

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 30th November, 1939.

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

QUESTION—YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.

Commonwealth Advisory Committee.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has his attention been drawn to a statement appearing in the "West Australian" newspaper that Mr. Holt, Assistant Minister for Supply, has appointed a committee of eight to advise on the training of youths to become skilled tradesmen? 2, As there is no Western Australian representative on that committee, has any person been recommended to the Minister for Supply to act for Western Australia and conserve its interests on behalf of our unskilled youths? 3, Will the Government take steps to ensure that Western Australian unskilled youths will receive the same opportunities to become skilled tradesmen as are being offered to youths in the Eastern States under the defence training scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Industrial Registrar, Mr. Wood, and the Research Officer, Mr. Hodgson, left Perth on Tuesday night to attend a special conference, which opens on Monday at Canberra, of technical officers from the Commonwealth and all the States in connection with youth employment. The Western Australian representatives have been in-

structed to make inquiries from the Commonwealth authorities with regard to the special committee appointed. 3, When details of the scheme have been obtained, the Government will make a decision in the matter.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS).

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—PLANT DISEASES (REGISTRATION FEES) (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to authorise temporarily the prescribing of higher registration fees for the registration of commercial orchards under the Plant Diseases Act, 1914-35. The present fee is 1s., and, as members are aware, the moneys collected are paid into a trust fund, which is utilised for the purpose of combating the fruit fly. During the last few years, however, the fruitgrowers' representatives have requested that the fees for commercial orchards be increased with a view to enabling the activities of the departmental inspectors to be extended. At the annual conference of the West Australian Fruitgrowers' Association held at Albany this year, representatives adopted the following motion:—

That the Fruit Fly Board's recommendation be adopted with regard to the proposals of a levy of 2s. 6d. per acre with a maximum of £5, but with a limit of the tax to three years, this to be reviewed at the end of a three-year period."

Representatives who spoke upon the resolution were concerned about the incidence of the fruit fly pest. In supporting the advisory board's recommendation, they took the view that if the motion were carried, extra precautionary measures could be adopted not only to keep clean areas free, but also to combat the pest where it is now in evidence. The conference also adopted another recommendation of the board, which had suggested that representation be made to the Minister for Agriculture with a view to gazetting further districts as areas in-

fested with fruit fly. After the board had received notice of the resolutions carried by conference, it approached the Minister regarding the introduction of legislation to give effect to its recommendation. It was emphasised that splendid work was being done in the various districts by the fruit fly inspectors, and that the appointment of additional officers would ensure the exercise of an even greater measure of control over the pest. The board pointed out, however, that unless more money could be collected some of the inspectors would have to be discharged early next year. In view of the satisfactory progress that was being made in the eradication of the fly, this would be a retrograde step; and therefore on behalf of the commercial growers, the board urged that a further levy be imposed upon the industry for the purpose of enabling the activities of the departmental officers not only to be maintained but extended. The board pointed out that excellent results have been achieved in the Darling Range and Swan Road Board districts following on their gazettal as infested areas, and the board would therefore like to see the gazettal area further increased. Additional funds are necessary before this can be done, but these will be available if this measure becomes law.

The Bill, which has been brought forward in response to representations made on behalf of the people who will be affected by the proposed legislation, will apply only to commercial orchards. It will not affect the existing registration fees paid for orchards whose area is less than one acre. There are over 40,000 backyard orchards; and, in general, the occupiers have willingly co-operated with the department's officers in doing all that is necessary to keep the fruit fly in check.

The proposed Act will continue in operation for a period of three years commencing from the 1st January next. During the currency of this legislation, power will be given to fix as the registration fee for commercial orchards a sum not exceeding 2s. 6d. per acre, and not exceeding a total of £2 10s. Sufficient additional revenue will be derived from the new scale of fees to enable the appointment of at least three more inspectors. Some indication of the progress already achieved in checking the fruit fly in the districts adjacent to Perth is afforded by

the reports of the Market Inspector over the last three years. During the period April, 1937, to March, 1938, 614 packages of fruit were condemned in the local markets because of fruit fly. Over the corresponding period 1938-39, condemnations totalled only 282 cases despite increased production. Condemnations during April to November of this year amounted to 67 cases. These results are very heartening, and if the House approves of the amending Bill, we may expect a further progressive improvement in the very near future. The people who will pay the increased fees desire the imposition of further levies in the interests of the industry. I feel sure members will appreciate the seriousness of the fruit fly pest, and will support the second reading. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [4.42]: I have read the Bill and have had the advantage of discussing its contents with commercial orchardists, who assure me that as a result of their deliberations, they are pleased that the Bill has been introduced. They realise that it would be very much better for them to offer voluntarily to pay an increased fee than run the risk of losing the greater portion of their crops through this pest. At the combined conference and at subsequent local meetings of orchardists this proposal has been commended. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [4.43]: I hope the Bill will be passed. The fruit-growers' Association is a unique organisation in that everything it does is done voluntarily and without enactments to enforce its resolutions. Orchardists are willing to tax themselves to the extent of double the amount the Government had approved. At the conference a motion was passed to tax commercial orchardists up to £5. That was a good gesture. They are perturbed about the ravages of fruit fly, and unless the pest is conquered their living will be gone. I read that Ceylon has taken action against Western Australian fruit on account of the prevalence of fruit fly here. Fruit fly breeds mostly in the non-commercial orchards, but the fruit-growers have not attempted to secure an increased fee for non-commercial orchards. The association is to be commended, and I hope the Bill will receive the unanimous support of the House.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [4.45]: Not often does an organised body of producers ask to be taxed, but that is the position here. The fruitgrowers wish to be taxed in order to police the fruitfly menace. I have received a letter from a large body of fruitgrowers and I also attended a meeting, and the almost unanimous opinion was that a tax should be imposed, but there was a definite difference of opinion as to what the fee should be. The present tax of 1s. per orchard produces something like £2,500 per annum. There are many small orchardists who feel that the fee proposed in the Bill is a little too high for them. An orchardist with 20 acres or more will pay £2 10s. a year and the man with 80 acres will not pay any more, but for the man with an orchard of four, five or 10 acres this tax is a little too high. If 1s. per orchard brings in £2,500, how much will 2s. 6d. an acre yield?

