extremely fortunate if he could find anyone to lend him the money. Again, if that represents the sum total of his assets, this Bill will do some good

because it will prevent him from borrowing on them, particularly when one considers the nature of the transaction. I repeat, in the first place, I do not know where such a person could find a money lender willing to accept his security; and in the second place, if £35 is the total value of his assets, he should be prevented from giving a bill of sale over them. At the worst, if the Bill passes it will make it hard for such a person to borrow temporarily when he is short of money; but on the other hand, the Bill will do him a good turn because it will prevent him from raising money on the security of those goods and chattels, and he will still have them. I would prefer to see such a person forced to sell his goods and chattels, rather than obtain a loan from the money-lender and give a bill of sale over them. It will be in the interests of the community if we pass the Bill. I hope the second reading will be carried.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East—in reply) [9.21]: All I hope is that this small Bill will receive the consideration which I maintain it merits. I will briefly do my best to clear up what I consider to be misleading statements made by the opponents of the measure. Mr. Holmes said that if the Bill were passed, it would amount to a breach of contract. I have no hesitation in saying that that is entirely a mis-statement of the position.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: In what way?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The Bill will affect a small section of the community, the poorer class.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It will apply to any section of the community.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: In the case of the poor householder, it will simply mean that if the husband or the wife—whoever is the owner of the household furniture—wants to borrow £50, the moneylender will know, if this Bill is enacted, that he cannot obtain security over furniture to the value of £10, beds and bedding to the value of £10 and tools of trade to the value of £15. Therefore, he will exclude those articles from his consideration. I fail to see that there will be any breach of contract. Everyone will know the position. No one can argue that that will be a breach of contract.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Bill does not prevent all those articles from being removed from the Bills of Sale Act.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I say unhesitatingly that that is not so. The Bill provides—

In any bill of sale by way of a security, whether heretofore or hereafter executed, the following chattels of the grantor, to the extent in this subsection mentioned, that is to say, beds and bedding . . . shall notwithstanding anything contained in the bill of sale be deemed to be expressly excluded.

They should not be included in the bill of sale. Mr. Parker said, in effect, that the Bill would prevent a poor person from borrowing money. It would do nothing of the kind. A poor person should not borrow money on beds and bedding to the value of £10, nor on furniture to the value of £10, nor should he pledge tools of trade to the value of £15 by which he earns his living. This Bill will prevent him from doing so. Mr. Parker also said that in desperate cases such a man might be forced to sell his chattels. That is true; but a person would have to be in a very desperate plight to sell his bedding, furniture and tools of trade. Anyhow, if his position was so desperate, the lesser evil for him would probably be to sell the chattels, and not pledge them.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not at the rate of interest the money lenders charge.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Mr. Parker is also afraid that a class of person may purchase those articles, that he would go as far as to purchase the beds and bedding, furniture and tools of trade. Mr. Parker knows as well as I do, however, that there is a doctrine known as the doctrine of apparent possession. I tell members without any fear of contradiction that there are sales known as bogus sales. A person might come along and say "Yes, the law prevents you from granting a bill of sale over those articles, so in order to get around the law, you sell them to me and I will give you a receipt." I have no hesitation in saying that that would be a bogus sale and would not be upheld if it came before a court.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Mr. Parker did not so argue at all. There would be a clear sale and delivery of the goods. There would be no apparent possession at all.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: We cannot prevent people from selling their goods, if they so desire; but wives sometimes grant these bills of sale without their husbands' knowledge. I venture to say wives would not sell the chattels proposed to be protected,

because in such case they would have no beds to sleep on. Last year the House gave generous consideration to a similar amendment of the Local Courts Act.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: A different Act altogether.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I agree, but the principle was very similar.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Entirely different. You know it is.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The principle, I repeat, is similar. The principle is that poor people, by virtue of their poverty, must be protected against themselves.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There is still the pawnshop. This measure will not protect those people.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I admit that, but it will prevent them from mortgaging such chattels and thus will avoid all the hardships incidental to such transactions. The measure will do harm to no one in the world. It will not harm money lenders, because they will be aware that the law will prevent the pledging of the goods in question; and, when lending money, they will take that fact into consideration.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the bona fide purchaser?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am glad the hon. member has reminded me of the bona fide purchaser. Take the case of the young man who wants to purchase £100 worth of furniture. He signs a hire purchase agreement, which is registered as a bill of sale.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And it becomes a bill of sale.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is so.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There will be no hire purchase agreements in future, if the Bill passes.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: What an extraordinary statement for the hon. member to make.

Hon. G. Fraser: We are used to such statements.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: A young man who desires to settle down proposes to buy furniture worth £100. The vendors will want a deposit. They do not deliver £100 worth of furniture without securing a deposit. They will also know full well that the goods referred to in this measure must be protected, and so will protect themselves to that extent before delivering the furniture from their warehouse, that is, if they have any sense.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The man would have to pay £50 deposit.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: No.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: As soon as it is delivered, the furniture becomes secondhand. Furniture to the value of £50 would be reduced in value to £30.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: No, £20.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Furniture depreciates in value 50 per cent. immediately.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is one aspect of the case that I am certain the furniture vendors will work out to their own satisfaction. The principal virtue of this Bill is that poor people will be denied the very doubtful privilege of pledging bare necessities in the way of furniture, bedding and tools of trade. The measure will not apply to existing bills of sale; it will protect a certain unfortunate class from themselves.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	14

Majority against ..	1
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AYES.

Hon J. Cornell	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon J. T. Franklin	Hon. T. Moore
Hon G. Fraser	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon E. H. Gray	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon E. H. H. Hall	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. L. Craig
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

MOTION—TROLLEY BUSES.

Barn on the Esplanade.

Debate resumed from the 14th November on the following motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton (Metropolitan):—

That, as the reply by the Chief Secretary to a question regarding the erection of a trolley bus barn on the Esplanade, indicated that the Government had such under consideration, this House emphatically protests against the use of this site for such a purpose.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.35]: Mr. Bolton, in moving the motion, went to very great lengths to impress upon us what had been accomplished by the City Council, and did not concern himself very much with what has been accomplished by the Government regarding improvements made on the river front. In my opinion he introduced quite a lot of matters not relevant to the motion, but I should like to tell him without further delay that this matter has not been considered by the Government.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You said it was under consideration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Here again we have another example of what comes of being too generous in giving information. The reply to the hon. member did not state that the matter was under consideration by the Government. The facts of the case are easily explained. Trolley buses are a comparatively recent innovation in this State and have been very successful, with the natural consequence that there is every possibility of an increasing number being used in the city. This being so, the department must have some regard for the requirements of the service. At present the trolley buses are housed at East Perth, and metropolitan members particularly will recognise that there is a lot of running from the centre of the city to East Perth, which of course, is unpayable because the trolley buses have to traverse the whole of the distance along Hay-street to the car barn. The uneconomical running which that necessitates is something that the department must take into consideration, and so thought has been given to the question of a depot for trolley buses at some point other than the present East Perth car barn. I am afraid that the mere appearance of the car barn has probably had something to do with the objections raised by some members of this House. I understand that the department has been looking for a site which I will describe as a depot. There has never been any intention of establishing repair shops or anything of that kind separately for trolley buses. The intention has been that the trolley buses should use the repair shops at East Perth when necessary. As I said, the department has been giving thought to the question, and has considered quite a

