

New clause:

Mr. GRAHAM: I move—

Page 13, line 25—Insert the following clause to stand as clause 7A:—

7A. Section forty-three of the principal Act is amended—

- (a) by adding after the word, "vehicle" in line six of subsection (1), the passage, "or the gross weight supported by any axle, wheel, or tyre, on the vehicle";
- (b) by adding after the word, "load" in line three and again in line six of subsection (2), the passage, "or gross weight supported by any axle, wheel, or tyre"; and
- (c) by adding after the word, "or" in line nine of subparagraph (i) of paragraph (a) of subsection (3), the passage, "if the weight supported by any axle, wheel, or tyre exceeds the weight prescribed by the regulations; or."

Mr. HEARMAN: I think I know what is behind the Minister's desire to insert this clause, but I feel he should tell the Committee what his reasons are, and whether it is anticipated there will be any change in accepted practice in relation to axle loading in this State.

Mr. GRAHAM: At the moment the Act makes reference to the load of the vehicle, whereas the matter of concern to the road authorities is the load on each axle. This matter of axle loading is principally the concern of the Main Roads Department, but local authorities which have traffic departments are also responsible for policing it. It is not intended to tighten up the present formula which applies and, incidentally, there is some latitude allowed over and above what is described at the present time.

New clause put and passed.

Title—put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE HON. H. E. GRAHAM (Minister for Transport—East Perth): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. today, Friday, the 28th November, 1958.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thought you were going to say 1959!

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.35 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Council

Friday, the 28th November, 1958.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

UNFAIR TRADING AND PROFIT CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (Minister for Industrial Development—North [2.20] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, which is to amend the Unfair Trading and Profit Control Act, 1956-57, is a comparatively short measure designed to amend the parent Act in only one or two particulars, and to deal, in the main, with what are known as collusive tendering practices. Approximately 60 countries in the world have legislation of a nature similar to ours. For instance, Great

Britain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Eire, the U.S.A., South Africa, West Germany, Queensland, Holland and New Zealand, all have statutory controls of some kind over unfair trading and unfair profits.

This Bill proposes to alter the Title of the principal Act to read, "Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Control Act", and although this is not quite similar it is almost similar to the title of such legislation in other countries.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why is it necessary to alter the Title of the Act?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is deemed necessary at this stage, in an endeavour to get support from the hon. member himself—and from people who think with him—to overcome unfair practices of trading and to remove what may be considered to be objections—in the Title—to what some people appear to think are quite fair business and trade practices. The Bill proposes also to include collusive tendering in the definition of unfair trading methods or unfair methods of competition.

The Honorary Royal Commission which inquired into trade practices and legislation said, in its report—

We came across several instances of what is usually known, we understand, as level or collusive tendering. This amounts to an arrangement between persons engaged in the same line of business not to tender an amount which differs from that to be tendered by other persons engaged in the same line of business.

This practice eliminates competition as to the price upon which the practice of calling tenders is based and may have the effect of destroying the real reason underlying the calling of tenders; namely, to obtain competitive prices and is correspondingly undesirable.

It appears that this practice is not as yet very common in Western Australia, but there is direct evidence of it in certain associations and it is therefore desirable that no opportunity should be given for it to become more widespread. A long list provided by the Comptroller of Stores, W.A.G.R., indicates a number of articles which are non-competitive as to price whenever tenders are called. I think it is perhaps necessary to read this list to the House to show the kind of articles which are the subject of collusive tendering and which are non-competitive as to price when tenders are called. They include the following:—

Antimony.
Augers.
Bakelite material (electrical switches, fittings, etc.)
Bearings—ball and roller.
Brushes—paint and varnish.

Belting—vee.
Brass—bar and sheet.
Cement.
Cells—dry.
Conduit and conduit fittings.
Cables—electrical.
Drawing linen and paper.
Drills—twist.
Electrodes.
Files.
Forks—ballast.
Fly wire.
Greases—various.
Insertion rubber.
Kerosene.
Lead—sheet.
Lamps—electric.
Locks—pad, various (Lockwood).
Masonite.
Motor spirit.
Nails.
Oils—motor, various (standard grades).
Oils—linseed.
Oils—diesel fuel.
Paper—brown.
Paper—toilet.
Petroleum jelly.
Spark plugs.
String.
Shovels.
Scoops—coal.
Sleepers.
Taps and dies.
Tubes and fittings.
Tyres and tubes.
Tin—ingot.
Tubes—fluorescent.
Radio valves.
Steam wheel valves, etc. (Johns).
Wire—V.I.R.
Wheels—abrasive.

There are several other items, many of which should be, because of the nature of their source, competitive at many levels of the trade.

The Western Australian Government Railways Comptroller of Stores said, "When we call quotes for any of these the prices offered are identical. Perusal of minute books indicated considerable discussion on various contracts, and in many cases the minutes listed the agreed discounts on the different lines for which tenders had been invited." Among the unanimous recommendations of the Honorary Royal Commission, No. 12 reads—

- (a) That collusive tendering be prohibited and a substantial penalty provided.
- (b) That no association be registered whose objects or powers contemplate collusive tendering.
- (c) That collusive tendering be defined as—

the submission by two or more persons of tenders, in response to a public invitation, the amounts of which have been agreed between the persons tendering which agreement is contrary to the public interest.

No. 13, of the recommendations made by the Honorary Royal Commission, reads as follows:—

That proceedings for any offence in respect of collusive tendering shall only be taken with the consent of the Attorney-General.

- (3) Permit the Director of Investigation to institute proceedings for an injunction restraining a person, during any investigation by the director, from doing or continuing to do anything which appears to the director to be unfair trading.
- (4) Permit the right of appeal by all parties to the Full Court and to the High Court.
- (5) Prevent any person from endeavouring by threat or otherwise to stop another from invoking the protection of the principal Act.

When perusing the Bill, hon. members will note that some amendments have been made to it in the Legislative Assembly. Certain parts of clauses have been deleted and other minor amendments have been made. However, in all, it is a short Bill containing only the three or four provisions I have outlined; namely, to provide for a situation that will obviate collusive tendering and endeavour to control it; allow for appeals to be made to a judge in chambers, and from that decision an appeal to the Full Court if necessary; and for certain action to be taken during the course of the inquiries by the Director of Investigations. Those are the main principles of the measure, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith, debate adjourned.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL.

Assembly's Further Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it no longer disagreed to the amendments on which the Council had insisted.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

CANCER COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA BILL.

Assembly's Message.

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

RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT CONTINUANCE BILL.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise (Minister for Industrial Development), read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (Minister for Industrial Development—North) [2.37] in moving the second reading said: This short Bill has reached this House in a printed form which is almost identical with the Bill I was privileged to introduce last year at the request of the Chief Secretary. It seeks to continue the operation of the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act for a further period of 12 months, and follows along the line of continuance Bills which have been introduced in this Parliament since the last war.

Circumstances have made it necessary to continue the operations of this legislation in its various forms since that date, and it is well known to hon. members that its provisions have been drastically curtailed and modified as the years have gone by, so that today the measure of protection to both the landlord and tenant provided by the Act, and which this Bill seeks to continue, is very small in comparison with the protection which originally obtained.

As hon. members will probably know this protection relates to proceedings which may be taken before either a court or a rent inspector for the eviction of tenants and for the determination of a fair rent. Last year when this Bill was introduced the Act provided for the following protection from eviction or recovery of possession of premises to be allowed:—

1. In the event of an owner requiring his premises, 28 days' notice to quit would need to be given to a tenant.
2. In the event of a tenant applying to the court or rent inspector for determination of a fair rent, the owner would not be able to evict the tenant immediately as there was protection from notice to quit for a period of three months.
3. In the event of a court determining a fair rent less than 80 per cent. of the rent being charged or asked for, notice to quit cannot be given for a period of 12 months.

These eviction proceedings expired on the 31st August, 1957, and the Legislative Council would not agree to the continuance of the three months and 12 months' protection, but there was still agreement on the 28 days' notice to quit provision. This still remains and is the only available protection of its nature.

Last year Parliament also agreed to the continuance of the provision in the Act which enabled the establishment of a fair rents court and the continuation of the rent inspector. All of these provisions will expire in December, 1958. Briefly stated, therefore, the existing Act in general terms may be said to provide for a measure of protection from eviction and for the establishment of a fair rents court, which gives an opportunity to either party to apply for the determination of a fair rent.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: How many cases were heard during the past year?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Very few indeed. The officer concerned with that work was found other duties. If the hon. member is directing his question for the purpose of querying the necessity to continue this legislation, I would point out that matters might not be as good, in a personal sense, for many people, as they were even last year. It is thought vital and necessary to give them some access to an authority which can give a fair and right determination.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: While it is on the statute book it is a protection.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I mentioned that the Bill really continued the measure for protection from eviction and for the establishment of a fair rents court which gives either party the right to apply for a determination of the court. This should be assessed by the court to show a net return of not less than 2 per cent. or more than 8 per cent. on the capital value. The present percentage assessed by the court is six for private dwellings and seven for investment properties. The right of approach to the rent inspector also exists, and his determination would be on a similar basis to that of the court.

As pointed out last year the provisions, so far as the court and rent inspector are concerned, are to some extent undermined, because of the existence of a section in the Act which provides that premises let for a term of at least three years are outside the scope of the Act. It could be said that if a tenant approaches the court or rent inspector, he invariably is met with a request by the owner or landlord to take out a lease for three years, or be evicted within 28 days.

However, it is considered by the Government that the small measure of protection which still remains, whereby a period of 28 days' notice to quit is given, is worth retaining. If this were not continued we would revert to the common law provisions of seven days' notice to quit, which in some existing circumstances of unemployment would create hardship. Furthermore, the principle that either party may have the right of approach to a court for the determination of a fair rent is also one which

should not be discontinued. It is a reasonable approach where a difference of opinion arises between the tenant and the landlord.

There are other small provisions in this Bill which are merely of a consequential nature. The principles, as I have explained, are very simple. The parent Act has been considerably varied and we have reached a very small stage of the original provisions. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3).

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise (Minister for Industrial Development), read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (Minister for Industrial Development—North) [2.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to amend the section of the Act which gives power to the Minister to make regulations concerning the functioning of the Act. At present this section gives the Minister power to regulate various matters, mainly in regard to the movement of stock and the use of certain appliances. But with the progress being made in the use of chemical treatments for the eradication of noxious weeds, several cases of suspected damage have occurred in many districts and with various types of crops.

At Geraldton, for instance, several tomato crops have been damaged, and it is evident there is need for a degree of control over the use of some potent sprays, and in particular the hormone growth regulating chemicals used for weed control. It is a remarkable thing that there have been developed hormones which can be said to be selective in the type of weed or growth that they affect. It has been said that this is the reason for the obvious need for rigid control of these sprays. The Department of Agriculture has for some years appreciated the difficulty which could arise from the use of these chemicals. The drift from sprays containing hormone-like weedicides especially used for weed control can cause, and has caused, damage to nearby crops. Tomatoes and grapes are particularly susceptible, and lupins are readily affected.

The risk of damage is far greater when the spraying is done from the air because it has been established that the possibilities of contamination by air drift are almost

unlimited as a result of the tremendous area being treated. It is admitted that ground units can do similar damage but the area is much more limited than is the case when aircraft are employed. Even the contamination experienced in the equipment when sprays are changed, has been found to have a serious affect.