Hon. W. J. Mann: The Bill says not exceeding 2s. 6d. an acre.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: But the maximum generally becomes the minimum. I am inclined to think that the small orchardists should pay a maximum of 1s. 6d.

Hon. L. Craig interjected.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The hon. member does not pay a special tax to police people in the street because of the existence of the liquor trade, and why should fruitgrowers have to pay a special tax to combat the fruit-fly? However, they have agreed to do so, but many of them are opposed to paying so high a rate. I suggest that if, after 12 months, these registration fees produce insufficient money to permit of employing the requisite number of inspectors, the rate might then be increased to 2s. 6d. an acre. The Minister in another place did agree to various amendments and gave consideration to the orchardists, but the only consideration given was extended to the large orchardists. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill on behalf of the orchardists I represent, and in Committee I shall move to reduce the fee to 1s. 6d. an acre. Then, if 12 months' experience shows that this fee produces insufficient money, I shall be prepared to support an increase to 2s. 6d. an acre.

trate very far into the South-West. Years elapsed before it reached the Bridgetown district; the growers there thought they would not be troubled because of the cold climate. However, the pest has made its appearance in that district and has extended much further south, and is spreading more and more each year. The work already done by the department has resulted in great good being accomplished. I am inclined to agree with Mr. Wood regarding the fee. Probably the amount proposed is rather high. We are told that there are over 40,000 back-yard orchards and if each paid 1s. there would be a revenue of £2,100. A great many orchards must be getting off without paying the shilling fee, since back-yard orchards would not represent more than 50 per cent. of all the orchards in the State. If every orchard paid the shilling, a far larger amount would be collected. In my opinion, a reasonable charge of 1s. or 2s. per acre would be ample for the present. If necessary, it could be increased next year.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.51]: Mr. Mann and Mr. Craig have pointed out that this legislation is requested by the Fruitgrowers' Association. The fruitgrowers' business is at stake, and therefore they regard the levy as in the nature of insurance against possible loss of crops. Colombo having already put Western Australian fruit on the black list because of fruit-fly, the Fruitgrowers' Association in asking for this Bill proves that its members are keenly alive to the need for safeguarding their livelihood. While it may be admitted that the sum of £2,500 resulted from the shilling levy, it is a fact that registration of orchards at that time was undertaken merely for the purpose of obtaining statistics of the number of backyard orchards in Western Australia, particularly of those in the metropolitan area, which represent the greatest menace to the industry. From my knowledge of fruitgrowers, of whom there are numbers in my Province, their opinion is against the charge of 2s. 6d. per acre on orchards whose area exceeds 20 acres. The small total of fees that will come from small orchardists is not worth while reducing. I dare say the majority of the small orchardists who have been referred to may have three or four acres, and I should think they would not object to paying the extra three or four shillings for protection. I presume

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [4.49]: I support the second reading of the Bill which, perhaps, is somewhat overdue. For many years the fruitfly pest did not pene-

that the amount collected will be utilised in combating the fruit-fly pest. I trust the Bill will pass unaltered, especially as I know that the fruitgrowers in my Province are particularly keen to have the measure enacted. Mr. Craig has pointed out that the fruitgrowers are the first body to have been organised for the purpose of taxing themselves. As representatives of the co-operative movement, our fruitgrowers are an example to the rest of Australia. In respect of fruitgrowing, they are the supreme organisation in the Commonwealth. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.54]: One might exclaim, "At long last something is being done to prevent the spread of fruit-fly!" Carrying my mind back to the first registration of orchards and the first imposition of a fee, I recall that even then I advised doubling the proposed fee of 1s. I said at the time that the shilling fee was useless, and that eradication could never be undertaken by means of the return from such a small fee. The Bill does not interfere at all with orchards under one acre in area; but that is where 90 per cent. of the trouble comes from, emanating from a few backyard orchards in the metropolitan area and in country towns.

Hon. L. Craig: They are not much trouble now.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I know the contrary to be the case. Two or three fruit trees in a backyard, producing in the very best years not more than 3s. or 4s. worth of fruit, and at considerably greater cost, are prime sources of trouble. In backyards are to be found fruit trees reeking with the fly.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The department is dealing with the matter every day.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes; but £2,000 does not go far in the metropolitan area. There are so many backyards with a grape vine or a tree or two. Apart from being careless, backyard fruitgrowers do not know what to do in order to cope with pests. If in the first place the registration fee had been 2s., the department might have been able to accomplish something. Though the Bill comes late in the day—the fruitflies now have a good hold—it is not too late. I am glad to note that the orchardists are taxing themselves to find money

for keeping down the pest and eventually clearing it out altogether. I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.57]:

I also support the Bill. Letters of the same tenor as those Mr. Wood received have also come to me, on the subject of the proposed fee. It has been calculated that the fee under the Bill as originally drafted would have brought in £30,000 a year. Therefore it would be interesting to note what this measure is expected to realise. The Government should be able to give us some idea of the departmental estimate of the amount of money that will be realised if the Bill passes as printed. On the basis of the £2,500 derived annually from the shilling fee, the department was able to appoint about seven additional inspectors. Therefore it should be possible to put on 70 more inspectors if this Bill passes unaltered. I hardly think the department would create so large a staff of inspectors. I am well aware that the inspectors have done an immense amount of good work, but nevertheless the fruit-fly still breeds in many centres. That is deplorable, after all the years we have known of the menace. Many years ago this country and California paid the expenses of Mr. Compere to travel the world in a search for fruit-fly parasites. That gentleman found a parasite which proved particularly effective. Unfortunately, however, through the lack of fruit growing throughout the year, that parasite did not succeed as well as many parasites do. We still have to resort to spraying and other treatments to cope with the fruit-fly. Unfortunately the fly is very prevalent over the greater part of the State and every day there are opportunities for the pest to spread. We do know that a certain quantity of fruit is destroyed, and that frequently the orchardist himself is scrupulously careful to do his best to carry out the wishes of the department: but because of the lack of inspectors, the orchardist's neighbours allow their properties to become a breeding ground for the fly. I welcome the measure, but I should like to know what amount of money the Government expects to receive from the fees. We should bear in mind all the time that it should not be our desire to take too much from the settlers who, as it is, find it difficult to make a living. Therefore, we should