number of sites, but no finality has been reached. Again I emphasise that the Government has not at any time had this matter before it. I hope the hon. member will accept my word for that, as it would appear that he doubts the word of another Minister who made a somewhat similar statement. May I suggest to the hon. member that if there was an intention on the part of the Government to utilise the site to which he referred, instead of any building that might be erected being an eyesore, it would probably be quite in keeping with the surrounding area.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We do not want any building there at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member has very definite ideas on the matter. I am not quarrelling with him on that score, but he appears to have trolley buses on his mind, and I want to assure him of the actual position. Until such time as this proposal is dealt with by the Government, I do not know that he has much to complain about. Still I would like to reply to some of the statements made on the motion, because he seemed quite prepared to give all possible credit to the City Council for having done a very good job. In that he is not alone. I, too, am prepared to give the City Council much credit for the work it has done, but I am not prepared to give the City Council all the credit for all the work that has been done. Only in recent years has the City Council been prepared really to interest itself in the beautification of the water front. As far back as 1914 Union Jack Square was offered to the City Council by the Government and the council refused the offer. In 1918 the Government offered the City Council all the parks and gardens under Government control in the City of Perth, and the offer was refused in July of that year. So members should bear in mind that the City Council has not always been so keen in the matter of parks and reserves and water fronts as it is today. The City Council did not refuse the offer of the Government in 1918 until it had inspected all the books in connection with the parks and reserves. Apparently because the City Council thought the taking over of those parks and reserves would involve something of a liability, it was not prepared to accept the offer made by the Government.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: But the war was on then.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And a war is on now. I cannot see that that would make any difference to the principle.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The undertaking of a liability at that time would make a difference.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So we have one of the reasons why we have heard so much recently regarding the City Council. I wish to give the City Council all possible credit for having done a good job, but I do not want this House or the City Council to take from the Government the credit due to it in that regard or the credit due for enabling the City Council to do its share. I think members will agree that Mr. Bolton was not prepared to give the Government any credit at all.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I was not putting up a case for the Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would not expect the hon. member to do so, but he could give credit where credit is due, and not claim the whole of the credit, as he did, for the City Council. The hon. member went so far as to say that the Government was shirking its responsibility. He even said that the Government was not prepared to carry out the agreement entered into with the City Council. Neither of those statements contained any semblance of truth, but before dealing with that point, let me give a little more history. The hon. member said that the City Council had spent £78,000 on Riverside Drive and foreshore improvements. I have no doubt those figures are correct, but the hon. member said nothing about the money spent by the Government, which had brought river improvements to the stage when it became possible for the City Council to expend that money and secure the results that we see today. The hon. member spoke eulogistically of Mount's Bay-road, referred to what it had been and to the wonderful improvements to be seen today. The hon. member gave the City Council all due credit for what it had done, but not a word was said about what the Government had done regarding the same work. One would imagine that the Government had had no hand whatever in the task. As a matter of fact, it was carried out largely with Government assistance. Members will recall that at that time the local authorities, and

particularly the Perth City Council, were supplied by the Government with relief workers. In this instance, the men were paid £1 more than they were entitled to as relief workers, or for sustenance. The money so paid represented at least two-thirds, according to my information, of the total wages paid on that job. That money was provided by the Government; yet Mr. Bolton says the City Council was responsible for that, and claims that the present Government is anxious to do something that will spoil the good work accomplished by the City Council. In addition to the money provided by the Government in that way, the plant owned by the Government was largely utilised for the work. Let us be fair in viewing a matter of this description, and not limit credit to the City Council only. In discussing this question outside Parliament, one gentleman said that the comparison between the work of the Government and of the council was as between a man that created a garden and one that merely top-dressed it. I think that description very apt when consideration is given to the widening of Mount's Bay-road and the improvement of the river foreshore.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I gave you the expenditure incurred by the City Council, but you have not given the House particulars of Government expenditure.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall give the hon. member information under that heading as well. While Mr. Bolton was speaking, I interjected that the council had received very great benefit as a result of the improvements to the waterfront. There is no question as to the truth of that remark, in that, as a result of the expenditure of Government funds in that area, the council has undoubtedly received considerable benefit by way of increased rates. As usually happens in such instances, those increased rates will be payable for many years to come.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But where would the increased rates come from?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: From properties in the vicinity of the waterfront.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You are wrong there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There have been great improvements, and I think I am right in my statement.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Not one whit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Does Mr. Nicholson claim that land in the vicinity of the waterfront is not more valuable than formerly, and that that is not due to the improvements that have been carried out?

Hon. J. Nicholson: But those improvements have not increased the rates at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If rates have not been increased, most decidedly land values have increased.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The improvements must have resulted in increased valuations.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course; and I am surprised that Mr. Nicholson could even suggest for one moment that an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds would not have that effect. I claim that the value of the land handed over to the City Council as the result of the reclamation work must amount to about £108,000, and that is the opinion of an expert valuer. There is another point in respect of which the Government at least is entitled to some credit. Mr. Bolton complained that the Government had shirked its responsibilities and neglected to fulfil its obligations.

Hon. L. B. Bolton. Yes, with regard to the removal of the sheds.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: During the course of his remarks, Mr. Bolton said—

It is my desire to point out to members who may not be thoroughly conversant with the subject how the matter stands to-day, and to show them how the City Council in every instance has fulfilled its obligations but how, on the other hand, the Government is attempting to shirk its responsibilities and to do something which is not included in the arrangement between the City Council and the Government.

I am afraid the facts do not bear out the hon. member's statement. The Government has already done more than it undertook to carry out. It promised the removal of the existing buildings within five years. Now, at the end of 2½ years, some of those buildings have already been removed.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Or as soon as they are empty.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member desires to be very particular.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is an important point.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What Mr. Bolton refers to is an arrangement that was made after the original agreement was

entered into as the result of which the Government, by means of correspondence, and in reply to deputations, told the council that it was desirous of assisting that body as far as it could. I understand the City Council expressed its satisfaction with the arrangement made. I am very doubtful whether the council is dissatisfied with the position as it stands to-day. Of course I know Mr. Bolton is in possession of correspondence, which he quoted to the House. I do not propose to follow him by also quoting correspondence. All I desire at the moment is to show the hon. member that the Government will carry out its obligation to the very letter. It is to be hoped the council will do the same. I have already pointed out that some of the buildings have been removed; for instance, three boatsheds and one storage shed have gone, and legal action has been launched to secure the removal of two other boatsheds. A modern parking area has been established. If it was not the intention of the Government to carry out the arrangement it had entered into with the council, would it be likely to take legal action to enforce the removal of some of the existing premises? If the hon. member thinks a gang of men should be sent to demolish the sheds immediately they are vacated, he makes a big mistake. We must be reasonable regarding such matters, and I consider the Government has been more than reasonable in giving effect to the arrangement. I am advised that the following sets out briefly the arrangements made with the City Council: The Government, on the 21st May, 1937, undertook "to remove the buildings now existing in the section bounded by Mill-street, Bazaar-terrace, Riverside-drive and William-street within five years." This was communicated to the council, and after an exchange of letters, the matter was agreed to without alteration to this clause. The Acting Lord Mayor thanked the Government in writing, and expressed the appreciation of the council and of himself at the action of the Government in bringing this long-debated matter to finality. The lightering companies then decided to close down their operations by river, and asked for a two-years lease for storage, as they were considering a proposition for road transport. Cabinet agreed on the 3rd October, 1938, to a lease for one year and no longer. The proposition having fallen through, the companies were prepared to remove their sheds as soon as they became empty, and one was

dismantled and sold. Another containing many tons of paper was to remain until not later than the end of 1939. That is another indication that the Government was very anxious to secure the removal of these sheds at the earliest possible moment, consistent with a reasonable attitude towards the various interests affected. An arrangement was made between the State Gardens Board, McIlwraith McEacharn & Co., and W.A. Newspapers Ltd. for the storage of newspaper print in sheds from the 28th February. A minimum period of six months was fixed, with a right of extension for any subsequent period not later than the 31st December, 1939. Again, that shows that the Government was not prepared to agree to any extension beyond the end of this year. The war, however, has raised a possibility not contemplated by any party to the agreement, and it is just possible that the removal of all the facilities for the river transport of goods might be a serious blunder.

Hon. L. Craig: It would probably be very serious.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; and consequently that phase had to be given some consideration. I understand some thought was given to the possibility of the destruction of bridges by enemy action. We all hope that is far-removed from the bounds of possibility, but nevertheless we cannot afford to assume too much. The Government must have regard to the possibilities of such a situation.

Hon. L. Craig: Then there is a possibility of restricted petrol supplies.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That too is a grave possibility. I have already mentioned that river transport may be essential in the future. While the City Council may choose to ignore that aspect, the Government cannot afford to do so. Members will quite understand what criticism would be levelled at the Government if anything of the sort should happen as the result of enemy action and, by some decision of the Government, the people were so circumstanced that they were not able to use the river when other means of transport were not available. I can assure the House that the Government is anxious to remove eyesores on public domains, and along the river frontage, or wherever they may be. As to the existence of the particular buildings to which Mr. Bolton has specifically alluded, a motion such as he moved was not needed, nor were the

statements made by him in support of it required to convince the Government that it should carry out an agreement honourably entered into with the City Council. I could criticise the City Council on its attitude if I wished to do so, but I do not propose at this juncture to deal with some of the matters that would show that even the policy of the Perth City Council has not always been in accord with that which it advocates at present, not only regarding its attitude to the beautification of the river but concerning the spoiling of what has already been accomplished. I told Mr. Bolton I would quote some figures to indicate the money that has been spent by the Government on this work, but I am afraid I have not included those particulars in my notes. Suffice it to say that if one cared to reckon up the amount of money spent by the Government in different avenues, one would find that it ran into hundreds of thousands of pounds, not a mere £78,000.