Suggestions for safeguarding crops have been put forward but the administrative difficulties involved really prohibit the adoption of the effective chemical control that is available to us. The Solicitor-General, after examining the subject has suggested an amendment to the Act which has resulted in this short Bill.

At present, the Act contains power to declare areas within which the control measures may operate, but this measure is designed to give additional power for regulations to be made to control the use of dangerous sprays or chemicals. Those who have been interested in the spraying of crops for the destruction of pests or those who have been acquainted with the use of sprays on pastures, will know how serious can be the effect if hormone-like sprays are used, because of the deleterious effect they have on a wide variety of crops. I commend the Bill and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. A. R. Jones, debate adjourned.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Assembly's Message.

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

ROAD CLOSURE BILL.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise (Minister for Industrial Development), read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (Minister for Industrial Development—North) [2.47] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is one of the usual formal measures presented at the end of every session. It contains the description of eleven variations in roads, truncations, and closure of roads, and all those things necessary during the year to make adjustments in many districts. The first one deals with the closure of the public road known as Charles-st. in the Albany municipal district, being the road extending from the south-eastern alignment of Collingwood-st., to the western alignment of Drew-st., including the widenings at its south-eastern and south-western corners. This road

has been closed and the land has been re-vested in Her Majesty and re-included in Albany Suburban Lot 379. Provision is made in the Bill for the Registrar of Titles on application of the owner of the land for the time being that is contiguous to the road closed to apply for the area.

The second road dealt with in this Bill is also in Albany, and refers to the closure of the road and widening at the intersection of Middleton-rd. and Vine-st., and deals with all that portion of the road widening at the intersection I have mentioned, extending in a south-easterly direction to the corner of Albany Suburban Lot 51 and along its eastern boundary to the starting point. This road is also closed and the land comprised in the portion so closed has been reserved under the provisions of the Land Act for a public garden. Those hon. members who know Albany can picture the particular point, very close as it is to Middleton Beach.

The next road closure is also in Albany and concerns Roe Parade. This is portion of a road near Emu Point in the Albany municipal district. It has been deviated and the land taken from the road by deviation has been added to the reserve. There are two reserves contiguous to this road and the road has been deviated between them.

The next road affected is in Bentley, and concerns all that portion of a road widening at the junction of Hill View Place and Hill View Terrace in the Cannington road district, being the road widening at the south-western corner of Lot 1 on Land Titles Office Diagram No. 23523. The land, the subject of the widening of the road, has been re-vested in the Crown in estate in fee simple and is under the control of the State Housing Commission of Western Australia. The same course will be pursued, and the Registrar of Titles on application will have the titles altered accordingly.

The next road is in the Irwin road district and is portion of road No. 177 near Bookara. It is portion of a public road, quite lengthy, and is not required by any adjoining owner. It has been re-vested in Her Majesty to be disposed of in a manner which the Governor may approve.

There is also provision in the Bill for the closure of a certain right-of-way at Bunbury. This right-of-way, which is in the Bunbury municipal district, is the right-of-way separating Lot 554 on Land Titles Office plan No. 4638 from Lot 8 on Land Titles Office Diagram No. 11595. This land was previously held by the Municipality of Bunbury and was dedicated as a public right-of-way under the provisions of Sections 222 and 227 of the Municipal Corporations Act. That obtained in 1940 and it is to be closed by a provision in this Bill, and shall cease to be a right-of-way on the coming into operation of

the Act. The land affected has been re-vested in the municipality as an estate in fee simple.

The next road affected by this Bill is a portion of a road at Dandaragan. The Bill provides for the widening of road resumed from Melbourne Location 624. It has been taken from that area and all roads and rights-of-way over it shall cease on the coming into operation of the Act. The land comprised in the portion of the land so closed is vested as for an estate in fee simple, for a consideration of £10, in the owner for the time being of the adjoining portion of Melbourne Location 624.

The next area is portion of Francis-st., Geraldton, and is all that portion of a public road known as Francis-st. extending from the northern alignment of Eliot-st. to the southern alignment of Whitfield-st. Under the Bill, when it becomes law, that portion will be closed, rights-of-way over it shall cease and the land added to the adjoining school site which comprises Geraldton Lots 1463 and 1687.

An area comprising a portion of Addis-st., Kalgoorlie, is also affected, and it is that portion extending from the eastern alignment of Russell-st. to the south-western alignment of Cemetery-st. That portion is to be closed, and all rights-of-way over it are to cease on the coming into operation of the Act. The land has been reserved and is to be disposed of for any purposes for which the Governor may approve.

There is also provision for the closure of portion of Homer-st., Narrogin, extending from the western alignment of Kealley-st. to the eastern alignment of Gray-st. and the right-of-way extending from the northern alignment of Homer-st., Narrogin, along the western boundary of Narrogin Lot 973 and the northern boundaries of Lots 973 to 978 inclusive to the western alignment of Kealley-st. This land will be re-vested in Her Majesty with the intention that it should be included in the Narrogin High School site, Reserve No. 22787.

There is also provision for a closure of portions of certain roads at Sorrento in the Wanneroo district. This involves portion of a dedicated road 150 links wide out of and along the southern boundary of Swan Location 1315; and also a portion of the dedicated road separating Lots 159 and 160, being the portion commencing at its southern extremity and extending 50 links northwards. Under the provisions of the Bill those areas are closed and all rights-of-way over them shall cease. The land in this case has been re-vested in Her Majesty with the intention that it may be disposed of to the owners of the contiguous areas at a price to be fixed by the Governor. For this year those are

all the roads to be closed and for which Parliamentary sanction is necessary. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [2.57]: This Bill is similar in application to the Reserves Bill which we had the other night. On that occasion we found ourselves in the position—because Standing Orders had been suspended, on receipt of the message the Bill was read a first time and the Minister immediately made his introductory speech—of having to do something quickly, because we could see that the measure was about to pass all stages. I said at the time that the Bill was one which we were obliged to accept, and did accept, on the explanation of the Minister, because research into it was quite impossible. We had no file concerning the particular reserves and I should like to say that I appreciate the action of the Minister for Industrial Development in seeking me out and giving me the file in connection with this Bill earlier in the day. This gives hon. members an opportunity, although a very brief one, to have a look at what the Government proposes to do.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I have no objection to the hon. member adjourning the debate if he wishes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister has taken the words out of my mouth. I appreciate the fact that we can ask for an adjournment but, at this time of the year, I know that Ministers like to get the business off the notice paper as quickly as possible. While there is not much on our notice paper, we still have a lot to deal with from another place. I am making these remarks in a spirit of co-operation and, as we get only a couple of these Bills each year, it would be appreciated if we could have the information made available to us a little earlier than is done now. The file is laid on the Table of the House in another place usually 24 hours before the Bill is introduced there. I have no desire to adjourn the debate.

The PRESIDENT: You could not do it now.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not attempting to do so. I appreciate the Minister's action on giving me the file on this occasion. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL.*Assembly's Amendments.*

Returned from the Assembly with amendments.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

(No. 2).

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland (Minister for Railways), read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (Minister for Railways—North) [3.4] in moving the second reading said: Several of the 10 proposals in this Bill are designed to correct mistakes which occurred when a Bill to amend the principal Act was being dealt with during the last session of Parliament. In addition, experience has shown there are certain weaknesses in the principal Act. The proposals in the Bill will not have the effect, in any way whatsoever, of altering present procedure. They are designed to give statutory authority to what has been the accepted practice.

The Bill seeks to amend that portion of the Act which applies to motorcar dealers. Hon. members will recall that persons who trade in vehicles in excess of a certain number, may be required by the Commissioner of Police to enter into a bond. Experience has revealed that, quite unwittingly, Parliament so worded this provision that if a motor dealer breaches any portion whatsoever of the Traffic Act or regulations he is liable to forfeiture of the bond.

The result of this has been that no insurance company will undertake the bond in the terms which are necessary to conform with the Act. Therefore, whilst motor vehicle dealers are registered at the present time, they are not subject to the bond. This, of course, to a very large extent, defeats one of the main purposes of the legislation. Consultations have taken place recently between representatives of several Government departments, the Chamber of Automotive Industries, and the insurance companies, and it is understood that all parties are agreeable to certain requirements in respect of which the bond becomes forfeitable.

These are defalcation or misappropriation of moneys; if the sale is not in accordance with the owner's instructions; misrepresentation by the dealer regarding ownership; incorrect description of the year, model or efficiency of the vehicle, or the year of registration when new; and fraudulent removal of parts or accessories from the vehicle.

A principle in respect of tests for alcoholic content of the blood in order to ascertain whether a person was under the influence of alcohol has been agreed to by Parliament. The principal Act stipulates that measurement of the alcohol content should be by weight. Technical and scientific advisers and those engaged in the analyses have stated that it is actually a combination of volume and weight.

Therefore, the proposal in the Bill is that it should be expressed as "percentage of alcohol in the blood" without necessarily stipulating whether by volume or by weight. Incidentally, the same result, by and large, is arrived at if it is measured either way, but the process that is used is a volume and weight combination. If this provision is included in the principal Act it will enable the process to be continued.

Hon. members are, no doubt, familiar with the yellow registration plates carried by vehicles in the possession of dealers. They are usually referred to as demonstration plates. Strangely enough, there is no provision in the Act to allow these to be used when a new vehicle is being delivered. The Act provides that these demonstration plates are to be used by dealers when they are endeavouring to make a sale, but for a firm in Perth which wants to deliver a new car to an agent in a country centre, there is no provision in the Act, and there is no protection in law if anything should happen to the vehicle en route. In fact, the firm has no right to have the car on the road. This is an omission which should be rectified at the earliest possible opportunity, and the Bill seeks to do this.

Hon. members will recall the debates last year in respect of tractors. Unfortunately, the private member's Bill and the Government Bill both found their way on to the statute book. As a result, licensing authorities have met considerable difficulties. Therefore it is the intention, through this Bill, to adopt the more generous provision.

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

Hon. members should note carefully the exact terms I have just indicated, and compare them with the provisions which I will outline and which will become operative in all cases. They are:—

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

It will be noted immediately that the maximum is reduced from £10 to £5; and, accordingly, I think hon. members will

agree that a certain amount of contentment will be afforded both parties who are contriving to reconcile different procedures.

Another provision which might surprise hon. members, covers the situation where a motorist cancels his licence. This is done on many occasions; but in point of law, the licence still continues.

The motorist hands in the plates; and, if only a portion of the year has passed, he obtains a refund. Legally, however, he still holds the licence in respect of those plates. This might sound a small and technical matter, but it is something which no-one envisaged would apply. The Bill seeks to correct this matter.

While it is an offence for any person to represent himself as a member of the police force, there is no provision making it an offence for a person to represent himself as a traffic inspector. As traffic inspectors are employed in country centres, and now by the Perth City Council, it is highly desirable that no person should be permitted to pretend he is one of these public officials. The Bill seeks to deal with this question.

I might mention that the Minister for Traffic has instructed that attention be given to a complete redrafting of the Traffic Act. The numerous amendments make it difficult to understand, and a reprint is highly desirable.