see to it that we do not take from them more than is actually necessary. I support the Bill.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [5.1]: I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill and commend the Government for having brought it down. As one who represents a large area of fruit-growing country, I consider that the fee should be made as low as possible. There appears to be no objection to the measure on the part of the fruit-growers; they approve of it and expect it will be a good thing for them. We have been comparatively free from pests, but at the same time everything should be done to prevent the spread of the fly. The Bill will be of value, more particularly when we remember that so many private houses have one or a few trees in their backyards. These almost invariably are grown by people who know nothing whatever about fruit cultivation. They consider that while the trees are growing and bearing fruit in their yards, everything is all right. I have a few trees and I contribute my 1s. a year to the department, but I have never seen an inspector. I would welcome an officer if he called, because he might give me some information. I support the second reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [5.3]: Mr. Hamersley desires to know the amount that is likely to be collected by the department as a result of the passing of the Bill. I am informed that between £1,500 and £2,000 will be the revenue obtained from the fees prescribed in the Bill.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Over and above what you were collecting before?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. That sum will enable the department to employ perhaps four additional inspectors and having regard to the successful work that has already been done in the metropolitan area, the department believes that when the additional inspectors are appointed greater progress will be made in the direction of exterminating the fruit-fly.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Operation and duration:

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I move an amendment—

That in line 9 of Subclause 1 the word "two" be struck out for the purpose of inserting the word "one" in lieu.

This represents the fee to be paid for the registration of an orchard the area of which is not less than one acre. The fee is not to exceed 2s. 6d. for every acre comprised in the area of such orchard. My desire is to reduce that amount to 1s. 6d. and the reason is that already there is a considerable amount of money collected.

The Honorary Minister: The orchardists are willing to pay 2s. 6d.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That fee will be all right for the small orchardist, but a man may have over 20 acres planted and he will pay 25 times more than he paid before.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If we accept the amendment, we shall be starting at the wrong end. We should go to the limit at the beginning and then if it is found that the fly has been brought under control the fee can be reduced. To reduce it now will mean to circumscribe the efforts of the department. We should be guided by the people mostly concerned. There are not many orchards exceeding 50 acres in extent; indeed, very few exceed 20 acres, which is a fair size.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: That would mean only £2 10s. an orchard.

The Chief Secretary: The growers themselves have agreed to this.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I have a great deal of admiration for the fruitgrowers. I have attended some of their conferences and I can say that at no conference on any question I have ever attended, has a better grip of the industry been shown than that displayed by the orchardists. They are in close touch with the market and with each other and voluntarily do things which in some walks of life might not be accepted. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The fruit-fly has become a menace and we should go to the limit as suggested by the orchardists themselves and thus protect the growers. The fly being a menace, I would give the department all the money that is necessary to combat the pest. The Bill is to operate for three

years. If that were increased to 20 years I would not raise any objection. If we allow the fee to remain as is provided in the Bill, the department will have sufficient money to meet its requirements.

Hon. G. FRASER: Members overlook the important factor that the amount the department expects to receive from the fees is between £1,500 and £2,000 which will be sufficient to permit of the appointment of four inspectors. If the amendment is carried, and the fee is reduced by about half, it will be possible to appoint only two inspectors. That number might seriously affect the work of the department. To reduce the revenue the department expects to receive will not be in the best interests of the orchardists. Having tackled the job, we should go on with it properly. I should like to see the fee of 2s. 6d. left in and the £2 10s. maximum increased.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I seriously doubt whether Mr. Wood could produce an orchardist who, having read the Bill and realised the extra protection to be made available to him, would agree to any reduction of this amount. The amount asked is moderate, and the department will probably have to find some of the money.

Hon. G. B. Wood: How do you know that?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Well, it has inspectors in its service already. Surely no orchardist who realised the danger of having his overseas markets cut off on account of an increase of this pest would object to the amount specified. A reduction would mean fewer inspectors and consequently less protection.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I support the Bill in its entirety. As a backyard orchardist, I did not realise the danger of the fruit-fly to orchards as a whole until I had a visit from an inspector last year, who pointed out that not only did the fruit-fly attack stone fruit, but was also found to infest citrus fruits and buds of rose-trees. The backyard orchardists should contribute their quota too. If they realised how much they were contributing to the spread of this menace, and how much could be done to assist in its eradication, by their payment of 6d. or 1s. extra, I am sure they would not complain about an additional charge.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I want to make it quite plain that I do not desire to deprive the Agricultural Department of any neces-

sary money. It has been said that £1,500 will be collected from the extra tax. I am inclined to doubt that figure. Some will pay up to 50 times as much as previously. Mr. Mann said we were starting at the wrong end, but I point out that this was begun years ago when 1s. per orchard was charged. I would be quite willing to agree to 3s. or 4s. being levied next year, if necessary. The discussion appears to have resolved itself into one of the big man versus the little man. I represent the latter. Mr. Mann said that orchardists in his district desired this tax. Probably they do, but many small orchardists do not want to be highly taxed. In the Swan electorate there are 850 orchards, and not many of them are big. In Toodyay, an electorate which I represent, there must be 1,000 orchards. I am quite sure that 1s. 6d. per acre would meet the position for at least 12 months.

The HONORARY MINISTER: When the Act was first passed, there was considerable opposition to it, but as a result of the educational work of inspectors, people have come to realise the danger of the fruit-fly, and some are paying a fee of 1s. for one tree. Surely the hon. member does not think the fee suggested in the Bill is too high. The passing of the amendment will be a disservice to orchardists.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. A member of Parliament who has an orchard, and whose district is free from fruit-fly, says he will now have to pay £2 10s. instead of 1s., but he will pay it willingly because he believes in combating the pest even though it is miles away from his own home. Seeing that the majority of fruitgrowers are in favour of this, we should agree to it. In this instance undue anxiety is being shown for the smaller orchardists, but in view of the fact that the orchards belonging to those men can easily be wiped out by this pest, the small additional charge is not too much to ask of them.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3, 4—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

RESOLUTION—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

To Inquire by Joint Committee—Assembly's Message.