Hon. T. Moore: And that is apparent; the work can be seen all over the place.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course that is so. It is there for every member to view for himself. One need only mention what has been done on the South Perth side of the river.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: My only concern is where you propose to house the trolley buses.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In support of his motion Mr. Bolton's argument made it appear that the present Government was not interested in any such work unless it could get a few more pounds by way of rent, that because some department of the State desired to get a few pounds of revenue, the Government is going to agree willingly to the erection of some building on the waterfront that would be an eyesore. That was the hon. member's argument, no matter what words he used. I would point out that the Government is committed to the expenditure of a tremendous amount of money in the future on the beautification of the river front. Much work remains to be done. The beautification will take some years to complete. I do not suppose the City Council is likely to agree to the suggestion that it should be prepared to foot the bill. I hardly like to mention this, but it is a remarkable fact that those who are speaking for the City Council seem to think that the respon-

sibility for the unemployed should fall wholly and solely on the Government. It would be interesting to know what the City Council has spent in the last few years on the relief of unemployment.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Part of that £94,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is that compared with the times we have been going through and the amount of money provided by the Government for the relief of unemployment in the city of Perth?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The Federal Government provided most of it, do not forget.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Quite apart from anything that might have been provided by the Federal Government, what has the City Council done to relieve the unemployment position in Perth?

Hon. J. Nicholson: A very great deal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In what way?

Hon. J. Nicholson: In giving employment on roads to men who were more or less incapacitated.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That statement sounds very nice. Unfortunately the hon. member is not in a position to substantiate it.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I will get the information for the Chief Secretary if we are sitting tomorrow.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member is not in a position to substantiate his statement to any extent. He may point to a few men who have been given employment, but I have yet to learn that within the last few years the City Council has done anything concrete other than to keep its own workers in employment. Can the hon. member mention one work that has been done in the city in recent years by the City Council to relieve unemployment?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Yes, the very work we are discussing; that on the waterfront.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The men employed on that in recent years have been employed by the council for some time.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Some of them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I give the council credit for what it has done but it has not done one-tenth of what it might have done to relieve the unemployment problem in Perth. I make that definite statement in view of what the hon. member has said. There are very few capital cities—very few cities at all—that are in such a

favourable financial position as the city of Perth. All credit is due to the City Council. That body is looking after its own interests and doing so very well indeed.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Was the Council not £12,000 in debt at the 30th June?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: £12,000? A few hundred thousand pounds! It is significant, however, that the council has reduced its loan liability by about £400,000 in recent times.

Hon. H. Tuckey: I was referring to its overdraft.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I imagine that its overdraft is much larger than £12,000. I do not know where that figure comes from but there may be a loss on the working account.

Hon. J. T. Franklin: That figure was last year's deficit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I want it to be understood that I am forced to make these statements in view of the manner in which the motion was introduced and the arguments used in support of it. So far as I understand, the relationship between the City Council and the Government is quite good, though I did notice that, according to the paper the council had decided to ask its officers to give whatever information they could if there were any signs of the Government erecting a car-barn or a trolley-bus depot on the waterfront. The council is terribly suspicious that the Government is likely to do something to spoil the waterfront; yet what the council has done to beautify the waterfront will not compare in value with what the Government has done.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I did not criticise the Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the past the Government has been criticised for spending too much money on the waterfront and not enough in the country. The hon. member himself used that argument.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What has that to do with the question before us?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have dealt with that matter and am now replying to the hon. member's statements.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I do not think he raised that question at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I did not say he had raised it on this motion. I said we have heard from him in the past that we are spending too much in the city and not

enough in the country. Just as we have heard from country members that we should provide more facilities for the country instead of spending the money in providing for the beautification of the riverfront.

Hon. T. Moore: You get it both ways.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is so much one could say when dealing with town planning or the beautification of the riverfront or the erection of a tram depot or trolley bus barn. I want to conclude as I began by saying that the department has considered many sites which would provide a more accessible depot for trolley buses. The East Perth site does not lend itself to expansion as proposed by Mr. Bolton. It has never been the intention of the department to establish repair shops away from East Perth and hon. members can rest assured that the repair shops will remain where they are at present. Until such time as a proposal of that kind is dealt with by the Government, naturally the Government will not be in a position to discuss it. I want the House to understand that the department has been looking after its best interests and endeavouring to find ways and means for providing a depot for trolley buses more economical than the present one. The hon. member, in moving his motion, has endeavoured to give a good deal of credit to the City Council without giving any to the Government for what it has done in the way of beautifying the riverfront, but I assure the House that the Government is just as jealous as the City Council to prevent the erection of eyesores on the waterfront, and the agreement with the City Council will be honoured in every detail consistent with the circumstances at a given moment. Unfortunately it has not been as easy as some would have thought to secure the removal of all the sheds at the one time. I have pointed out that war conditions have created a situation that has had to be given some consideration. Having regard to all the circumstances, it can be said that the Government has not endeavoured to shirk its responsibilities but has tried to do its best to carry out its agreement and will continue to do so. If circumstances arise that make it essential to retain some facilities for river traffic, as a result of war needs, the Government will have to take that into consideration, and I do not think the council will raise any strong objection. I feel the council con-

sists of reasonable men who will adopt a reasonable attitude if circumstances of that kind should arise. The hon. member's fears that the Government is not likely to carry out its obligations are therefore groundless. There was no need for the hon. member to move a motion of this kind because the Government is as anxious as is the City Council to beautify the riverfront.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.10]: Actually I think the House is not very much concerned with the quarrel between the champion of the Government and the champion of the City Council. The Chief Secretary appears to me to have spoken for about two minutes on the motion and for the rest of the time on something that is almost irrelevant. The motion as printed on the notice paper is that this House emphatically protests against the use of this site for the purpose stated; that is, against the use of the riverfront for the purpose of erecting a trolley-bus barn. The Minister has given us a certain assurance but I do not know that the story has been completely told. I have it on what I consider indisputable authority that at the time Mr. Bolton introduced this motion plans were on the drawing board for a trolley-bus barn to be erected on the riverfront. It is not a very big step from a plan on a drawing board to a building on a site, and it is not a very big step from a recommendation by a department to the acceptance of that recommendation by Cabinet.

The Chief Secretary: It would be interesting to know where you got that information.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I had it on indisputable authority.

The Chief Secretary: Whose?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I will go further and say that a person made a remark to me that he was in a position to make, that members of Parliament should not be worried about an unsightly trolley-bus barn because the building was to be of brick, and something good to look upon.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I heard that, too.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: My contention is that if the building were of stone surrounded by Corinthian columns, and if those columns were embellished with gold and studded with diamonds, it would still be wrong for a building to be placed in that position. Mr. Bolton's motion should be strongly supported

by the House so that the Government need be in no uncertainty as to Parliament's attitude to such a proposal. It would be a sin to spoil the river frontage. Actually it has been spoilt to some extent by the establishment of a car parking area and an amusement park, and the erection of buildings on the riverfront would carry that spoliation still further and indicate a complete disregard of the beauties of Perth and the river frontage. Many cities are spending scores of thousands of pounds to beautify their environs while here are natural advantages that the Government, or, if not the Government, a department is seeking to destroy. While it may be true that the Government as a Government has not considered this site, it seems perfectly obvious that a department has considered it, and not only considered it but has gone to the extent of having plans and specifications completed. I hope the House will vote solidly for the motion so that the Government will know that Parliament is certainly not in accord with such a proposal.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.15]: I listened attentively to the remarks of the Chief Secretary, and was pleased to hear that the Government was proud of having spent so much money on the foreshore. Nevertheless I was surprised he made no definite statement, and was very careful not to do so. The only statement he really made was that we could be sure there would be no eyesore. The answer given to a question some time ago was that the matter was under consideration, but no decision had yet been arrived at. I hoped tonight some definite statement would be made that in no circumstances would a car-barn, however beautiful, be placed on the river front.

The Chief Secretary: That was the reply of the department.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I hoped the Chief Secretary would be able to make a definite statement that the Government in no circumstances would allow any such buildings to be erected on the foreshore. I am not surprised Mr. Bolton brought forward the motion. One of the greatest eyesores the city could have is "White City" in the middle of the river front. Beautiful grass grows from the Causeway to the most unsightly parking area that is out in the sun.

The Chief Secretary: Was that not agreed to by the City Council?

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: I am not concerned about that, but am sorry the Government was not strong enough to prevent the council from erecting that eyesore. That, however, is not under the direct control of the Government, but comes under what is called the State Gardens Board. Only today I saw an iron building going up there, and presume it is for some other gaudy amusement at the foot of William-street. There is a large area surrounded by netting, and it is let for the parking of cars. Why should it not be used for the general public if available for the purpose, but, on the other hand, why have cars parked there at all? The area should be laid out in gardens. If the Gardens Board is going to do that sort of thing with our public areas, it is time the Government brought its career to a close and handed over the property concerned to the City Council; alternatively, if it is to be a State Gardens Board, let it be restricted to the control of gardens only. As a member of Parliament in this State and a ratepayer of the city one is ashamed to point out things like that to visitors. I refer to the wheels, the side shows and other amusements at the foot of William-street. True, the noise has been eliminated, but I hope the whole thing will shortly disappear because very few people patronise the place. I was sorry the Chief Secretary could not say definitely the riverfront would not be used for a building in which to house trolley buses. He should have found no difficulty in saying that. All we have had from him is a statement that the site of the depot has been under the consideration of the department. Apparently he was unable to say that that site had not been considered by the department. Possibly he is not in a position to be more definite on that point. I trust the House will ask him to convey to the Government that we are definitely opposed to any portion of the river frontage being occupied for that purpose, and that he himself will oppose the use of such a site. Any amount of land is available for the purpose between Claremont and the University at comparatively cheap prices.