The Minister has requested also that an attempt be made to modernise and make more concise the Traffic Regulations. Some of these refer more to the horse-and-dray era than the motor period we are experiencing at the moment.

At present, there is in existence a regulation which empowers the Commissioner of Main Roads to mark streets with white lines. However, the regulation does not conform with the Act, because under the Act the Commissioner of Police is the authority responsible. When this function—for obvious reasons—was handed over to the Commissioner of Main Roads exclusively, the regulations were amended, but no authority existed for such action. Accordingly, the Bill seeks to rectify the matter.

It is important that motor vehicles engines should have serial numbers. These apply, generally, to vehicles, and the motor-car and motor truck manufacturers enter into the spirit of the arrangement throughout the entire Commonwealth. But there are engines—such as replacement and remodelled engines—which for certain reasons do not have serial numbers stamped on them. It is felt that legislation should be enacted to ensure that reconditioned engines should be stamped with a serial number and so the Bill seeks to prohibit the use of a motor vehicle which has an unnumbered engine.

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

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

This could reach the stage where motorists would not be certain whether they should take seriously what appears on signs erected by public authorities. In this connection I might mention that the country traffic committee of the Road Board Association is most anxious that all local authorities should give effect to this matter. Periodically this committee issues a bulletin to the local authorities, where such local authorities are the traffic authorities. The most recent bulletin calls on local authorities to give attention to this very matter. It is most necessary that local authorities' signs should conform with the Traffic Act and regulations.

The present policy is not for speed limits, varying from 35 miles an hour maximum here, 20 miles there and 15 miles somewhere else; but rather for warning signs indicating danger or the necessity for additional care to be taken.

At present, there is power in the Act to impose conditions on taxi-drivers, or drivers of passenger vehicles who are employed in the industry. There is some uncertainty in respect of the term in the Act "employed on passenger vehicles."

Under the Transport Co-ordination Act, both Houses of Parliament have agreed that there should be some limitation to the time that a commercial driver should be continuously at the wheel over a period of 24 hours, and at different intervals, without a break.

That gives some indication as to the feelings of Parliament in this matter. It has been stated in many parts of the world, that, if for any reason, persons engaged in commercial carrying are to

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

There is a further amendment which deals with the damage to road caused by certain plant or equipment. As the law stands at present, it is an offence if extraordinary damage is done. There was a case comparatively recently where a piece of machinery was being hauled along a country road. The tyres were down and they were scratching great marks in the roadway. But the court held that this was damage which was to be expected, and therefore it was not extraordinary damage. Accordingly, the prosecution failed.

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

Altogether there are 10 amendments contained in this Bill and some, as I have already said, are rectifying mistakes that Parliament made last year, while others are entirely new. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, debate adjourned.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [3.18]: This Bill has for its purpose the bringing into line of people who work in the taxi industry with those who work in other industries, inasmuch as they shall be governed by awards of the Arbitration Court.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Minister said it has nothing to do with the taxi industry.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I rise to support this Bill, firstly, because it is a Government measure; and in my 5½ years of sitting behind my Government, I have not found it necessary to oppose any Bill which it has brought forward. I support the Bill from the bottom of my heart,

because it is a most necessary type of legislation to bring peace to an industry that is in a chaotic condition. Since my early childhood I have believed that every person is worthy of his hire. In my early days, the clergy used to live on what people liked to put in the plate for them. Now most members of the clergy receive remuneration for services rendered, irrespective of their divine services.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Some do not get too much.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: That could well apply to the employee taxi-drivers, because they do not get too much. Quite a lot of discussion took place on the Bill in another place, and we had a fair amount of debate on it here. I feel that a number of remarks have been made by people who have been looking for information because they have said straightout, "We do not know, and we are asking." The hon. Mr. Murray said that we should restrict the issue of number plates.

Sometimes our opinions change as the years go by. I well remember when restrictions of various sorts were imposed on the community, those in Opposition to the Government saying that they did not agree with restrictions. Today, however, we are told that all that is wrong with the taxi industry is the over-issue of plates.

Let us grant that there has been an over-issue. There have been reasons for it. Yesterday when I interjected that the R.S.L. was partly responsible for this state of affairs, I caused a lot of mirth. But I repeat those remarks now. Many young men returned in a delicate state of health from the war, particularly those who had been engaged in the war against the Japanese, because they had suffered intense conditions as P.O.W's. It was thought that the taxi industry was a type of industry in which these men could be employed. When I mentioned the R.S.L., I was referring to those people who were concerned with the welfare of the soldiers. By negotiation, or as a result of bringing pressure to bear on the Government they were successful in having a certain number of plates released. Since that time there has been dissatisfaction in the industry. There is no denying that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: When did all this occur?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I would not like to name a date. I am speaking of the time following the war; and the war finished in 1946.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Could you tell me approximately?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Put the question on the notice paper!

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The Hon. Mr. Griffith will, perhaps, give me credit—possibly for the first time in the history

of this Chamber—for not interjecting when he spoke. I am hoping to receive the same consideration from him.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You were different from the Minister for Railways.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Most people seem to have uppermost in their minds, the idea that the present Minister for Transport has been the arch-enemy of all. It is only about 12 months since the members of the taxi industry would have done almost anything to put the hon. Mr. Graham in his place.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Have they changed their minds?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: My word they have, and I will say why! I thank the hon. member for the interjection. They changed their minds because, approximately 12 months ago when the hon. Mr. Graham was the arch-enemy of the taxi industry—or supposed to be—a group of people opposed to the Government attempted to help the taxi industry. These people comprised members of Parliament, too. They promised the taxi drivers quite a lot of assistance.

Yesterday the hon. Mr. Griffith spoke of the appointment of a Select Committee. As far back as 12 months ago, someone on this side of the House thought of that. When the men in the industry found they were being led up the garden path, they decided to do something about organising themselves. What I am going to say now—I am not making any reflection on anyone—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Not much!

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: These people, because they were badly let down, were left in the wilderness, and they sought aid elsewhere; they sought it from the Transport Worker's Union. At the time, the union was not able to do much but it did call a meeting of those concerned, and the meeting was held in the Trades Hall about 12 months ago.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The hon. Mr. Griffith was not there.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: No.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am not invited to these exclusive circles.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The Trades Hall had nothing to do with the meeting except that the meeting was held there because The Transport Workers' Union officials made their offices available to the president and committee of the Owner-Drivers' Association, and the owner-drivers, together with a great number of others, were at the meeting which was attended by some 400 or 500 men.

When one entered the meeting, one felt there was a great air of dissatisfaction and distrust. This was because these men had been let down by some people in whom they had put their faith. I had the

honour to address the meeting for about seven or eight minutes on the point of the men organising themselves. After the meeting they set about organising themselves, and the result is the Bill now before us.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I thought the Minister for Transport had the privilege of doing it.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: As far as I am concerned, the Minister for Transport takes second place to no-one in the Chamber. He is a man of the highest ideals. Those men who have come into the industry in latter years have found it to be overcrowded. Why is that? Let us grant that in their opinion there has been an over-issue of plates. The situation today is that the economic position of the State has deteriorated as, indeed, it has all over the British world. The owner-drivers, and all other people, are feeling the pinch severely. Wool has dropped in price but the farmer has been able to get along as a result of good management and a lessening of normal expenditure. Wages, however, are not being paid today as they were when, at the time Kwinana was established, people were working and receiving £30 to £35 for long hours of work each week.

What transpired at today's street collection is, I think, a good answer to the position. I was told that whereas some time ago people were putting 2s. pieces in the collection boxes, now they are putting in threepenny bits and pennies. That was said by a great number of those around town with collection boxes today; and it illustrates that people simply have not the money they used to have. One of the difficulties of the taxi industry at present is caused by the coming into it of a new type of taxi-owner, in regard to whom the word "parasite" has been used. I do not associate myself with that term, as I do not consider these people are parasites when they set out to make themselves a lot of money, but simply shrewd heads and men of not high business integrity.

As I say, a number of people have come into the industry without any interest in it other than to make money, and they do not care how they make it. They do not care whether a taxi-driver works 40 hours a week or 120 hours, or whether he can meet his commitments or not, so long as they can still draw the same amount of money per week per vehicle. A taxi-driver may earn £40 or £45 one week and only £20 the next week, but he still has to pay £20 for his vehicle each week. I repeat that this type of operator is not in the best interests of the industry and I believe that a number of them would go out of the industry almost immediately—within six months or a bit longer at all events—if they found that they could not get the return they are at present receiving for their money.

It costs approximately £1,000 to buy a car suitable for a taxi and another £200 odd to fit a two-way radio and controls. Complete with incidentals, the total cost would probably be not more than £1,300. When the vehicle is hired out to a driver the owner earns £500 to £600 per year per car; while the driver receives only from £12 to £15 per week and works not from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. on five days a week, but seven days per week and for whatever number of hours he is physically capable of keeping the vehicle on the road. I agree with what the hon. Dr. Hislop said yesterday, when he pointed out that many of these men were reaching a condition of health which will soon make it necessary for the examining doctors to be more stringent in their examination of taxi-drivers.

The hon. Mr. Griffith said yesterday that there were three types of taxi operators; the owner-driver, the commission-driver and the lessee-driver. That is so, but if the Bill becomes law there will be the owner-driver and the employee-driver only. I have here two petitions, one signed by a number of company-drivers—it was obviously a case of “sign this or else”—containing 22 signatures. They are opposed to the Bill. A commission-driver could only sign such a document under pressure, because he is the one who would benefit most from the Bill. The other petition bears the names of 190 men and that number of signatures was raised in 24 hours without any trouble at all. Of that number approximately 175 are the signatures of owner-drivers, and when an owner-driver comes to Parliament and says he wants this Bill for his protection, how can members of the Opposition stand up and say they speak for private industry? What clearer form of private industry is there than the man who owns and drives his own vehicle?

If the man who owns his own vehicle has sufficient finance to buy a second one and put it on the road, with a paid driver, we will find that the industry will soon come back to sanity and to an even economic basis.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Apart from the taxi industry, there is no other in this State where the working staff do not receive a set wage. Hon. members may cite the insurance industry, where the employees receive a small remuneration and work on commission, as an exception, but I am referring to the industrial type of workers. We often hear it said that the issuing of taxi-plates must be controlled, but when that is done a set of plates which costs 8s. may be sold for anything from £400 to £700. Who pays for that? It is certainly not the person who pays the high price for the plates, because in the long run, as the hon. Mr. Roche said yesterday, the general public pay for it—but, why should they? The

Milk Board, the Builders' Registration Board, the Potato Marketing Board, the B.M.A. and many other such organisations are all controlled, but their members do not go out and sell their licenses to operate at figures running into hundreds of pounds. Some 200-odd sets of taxi-plates have been issued since 1956, and none of them is transferable.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Have any of them been transferred?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: As I have said, they are not transferable.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Have any been transferred?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I repeat that they are not transferable. A number of people have come into the industry by applying for new plates and also by buying plates from other people. One Fremantle operator told me that he bought a set of taxi-plates from a driver who, three weeks later, was issued with another set of plates. I checked on that statement and found it to be incorrect, because the second driver did not get a set of plates from the Traffic Office, but from someone else at £100 less than he had sold the others for.