Message from Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the following resolution:—

That a committee of three members of each House of Parliament be appointed to consider alternative sites for the erection of public buildings for the accommodation of the Public Service; that the committee have power to sit on days on which the Houses stand adjourned, to call for papers and examine witnesses, and to report to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor. The members of the Legislative Assembly to be Messrs. McDonald, Styants and the Minister for Lands;

and requesting the concurrence of the Legislative Council therein and the appointment of three members of the Council accordingly, now considered.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E.

H. Gray—West) [5.27]: I move—

That the Assembly's request be complied with.

I impress on the House the fact that the Government is fully alive to the necessity for settling this question of a site for new public offices. The suggestion that such a committee should be appointed was made in this Chamber by Mr. Craig and Mr. Angelo. Its appointment will afford an opportunity for the gathering of all the evidence available and for the settling of this question once and for all. We have the money to erect the buildings, which are urgently required, and the House should unanimously agree to the Assembly's request rather than let the matter drag on indefinitely.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.29]: In the circumstances, the request of the Assembly seems to be reasonable. The majority of members who voted against the Reserves Bill which provided for the ex-cision of land from Government Domain did so mainly on the ground that there had not been sufficient investigation of the various sites available for the erection of administrative offices. It may be found that Government House Domain will prove to be the right place. There is a big difference between an investigation by a committee such as is now proposed, and the investigation by the committee referred to when the Reserves Bill was before the House. I feel, however, that

the proposed committee should consist of four members from each House, because of the importance of the matter. The committee would not only be called upon to select the site for the buildings, but whatever was recommended would ultimately mean the expenditure of a quarter of a million of money, if not a still greater sum.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That would only be a commencement.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The resolution of another place should, therefore, be amended to provide for a committee of eight. The Minister for Lands will assume a heavy burden if he serves on the committee, because he has his important departments to administer. This House, I remind members, has placed a heavy burden on the Auditor General. Although we know that the Minister for Lands is an extremely efficient man, he will be assuming a heavy task if he associates himself with this investigation. The inquiry will not be an easy one nor of short duration, and a great deal of time will have to be spent before a decision is arrived at. Of course, I admit that the Minister is responsible for his own actions. I move an amendment—

That the word "three" in line 1 of the Assembly's resolution be struck out and the word "four" inserted in lieu.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.32]: I support the proposal for the appointment of a joint committee of both Houses, but think its duties should be defined. The resolution indicates that the report is to go to the Governor. Will it stop there? If the committee decided upon a Class A reserve, either that which was proposed or some other, the fact that it reported to the Governor would not get over the difficulty, for an Act of Parliament would have to be brought down to deal with the matter.

The Chief Secretary: It would still have to come here.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the committee decided that some other site was more suitable, and reported favourably to the Governor, provision should be made for the work to be gone on with. The matter is of great importance. I have no intention of discussing one site or another, for such a thing would be beside the question. Perth is a growing city and Western Australia a growing State. The housing accommodation, particularly for the Agricultural Depart-

ment, has for a long time been a disgrace. I do not want to see the matter held up any longer. If the committee reports to the Governor on a site other than a Class A reserve, the job should be gone on with, provided the majority is in favour of it. If the committee chooses a Class A reserve, provision must be made for the passing of an Act of Parliament.

Hon. L. Craig: Would not the approval of Parliament have to be obtained for the purchase of land?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No. If Parliament had adjourned and the committee selected a Class A reserve, the matter would have to be held up for another year. That is not what I want. I support the proposal but think the duties of the committee should be defined. I also prefer a committee of four members from each House to three from each.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.35]: It appears from the terms of the resolution that the committee in question is not going to be a select committee appointed according to our Standing Orders.

The Chief Secretary: That is so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It will continue its labours when the House is not sitting, whereas under the Standing Orders a select committee lapses when Parliament is prorogued. I will not subordinate my opinion to that of any other member as to the necessity for proceeding with the erection of new public offices. The all-absorbing question is where they should be erected. Whilst I have a warm regard for members of Parliament—I find them all estimable comrades no matter to which party they belong—I must stick to what I have said on two occasions in this House. The question of site should not be within the determination of parliamentarians. Parliament should inform the Government that it is of opinion that a commission of experts, to consist of the Chief Architect as chairman, a financial officer within the service, and three men entirely outside the service, should be appointed.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is the suggestion I made.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Those gentlemen should be given the powers of Royal Commissioners. They would be qualified to deal with all phases of the matter, with all viewpoints, the site, the financial aspect and

everything else. They would be beholden to no one, and would submit their report and recommendations to the Government and on to Parliament. We would then be in honour bound, more or less, to accept the recommendations of that body. On the other hand, it is proposed to appoint a parliamentary committee of laymen. The members of another place will be the Minister for Lands, a locomotive driver and a lawyer. I do not know what would come out of the melting pot in this House. The committee would have to call witnesses from amongst those who were versed in building sites and other matters. A Royal Commission would be the better tribunal to get out all the points that are essential when such a subject is being dealt with. Whilst I am anxious to help the Government in every way, I am convinced we are not going the right way about doing so. Whatever the committee recommended would have to come to Parliament. I venture to say that some section of the Legislature would take a different view of the recommendations of a committee of parliamentarians from the view they would take of the recommendations of a Royal Commission of experts. I am extremely anxious that this question should be settled as soon as possible. The proposal involves the erection of public offices to serve the country for 100 years, and there is more in that than the mere question of accessibility. If one requires an illustration of administration offices that fill all requirements, where the question of accessibility has been subordinated to other viewpoints, one need only refer to the administrative block of buildings in Pretoria, South Africa. That site was chosen by competent men and the buildings were designed by equally competent men, and the Union Parliament had no finger in the work. If the House decides that a committee should be appointed, I shall be satisfied, and whatever the recommendations may be, provided they are reasonable, I shall hope to be able to accept them, but I would much prefer to see a Royal Commission appointed. The views of a Royal Commission comprising experts would meet with far more general approval than would the recommendations of a number of parliamentarians. The section of the people we have to consider is that which lives in the metropolitan area, and we are not called upon to consider so much the