The Chief Secretary: Where do you suggest?

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: Between the Perth-Fremantle-road and the Karrakatta cemetery. The depot need not be erected on the main road, and could be placed a few hundred yards further back. There is a dairy at present in the locality with a dirty-looking cowyard attached to it. The area could be acquired at a low cost, and a depot established there would be out of the way, although conveniently placed for the vehicles concerned. If a depot were required for the northern trolley buses, I suggest one of the northern suburbs. Trolley buses are already parked along Bazaar-terrace in the daytime, but I do not know whether they are there at night. I admit it is inconvenient to take trolley buses to the carbarn, but there is an old carbarn at Claremont in which the trolley buses could be housed. I trust the Chief Secretary's words will be given full effect to by the Government, and that no more eyesores will be erected along the river front. I also hope the Government will in the near future do its best to remove the present eyesores, namely, those that have been erected by a Government instrumentality. I am not referring to other buildings that must remain where they are for the time being in case they are required for water transport.

The Chief Secretary: I think the City Council agreed to the parking area being placed where it is.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [10.22]: The Chief Secretary has displayed remarkable skill tonight in seeking to evade a very definite reply to the motion. He has practised that high art of evasiveness that probably entitles him to be placed on a pinnacle. The question is a simple one, not one that needs to be elaborated and dilated upon to the extent the Chief Secretary has done concerning the respective amounts expended by the Government and the City Council on the waterfront. The matter originated by a question asked by Mr. Bolton in November last. He asked, "Is it the intention of the Government to build a trolley bus barn on the Esplanade site between William and Mill streets, south of Bazaar terrace and the water's edge?" That was a plain and simple question, and the reply of the Chief Secretary produced the motion now before us. The reply was "The matter is under consideration but no decision has yet been arrived at."

The Chief Secretary: That was the department's reply.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Apparently the Chief Secretary has not heard the many rumours that have been floating widely about the city, but for his information I can verify what Mr. Dimmitt said. There have been what seem to be definite rumours that the Government has prepared plans and specifications for a proposed earbarn on the waterfront. Those rumours have been prevalent, and because of them Mr. Bolton was prompted to move his motion. It is, I believe, the honest endeavour of the Government to assist in embellishing and improving the waterfront, just as it is the earnest endeavour of the City Council to make the waterfront a source of attraction worthy of the capital city of this great State. That the Government has spent certain sums of money on works there is to be expected. It is the duty of any Government to see that the capital city is kept up to a high standard, because by the standard attained in the capital city shall the State as a whole be judged by those who come here. For that reason I would not expect the Government to do other than spend money wherever necessary, but Governments sometimes make mistakes. I believe there has been a risk of a very grave mistake being perpetrated by the Government, if one is to believe the rumours that have been going about. They seem to have some foundation in fact. The very answer given by the Chief Secretary to Mr. Bolton's question in November is indicative of the fact and helps to prove the truth of the rumours. This House should assist the Government in seeing that it does not perpetrate a mistake and spoil the beauty of the waterfront. By this means its progress towards embellishment will be advanced. We recognise that at present there are certain eyesores on it which must be removed and in due time will be removed. But the Government ought to be encouraged by an emphatic vote from this House registering our strong objection to any proposal to erect on that waterfront or in its vicinity any such structure as that which is proposed here. That being the case I sincerely hope that hon. members will record their votes in favour of Mr. Bolton's motion.

HON. J. T. FRANKLIN (Metropolitan)
[10.31]: In listening to the debate on this, in my opinion, highly important question to

the citizens of Perth, I wish first of all to congratulate Mr. Bolton on bringing the matter forward. I wish also, however, to draw attention to the fact that Mr. Bolton is not blaming the Government. He is merely anxious to obtain a definite promise that a ear barn shall not be erected on the Esplanade. The Chief Secretary in speaking to the motion actually twitted the City Council with not having spent much money on the foreshore. I wish to inform the hon. gentleman and also the House and the public generally that the Perth City Council has spent thousands of pounds more than it should have spent on the making of Mount's Bay-road. I wish to bring it prominently to hon. members' notice that Mount's Bay-road is a portion of the main highway. On the boundary of the City of Perth, the Main Roads Board has never spent a penny on that road. The Perth City Council did the whole of the work. From Crawley Baths to the boundary it made a deviation at considerable cost. That was during the time when Mr. Galbraith was City Engineer. Then, to make that road something that not only the Perth City Council would be proud of but also the citizens of Perth, the council decided to widen the road from the Crawley Baths right into the city. That work also was carried out by the Perth City Council—with the assistance of the Government at that time; and I think hon. members will agree that the council assisted the Government by engaging sustenance men to do the work on that portion of the road. Therefore it is about fifty-fifty as far as expenses with regard to that work are concerned.

However, we have also the good graces of the King's Park Board, who allowed us to take all the filling-in we required off the side of the hill. That was a big undertaking, but the Perth City Council also had to re-establish the side of the hill by planting trees and shrubs and so forth to make it as natural as possible. I think hon. members and the citizens of Perth think a good job was made of that.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I can bear all that out.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I desire to give the Government a great deal of credit for what they have done in improving the foreshore; and in giving that credit I want to go back to one man, who is gone, unfortunately for the State of Western Aus-

tralia. But for the late Mr. Alexander McCallum, those improvements would not have been so far advanced as they are at the present time. Honour to whom honour is due. As regards the foreshore, however, I am not only with Mr. Bolton but also with the Chief Secretary. The hon gentleman does not want that foreshore to be disfigured: he wants it to be a thing of beauty forever. However, we do want a distinct undertaking from the Government. Whether the Government knows or not that the idea is to erect a car barn on the foreshore I cannot say. I must accept the word of the Chief Secretary, who says the matter has not been considered; but I know from past experience, from having written in to certain departments and objected to this, that and the other thing being carried out in the main street, that the next thing one knows is that that very thing is being done. Now Mr. Bolton has taken the bull by the horns and brought the matter before Parliament, and I sincerely hope the motion will be carried, and carried so effectively that no building will be erected on the foreshore between Crawley and the Causeway to disfigure it once more. The Perth City Council has made a wonderful work of that locality. The Government has assisted the council, I wish to say also. The Government and the council have worked hand-in-hand. I know from my experience of 26 years in the council and of dealing with the Government that we have always had a fair deal not only from the Government of the day but also from the Gardens Board with regard to any matters brought forward. They have always been at one with us as regards the beautifying of that route. But if we do not pass this motion, it will be a kind of lever for the department. I am not saying "the Government" now, but "the department." The department will try to mislead the Government into erecting buildings on the foreshore, and that will be the thin end of the wedge to go on and effect other disfigurements there.

An objection has been raised that the area at East Perth is not large enough for the erection of the proposed buildings. I do not set myself up as an expert, but if I were manager of the tramways I would put up on that area a car barn that would be suitable for all time. If we do not pass

this motion tonight, we shall be allowing the Government to erect a car barn as proposed. What will happen? No trolley buses will go down to the East Perth car barn. They will be housed on the Esplanade. We want to block that straightaway. What would the Government do if that site was not there? They would have to find another site. Well, let them find it now. During the last ten years or so the Perth City Council has spent over £100,000 on improvements of the foreshore. In South Perth it was necessary to resume several properties bringing in revenue, and to pull the buildings down. The Perth City Council has also taken full charge of the maintenance of all those vacant spaces along the foreshore. Those spaces have been handed over to the City Council.

The Chief Secretary made a remark with regard to Union Square, to the effect that the Perth City Council did not want to take that over. Is that to be wondered at? The area is very small, and all the trams congregate there to discharge passengers. The fly in the ointment, I may say, was that the tramways had no conveniences for their passengers, and the department thought that possibly, if the City Council took it over, they could say, "You have taken it over, and you will have to erect those conveniences." That is the truth. I know what I am talking about, because I was Mayor then.

The Chief Secretary: Was it not the suggestion of the council that that should be done?