In view of the fact that all the other industries I have mentioned are controlled, I cannot see any reason why the taxi industry should not be controlled. However, if it is to be controlled, we should ensure that the employers pay standard rates of pay for the services rendered by their employees. I know of one family which controls 180 cars and they have nine in the family name. After paying £7,000 expenses, they have a profit of £27,000 in the year. Surely that is enough to make hon. members sit up and take notice, because all of that profit was made from the work performed by drivers on commission, and by lessee-drivers.

The case I am now about to quote is, in my opinion, the gem of the season. On the 26th of this month a driver worked 17 hours. His takings were the magnificent sum of £4 2s. 6d. Because the industry is in such a state of chaos and under such economic stress, the company for which he works insists that the drivers should pay their daily earnings into the company each day. The company will not wait until the end of the week for the drivers to pay in.

That driver's commission is 8s. in the £1, and, on £4 2s. 6d., amounted to 33s.; but when he went to pay in his takings to the company, after having worked 17 hours, he was told he would have to wear a gray shirt with the company's badge on it, which would cost him 33s. He handed over the 33s.; and, as a result, he did, in effect, work 17 hours that day for a shirt. The cab which he drives is run by a company which receives a commission, and the lady who owns the vehicle receives a net return of £12 a week. I do not intend to mention

her name, but I have received this information on such good authority that, if pressed, I could supply it.

Over the years legislation has been passed in this Parliament to lay down and control the working conditions of men in various industries. This Bill seeks to control the working conditions in the taxi industry. At present, the drivers who are working on a commission basis are compelled, by economic necessity, to work 80 or more hours a week for a return, sometimes, of only £12 a week.

Due to difficulties encountered in securing employment today, men become taxi-drivers in the hope that they can take home a few shillings to their wives and children, apart from meeting other commitments such as rent. This is a case of working under "sweated conditions" and the position should be rectified. Vehicles are leased to drivers at £25 per week. Their total weekly income is approximately £37 or £40. Therefore, the balance of £12 is the amount left for the driver.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It needs a thorough investigation.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The people who lease taxis to the drivers have no interest in the industry. They do not wish to supply an avenue of employment and they have no interest in giving a service to the public or in the welfare of the drivers. Their only concern is the financial return they receive from their investment, and the return they are receiving at the moment is the main reason why taxi-drivers are forced to work exceptionally long hours.

The Bill does not seek to compel taxi-drivers to become members of the Transport Workers' Union, despite what hon. members might think to the contrary. The practical effect of the Bill will be that the leasing of taxis will be dispensed with and drivers will no longer follow the practice of working on a commission basis. In effect, if this Bill is passed, each taxi will be under the control of an owner-driver. As I said before, in what other industry could one get such a flying start in private enterprise? The hon. Mr. Griffith does not seem to like the lie which I have given to his remarks expressed yesterday, and when he spoke of his sincerity, I can assure him that no-one is disputing his sincerity; but the hon. Mr. Griffith does not deny what I said before—namely, that a committee of members of his party should have helped these men out 12 months ago.

Because they did not, they were forced to approach the Minister, whom they then despised, to tighten up on the issue of taxi plates; and as a result, since last April, the issue of plates has been cut by half.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: And they are still being issued today.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Yes; and by whom?

The Hon. G. Bennetts: It is an open go.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: One organisation has an application at the Traffic Office for 65 plates. It is called the B.O.S. Pty. Ltd., those letters standing for the names of Blake, O'Hara, and Smith. Can any hon. member assure me that any one of those men is interested in the taxi industry, apart from what he is getting out of it? Taxis today are being leased to drivers by doctors, bookmakers and various women who are not interested in the industry.

I can recall that in 1925 or 1926 there were two taxi services with about eight or nine cars plying for hire in Fremantle. I will admit that the population of Fremantle has doubled since then, but today the number of taxis has increased to 120. Who owns them? One body of people whose names appear on the petition that I have here is comprised of 35 owner-drivers, all of whom are in favour of the Bill. As with many taxi-drivers in the metropolitan area, they have reached the stage today where, if this Bill is not passed or some relief is not given to the industry in the very near future, they will be in a desperate plight.

I would point out to the hon. Mr. Griffith that if his request for the appointment of a Select Committee were granted, no relief would be available to those taxi-drivers for 12 months and such a committee could not tell us any more than any hon. member of this House can learn for himself by driving with any taxi-driver. I recall the hon. Mr. Griffith saying yesterday that he had ridden in many taxis and that on each occasion he had asked the driver what he thought of the position in the taxi industry. I have not had occasion to ask that question of any driver, because immediately I entered the cab I got "the works" without having to ask the driver's opinion.

These drivers were being led up the garden path as a result of having been told that the Minister for Transport was the one who was responsible for the present position of the taxi industry. Apparently nothing was said about the Higgs, the Blakes, the O'Haras, and the Smiths at that time. So, as time goes by, the industry will sort itself out, regardless of whether the position is investigated by a Select Committee.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: How can it sort itself out?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: In making a comparison with Perth, I would point out that in the city block of Sydney there are 2,205 taxis which are licensed to operate within a certain limit, and a set of plates did cost about £600 or £700. Today, however, taxi plates are not transferable. In the Sydney taxi industry now the drivers are being paid a reasonable

rate of pay by the companies which operate the taxis. Nobody objects to a person owning 60 or 70 taxis so long as the drivers are not asked to work anything up to 120 hours a week and to return to the owner of the vehicle a sum of not less than £25 a week irrespective of the return to themselves.

While I am a Labour man, I also believe in private enterprise, and I have never denied private enterprise its rights, although I have been told what it has done in the past. In these days we have to reorientate our thinking. Private enterprise has its place in the world, as have a great number of socialised industries.

We should not permit the taxi industry to fall deeper into the mire, unless we wish to retain the existing situation whereby people who are not interested in the industry, except for what they can get out of it, earn between £500 and £600 per annum on a leased vehicle, while the driver or lessee earns only £400 a year as a wage. It must be remembered that even the basic wage today is £670, so these lessee-drivers are working for less than the basic wage. Some hon. members have intimated that a Select Committee will help those engaged in the industry, but I say this Bill will give them all the consideration necessary for the time being.

As the hon. Mr. Bennetts stated yesterday we should pass this Bill and so give the lessee-drivers the protection that is needed, and then next year hold an inquiry about what can be done to amend the Act. I want to close on this note: When 22 persons write to me and say they are against the Bill, I want it to be known that I accept their letter. I have disclosed their opposition to the measure.

Hon. members who think that this Bill will result in the Transport Workers' Union gaining 400 or 500 members are mistaken. That is not true. If this Bill is passed and the existing cabs pass into the hands of owner-drivers, they will not become members of the union. Their employees might.

Of the 190 people whose names are on this list, 175 own their own cars. Some have been in the industry for a long time. After years of hard work some are meeting with difficulties; and only recently the wife of one driver had to go out and work to help her husband to keep the vehicle on the road. I support the second reading.

THE HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [3.52]: I have listened very intently to the whole debate on this Bill, and in particular to the Minister when he introduced it. I feel, as some other hon. members do, that even after what we have heard from various speakers, we know little of the taxi industry as a whole. It does appear that at the moment there are too many taxis operating in Perth. As one hon. member

said yesterday, the person responsible for that is the present Minister for Transport.

I supported the action of that Minister in the early part, because some years ago there were insufficient taxis operating and taxi plates were at a premium. We heard of people paying up to as much as £1,000 for taxi plates. That is a ridiculous state of affairs. The position has gone to the ridiculous in the opposite direction at present. On the evidence we have been able to obtain, and from the stories we have heard, there are too many taxis operating in Perth.

I am not in a position to judge whether that is so or not. I formed the opinion that there must be a surplus, because of the chaos which exists in the industry. We have to protect as much as possible all the parties affected by the industry and the people who use and pay for these services. It does seem that the owner-driver is the one who should be encouraged. Further, the hirer should also be protected. I am not concerned with the people who own taxis and hire them out. They can look after themselves, because they are shrewd business people.

Some of the drivers go into the business because they think it gives a lucrative living. Some go into it because it is easy work. Some go into it because they are not able, through force of circumstances, to obtain other work. We have to contend with all types in the industry. As was suggested by the hon. Mr. Griffith, none of us knows sufficiently what is the right thing to do.

When introducing the Bill, the Minister said that the commission-driver would not be affected. He said it would affect only those driving for wages. Other hon. members have given the impression that the hirer would be covered by the Bill and would receive its benefits.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You misunderstood the Minister.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: I understood from his remarks that the person who hired and drove a taxi on a commission basis would not come into the picture. Like many other people, I often ride in a taxi from the city to Parliament House; from here back home; and from home to the aerodrome. I often speak to the drivers who want to talk about the conditions in their industry. I learnt that some years ago conditions were very prosperous and nobody had anything against the industry. Over the past few years, particularly in the last 12 months, conditions have changed.

Late last night I drove down to the city in a taxi to pick up my own car. The driver told me that he was working on a commission basis. I asked him how he was faring. He told me he was doing very well indeed. He wondered how the stories got into the newspapers that taxi-drivers were receiving only £9 to £10 per week.

He said that together with his tips he was receiving £23 to £25 per week. He is a married man with three children and is quite happy in his job. He said he could not understand how some drivers were receiving only £9 to £10 a week for their work. He would not believe that, because nobody could afford to earn only that amount and be expected to keep himself and his family.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I did not give any amount which was less than £12 a week.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: We have to take a broader view than this Bill takes, if we are to do the right thing for the taxi industry and for all parties concerned. It is very hard to legislate for this industry. At times this city could do with many more taxis than are available; that is during peak hours, week-ends, holidays and evenings. On five days of the week probably 400 taxis would cope with all the business offering, but at other times 800 or 900 taxis are needed.

When there is such a fluctuation as that, it is difficult to legislate or control, in order to meet the requirements during busy periods. To do this perhaps 200 extra vehicles would be needed, and a fair amount of capital would be involved to put that number of cars on the road. That makes the overall operation of the taxi industry rather expensive.

I have sometimes wondered whether or not it would be possible to issue taxi licenses to people, to permit them to ply for hire for 24 hours of the day if they so desire; and, in order to accommodate the travelling public during the peak hours, to allow persons who possess cars to use them as taxis part-time. By this means we could assist some retired people who have not sufficient to live on, and others who are not capable of working all the time. They could be issued with a different type of taxi plate, to enable them to work during the peak hours of the day. They could still run their vehicles as private cars but would be permitted to use them to carry passengers at peak hours.

Sitting suspended from 4 p.m. to 4.15 p.m.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: I was making some reference to the peak hour trade and offering a suggestion that perhaps some means of coping with that traffic could be formulated by allowing persons to register as taxi drivers, with special plates, to operate at certain times. This would cheapen the over-all operating of taxis in Western Australia. I believe there are many aspects of this industry which need to be investigated and the Bill before us will help only a very small section of the community concerned in it. In my opinion, the ones affected are those who are least entitled to protection; because it appears that the drivers who are connected with good reliable people

and drive for commission are doing quite well. I have not yet spoken to one who is not doing well.

I do not know how many drive for a straightout wage; but to my mind they are the persons whom this Bill will benefit, and yet they are least entitled to any help. The owner-drivers, and those who drive on commission are the ones we should try to help and protect, because to my mind the best service is given by one who owns his own vehicle or who drives on commission because they both have a stake in the industry in which they work.