people who are going to work in the offices or the members of Parliament who may occasionally have to visit them.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [5.43]: I opposed the Bill that was recently before us on the ground that we were not in possession of sufficient information to enable us to decide on the suitability of the site suggested for Government offices. That view was borne out by the subsequent discussion in the Chamber when no fewer than 14 sites were mentioned as being most favourable for the matter in hand. Those who will be held responsible in the future for the site chosen will be members of Parliament. If later on a mistake is found to have been made, present members will be pointed to as having been responsible for the choice of such-and-such bad site. Our children will be told, "Your father was responsible for the selection of this unsuitable site." It is essential that Parliament shall be satisfied as to the best site before such a huge undertaking is put in hand. Members generally cannot get together and decide upon the site that should be chosen. That fact was clearly demonstrated the other evening when we dealt with the Reserves Bill (No. 2). What is the best course to pursue? I consider a joint committee representative of both Houses of Parliament will fill the bill. Each House will select the best men available for the task. The committee's report will not be representative of the opinions of the members of the committee. They will take evidence from all sections of the community, including the experts, and will arrive at a conclusion. Thus they will really act as a jury. What could be more fair? Members of Parliament should accept the responsibility of endorsing the committee's report and recommendations. When I was speaking the other evening on the Reserves Bill, I said that whatever the decision of such an investigatory body was, I would be prepared to support its recommendations. I regard that as the best course to adopt in the circumstances.

The question has been raised as to whether there should be three, four or more representatives from each House on the committee. I do not think that phase matters very much. We must get on with the job. When I spoke previously I suggested three or five members from each House, but I think three representatives of the Assembly and three

of the Council would be quite adequate. I find no fault with that suggestion. If, however, the Council decides to recommend four members from each House, I shall not raise any objection. I trust that the joint committee will be practically unanimous in its findings and should that be the result of the inquiry, I trust the Government will be authorised to go on with the work straight away. We have been told by the Government how absolutely necessary it is that Government buildings be constructed. Members now have a means by which the question of the site can be determined effectively so that the work can be put in hand as soon as possible. Mr. Holmes raised the point that if the site included part of a Class A reserve, the matter would have to be submitted to Parliament.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Such a proposal would have to be presented to Parliament for endorsement.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: That certainly raises one difficulty, but Parliament could be called together to deal with the matter. If that course is not necessary, I suggest that the Government should be allowed to get on with the job without delay. If the constructional work cannot be put in hand before the excision of part of a Class A reserve has been agreed to by Parliament, then, at the very latest, legislation could be submitted by July or August next and authority could then be obtained to put the work in hand. The quicker the position is dealt with the better. I shall support the report submitted by the joint committee.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.49]: I cannot agree with the remarks of Mr. Cornell who suggested that Parliament was not competent to select the site. Whether this Chamber is competent or not to undertake the task, the fact remains that members rejected the selected site when they threw out the Reserves Bill (No. 2). The motion represents a means by which the existing difficulty can be overcome. The object is to appoint a committee consisting of members of Parliament, and they will be the persons responsible for the selection of the site on which to erect Government buildings. The motion represents an excellent way of securing finality in the battle of sites. Irrespective of what is the final selection, we shall probably find a majority of members

of Parliament against it. However, the motion is so couched that we shall have an independent body that will be responsible to Parliament, and that body will be able to determine the issue. The members of the committee will not be experts with preconceived ideas. They will take evidence and report to Parliament. If effect were given to Mr. Cornell's ideas, we would not be bound to vote for the site, because independent and competent experts have decided definitely that the best site available is the one which this Chamber rejected.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not let the joint committee report to the Governor, who could act on its recommendations?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Perhaps that would do, but I would prefer the proposal embodied in the motion. Parliament should deal with the matter finally. I think a committee of three members from this Chamber to collaborate with three from another place should consider the problem.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You mean that the committee should report back to Parliament?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Should the committee fix on a site that involves a Class A reserve, Parliament will have to be consulted. If a Class A reserve is not affected, then there is no need for the matter to come before Parliament, and the Government could go on with the work. I do not know what prevents the Government from going on with it now, presupposing that the site does not involve a Class A reserve. The committee need report back to Parliament only if it is necessary for legislation to be introduced to excise portion of such a reserve. As the matter is urgent, the work could be proceeded with at once, if the site does not necessitate the introduction of legislation. As to the numerical strength of the joint committee, the more members there are the more argument is likely to arise. This Chamber is competent enough to select three members who would give effect to the opinion of the majority of members. If the joint committee furnishes a report that expresses the decision of a majority, then I trust the Government will immediately go on with the work on what will eventually prove to be the best site for Government offices.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [5.53]: Although when speaking on the Reserves Bill (No. 2) I advocated the appointment of a committee similar to that suggested by Mr. Cornell,—an outside body presided over by the Principal Architect—I am prepared to support the proposal for a committee representative of both branches of the Legislature. I commend the Government for tackling the question so promptly. The problem of the site has been discussed year after year with the result that false property values have been created in certain parts of the city. In order to finalise the matter quickly, the suggestion has been advanced that the joint committee should be given power to report to the Governor. If it were possible, I would also like power to be provided to enable the work to be proceeded with straight away. As the Honorary Minister has already pointed out, the Government has the money available for the erection of Government offices, and that money cannot be used for any other purpose. To delay the matter for another 12 months would be quite wrong. I think the work should be proceeded with, once the site is definitely selected.