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: No: it was the suggestion of the Tramway Department. That department wrote to the Perth City Council drawing attention to the fact that there were no conveniences at the terminus for the public, and that it was the Perth City Council's business to supply them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You knew where the trap was.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: Yes, I maintain that the City Council has done more than its fair share towards the improvement of the foreshore. As regards the revenue to be derived, when I informed hon. members that there are only about 20,000 ratepayers who could be taxed to find the money for this undertaking, independently of what has to be done for the whole of the city, members will realise that it is a very big undertaking for the Perth City Council. I trust that after Mr. Bolton has replied, hon. members will

make up their minds with regard to the site for trolley buses on the foreshore. As regards the buildings, the Perth City Council has more than carried out its obligations. It has removed many of the buildings, and possibly those that remain may prove a good thing for the State of Western Australia; now that the war is on, they may be wanted for war purposes. I support Mr. Bolton's motion.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) : [10.43] : I am sorry that this debate has developed into a contest as to who shall be the hero—the Government or the City Council—as regards the beautification of Perth. If the motion goes to the vote, I shall support it, not in any respect by way of condemning the Government but purely as recording a protest against any policy of Perth's parks or gardens being utilised for such a purpose. I am just wondering what a corroboree there would have been in, for instance, Victoria if someone had suggested putting a building such as a car barn into Melbourne's Treasury gardens, or if anyone had been insane enough to suggest that a building of the kind should be erected in Sydney Domain. The uproar would have been tremendous. In this State we are not particularly well off regarding parks and gardens, and when the Government set out upon the reclamation of the river, those of us who take their delight in seeing beautification of the whole city felt that at last some effort was being made to supply a much-needed want. I sincerely trust that at no time—unless it be for purposes associated with the war crisis, to which everything has to be subordinated—will such a thing ever be done. I am glad to have the Chief Secretary's assurance that the Government has not seriously considered the erection of a car barn on the Esplanade.

The Chief Secretary: Would you support the removal of other buildings?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes; and I have a word or two to say about the later buildings. The buildings there could, I am sure, be well moved away. The latest one known to me—I saw it from the tram this morning in that beautiful little garden in front of the Supreme Court—is a gimcrack shack being constructed on piles, for I do not know what purpose, right against the sideline boundary of the garden. It is a shocking structure to

look at for the moment; but I presume it is temporary, as I understand the area is under the jurisdiction of the State Gardens Board. I am not surprised at anything that board does, when I consider the cheap-looking amusement park situated at the foot of William-street. The sooner the Government sets about reorganising the State Gardens Board, the better the community will be pleased. The board seems to please itself, it is answerable to no one, it takes all kinds of risks and assumes authority that I do not think a board should possess. I agree that the City Council has received a fair deal from the Government. On the other hand, I think the Government recognises that the City Council is endeavouring to do a good job. I support the motion merely as a protest against any portion of the river front being utilised at any time for the purpose of a car barn or any building of that description.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [10.47] : Although it is late, I wish to say that anybody who listened attentively to the debate, should commend Mr. Bolton for having brought forward the motion and having ventilated what might have proved to be a grievance had a trolley bus barn been erected on the Esplanade. I suggest, however, that the hon. member has achieved his object; and that if the motion be carried, the inference would be drawn that the Government had decided to erect a trolley bus barn on the Esplanade, and that this Council, by vote of the House, had either prevented or endeavoured to prevent the Government from adopting such a course. I do not think that would be right. After all, country members say, "Look at what the Government is doing for the City of Perth." As a matter of fact, we are all proud of the good work that the Government has done. Mr. Bolton will agree with that, and so will Mr. Dimmitt. We know the wonderful change that has been wrought by the reclamation work carried out during the past 30 years. I well remember the time when the small Esplanade as we knew it then, represented the total of the reclamation work. Since then, it has been extended and still further extended. Therefore each successive Government during that period has shown a desire to beautify Perth and its surroundings. The present Government in particu-

lar has done much good work in that respect, work which, as has been pointed out, was commenced when the late Mr. McCallum was Minister for Works. I think it would be unfair to the Government if Mr. Bolton's motion went to a division. The hon. member has, as I have said, achieved his purpose. We are all in favour of what he says. None of us wants to see any building of the kind referred to in the motion erected upon any portion of the Esplanade. I appeal to the hon. member to let the matter rest at that, and not allow people to draw the inference that we prevented the Government from doing something that it did not contemplate doing.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan—in reply) [10.50]: May I first say that I very much appreciate Mr. Moore's remarks, but I am sorry I am unable to accede to his request. The matter, in my opinion, is too serious, particularly in view of Mr. Dimmitt's remarks. It should not be left in mid-air, as it would be if I failed to press my motion. I do not propose to speak at great length in reply, because the Chief Secretary, in his goodness of heart, has left me practically nothing to answer. His very brief reference to what I consider to be the main point of my motion—that of the building of a trolley bus barn on the Esplanade—was in absolute contradiction to the reply that I received to a question I asked in this House. My question definitely and clearly was: Did the Government intend to build this barn? In reply the Chief Secretary told the House that the matter was under consideration, but that no decision had been arrived at. Surely he or his colleagues, or one of his colleagues, must have known something about the matter in view of his reply that the matter was under consideration.

The Chief Secretary: It was a departmental reply. You understand that.

HON. L. B. BOLTON: The Chief Secretary told us tonight that the Government had never given the matter consideration. I accept his assurance. The Government, as a Government, may not have given the matter consideration; but from the remarks made by Mr. Dimmitt and Mr. Nicholson, supported as they are by what I have heard myself from a high official in the department, who said I was barking up the wrong

tree, to use his own words, I gather the Government proposed to erect a beautiful brick building that would be an ornament to the Esplanade. Surely, where there is smoke there is fire. I believe the site is favoured by the manager of the tramways, Mr. Taylor. I believe also that Mr. Shapcott is quite willing that the barn should be erected on the Esplanade, and I believe the idea has the sympathy—although I have no evidence whatever of this—of the Commissioner of Railways and the Minister for Railways. Now the Premier—who I see is present—assures us that the Government, as a Cabinet, has not considered the matter. I can but hope that, in view of my motion, the Government will not give the matter any consideration.

To my mind the Chief Secretary has such a weak case that, like the poor politician, all he did was to criticise the other fellow. The criticism that he levelled at me with respect to the amount that the Government spent on improvements to the waterfront was most unfair. I did not in any way criticise the Government with regard to that work. Like every other member of this Chamber, I much appreciate what the Government has done. It has done wonderful work, but I endeavoured to point out that the City Council also has done wonderful work. It has spent £94,000 on the beautification of the river, and is surely entitled to the credit I gave it. I never intended nor in any way attempted to praise the work done by the City Council at the expense of the Government. The City Council and the Government worked together to make the river as beautiful as it is today. As I said when moving the motion, it would not be a sin but a crime if a trolley bus barn were erected on the Esplanade. The Chief Secretary did mention that some thought had been given to the erection of a barn on a site other than the East Perth site. I, in my wisdom, think the East Perth site ideal for car-barn extensions, but I am not pressing that site on the Government. If the Government desires some other site, let the Government have it, so long as it does not build the barn on the Esplanade. The Chief Secretary early in his speech told the House that he would furnish information as to how much more the Government had spent on this work than

had the City Council. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately for my case—he forgot to quote the figures. However, we can leave that aspect.

The Chief Secretary: I did furnish figures.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I cannot speak for the accuracy of the Chief Secretary's figures; but I can vouch for the accuracy of the figures that I submitted to the House. I can also vouch for the accuracy of all the statements I made. I read to this Chamber copies of letters and proved my case to the hilt, so much so that when the Minister for Agriculture received a deputation a few days ago from the City Council, he, being unfortunately ignorant of some matters that I quoted, used copies of the letters I had read. The quotations made by the Chief Secretary tonight were practically identical with those that I submitted to this Chamber. I have no desire to labour the question. In conclusion, I wish to say that almost every citizen whom I have met in Perth since I moved the motion has commended me and expressed the hope that the motion would be carried as a protest. It is all very well for Mr. Moore to say that I should have made my protest after the building had been erected.

Hon. T. Moore: I did not say that.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am sorry. Some member suggested that I should have waited until the building was erected and then protested. Such a course, in my opinion, would have been quite wrong. The time to move is now, before a commencement is made with the building. I sincerely hope my motion will be carried by such a majority as will convince the Government that it should not erect a trolley-bus barn on the Esplanade. The danger I see is that perhaps, when the session is over, the Government may decide to proceed with the building. I am quite satisfied that Mr. Dimmitt's statement is right and that plans for the proposed building have been prepared by the department. I feel perfectly justified in bringing forward the motion. I would not have brought it forward except for the fact that the reply to my question was that the matter was under consideration, but that no decision had been arrived at.