I was amazed at the figures given by the hon. Mr. Lavery. He said that he had worked the figures out on the cost of a car, and what a person paid as a hirer, or as a driver on commission, to the owner; and he said that from the takings the owner would get £700 a year, whereas the hirer would get approximately £350 only. Then he went on to say that he knew of a firm operated by one family which owned 180 cars and the profit for the year was £27,000. I worked that out and it meant a profit of only £150 per car per year. So how the hon. member drew the conclusions he did, I do not know. He said that a person who owns a car gets £600 or £700 clear profit each year and yet the family he quoted, which had 180 cars, could get only £27,000 profit. He must have been told the wrong story somewhere.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It shows there must be something wrong somewhere.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: I am convinced of that. I do not think that this Bill will fulfil the purpose for which it was introduced, namely, to put the taxi industry on a sound footing. I think the matter should be examined more thoroughly so we can have a better appreciation of the whole of the taxi industry and so that we can have more decency in it. Over the past 12 months there have been many serious incidents; one particular gang was cutting the throats of the others.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is figuratively only.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: Yes. We did hear of one taxi chopping in on another, and we have even heard of cars being damaged, because of ill-feeling in the industry at the time. All that needs straightening out. I feel that even the dress of these men, together with the question of their passing an examination, needs consideration. I always thought it was necessary for a taxi-driver, before he could be issued with a conductor's licence, or a licence to drive a taxi, to know the metropolitan area and suburbs pretty well, and be able to take passengers direct from one point to another.

I have driven in taxis the drivers of which barely know how to speak sufficient English to make themselves understood. They do not know the suburbs at all, and they are just as likely to take one for a ride, as it were; and instead of going direct from one point to another by the shortest route, they traverse a route which would cost an additional 3s., or so, by way of charges.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Perhaps that is how the fellow got his £23 per week.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: He could speak English. The hon. member has just come into the Chamber. I have already referred to his statement about a family having 180 cars and making a profit of £27,000. By my arithmetic that would work out at a profit of £150 per car. I wonder where the hon. member got his figure of £500 or £600 from? In all the circumstances, I propose to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. G. E. JEFFERY (Suburban) [4.22]: I will not traverse all the comment that has already been made, except to say that, in the first instance, this measure was requested by 400 or 500 owner-drivers who form the Metropolitan Taxi Owners' Association. I am told that at present in the metropolitan area there are 751 cabs, 550 of which are owned by owner-drivers and 200 of which are investor-cars owned by 30 investors. At present there are 69 applications for plates. As has been said on a previous occasion, the applications are not a true indication of the number of cars that would be on the road if the gates were open.

My information is that there would be approximately 200 cars that would immediately come into operation as a result of the 69 applications. As has been said, in some cases the one person has made more than one application. The number of taxis per head of population does not have very much to do with the debate, but I think the habits of the population have changed considerably; and I am sure hon. members will agree that, in the pre-war years, taxis were a luxury and used only on special occasions, such as marriages, accidents, and the taking of expectant mothers to maternity hospitals; and occasions of that nature.

But since the advent of the two-way radio service, the taxi has come within the means of the ordinary man, and figures taken out in Sydney prove this to be the case. They show that pre-war the average man used a taxi on 12 occasions in the year; whereas today he uses it on 65 occasions. I am sure that hon. members know from their own experience that they themselves use taxis much more today than they did 10 or 15 years ago. Accordingly the figures are not indicative of the number of occasions on which people use taxis, and they have no great bearing on the subject.

Concern has been expressed about the number of taxis on the road. It is true that up to December, 1956, there were 550 taxis on the road; but since then they have been admitted at the rate of ten per month; and, since April this year, the figure has been reduced to five per month. With due respect to hon. members, I suggest that in some cases this has proved a benefit to taxi-drivers because mostly owner-drivers have been able to get plates at their actual cost, rather than pay exorbitant goodwill charges on the 550 plates which can still be sold on the market.

The plates issued since December, 1956, are not transferable, and if the individual ceases to be in the taxi industry his plates are returned. I would point out to hon. members that according to my information only two plates have been surrendered in the last two months; and with the admission of five, there is a wastage for various reasons.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are quite sure the plates cannot be transferred?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: That is my information—that plates issued since December, 1956, are not transferable.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: But are they being transferred?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: My information is that they are not. It is problematical whether this will do any good to the owner-driver, but I suggest it will. It will do a lot of good for the man who is a lessee and also for the man who is working on a commission basis. In the first instance, the owner-driver will be competing against the man who is on an even footing with him. At present the position of these lessee-drivers is, to my mind, something akin to the rickshaw coolie; and, in many instances, his economic circumstances are not much better.

Despite what has been said by some hon. members that they have chatted to the odd taxi-driver here and the odd bus-driver there, I would like to point out that I have with me statutory declarations which can be seen by hon. members if they so wish. In one instance the man said that for the few weeks he was engaged with his company his income was £3 per week. Needless to say, that is why he got out of it. From the statutory declaration, it will be found that the number of hours these people work vary from nine hours a day to 16 hours a day. In some cases they are taking tablets to prevent themselves falling asleep.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I told the Minister for Transport that some time ago.

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: Reference has been made to the man who owns the taxi and yet has no great interest in it. In one instance there was a bookmaker-owner living in New South Wales who,

along with another man, had two taxis in Perth. All he is concerned with is that a cheque goes to the Eastern States every week. He does not care whether the public of Perth are being served properly or not.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Don't you think that needs straightening out?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: The hon. member has made his speech; now I am trying to make mine. I have with me a legal document that can be seen whenever the hon. member wishes. I am not firing a shot at the fellow who owns the vehicle or the man who hires it. Many of these agreements would not hold water in a court of law. After the man has signed the lease it is put away in a safe belonging to the taxi company, and is not to be sighted. In one instance, however, a copy was secured, and I have it with me now.

The lease provides that the individual is to pay £25 a week, and if the vehicle does more than 1,050 miles he shall pay an extra 4d. per mile for that vehicle; he will pay his rent on the Tuesday of every week. There are gentlemen resident in Western Australia—one with an address in South Perth—who have a pool of names. If people are not able to stay in this racket for a great length of time, then there must be somebody ready to step into the breach.

In these cases the individuals say they average between £9 and £14 per week income. The average gross income 12 months ago was £43 a week. I suggest to hon. members that after deducting £25, plus anything from £7 to £9 for petrol and oil, the remainder is the income of the taxi-driver. For a driver who works on the £25 lease basis, the hourly wage rate is 2s., which is something about—or it may be less—the wage earned by a first-year apprentice in a trade.

This situation is becoming rapidly worse. Because of the tightening of the economic purse-strings, taxis are being used on a lesser number of occasions by the ordinary person in the street. Everybody knows that there are fewer people going to the races, because of the fact that they are not earning the same income as they used to do. This applies to building tradesmen and so forth, and, of course, taxi-operators are feeling the economic pinch.

The Bill will force the investor to pay a decent wage to his employees, and the owner-driver will be able to compete on a fair basis. I have obtained statements from drivers who are on the commission basis; and on each occasion these men have said this is the best they have been able to get in the industry. That is the man who receives something like 8s. out of every £1 the vehicle earns. I think it is

a sporting risk whereby the owner of the vehicle and the operator share according to the income. If it is large, then they have a good week; but if it is not large, they have a bad week.

The figures supplied to me are in regard to a very well-known vehicle on the road. I will not mention its name; but everyone will know the vehicle to which I am referring. It is a very popular make and good indeed. Using the most generous figures, the cost of the vehicle, plus the installation of two-way radio and meter, would be about £1,410; the cost of the vehicle being £1,150. The two-way radio costs £180 and another £80 is needed for the taxi meter. The overheads have been assessed on a most generous basis. I was present when they were assessed, and I will give hon. members an idea of them so that they may either agree or disagree.

There is an agreement between the vendors of these particular vehicles and taxi-owners that for the payment of £4 per week they can turn in the vehicle at the end of 12 months and take out a new one. In other words, for the payment of £200 per year, the proprietor maintains a good vehicle. Under the overheads which have been mentioned, the sum of £50 a year is allowed for mechanical repairs. I think most people know the sturdiness of this vehicle and will agree that £50 is a generous assessment of mechanical repairs, particularly if that vehicle is replaced every 12 months.

There is another item of £3 per week for rank fees, which also allows the person concerned to use the rank's radio facilities. It goes on to allow for such things as taxi licence, insurance, and even a new set of tyres at £40. There is also an allowance of £20 for maintenance in the case of the meter and the car radio. I think most operators would agree that £20 would be a most generous estimate.

By using these figures, the total is £550, or £11 per week. Therefore, the operator who is receiving £25 per week is, in fact, clearing something like £14 per week which, on a capital investment of £1,500, is rather a good return. The fellow who has a lease is earning £9 per week and the owner is clearing £14. I think this proves conclusively that a wage could be paid to the driver of the vehicle. I see no reason why he should not be paid at least the basic wage, together with such additions as extra for work on Sundays and probably Saturdays.

These owner-drivers have another problem with which they have to grapple. It is their problem and I do not think that Parliament can do much about it. It is in regard to the number of individuals who have five-day week jobs and who operate taxis over the week-end on Saturday or Sunday, or both days. They work for the owners of vehicles.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What will the Bill do for the taxi-owner in connection with these people?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: The turnover of these people is terrific. Because of the wage level which I have previously mentioned, people who are out of work think there must be something wrong with the man who is only making £10 per week, and they think they can do much better. However, there is a maximum; and once it is reached, that is it. These people soon find out that what appeared to be a reasonable chance of earning a living has disappeared very rapidly and most of these people are left lamenting.

I have read some of these agreements or lease deeds, and I saw a document where a fellow was buying a vehicle and paying £7 15s. for its purchase, plus £17 per week rent. In the first instance, he had to pay £100 for consideration of option of purchase of a vehicle, which it will take him 130 weeks to own. I think all hon. members will agree that if a vehicle does 1,000 or 1,300 miles per week, it will show about 150,000 miles on the speedometer at the end of the 130-week period; and all the person finishes up with is a second-hand vehicle in poor condition—plus the fact that plates, meter, and radio revert to the original owner of the vehicle.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How long has this been going on?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: For some time. This document was signed in June or July, 1956; and in this particular case the man concerned would have owned his vehicle at about Christmas this year. Under the agreement, he was allowed to step out. He did so; but I am not sure of the reason. I was told he had a nervous breakdown. Having read that agreement, I can well understand why he should; but I am not sure of the reason. I have the agreement here and hon. members can see it if they wish.

The lease agreement provided for many other things. The owner had to pay the rank fees; but if these fees were increased, the hirer had to pay the extra amount. The hirer was also required to maintain the vehicle in first-class order. If repairs were required, these had to be carried out by a person selected by the owner or vendor. The agreement contained numerous other restrictive clauses. It was easy to see that in no time the chap would be in deep financial waters.

I think this Bill will give the owner-operator a clear amount of money and will make all taxi-drivers in this State owner-drivers. That will be a desirable situation and much better than having individuals in the industry who have no relationship to it whatsoever. People have gone into the industry and have obtained a very lucrative wage. In one instance there was a doctor. Farmers and other gentlemen have also been mentioned.