Hon. L. Craig: But that is not possible.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I would like definite information on that point. Can we give the Government power to get on with the job?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Not if a Class A reserve is affected.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Very well. Then again, I would like to know whether one condition should be that tenders shall be called for the work so that private enterprise may be given a chance to tender against the departmental estimate. I do not think the Government officials would raise any objection. That course was adopted years ago. I had one experience in connection with the Fremantle Hospital. The Government of the day gave the Hospital Board permission to call tenders for work that was eventually carried out at a cost considerably less than the departmental estimate. I think that course should be adopted regarding the erection of Government offices. I support the motion whole-heartedly. The Government has definitely made up its mind regarding the best site, but this Chamber did not endorse the Government's attitude. On this occasion I hope the House will agree to the motion. Whether the committee should consist of three or four representatives of each House is a matter of opinion. Six men may do the

work better than eight. The issues involved are so great that if members generally consider it better to have four representatives from each House, I shall support an amendment to that effect. I hope an early agreement will be reached on the issues involved.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.56]: The Government is anxious to proceed with its building proposition without any further trouble between the Houses regarding the question of site. While the issue is to be decided by a committee representative of both Houses of Parliament, I do not see why the opportunity should not be availed of to complete Parliament House building. That task has been delayed for many years. The building should be completed. That would provide work for quite a large number of men. Later on when the problem of the site for the new Government buildings is settled, the Government would have the staff and gear available for transfer immediately to the site for the Government offices. If in such a tearing hurry to get on with constructional work and it has so strong an urge to spend money in that direction, the Government should lose no time in completing Parliament House buildings. By the time that work is finished, the plant to start on the construction of public offices should be available. I support the motion so that the site may be determined by the joint committee. I think it better to have four members from each House rather than three. There is safety in numbers.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [5.58]: I oppose the motion. I am quite confident that the present is no time for such a project. The question has already been debated at length by this House. When the Reserves Bill (No. 2) was defeated, I hoped it was the last we should hear of the proposition. The statement has been made that the money is available for the construction of Government offices. I was very pleased to hear that. One point about which I was concerned was that the financial position of the State would not permit of the expenditure of £500,000 or £1,000,000.

Hon. L. Craig: But the Government has the money already available.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I am glad to hear that.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you been through the rabbit warren that houses the Agricultural Department?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I would be very happy if that building were pulled down. I should like to see that done. I hope that the buildings will be erected there and that the rabbit warren will be pulled down. I am in agreement with Mr. Cornell that the proposed committee should be formed of men thoroughly versed in this business. They should be experts, not members of Parliament, whether the number be six or eight. I should be sorry indeed if during the ensuing year a site was decided upon and the Government directed that the work should be commenced before the matter could be considered by both Houses of Parliament. If, however, a decision is reached to appoint a committee consisting of members of Parliament, then I favour a committee of eight rather than a committee of six. I oppose the motion.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [6.2]: I did not propose to speak on the motion, but I do so largely out of sympathy for the Government in its efforts to conclude this matter. Anyone who has visited the other principal cities of Australia will agree that none of them surpasses Perth in natural beauty; but I think we all agree that our public offices are not in keeping with the general surroundings of the city. This matter is undoubtedly urgent. Every responsible person must admit that, in the interests of the State, the proposed public buildings should be erected with as little delay as possible. The scheme will involve the expenditure of a large sum of money and so will create useful employment. That is another reason for treating the matter as urgent. The appointment of the proposed committee is, in my opinion, a sensible way out of what has practically become an impasse. I see no reason why the committee should not be comprised of members of Parliament, whether the number be eight or six. The committee can call all the necessary expert testimony to which Mr. Cornell has referred. I do not know that any committee differently constituted would be more capable of dealing with the situation that has arisen. Whether three or four members of this House are appointed I do not think matters a great deal; although I favour the smaller number, because with small commit-

tees the work is generally expedited. I venture to suggest that had four members been mentioned, some hon. members would have desired to increase the number to five or six. I support the motion and hope the House will carry it and thus bring this matter to a conclusion.

As to Amendment.

Hon. J. Cornell: I desire to move an amendment.

The President: I understand that Mr. Baxter either moved or said he would move an amendment.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I have moved it.

The Honorary Minister: I moved the motion expecting that it would be amended. We should pass the motion now and Mr. Baxter's amendment can then be dealt with.

The President: I hardly think that would meet the case; because the message from the Legislative Assembly concludes with these words—

The Legislative Assembly now presents the same to the Legislative Council for its concurrence, and requests the appointment of three members of the Legislative Council accordingly.

The Minister's motion is that the request contained in Message No. 73 from the Legislative Assembly be complied with. I gathered—although I did not put an amendment—that Mr. Baxter desired to move an amendment to provide that the committee should consist of four members of each House.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is so. My desire is that the number shall be increased to four, that is, four members of each House.

The President: Do I understand that the hon. member moved that amendment?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is so.

Hon. J. Cornell: But my amendment may have to come before Mr. Baxter's.

The President: The hon. member has already spoken to the motion and cannot now move an amendment until Mr. Baxter's amendment has been disposed of.

Hon. J. Cornell: We are at a disadvantage because we have not a copy of the message before us.

The President: I take it that this is a personal explanation.

Hon. J. Cornell: If Mr. Baxter's amendment to the motion occurs after that portion of the motion I desire to amend, I shall not be able to move my amendment.

The President: I have no idea what the hon. member is hinting at.

Hon. J. Cornell: I desire to move that we agree to the motion subject to other words, after the word "Governor", being inserted as follows:—"who shall submit the report to Parliament for approval." I do not know exactly where the word "Governor" occurs in the motion.

The President: Whether Mr. Baxter's amendment is defeated or agreed to, Mr. Cornell may still move his amendment; or if he, having already spoken, cannot do so, he may get some other member to move it. That is one of the difficulties we encounter in considering messages in the House instead of in Committee. I remind the hon. member that he has already spoken to the motion.

Hon. J. Cornell: Assuming the amendment that I have outlined occurs in the motion before the portion of the motion to which Mr. Baxter's amendment refers, then I cannot move my amendment.

Hon. G. Fraser: Does that not occur when we are in Committee?

Hon. J. Cornell: Yes.

The President: The first line of the Assembly's resolution is as follows:—"That the Committee consist of three members." The question is—

That the request contained in Message No. 73 from the Legislative Assembly be complied with.

To that Mr. Baxter has moved an amendment to the effect that the Committee consist of four members of each House.