Question put and passed.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 4:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 3, the question being to strike out of paragraph (i) the word "sixteen" and insert the word "thirteen" in lieu.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This relates to the net assessable income of £216. The Bill represents the policy of the Government as it has existed for several years. The object is to exempt from this tax those persons who are receiving the basic wage. If the amendment is agreed to, a large number of individuals who have been exempt during the last few years will be called upon to pay.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Ever since Labour has been in office it has increased the exemption year by year. The people benefiting are those who enjoy to the full the free social services provided by the State and enjoy them to a greater extent than does any other section of the community. Those services represent a value of something over £4 per head of the population, and the burden of providing them is borne by about 80,000 taxpayers.

Hon. G. Fraser: You have agreed to it every year.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, I have fought it every year.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	8
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	10
				—

AYES.	
Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. G. W. Miles
	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. W. H. Klison
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. W. R. Hall
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

The CHAIRMAN: Paragraph (ii) will be consequentially amended.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: To bring paragraph (iii) into line, the amount will have to be altered from £4 3s. to £4 2s. a week. I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (iii) the word "three" be struck out and the word "two" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. G. B. Wood in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 3:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This clause proposes that the present three-fifths majority shall be reduced to one-half. If the measure covered all poultry keepers, that might be satisfactory, but in the circumstances the three-fifths majority should be retained. The board as at present constituted provides for a majority of members who are not opposed to the increase. If Mr. Wood has his way that position will be reversed. That is not desirable in the circumstances.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: As to the objection of the Minister to a simple majority, if the Committee agreed to that I shall ask mem-

bers to allow me to withdraw paragraph (b), which would overcome the Minister's objection. The effect would be to bring in all poultry owners who have 75 head of poultry. As to the composition of the board, surely people who are setting out to control and sell their product should have the majority representation. Last year this House indicated no opposition to the constitution of the board. That action was taken in another place. Why bring in the merchants and others having city interests? So long as those sections have some representation on the board, the majority representation should be retained for the producers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have already pointed out that if Mr. Wood has his way, a large number of poultry keepers will be brought within the scope of the Act and, in the opinion of those competent to advise me, the effect will be to undermine the efficiency of the Act. The Agricultural Department has a list of over 4,000 poultry keepers that have 75 head or more. If Mr. Wood is not careful these people will undermine what he desires to achieve by this legislation.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Over what area are the 4,000 poultry keepers spread?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Over the whole State.

Hon. J. Nicholson: If the owners of 25 head were brought in the number would be still further increased.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Most decidedly. The department is anxious that the industry shall be on a proper footing.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Then the three-fifths majority should remain.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have been impressed by the remarks of the Chief Secretary, and I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) be struck out.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I oppose the amendment. A simple majority is the fairer provision.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	14
					—
Majority against	..	..			2
					—

AYES

Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. W. H. Kitson

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Angelo
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. E. M. Heenan

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. C. F. Baxter
(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Having decided on the simple majority, which I understand is quite democratic, I take exception to paragraph (b).

Hon. G. Fraser: Mr. Wood intends to withdraw that paragraph.

The CHAIRMAN: That cannot be done. An amendment can be moved to strike the paragraph out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The section provides that only certain people are to have the right to sign the petition or to take part in the election of the board and now Mr. Wood seeks to add another qualification that the person taking part must own 250 head of female poultry. They are to control those owning 25 head of poultry, although the latter will have no say in the matter.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is that quite democratic?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was just wondering about that myself.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: This proposal is not quite as bad as it appears to be. The Minister said that those controlled should have a vote. Does that mean that a woolgrower or a wheatgrower who has 25 head of poultry should have a vote because he comes under the Act? I say no. He is not interested in a vote; he does not want one. For a commercial grower, 250 head of poultry is not a large number. We are endeavouring to obtain better conditions for commercial growers and not for the men who have a few fowls as a sideline. If the men with the smaller number of poultry were not controlled, what would be the use of a board?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I feel that the Committee can do nothing better than oppose the clause.

Hon. G. Fraser: Move to delete paragraph (b).

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Bill proposes to make subject to the Act the owner of 25 head of poultry, but no vote is to be given to any man who has less than 250 head. That would be to do an injustice to those conducting small poultry farms. I move—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I suggest to Mr. Wood that it would not do any harm to give these people the right to vote. If they are not interested in the industry they will not exercise their vote. If they are interested they will want to do so and will therefore be of some value to whatever organisation is endeavouring to control the industry. In view of the other amendments in the Bill and the fact that he has succeeded in securing an amendment for a simple majority, as against a three-fifths majority, I do not think he has much argument left in support of the paragraph.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do not intend to press the paragraph, but I point out that we are afraid that the people opposed to us will oppose the board. Unfortunately we have a poultry adviser who is trying to drive a wedge into the Primary Producers' Association. We are afraid that the farmers with 25 head of poultry will be canvassed to vote against the board.

Amendment put and passed

The CHIEF SECRETARY: By means of paragraph (c) the hon. member seeks to have three producers on the board of five instead of two. I do not think he has anything to be afraid of in regard to the constitution of the board under the Act. Generally speaking, the egg producers would agree that they do not know very much about the business side of this matter, which is a very big one, having to do with marketing and export. I do not think the hon. member would be well advised to seek for the control to be entirely in the hands of the producers who may or may not have had experience of the business side.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I am seeking to give the producers a majority of the representation on the board. I do not agree that because a man is an egg producer he does not know anything about marketing. The Dried Fruit Board had five members, all of whom were producers, and they did a wonderful job. It is only fair that the producers should have a majority on the board. If the amendment is carried and the subsequent amend-

ment is agreed to, two other members will be appointed by the Governor, one of whom will represent the consumers and one will be a person of mercantile and commercial experience.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have no objection to the producers having a majority of representation on the board, but I do not think it necessary that they should all be producers though they should be elected by producers. I move an amendment—

That after the word "be" in line 5 of paragraph (c) the words "elected by" be inserted.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I welcome the amendment. Peculiarly enough I suggested the same amendment to the Dairy Products Act two sessions ago, an amendment which Mr. Craig opposed. There are men in this industry who are highly regarded by producers, but who are not producers. What man could better represent the producers on the board than one who has retired after having been engaged in the industry for many years?

Hon. T. MOORE: If the hon. member desires the measure to receive a good reception from another place he should send it down in a democratic form, otherwise it will be quickly rejected. I maintain that the present measure is quite fair. There are two producers on the board, and a commercial man who will look after the selling side. Further there is a Government nominee who would be a fair man, and one consumers' representative. If three representatives of one section are included on the board the measure may not receive the consideration it warrants from another place.

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

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 10 of principal Act:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Is Mr. Wood satisfied that this is consequential on the other clauses?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I understand from the Parliamentary Draftsman that the rest of the Bill is necessary to rectify certain errors made in last year's measure.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 8, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, Bill re-committed for the further consideration of Clause 2.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Hon. G. B. Wood in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2 of the principal Act:

Clause put and negatived.

Bill again reported with a further amendment, and the reports adopted.

BILL—POTATO-GROWERS LICENSING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

Hon. W. J. MANN (South-West) [11.50]: I regret I have to approach this subject at this stage of the session, and would have liked further time to deal with it. I oppose the Bill, not because I have any objection to the passing of legislation on behalf of potato-growers, but because I have received from a large number of people in the South-West very definite objections to it. Efforts have been made in the past two weeks to extract from many people expressions of acceptance of the Bill. Some have been rather precipitate and have replied to letters that have been written to the effect that they had no objection to it. Quite a number of others have seen me and asked me what the Bill means. I have no feeling in the matter and am not a potato-grower. If I were a grower and wanted legislation I would ask for it, and if I did not want it I would oppose it and ask my representatives in Parliament to do the same. I took the precaution of getting a number of copies of this measure. Whenever I was asked a question about it, I handed over a copy and said, "That contains all I know; you can read it for yourself." Anyone who examines the Bill must admit that it is as crude a measure as was ever introduced to this Chamber. It proposes to call upon potato-growers, those cultivating a quarter of an acre upwards, to contribute a fee ranging from 10s. to £3 for the right to grow potatoes. In return for the money, they are to get something

quite negligible, something that is really in the clouds. They will be asked by this Bill to pay money into the Treasury, and the Treasurer will then, upon the recommendation of the Minister for Agriculture, pay out moneys from the special fund to any society, association or body of persons who, to the satisfaction of the Minister for Agriculture, will wholly apply such moneys to the promotion of the production, marketing, treatment and sale of potatoes. To-day Mr. Piesse handed to me a list of amendments. I was astonished to find that one of these was a proposal to cut out the very cause for which the Bill was brought down, namely, paragraph (a) of Subclause (2) of Clause 4. He proposes that potato-growers shall, against their will—that is so in the case of many of them—be asked to contribute an amount of money to be used in any manner which the Minister for Agriculture deems to be calculated to protect the potato-growing industry. Could anything be more negligible than that? They are to be asked to subscribe from 10s. to £3 a year, according to the acreage, hand this over to the Minister without any conditions, and the Minister can use the money as he pleases. I put it to members that a blank cheque of that description is not likely to be acceptable to anyone. The proposal is absurd. I commend to Mr. Piesse the method adopted by those members who introduced the egg-marketing measure and the onion-marketing measure. They were complete Bills. They were asked for by the producers, who detailed what they wanted. This Bill was not asked for, it does not provide for a board, and provides for nothing except that every person who grows from a quarter of an acre of potatoes upwards shall pay a certain sum of money to the Minister for Agriculture to deal with as he likes for the development and protection of the industry. I ought to leave that portion of the Bill, and endeavour to give the House some idea of the potato industry as it exists at present. In order to get the proper atmosphere and a proper viewpoint relatively to the Bill, it is necessary that we should realise the position of the potato industry in this State and in Australia. I have gone to some trouble to take out some figures—not very many, not sufficient to weary hon. members, but merely enough to indicate just what the