I think the other important feature of the Bill relates to the hours which these men have to spend on the road; and the public is due for consideration in relation to the safety angle, which is important.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: A good point.

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: I have previously mentioned that in order to keep going, drivers have had to take tablets, but they have still met with accidents.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How long would it take to bring about the position you have mentioned?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: That is a debatable point. I could not even give an estimate of the time it would take to disgorge some of the original 550 people from the industry; but, frankly, I think it would have to be done over a period of time.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You would say, "gradually"?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: Yes; they would gradually move out of the industry. I think, all in all, this is a good Bill and one which will help the industry to get on its feet. Irrespective of whether there is a Select Committee or not, I suggest that the Bill should be passed, as it will go some of the way towards meeting the difficulties of the industry.

I know that the taxi-drivers are depending upon this Bill as one of the things which will give them a chance to earn a living, and enable them to live a somewhat normal life. What is happening in their private lives today? They are working for a great number of hours; and, therefore, they are away from home for long periods. The conditions under which they are working are terrific. Everyone can see what a serious effect this is all having on the home life of these men, quite apart from their economic circumstances.

I have no desire to continue the debate much further, because most of the points have been covered at some stage or another; but in view of what I have learned in the last week or two from statutory declarations and the sighting of lease agreements, I intend to support the measure.

However, before concluding, I wish to refer to the Minister for Transport. Much has been said about his being the big bad wolf of the taxi industry. Therefore, I am going to inform hon. members of some of the things he has done during the 2½ years he has been a Minister. These are some of the things which he has achieved in order greatly to alleviate conditions in the taxi industry in this State.

He standardised the flag fall from 1s. to 1s. 6d.; and increased waiting time, from 8s. to 12s. per hour. He agreed to increase the number of taxi stands even though this was done against police opposition.

In addition, he increased the minimum fee per mile to 1s. 6d. Despite all this he is regarded as the big bad wolf of the industry. However, I think hon. members must agree that he has done many things to assist. In regard to taxi-plates there are now only five released each month and this has allowed some owners to go into the industry by dodging the payment of huge sums of money, which they could not afford, to obtain plates.

THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [4.43]: When this legislation was first mooted in the Press a few weeks ago I was besieged from various angles by persons interested in the taxi business, from one side or another; and since that time I have been completely confused. On the one hand, people approached me with urgent pleas to vote against this legislation; while on the other, people asked me very urgently to support it.

I have tried to make inquiries through various channels, and I must admit that the confusion has not been solved in any way at all; and since listening to the various speeches in this Chamber, I find my confusion still exists. I cannot see any clear line of thinking through it at all.

For that reason, and because of a suggestion made by the hon. Mr. Griffith yesterday that when the Bill goes into Committee, it is his intention to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the whole of this industry, I am going to support the second reading. I think that will be a very wise move and one for which the hon. Mr. Griffith should be commended.

The taxi industry is an extremely important one, as the previous speaker said. It is playing an increasing part in the life of the average citizen; and there are many instances where a taxi is used, not only for transport from point A to point B, but to obtain information in one way or another. I have done it myself. One gets in a cab and asks the driver, "Where is a good place to stay in the city?"; and the taxi-driver says, "Such and such a hotel." There are various other items like that. One can meet very courteous drivers, and I think they are playing a very important part.

Another aspect is concerned with the recent radical changes in the transport system of the city. Even travelling between the city and Parliament House it is extremely difficult to get on to public transport. Persons living in close proximity to the city would be well advised to use taxis for their transport. For this reason alone I feel the matter should be given careful consideration.

If we vote against the measure, we may be doing a grave injustice to the industry as a whole, or to a certain section of it. On the other hand, if we allow it to go through in its present form, the same thing might apply. For that reason, and

in view of the importance of the industry, I feel that the sensible thing to do is to appoint a Select Committee which can then be turned into an Honorary Royal Commission.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You could have appointed one 12 months ago.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: —and let all those directly concerned, or indirectly concerned, come forward and have their say. Then the Select Committee or Royal Commission could sift the information and submit it to the Government with a view to having suitable legislation to improve the conditions in the industry, introduced next year.

I wish to refer to one further matter. Much has been said about the Minister for Transport and his being such a blue-eyed boy in connection with the taxi industry. That differs considerably from what I have heard from taxi-drivers when travelling in taxis between here and the city, and on other occasions. I vividly recall that when it was proposed to increase the flag-fall from 1s. to 1s. 6d., there was bitter opposition. Many taxi-drivers were greatly incensed about the suggestion; and also because the Minister tried every means to prevent them from picking up short-distance passengers when the tram services were first eliminated.

Therefore I think the Minister for Transport, even though he may be doing a good job, is not entirely the blue-eyed boy that the hon. Mr. Jeffery would have us believe. However, that is beside the point. The main issue is that something must be done in the taxi industry. I feel that the only way that something can properly be done is by having a thorough investigation into the matter; and this can only be achieved by passing the second reading of the Bill and then voting for the appointment of a Select Committee as has been proposed by the hon. Mr. Griffith. I therefore support the second reading of the measure.

THE HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [4.48]: I had decided simply to vote on the measure, but in view of what the last speaker had to say, I wish to say a few words in support of it. If there is one thing that makes me think of democracy gone wrong, it is when the Opposition speaks about a Select Committee doing such wonderful work in the cause of justice.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It did not do too badly for you in connection with the Juries Bill.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: We know quite well that it is simply a quick way to kill a Bill.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did it kill the Juries Bill?

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: It is seldom that we get such a startling example of the need for a social reform as we did

when the Juries Bill was before us. The Opposition was left without a leg to stand on. To suggest the appointment of a Select Committee, is not an honest approach to the Bill. Any man should be able to earn an honest living. I do not agree with the hon. Mr. Lavery that the word "parasite" would be the wrong one to use when speaking about the people who own taxi companies. Of all the parasitic organisations, I think such companies would be a charming example.

Taxi-drivers work long hours. I know this, because I travel with them. These men become overtired, and sometimes they could be a danger to the people who use taxis. It is true that times have changed considerably since taxis first came into being. Now they are regarded as an ordinary form of transport and help.

An important point is that since the housewife, as a result of the war, has been made the carthorse of the nation, she uses taxis because by so doing she saves time and receives help in taking home the goods that she purchases from super markets, and so on. Since super markets have become the fashion, little or no service is rendered to the housewife with the result that the taxi-driver has become a very good friend to the housewife in the city and suburbs.

The Opposition should be prepared to face up to the position and not hide behind the suggestion for the appointment of a Select Committee. The hon. Mr. Mattiske dealt with the position with very nice words, but what he said does not alter things. The suggestion of appointing a Select Committee is just another way of getting out of facing up to a situation without being blamed for what we do. We must be blamed if we do not face up to the position when we have the conditions that exist in Perth through changed circumstances.

It is not the fault of the taxi-driver, or anyone else particularly, that things are as they are, but because of the changed conditions since the war. Vast changes have taken place in our transport system. The Minister for Transport is doing a good job, but it is not possible for a man to do everything perfectly when such a change from chaos is taking place. But no-one can deny that he is bringing order out of chaos.

Every man, I feel, should be able to earn a living in a country such as this. He should work proper hours and receive proper wages. I would put out of existence the taxi companies, which are a parasitic part of our society. I support the Bill. I rose to draw attention to the fact that, as I have said time and again, we have a Labour Party in Government, but not in power. This House is elected by a third of the people. A democratic franchise does not apply here, but most people in Western Australia do not understand that.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: What has this to do with the Bill?

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The privileged few can say what is to happen in Western Australia. I would like the taxi-drivers to know that this is the position. I support the Bill because I think it is one way by which we can bring order out of chaos and give a man a decent living.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND Minister for Railways—North—in reply (4.53): Much has been said on this simple Bill, but most of it has had nothing to do with the measure.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: That applies to the last speaker.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I notice how hard it is for those who always oppose any improvement in industrial conditions, to find reasons for their opposition. It is difficult for them to find real justification for their attempts to prevent measures, which will improve the conditions of some workers, becoming law. That is all the Bill intends to do.

The only thing it seeks to do is to improve the conditions of drivers employed on taxis or on goods vehicles. But the taxi-drivers are those most affected, because they work long hours and continue through the night. The Bill is just a simple measure, but we have heard a lot about it. We have been told that it should go to a Select Committee and then on to an Honorary Royal Commission; that the Select Committee and the Royal Commission should inquire into whether a man who is being underpaid should be paid a living wage. It is beyond all comprehension.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Nobody suggested that, except you.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member wants to refer the Bill to a Select Committee; but we will talk of that when he moves his motion. The measure merely seeks to ensure that men are not worked exceedingly long hours, and are not underpaid.

I was surprised to hear the hon. Mr. Jones oppose a measure like this. He is a man—a farmer—who insists that he should get a minimum price for his wheat—a guaranteed price for his labour—and yet he objects to a law which will guarantee a fair and reasonable return for the labour of a worker. That is all it amounts to.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Who else is opposed to it?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member said he sympathised with these people. He told us of a discussion he had with a taxi-driver, and said that the taxi-driver wanted him to support the Bill because he thought it would improve things. Mr. Griffith said, "Yes, I believe

it will." Yet, he wants to shelve it. He does not even want the Bill to make a start on improving conditions, although he admits in his speech that it would be a start. He is taking action to see that it will not get going—not this year, anyway.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Is it not better to wait?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member found it difficult to excuse himself for not supporting the Bill. He was confused and confounded. So many people have been to the hon. member and asked him to support the Bill, and so many others have asked him to oppose it, that he does not know where he is. I would not need a Select Committee or Royal Commission to tell me how to vote to improve the conditions of workers—I never have. Measures have been brought before us to improve our Parliamentary salaries; and our salaries have been improved, but no inquiry was held to see whether we deserved the increases, or not.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: I voted against them.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member should have had the matter inquired into. If he voted against those Bills, no doubt he did so because his taxation was so high that the increases would make no difference to him, anyway. Let us get back to the Bill. All it intends to do is to place a certain class of taxi-driver under the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court which will prescribe a minimum wage for him—a minimum return for his labour—in just the same way as it prescribes wages for contract workers. Hon. members will not agree with me here, perhaps; but every shearer is a contract worker; and the law of the land—a Commonwealth law at that—lays down that the shearer shall get no less than so much per hundred.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: He gets more.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member has probably been pleased to pay the shearers more, and that is why I cannot reconcile his attitude to this measure. The shearer is an important man to the farmers, but the taxi-driver does not mean a thing to them because they all own cars.

Let us get back to the principle of the matter. If one set of workers is entitled to protection and to having a minimum wage prescribed by the proper authority, surely others are, too. I cannot understand the attitude of wanting to push this simple measure into the wilderness where it will be lost.