Debate Resumed.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West—on amendment) [6.8]: In my opinion, it would be a pity to increase the number from six to eight, as to do so would add to the difficulties we have experienced in this House. Were there fewer members of this Chamber, no doubt we would experience less difficulty than we did recently. If six members from two Houses cannot reach an agreement they are a poor lot. I consider a committee comprised of members of both Houses is desirable, because then both Houses would share the responsibility for the selection of a site. I am speaking to the amendment: personally I prefer that six, rather than eight, members should be appointed to the committee.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North—on amendment) [6.10]: My reason for supporting the amendment is that our desire is to reach finality. Later I shall move a further amendment that the decision of a three-fourths majority of the eight members of the proposed committee shall prevail, and that the Government shall be empowered, in the event of a site being chosen and decided upon by a three-fourths majority, to proceed immediately with the erection of public offices; provided that the site chosen is not portion of a Class A reserve. There has been so much controversy over this matter that, so far as I am concerned, if such a committee selects a site, I shall hereafter remain silent upon the subject.

HON. J. CORNELL (South—on amendment) [6.11]: If a Parliamentary committee is to be appointed, I favour the amendment. I do so for obvious reasons. The matter will not then resolve itself into a party question. No possible argument could arise over that bone of contention. I understand that the Opposition in another place is not represented on the committee at all.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is another phase to be considered.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is why I favour an increase in the personnel of the committee. By that means we shall shed ourselves of all argument about parties. I would not like charges of that nature to be made later on. It should not be said that a particular political party had an advantage, and that the committee more or less represented only the Government of the day.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: My suggestion about the three-fourths majority would overcome that difficulty.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes. Another point I desire to raise is that when the report of the committee has been presented to the Governor, the Governor may authorise the erection of a building upon a Class A reserve. This point has already been mentioned in the course of the debate, and I desire to get it cleared up. Could the Government forthwith proceed with its project if a Class A reserve were selected? Should not the matter first be submitted to Parliament?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Suppose the members of the committee were equally divided, what then would be the position?

Hon. J. CORNELL: In my opinion, the motion implies that if a Class A reserve were selected the Governor could authorise the erection of the building.

Hon. L. Craig: If a Class A reserve were selected, the matter would have to be submitted to Parliament for approval.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yanchep is a Class A reserve, yet a hotel was built on it. Rott-nest Island is a Class A reserve, and it has been decided to build a hotel there. If the Minister will give the House an assurance that the Government will not commence building operations on a Class A reserve without first obtaining Parliament's approval, I will not proceed with my amendment.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—on amendment) [6.15]: In my opinion, six members are sufficient for the proposed committee. My experience is that the larger the committee, the worse the attendance. I do not anticipate that the proposed inquiry will take long, not nearly as long as Mr. Baxter thinks.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Yes, it will.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I think it will be a short inquiry. Evidence is available. I assure hon. members that a committee consisting of six members is large enough. With regard to Class A reserves, these cannot be built upon without Parliament's authority. I hope members will not agree to the amendment.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	11

Majority for	6
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AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. C. H. Wiltenoom
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. W. H. Kilson	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.22 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [7.30]:
I move an amendment—

That the following words be added:—
“Provided also that the report shall not be given effect to unless it be signed by at least three-fourths of the members of the committee.”

The object is to enable the committee to reach an agreement, although possibly all the members of the committee might not be able to approve of the whole of the report. By providing for a three-fourths majority, we shall have a better opportunity to get a report upon which action might be taken.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have an amendment that I think should take priority of Mr. Seddon's amendment. Members are at a disadvantage in that they have not a copy of the resolution. I took an abbreviated longhand note of it as it was read, and I think my amendment should be included after the reference to “alternative sites.”

The **PRESIDENT**: I think the hon. member's purpose might be met by inserting a proviso at the end, so that the House will indicate that it concurs in the terms of the resolution, subject to certain conditions set out in the proviso. We have already added one proviso that the committee shall consist of four members of each House. Possibly Mr. Nicholson's suggestion might be embodied in a proviso. There need not be any question about the precedence of the provisos, and so the hon. member may move later.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Members might think it advisable to insert my proposal before the proviso moved by Mr. Seddon.

The **PRESIDENT**: Will the hon. member indicate in a few words the nature of his proviso?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The committee will be limited to the consideration of alternative sites, and that limitation would clearly confine the scope of the inquiry.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where do you get the limitation?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is in the resolution.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The resolution refers to considering alternative sites.

Hon. T. Moore: Could anything be wider?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There is a limitation. When the committee is making an investigation of such importance, it

should be armed with sufficient power to consider the provision of office accommodation for governmental purposes by way of renting or leasing premises.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: This is only a question of the site.

The **PRESIDENT**: Mr. Nicholson may move to that effect after Mr. Seddon's amendment has been dealt with. I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to Mr. Seddon's amendment.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan—on amendment) [7.40]: I support the amendment, which I consider is commendable. Under it the report furnished by the committee would have the hallmark of a three-fourths majority. This will show a degree of unanimity that is desirable and will assist Parliament in determining whether to adopt the report.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North—on amendment) [7.41]: I support the amendment. I am aiming to reach finality. I do not want a committee with four in favour of a proposed site and four against. Let us have a three-fourths majority. This House is delegating its powers to a committee, and there should be a three-fourths majority recommendation.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—on amendment) [4.42]: I appreciate the object of Mr. Seddon's amendment, but I think that a five to three majority should be sufficient.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No, we are delegating our powers to the committee.

The **HONORARY MINISTER**: I should like to see the amendment worded to provide for a five to three majority.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Did I understand Mr. Holmes to say that the committee's recommendation should not be accepted unless approved by a majority of three-fourths of the members of the House?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No, three-fourths majority of the committee.

Amendment put and passed.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [4.44]: Normally the Government would have a free hand in any building operation it undertook, and the proposal of this House will be in the form of an instruction to the

Government. If the committee does not reach a decision, the Government could not have public offices erected, although it might wish to erect some portion on a site other than a Class A reserve. The motion is now really an instruction to the Government, and not a request. It reads the wrong way round.

Hon. J. J. Holmes (in explanation): Another place has asked for this committee. The committee is to report to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor. The proviso directs that the work shall not be proceeded with unless a three-fourths majority of the committee sign the report.