position of the potato industry is in this State and in Australia at the present time. To make the figures as complete and as accurate as possible, with the knowledge that potato growing is a fluctuating business—crops fluctuate with the seasons—I have taken out a 10-years' average production in each case. I want hon. members to understand that my authority is the Official Year Book, the last volume published, which does not include the past year. In speaking of 10 years I make that reservation. The average area under potatoes in the several States of the Commonwealth averaged for the 10 years—New South Wales 19,016 acres, Victoria 61,714 acres, Queensland 10,737 acres, South Australia 5,057 acres, Western Australia 5,007 acres, Tasmania 36,933 acres; or a grand total, including a small area of 25 acres in Commonwealth territory, of 138,492 acres. I shall come back to these figures for a minute and point out that the aggregate average in the production of potatoes was 138,492 acres, of which Western Australia contributed 5,007, a very small proportion indeed.

I go a little further and point out that the average production in tons for the same period of 10 years has been—New South Wales 42,474 tons, Victoria 165,676 tons, Queensland 17,385 tons, South Australia 19,352 tons, Western Australia 22,151 tons, and Tasmania 96,976 tons, making, inclusive of the Federal Territory's 48 tons, a grand total of 364,062 tons. Hon. members will bear in mind that production more easily when I mention that the production of potatoes in Australia for the last 10 years has been just about 1,000 tons per day—364,000 tons for the 365 days of the year. So that when we realise that the tonnage grown in the Commonwealth was 364,000 tons, of which Western Australia produced only 22,151 tons, it will be seen how small we loom in the potato production of the Commonwealth. I do not say that in any derogatory spirit, but as leading up to something I want to impress on hon. members later. The average yield for the 10-year period was—New South Wales 2.23 tons per acre, Victoria 2.68, Queensland 1.61, South Australia 3.83, Western Australia—a long way ahead—4.42, Tasmania—the great potato State—2.63, and Federal Territory 1.92 tons per acre. The average for the Commonwealth was only 2.63 tons per acre over that

period. It is gratifying indeed to find that Western Australia has an average yield of 4.42 tons per acre, which is 1.79 tons, or slightly more than $1\frac{3}{4}$ tons, per acre better than the Commonwealth average, and compares with the other States' and the Federal Territory's average of 2.48 tons.

Now we come to the question of imports and exports. That has a fairly important bearing on this matter. Imports of potatoes into Australia for the last five years were practically negligible. We do not import any potatoes worth talking about. The actual quantity for the five years was 96 tons. Now as regards exports. I think hon. members will be surprised to know that they averaged only 1539 tons per year for the five-year period; and those went principally to the Pacific Islands and Papua. The position in Australia is that with our potato yield we have reached almost a saturation point, and that there is no advantage in increasing our acreage and tonnage to any great extent, because we cannot send potatoes away and our present crop is not easily exportable, while our own local consumption is almost equal to our production. Compared with the average yield in other countries, Australian potato production is comparatively low. New Zealand, for instance, has an average of nearly two tons per acre in excess of the Commonwealth return. So that while potato growing is quite a valuable industry, it does not offer a spacious outlook for the future. Another illuminating series of figures shows the production per head of population for the past five years—approximately 119 lbs. We produced per head of population 119 lbs., and consumed about 99 lbs. So that there is very little margin between what we produce and what we consume. I want to know—if this Bill is passed and the potato growers are licensed—what is behind the Bill? As the Bill stands at present, without consideration of suggested amendments, it says that the money is to be applied to modes of production which have always reached saturation point, and of marketing which is not very much use to us because we cannot find a market—if we find a market we would sell to it—

Hon. H. V. Piesse: What is wanted is regulation.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes. At the back of the Bill is the idea of regulating production. When one starts to regulate production, there

is more in the Bill than appears on the surface. And that is what the potato grower thinks, and that is why he has said, "I do not want to have anything to do with it." It is one reason why I am opposing the Bill. I have many other figures which I might give hon. members, but I do not wish to weary the House. However, here is a small set of figures which I regard as quite illuminating. I wish to quote it because it shows the wonderful position, so far as Australia is concerned, in which we stand with regard to potato production. I have given hon. members the acreage production and shown that it is better by 1.79 tons than the best of the other States. Now I propose to show the value of the acre production. Potato crop-value figures may easily be misleading, so I have refrained from quoting money values. A few figures, however, relating to 1936-37, when all States except Queensland had yields above the average, give an idea of the aggregate and acreage values. For New South Wales the total value was £514,800 and the value per acre £20 12s. 11d.; for Victoria £614,447 and £13 9s. 4d., respectively; for Queensland £170,130 and £12 13s., respectively; for South Australia £105,137 and £22 11s. 6d., respectively; for Western Australia £210,302 and £48 12s. 6d., respectively; for Tasmania £549,030 and £14 17s., respectively; for the Federal Territory £1,692 and £19 4s. 6d., respectively; for the Commonwealth £2,165,038 and £16 13s., respectively. It will thus be seen that because of our productivity and good farming Western Australian potato growers received £31 19s. 6d. per acre more than the average, £33 5s. 6d. per acre above Tasmania, and just under £28 more than Victoria.

I thought it fair to recite those figures in order to show exactly where Western Australia stands as regards potato production. If I thought that there was any possible expansion of the export trade in Western Australian potatoes, I should be most happy to do everything possible to assist towards it; but to me it does seem quite the wrong thing to endeavour to compel our potato growers to contribute sums of money in order that production may be controlled. Those potato growers whom I have met know their business. I am convinced that there are no more expert potato growers in Western Australia than those established in the South-West. I admit that we are fortunate in being able to

grow three crops a year. Apparently we have a better climate, which may not always grow a better product than the Eastern States, but does grow a very good product that finds here at any rate a ready market. What is the position regarding the export of potatoes from this State? We simply export potatoes to the Eastern States when a shortage occurs there; at no other time can we compete successfully. We are up against all kinds of difficulties. Hon. members may recollect that only two or three days ago a consignment of 1,500 bags of potatoes was condemned in Sydney. I made some inquiries and learnt that the potatoes were an excellent sample when shipped from this State; but the climatic conditions and the conditions under which they were shipped were such that the potatoes seemed likely to become a total loss to the grower. This Bill did not have its origin in Western Australia at all. It was suggested by a body called, I think, the Federal Potato Advisory Board, which is not a State organisation at all, nor has it Federal or State standing. It consists of delegates from several States who meet together under the high-sounding title I have mentioned. The body has no status that might be termed Governmental. That body—I am quoting from the speech of the sponsor of the Bill—on a couple of occasions suggested the introduction of legislation having for its object the registration and control of the potato growers in the various States; but until July last I think no State, except Tasmania, took any notice of the recommendation. If I heard the hon. member correctly, he suggested at that conference that he would introduce this legislation and so give effect to the wishes of that body. I think he has gone the wrong way about it; he started at the wrong end. He should have consulted—and in saying this I hope he will pardon me—our own potato growers. He spoke to me some time ago about the Bill. As I said before, I have no feelings about the matter, but I suggested that he should, before doing anything, consult the potato growers as a body, and if they desired to be registered I would do everything possible to give effect to their wishes. That was not done. A few growers were consulted here and there, and consequently one cannot say that the Bill has any real justification whatever. The Bill is one, so far as I can see, designed to provide a fund to send delegates to a meeting held in

one of the other States. That remark may seem a little uncharitable; but I am assured by potato growers that on a previous occasion an appeal was made for funds for that purpose. A secretary of one association told me that his association contributed £5, but did not know what the amount was for and it was not inclined to make any further payment.