The hon. Mr. Griffith accused me of drawing red herrings across the trail, but he is attempting to draw a whale across the trail. I sincerely hope hon. members will examine this question as it stands and stick to the principle contained in the

Bill. The transferring of taxi plates, and the activities of taxi-drivers and their status in life, have nothing to do with the contents of this measure, which seeks only to see that taxi-drivers receive justice through the Arbitration Court. It is just so much hooey to talk about referring a matter such as this to a Select Committee, and I agree with the hon. Mrs. Hutchison that it is simply a way of killing the measure and ensuring that it does not become law.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: What about the Juries Bill?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That Bill—

The PRESIDENT: The Juries Bill is not the subject of debate at the present time.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I will have to ask the hon. member to put his question on the notice paper. At all events, that Bill had nothing to do with wages or conditions. As time goes on, as experience has shown us, the taxi-cabs are gradually but surely coming under the control of companies or investors, which means that the number of employees in the industry is increasing and the owner-driver is finding the position more difficult, as he has to meet the competition of the companies and their drivers; drivers who are working long hours in order to meet their commitments. The view of the hon. Mr. Griffith is that in time they will vanish if the court guarantees the drivers a minimum rate of pay—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You said that; I did not.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member said they would go broke and that the taxi business would be overloaded and that there would be unemployment. Unemployment is one of the chief reasons why so many drivers are taking a job with taxi companies and are driving long hours.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You have got your speech mixed up with mine.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member said everything but the right thing. The hon. member supported the second reading and now wants to send the measure to the wilderness. That is the objective of the Opposition.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: On a point of order, Mr. President; I regret that I have to ask the Minister to withdraw that remark. It is not the objective of the Opposition to throw this measure into the wilderness.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think there is any point of order involved there.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I say that is not my objective, but the Minister asserts that it is.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member has already made one speech in regard to this Bill and will shortly make

another. I am entitled to my view of his objective and I suggest it is to cast this Bill to the wilderness, from which it will not come back.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are wrong.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If I am wrong in that, the measure will pass this session. At all events, the decision will rest with this Chamber. I could debate for hours various matters not directly associated with the Bill, but this measure seeks only to see that taxi-drivers are given a guaranteed minimum wage. I commend the measure to the House.

Personal Explanation.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: On a point of personal explanation, Mr. President: I know the Minister for Railways is often misinformed, but I do not want him to misinform the House or the gallery in regard to my personal business. For that reason I now inform the House that I have not paid taxation for the last three years.

Debate Resumed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban) [5.6]: I move—

That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

After what has taken place during the debate on this measure, I think it is necessary for me, in moving this motion, to express again—and I hope a little more clearly—what my objectives are. The Minister for Railways states that my purpose is to defeat the Bill and cast it into the wilderness, so that it will never become law, and he suggests that that is where my interest in the measure starts and finishes.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: A bit like the position in regard to the Juries Bill!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes. On that occasion I was accused of wanting to move for the appointment of a Select Committee so that the Bill would be cast into the wilderness; but hon. members will recall that that Select Committee got on with the job and made recommendations to the Government, and that those recommendations were apparently quite satisfactory, because the Government introduced a measure embodying, to the finest detail, the recommendations of that Select Committee.

Whilst that legislation was passed about 12 months ago, we have not yet heard much about its being put into operation. It seems that whenever I move for the appointment of a Select Committee—which I rarely do—the Minister for Railways

believes my attitude is simply one in opposition to some section of the workers; and nothing could be further removed from the truth. The speech of the hon. Mr. Lavery, during the debate on the second reading—

The PRESIDENT: Is this relevant to the appointment of a Select Committee?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think it is.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has already debated the second reading of the Bill and I hope he will keep to the motion.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Do you agree, Mr. President, that in order to persuade hon. members to vote for the appointment of a Select Committee it is necessary for me to point out why such action should be taken?

The PRESIDENT: If the hon. member keeps to that I cannot object, but he cannot again debate the second reading.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am endeavouring to point out to the House why I think a Select Committee is necessary. This is an industry which, up until about 1955, seemed to be going along fairly well, and no-one heard much complaint about it; but from approximately that time onwards it seems that we have been inundated with complaints. In 1956 there were 572 sets of taxi plates in existence.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must remember that the second reading of the Bill has been agreed to, and that he is discussing the subject matter of that debate now. Instead of that he should inform the House as to why he seeks the appointment of a Select Committee.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Will you be good enough, Mr. President, to inform me of the subjects upon which I can address the House?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, the hon. member can address the House in order to give, in support of the motion, any further information he thinks it should have.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The second reading of the Bill has been agreed to and during the debate on the second reading I foreshadowed that at this stage I would move for the appointment of a Select Committee. It was for that purpose that I supported the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That was before I had spoken at all, so what has my speech to do with it?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Out of the second reading debate there has come certain information and I am asking you, Mr. President, whether I am permitted to address my remarks to that information while moving for the appointment of a Select Committee. I do not think you would suggest that I should stand here

and move a substantive motion and, having done that, sit down without saying why it is necessary; because that would be most unsatisfactory.

The **PRESIDENT**: The object of moving for the appointment of a Select Committee is, surely, to bring to the notice of the House information in support of the motion. The hon. member knows the position as well as I do.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I also know that this is a substantive motion that I have moved and in order that the House shall vote on it I must give hon. members something on which to vote. However, it appears obvious to me that you, Mr. President, do not propose to allow me—

The **PRESIDENT**: The hon. member is not permitted to make another second reading speech.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I regret that I find myself in a position where I have supported the second reading of the Bill and where I can now not give the Minister anything to reply to, because when he makes his speech I will have done nothing but argue with you, Mr. President, about what I am permitted to say. With obvious respect, Mr. President, I suggest that this is an unfortunate state of affairs, because the Minister has said he does not think a Select Committee is necessary and I am now merely trying to point to some of the facts and say why a Select Committee is necessary.

Here we have an industry which everybody agrees is in a parlous position. We are informed by Press reports and by all and sundry that taxi-drivers are working long hours for small money, and nobody denies that.

The **PRESIDENT**: A Select Committee could inquire into that.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am asking the House to agree to a Select Committee to find out whether anything can be done to alter such a state of affairs and to discover whether the allegations which have been made against certain citizens in this community are correct and, if so, whether the position can be put right.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What has that to do with the Bill?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister said he would make his speech, and in due course he can. We want to see whether the industry can be put right. I feel that an inquiry into this question will reveal that things are happening in the industry which should not be happening. I feel that an inquiry will give us an opportunity to report to Parliament, and then the Government of the day can take whatever action is necessary to place the industry on a more stable basis.

It has been suggested that there is now not much time left and that my objective is to throw the Bill into the wilderness. I would think that there is plenty of time, as I have sat in this Chamber almost up until Christmas Eve before now, in order to deal with the legislation that was before us. This is only the 28th November, but for some extraordinary reason this House has been asked to finish the session by next Friday, if it can. I can visualise the House sitting long hours of the day and night in order to pass legislation which is still being discussed in another place; yet night after night we have adjourned early because we have had little or no legislation on the notice paper.

If this Bill had been introduced earlier in the session it would have received a great deal more consideration than it will now and there would have been time for a Select Committee to have reported on it. If the House considers that a Select Committee should be appointed to inquire into this question, I will do all in my power to get the inquiry under way immediately. I will start on Monday morning if it is convenient to the other hon. members who will be appointed as members of the Select Committee.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: Could you submit a report by Wednesday?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: How on earth could one be expected to make a report by Wednesday when one considers all the ramifications of this industry?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What have the ramifications of the industry to do with the Bill?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The ramifications of the industry have a great deal to do with the Bill, because I am of the opinion that this measure will not be the means of solving all the problems in the industry today, and I am certain that an inquiry into the industry will bring forth a method by which the Government can iron out the difficulties.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: How long have you held that opinion?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I know one can expect that sort of remark from the Minister for Railways. I have held that opinion for quite a while.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: How long?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have been asking questions about the subject for the past 12 or 18 months, but the replies have not been very satisfactory.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You still took no action.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am not the Government. The Minister and the Government did not take any action.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I am talking about the action that you propose taking now.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Minister and the Government did not take any action and it is most unreasonable for the Minister for Railways to lay the blame on me. It is very easy to pass the buck on to somebody else by saying, "Although we have done nothing about the matter, what have you done about it in the past 18 months?"

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Tell us why you want a Select Committee appointed.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not wish to waste any more time discussing the matter, because there is some doubt as to how far I can go in doing so. In moving for the appointment of a Select Committee I repeat that if the House agrees to the motion I will do all in my power to ensure that the Select Committee will commence its deliberations immediately. My answer to the hon. Mr. Loton is that although it is most desirable that a report be submitted by, say, Wednesday, I do not think that by the wildest stretch of imagination he could expect any Select Committee to report by that date.

Of course, as I foreshadowed in my second reading speech, the Select Committee could be converted into an Honorary Royal Commission which could then get on with the job, and in due course report to the Governor. His Excellency could then take steps to approach the Government to improve the existing situation in the taxi industry.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (Minister for Railways—North) [5.22]: The hon. member has not given one reason why this Bill should be referred to a Select Committee.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I was not allowed.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You are casting a reflection on the Chair!

The PRESIDENT: I would point out to the hon. member that he is casting a reflection on the Chair.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I most humbly apologise, Mr. President.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member could not give one reason why this Bill, which will enable taxi-drivers to be brought within the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, should be referred to a Select Committee. If the hon. member's motion is agreed to, will the Select Committee deal with what is contained in the Bill or will it deal with all the ramifications of the taxi industry in Western Australia? The motion is ridiculous. I cannot understand a man with the intelligence of the hon. Mr. Griffith—and he studies legislation very closely when he so desires—making this move. I cannot understand his motive unless it is to ensure that this Bill does not become law this session.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Keep it up!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: We need no further conclusive proof of that now that the hon. member has stated that if the Bill is referred to a Select Committee, such committee can be turned into an Honorary Royal Commission. He was asked by the hon. Mr. Loton if he could make a report by Wednesday, and he replied that that would be impossible, because he would have to inquire into all the ramifications of the taxi industry.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You think a Select Committee could report back to the House by Wednesday?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Of course it could not, if it is to inquire into all the ramifications of the taxi industry; but is not the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the Bill? The hon. member admitted that he has been concerned about this matter for 12 months or so. The fact is that he was approached about 12 months ago by an officer of the Taxi Drivers' Association and asked to move for the appointment of a Select Committee in the Upper House, and he was presented with a case on which to base his motion. However, what did he do? That was the reason for my interjection when I asked the hon. member what he had done about the appointment of a Select Committee. The answer is that he has done nothing at all.

The hon. Mr. Griffith advised the officer who approached him that it would only be a waste of time to move for the appointment of a Select Committee because the report made by the chairman would have to go to the Minister for Transport (the Hon. H. E. Graham), and he would only put it in the wastepaper basket. That is what happened in September, 1957. The hon. member now, in the dying stages of the session, wants to refer this small, simple question to a Select Committee so that the committee can inquire into and report upon those matters connected with the taxi industry, which he was asked to deal with in 1957. Is that a logical reply to this measure?

The hon. member can agree to the passing of this measure and he can move for the appointment of a Select Committee. If he has no opposition to the men being brought under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, he has no objection to the principle contained in this Bill.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I did not say that.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member can then move for the appointment of a Select Committee, a Royal Commission, or whatever he likes. However, he should not obstruct the passage of the Bill by his motion for the appointment of a Select Committee. He should

let the measure pass. I will support a motion for the appointment of a Select Committee or an Honorary Royal Commission to inquire into the ramifications of the taxi industry; but I am not going to support this motion, which will obstruct the passage of this measure.

If a Select Committee is appointed it can still report back to us in 12 months or in two years on the ramifications of the taxi industry; but there is no reason why this Bill should be delayed. There is not the slightest chance of the Premier agreeing to a Select Committee—if it is appointed—being turned into an Honorary Royal Commission on this question. I can advise hon. members authoritatively on that.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Why did you not say that before the Bill reached the second reading stage?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If hon. members are under the impression that this motion has been moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into this Bill I can assure them that such is not the case. I am not objecting to the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the ramifications of the taxi industry, but hon. members should not agree to the appointment of such a committee that will sit long enough to prevent this Bill from passing.

THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [5.27]: I support the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee, and I take this opportunity to reply not only to the remarks made by the Minister for Railways in replying to the debate on the second reading, but also to those he has made on this motion.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The hon. member will have the opportunity to reply to what I have said on the third reading of the Bill.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I am supporting this motion and I am astounded at the inconsistency of the Minister for Railways. Recently, we had before us an extremely lengthy piece of legislation, concerning which doubts were raised because of an expert opinion expressed on it. However, it was decided to place the legislation on the statute book with the assurance given that it would not be implemented until Parliament had an opportunity to review it.

Now, in the dying hours of the session, we have an important piece of legislation before us and the Minister objects to delaying it until next session to enable a thorough inquiry to be made into it. This question is of paramount importance and we need to hold an inquiry on it. Therefore, a Select Committee is absolutely essential.

The Minister asked why no action was taken by the hon. Mr. Griffith previously to have a Select Committee appointed earlier; but I venture to say that it is the Government of the day that is responsible for controlling these matters. If the Government was aware of what transpired in September of last year or the year before, and it knew that there were certain aspects in the taxi industry that required attention, why did it not introduce this measure earlier in the session to give us the opportunity of appointing a Select Committee to make a full inquiry and enable it to report back to the House before the session closed?

The Minister for Railways has tried to make mock of me by saying that I did not know where I was going, but that his mind was completely made up on the measure. On any matter of this nature it is our duty to obtain the fullest information we can before arriving at a decision. I repeat that my mind is still confused and it would be extremely unwise, to say the least, for me to vote for or against this measure without having a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the whole matter thoroughly and submit recommendations for our consideration.

I sincerely hope that the House will agree to the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee. As the hon. Mr. Griffith said, it could then be turned into an Honorary Royal Commission and subsequently have the recommendations passed on to the Government. The Government would then have the opportunity to introduce suitable legislation to give effect to those recommendations, and by so doing it would be dealing with the taxi industry as a whole and not with one section of it.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—in reply) [5.31]: I am extremely sorry to think that the Minister for Railways has waited until the final minute to inform us that the Premier will not, under any circumstances, agree to turn the Select Committee into an Honorary Royal Commission, especially as I foreshadowed the appointment of a Select Committee during the second reading. He could have told us during the second reading that the Premier was not prepared to do that.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: This is the time to give the information.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Maybe this is the time, but nevertheless the proper time for these things to be announced is when the time is most opportune. I think the most opportune time was during the second reading. It was then that I myself foreshadowed the appointment of a Select Committee, although I was under no obligation to give an indication. Now the Minister drives me into a corner by saying that the Premier will not, under any circumstances, turn the Select Committee into an Honorary Royal Commission. He

knows it will not be possible for the Select Committee to sit and report by Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday next.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You admit that?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I admitted that when I replied to an interjection. I said it would not be possible.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You admit you are delaying the Bill.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not admit I am delaying the Bill at all. For some extraordinary reason the Minister insists that I am attempting to delay the Bill.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You said so. You said you would try.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I said I would try to give the House some sort of a report by Friday next. I am extremely displeased with the lack of co-operation from the Minister for Railways, because he is usually very considerate to me. On this occasion, however, he has not shown me any consideration at all. He prefers to say that it is my intention to delay this matter and cause damage to the people who will receive some benefit from this legislation. I am sorry the Minister cannot judge the difference between sincerity and what he asserts I am trying to do.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You will have a week.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If I have to sit up all night and day I shall try to get the report back to this House in some form by that time. I am sure that the taxi-drivers will not agree with the attitude adopted by the Government and the Premier in refusing to turn the Select Committee into an Honorary Royal Commission. Is that the sort of treatment we deserve?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Yes.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Obviously the Minister thinks so. It is true that one man representing this section of the community came to see me about 12 months ago. I interviewed a couple of them at the time. They were negotiating with the Minister to bring about an increase in the flag-fall rate. Ultimately that rate was increased from 1s. 6d. to 2s. But from that time until very recently I saw no more of the particular gentleman concerned. If he likes to read Hansard, or if some fairy will take the message to his ears, he will realise that I saw him on the Perth railway station taxi rank and asked how he was getting on.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is replying to a motion that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am referring to allegations made by the Minister. I have said enough on that point. Caesar himself was destroyed by Brutus. The man

in question will know what my attitude was then and now. I am sorry he has adopted this attitude. If the Select Committee is appointed I shall ask that the report be made by Friday next. So between now and Friday next we can see whether there is any better suggestion than that contained in the Bill. I say that the Bill will not be of any avail in the long run to the people who are now having such a raw deal.

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

Ayes—12

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. R. C. Mattiske

(Teller.)

Noes—9

Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. E. M. Davies
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. J. J. Garrigan
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. G. Bennetts

Majority for—3.

Question thus passed.

Select Committee Appointed.

On motions by the Hon. A. F. Griffith, Select Committee appointed consisting of the Hon. L. A. Logan, the Hon. G. E. Jeffery, and the mover, the committee to have power to call for persons, papers, and documents, adjourn from place to place, and to report by Friday, the 5th December, 1958.

MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland (Minister for Railways), read a first time.

CITY OF PERTH SCHEME FOR SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENTS AUTHORISATION) BILL.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by the Hon. G. E. Jeffery, read a first time.

LICENSING (POLICE FORCE CANTEEN) BILL.

Assembly's Message.

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

LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Assembly with amendments.

HIRE-PURCHASE BILL.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland (Minister for Railways), read a first time.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (RESUMPTION OF LAND) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

In Committee.

The Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Hon. F. J. S. Wise (Minister for Industrial Development) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—put and passed.

Clause 3—Section 12 amended:

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I desire to move an amendment before the one forecast by the hon. Mr. Thomson. I move an amendment—

Page 3, lines 2 and 3—Delete the words "a subsection as follows," and substitute the words "the following subsections."

I do this with the intention of moving subsequently to insert after the word "applicant" in line 23 the following:—

(8) Where in exercise of the power conferred on him by subsection (1b) of section eleven of this Act the Governor purchases land for the purposes of this Act, or where the Governor transfers or grants a lease of land so purchased, the Minister shall, on or before the expiration of thirty days after the purchase, registration of the transfer, or execution of the lease, lay or cause to be laid on the Table of each House of Parliament a report containing true particulars of the purchase, transfer, or lease of the land, including a description of the vendor, the land, the consideration, or the rent reserved, but if Parliament is in recess the Minister shall lay the report or cause it to be laid on the Table of each House of Parliament within thirty days of the next sitting day of Parliament.

This is to ensure that the point which was raised by the hon. Mr. Watson yesterday is incorporated.

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 8—Insert before the word "subsection" the words "paragraphs (c) (d) and (f) of."

First of all I would like to clarify the position about which the Minister spoke last evening when he indicated that I was desirous of killing the Bill. I want to emphasise that that is not the intention of my amendments. I am anxious only to ensure that the committee which has operated hitherto will continue to have the same authority. He said that if my amendments were agreed to they would have the effect of delaying the finalisation of the acquisition of land. But I contend that this is not the case. It could delay it to the extent of, possibly, three or four days—maybe even a week, although I do not think so.

The object is not to delay the finalisation, but to ensure that the committee will still retain its authority. If the Bill is passed in its present form, these land transactions can be completed and finalised without reference to Parliament at all, and therefore I think it is desirable that the committee should continue to operate.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I cannot accept this amendment. In spite of what the hon. member says, it will simply nullify the effect, or the desired effect, of this Bill, in that it will not be possible to deal quickly with the land transactions referred to. Although the hon. member's first amendment on the notice paper would have entirely defeated the purpose of the Bill, this one will so hamper operations that it cannot, under any circumstances, be accepted by me. There was an instance which was publicised in this morning's Press. One of the contingencies attached to the establishment of that most important industry was that the people get the land that they have selected. It will certainly be on the hon. member's head if anything happens and that cannot be done.

In the amendment I have forecast I have endeavoured to safeguard every transaction and action of the Government in the departure, where necessary, from the conditions operating under the parent Act. If that is accepted Parliament will, as soon as it is possible, and without disclosing the private affairs of the people concerned, know what has been done. At this point I think the Bill should stand as printed.

The Hon. H. K. WATSON: I think there is a lot in what the Minister said when he opposed the amendment. In my opinion the committee is certainly necessary when it comes to resuming another person's land in order to give it to someone else who has applied for it. But that is not the principle contained in this Bill; this measure is simply to give the Government power to acquire land, and the Minister has given an assurance that he is prepared to insert in it a provision under which the

full particulars regarding any transaction shall be presented to Parliament within 30 days.

In the circumstances it seems to me that if the Bill is to achieve its purpose it should pass in the form in which it is printed, subject to the amendment which the Minister has foreshadowed. I suggest to the hon. Mr. Thomson that he might reconsider his proposal, because I do not see why the Government should not have the final authority in deciding whether it will or will not purchase land for the purpose outlined in the legislation. The rights of other citizens are not affected in this instance. It seems extraordinary to me that as the Government can buy various commodities ranging in price from £10 to £10,000,000, without having to come to Parliament for approval, it is necessary to have this Bill at all.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: My amendment does not, and nor does it intend to, remove from the Minister the authority to have the final say. The Committee can only recommend, and I think the amendment will safeguard the position and will not cause any delay. What effect would this amendment have had on the discussion to which the Minister referred? The two or three days which the committee would take to deal with it would not have had any effect on whether that industry would establish itself in Western Australia. I think these matters should still be referred to a committee.

Amendment put and negatived.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: As my previous amendment was defeated, I will not proceed with the other.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 23—Add after the word, "applicant," the following subsection—

(8) Where in exercise of the power conferred on him by subsection (1b) of section eleven of this Act the Governor purchases land for the purposes of this Act, or where the Governor transfers or grants a lease of land so purchased, the Minister shall, on or before the expiration of thirty days after the purchase, registration of the transfer, or execution of the lease, lay or cause to be laid on the table of each House of Parliament a report containing true particulars of the purchase, transfer, or lease of the land, including a description of the vendor, the land, the consideration, or the rent reserved, but if Parliament is in recess the Minister shall lay the report or cause it to be laid on the table of each House of Parliament within thirty days of the next sitting day of Parliament.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: Is it intended that the papers shall be laid on the Table of the House within thirty days of the commencement of the session, or for a period of thirty days?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If the House is not sitting, all transactions which have occurred since the House rose will be tabled immediately the House sits; and if the House is sitting, any transaction which takes place will be tabled within 30 days of its having taken place and will lie on the Table of the House until the House rises, as all other papers do.

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

Title—put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

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

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Friday, the 28th November, 1958.

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