I do not desire to prolong the debate. There are many things I wished to refer to. I desire, however, to mention the extraordinary case of a grower who has one-quarter of an acre of potatoes and who would have to be registered if the Bill passes. I put it to hon. members that many farmers grow a few potatoes for their own use. They grow summer and winter crops. If they plant one-twelfth of an acre with each crop, they would have a quarter of an acre for the year and would therefore have to pay the fee of 10s. That is a wicked imposition. There are other matters connected with the Bill to which I can make reference when we reach the Committee stage. Before resuming my seat, however, I desire to point out the taxes that the potato grower has to pay already. I have made out a list, and these are the direct and indirect taxes: Federal and State income tax, hospital fund tax; up till recently the financial emergency tax; State and Federal land tax, roads board rates, general tax, health rate, water rate, loan rates; some have to pay a dairy marketing levy, others a dairy improvement levy; now they are being asked to pay an increased orchard registration fee; then there is the vermin tax, car and truck licenses, gun license and bull license; a license for a stallion, if the farmer has one, a fee if he grows a few onions; egg license; fee for inspection of his machinery; worker's compensation; sales tax; and increased railway freights. Now we are proposing to ask him to pay an additional fee.

I have been informed that the House was told that many people have written letters with regard to this measure. I have a list of letters here, and can inform members that they are mostly from dealers and people who have not grown a potato in their lives. The last one, strange to say, was from a man who published it in a paper bearing my name. I was surprised when I read it. I am referring to this man because if ever there was a wicked case of a person without knowledge of an industry trying to "butt in"—if I may

use the term—it is the case of A. E. Taylor, who published that letter in the "South Western News," in which he took to task the Marybrook Potato Growers' Association. Taylor has never made a success of anything, so far as I know.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is an authority on most things.

Hon. W. J. MANN: He is an authority on nothing at all. He told me quite recently that he had been living in Busselton for two years and had made a tenner, and was now trying to sell a few potatoes. Yet this man is quoted in this Chamber as an authority. He came from Wiluna and I doubt if he ever grew a potato in his life. The House should be very chary of so-called authorities who may be quoted here; if I have a chance of replying after their opinions have been quoted I shall make some of them look sick. I have only one more observation to make: I recently received a telegram from the Marybrook Potato Growers' Association to the effect that the association emphatically and unanimously objected to the Bill unless it contained a provision excluding all growers other than those British-born. I ask members to consider that viewpoint. We should deal very carefully with the measure. It has been foisted on the growers and I ask the House in all soberness and good faith to reject it. I make this promise, however, that if later on the growers express a wish to be registered and a properly-drawn Bill is presented to the House—not an amateurish attempt like the present measure, which I have not now the time to analyse—then I shall be happy to give it my support.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [12.27]: I support the Bill. Despite what Mr. Mann has said, I am confident that it is important to our potato growers. I listened very carefully to Mr. Mann's remarks, but my experience of the industry is different from his. Admittedly, my knowledge of the industry is confined entirely to the lower Great Southern district. I do not know the state of the industry in the South-West district, where Mr. Mann gained his experience. Therefore, what I have to say on the measure relates to the industry as carried on in the Great Southern district. I congratulate Mr. Piesse and Mr. Burvill, who are the Western Australian representatives on what is known as the Federal Potato

Advisory Council, on their excellent work for the industry. They have done their very best, in my opinion at all events, for the benefit and advancement of the industry. I have come in contact with a large number of the growers in my district and can say, of my personal knowledge, that Mr. Piesse and Mr. Burvill have not spared themselves in giving publicity to the industry and endeavouring to organise the growers. They made strenuous efforts to get into touch with all the growers. I am well acquainted with the conditions of the industry in that part of the State. From Ten-terden southwards thousands of acres are capable of growing the best varieties of potatoes, as well as vegetables and root crops. I understand three crops a year can be grown. The main factor restricting production is the limited market. In my opinion, the object of the Bill is to increase these market facilities, if possible. From inquiries I have made, the growers are quite favourable to the measure. On Saturday, the 18th November, I made a tour all over the Denmark area. It was Denmark's field day. The Honorary Minister was there and I had an opportunity of discussing the measure with some of the growers. I did not come across one who had anything to express but praise and approval of this Bill introduced by Mr. Piesse. We have every facility in Albany as a port for exporting potatoes to the Eastern States. That district is recognised in Western Australia as being one of the heaviest producers per acre in the State. This legislation would encourage the growing of the commodity, and a greater production would be advantageous to the State, to the Albany district and to the port. The Albany district also has a great name for growing good and reliable seed potatoes. I have been told on several occasions by growers that they could not supply the demand. The passing of this legislation would be of great assistance to those who specialise in that direction. Registration of growers would be advantageous to the department in that it would permit of more effective control of disease and also of the quality of the product. It is important that seed potatoes should be inspected.

We have been told that insufficient publicity was given to the subject before the Bill was introduced. I can go back some time in recalling meetings in Albany

in connection with the industry, and I have heard Mr. Piesse give more than one address on the marketing of potatoes and the registration of growers. I mention this because I understand that some people outside and some members consider that insufficient publicity has been given to this Bill, but my observations lead me to say that every endeavour has been made to acquaint growers of the proposals. Mr. Piesse has shown me many letters and telegrams from growers and all of them strongly support legislation of this kind. In many instances they have set out their reasons for doing so and good reasons they are. In the "West Australian" of the 24th November, I noticed that the Marybrook Potato Growers' Association was objecting to this legislation. I understand that is the only place from which any objection has been received.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Quite wrong.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: That is the only objection I have had.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I hope that when Mr. Piesse replies he will give the reasons advanced for this objection. Two amendments have been placed on the notice paper. Mr. Craig has one providing for a majority of potato growers within the State expressing, by means of a referendum, their desire for registration. I think that with so many growers scattered about, so many different organisations and so many foreigners in the industry, it would be difficult to conduct a satisfactory referendum. There are also many small growers. I understand that the growers having under two acres of potatoes represent about 30 per cent.

Hon. W. J. Mann: How many would that be?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I cannot give the number, but to exclude 30 per cent. of the growers would be unwise. Numerous growers in the metropolitan area would be left out. The Bill mentions a quarter-of-an-acre, but I am inclined to think that half-an-acre would meet the purpose. Let me ask, what is the object of the Bill? It seeks to collect a small fee from potato growers to be used for the purpose of exploiting new markets and advertising Western Australian potatoes in the Eastern States. One has only to recall the statement in the "West Australian" of the 2nd December to appreciate the need for legislation of this kind. Reference was made

to 1,500 bags of potatoes having been condemned in Sydney. This, of course, is only a small quantity, but it meant that those potatoes had to be disposed of in Victoria or elsewhere, and it takes only a few extra bags to upset a market. If the growers were registered, they could arrange to have a representative in Sydney looking after their interests. If they had had a representative there last week, probably those 1,500 bags would not have been condemned. Victoria grows considerably more potatoes than are consumed within the State; South Australia just about supplies its own requirements, but New South Wales grows only half its requirements and that is where we look for our best market. Certainly it would be worth while having a representative to further our interests there.

Before concluding I should like to refer to the great loss suffered by growers of the Great Southern during December and January last when floods occurred in the Albany district. This loss was very disheartening to growers, and although the Government gave all possible assistance and gave it promptly, had there been an organisation such as is provided for in this Bill, the misfortune could have been dealt with much more satisfactorily to the growers. I sincerely hope that members will give the Bill careful consideration, and I have no hesitation in saying that the growers in the Great Southern district earnestly desire that it be passed. I support the second reading.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3. In paragraph (i):—Delete the word "sixteen" in lines 10 and 11 and substitute the word "thirteen."

No. 2. Clause 3. In paragraph (ii):—Delete the word "sixteen" and substitute the word "thirteen."

No. 3. Clause 3. In paragraph (iii):—Delete the word "three" and substitute the word "two."

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing to all three amendments is—

The effect of the proposed amendment would be that persons receiving less than the basic wage would be brought within the scope of the financial emergency tax. This is contrary to the principle agreed to by Parliament for several years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY:—I move—

That the amendments be not insisted on.

The arguments have been traversed several times during the last few days. This Bill is strictly in accordance with the policy of the Government and has been in operation for several years, and this Chamber, by insisting on the amendments, would simply be demanding that a large number of people who have been exempt during the last few years shall be taxed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We in this Chamber do not recognise Government policy, but we are concerned about the finances of the State. We have fought against certain exemptions right through and have certainly not approved of them. I feel sure the Committee will adhere to its previous decision and the easiest way would be for the Chief Secretary to withdraw his motion and to request a conference at once.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To facilitate matters I ask leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the Council request a conference.

Question put and passed.

[The President took the Chair.]

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the Assembly be requested to grant a conference, and that the Council's managers be elected by ballot.

Question put and passed.

Conference Managers Appointed.

Ballot taken.

The PRESIDENT: The result of the ballot shows that the managers appointed

are the Chief Secretary, Hon. C. F. Baxter, and Hon. J. Nicholson.

Message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

House adjourned at 12.58 a.m. (Wednesday.)

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 5th December, 1939.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The Minister for Mines and State Batteries Charge.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [4.34]: I desire to make a personal explanation which is in the