Hon. J. Cornell (in explanation): As regards the question of the Class A reserve, I indicated that I would move an amendment; but I did not do so. I accepted another amendment. I want it on record that the Honorary Minister has given an assurance that if a site recommended is a Class A reserve, Parliament will be consulted before building operations are begun on the site.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [7.49]: I desire to move a further proviso, enlarging the scope of the committee's inquiry so that the committee may report not only on sites for the erection of buildings to accommodate various departments—

The **PRESIDENT**: If the hon. member would get some other member to move his amendment, he could speak to it; but he has already spoken to the motion and to the amendment which has been carried.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: My desire is to move a further proviso as follows:—"Provided that the committee shall in view of the state of war now prevailing consider the desirability of recommending office accommodation for governmental purposes by way of renting or leasing premises."

Hon. J. Cornell: That is out of order. The Government now has power to do that.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would not have power to do so without this proviso.

Hon. J. Cornell: Yes, it would.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The reason why I suggest enlarging the scope of the inquiry is that we are passing through a stage in our history which, as everyone realises, may be fraught with most serious consequences; moreover, there may not be money available for building.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: This has nothing to do with building, but only with selecting a site.

The **PRESIDENT**: Has the hon. member got the amendment written out? It appears to me to be out of order, and beyond the scope of the message. The motion has to do with selection of a site.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Very well, Mr. President. I shall not submit the amendment. I feel that the committee in making this inquiry should consider that other aspect because of the serious stage through which we are passing. Once a site has been selected, the next thing to follow will be the commission of the State to building operations on whatever site is selected.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [7.53]: I am sorry to delay the House a little longer on this matter, but I certainly do not like the last proviso.

The **PRESIDENT**: The last proviso has already been agreed to, in addition to the motion.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: I suppose that even though that proviso has been carried, we shall have to find a means of dealing with it. The proviso restricts powers which the Government already possesses.

Hon. T. Moore: That is what I contend.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: There is no occasion for the Government to come to Parliament for permission to build except on a Class A reserve.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You can ignore the proviso.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: That being the stage which has been reached, I shall not oppose the motion; but probably some ways and means will have to be found not restricting powers which the Government already possesses.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

The **HONORARY MINISTER**: I propose to move that the Legislative Council's representatives on the committee be Mr. Baxter, Mr. Craig, Mr. Mann, and the mover.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Am I in order in suggesting that a ballot be taken?

The **PRESIDENT**: Yes. Hon. members will find in Standing Order 332 the par-

ticular method for taking a ballot. The Standing Order reads—

The ballot shall be taken in the following manner:—Each member present shall give to the Clerk a list of the names of such members as he may think fit and proper to be chosen at such ballot; and if any list contain a larger or lesser number of names than are to be chosen, it shall be void and rejected. When all the lists are collected, the Clerk, with the mover, acting as scrutineers, shall ascertain and report to the President the names of the members having the greatest number of votes, which members shall be declared to be chosen. If two or more members have an equality of votes, the President shall determine by lot which shall be chosen.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Among the names which have been mentioned there is not one of a member for a city province. I think one should be included.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Yes. That is my reason for suggesting a ballot.

Committee Appointed.

Ballot taken and a committee appointed consisting of the Hon. C. F. Baxter, Hon. E. H. Gray, Hon. J. J. Holmes and Hon. W. J. Mann, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Firearms and Guns Act Amendment.
 - 2, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.
- Without amendment.

BILL—POLICE BENEFIT FUND ABOLITION.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting a conference on the amend-

ment insisted on by the Council, and notifying that at such conference the Assembly would be represented by three managers.

BILL—LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to amendments Nos. 1 to 8 made by the Council, now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1, Clause 3—In proposed new section 33B delete the words "and due notice has thereupon been given as provided for by paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section fifty-eight A of this Act and default has occurred as provided by paragraph (b) of the said subsection" wherever such words appear in paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of the proposed new section.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: When the Bill was before the House a decision was made to limit it to industrial policies and that instead of companies having to give notice to policy holders of intention to forfeit, they should insert in the premium books and in new policies a clause drawing attention to the conditions on which such policies might be forfeited. The Legislative Assembly disagreed with the action of this House and desired the Bill to be restored to its original form. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I trust the Council will insist on the amendment. The object of the amendments introduced by the Council was that this legislation should be brought as nearly as possible into line with similar legislation in the other States.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I remind hon. members that these amendments were made after a thorough consideration of the whole position and if we were to comply with the request of another place we would be doing something detrimental to the business of life assurance companies. The amendments were designed to bring the conditions pertaining to industrial life assurance policies into line with those obtaining in Victoria and elsewhere. Members will recall that when

the Bill was discussed the report of a Royal Commission that sat in Victoria and went into this matter exhaustively was read to the House. As a result of that Commission's findings a system was adopted in Victoria that is desirable here. The introduction of that system is essential, because in the near future, in all likelihood, a Federal law will be introduced to achieve uniformity. I hope the Committee will insist on the amendment.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I hope the Committee will stick to its amendments. The Bill was discussed at length in this Chamber and every viewpoint was placed before hon. members. The Chief Secretary heard all the arguments and did not raise any objection to some of the amendments, thus indicating that apparently he was convinced they were advisable. It will not matter much if the Bill is lost because, as Mr. Nicholson has said, a Federal measure is on the stocks and may be passed in the coming session, and that will provide uniformity in the States. Fancy mutual benefit life assurance companies operating in every State and having different methods of dealing with the same subject! For the sake of economy and efficiency there should be a uniform system.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry the hon. member was so indignant and that he suggested I raised no objection to the amendments.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I understand that you agreed with them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is what the Leader of the House gets for trying to be helpful!

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Minister endeavoured to get the matter dealt with.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I apologise if I said something that implied anything different from that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member should know that for years past there has not been a stronger advocate for the amendments suggested in the Bill than myself. On this occasion, because I could see the House was not going to be with me, I endeavoured to be helpful in order that we might arrive at a satisfactory amendment. I do not propose to go into the pros and cons of the subject as that was done previously. I do not agree with everything

Mr. Nicholson has said. A question of principle is involved and that is the real reason the Government has objected to the amendments made by the Council.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

No. 2. Clause 3—In proposed new section 33F delete the words "policy holder" in line 17, and substitute the words "holder of an industrial life assurance policy."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Hon. members will note that all these amendments are in connection with the points I mentioned—limiting the Bill to industrial policies, the question of the terms of forfeiture being put on the premium books and on new policies issued and they also involve the bond necessary for industrial agents. The same argument applies to each amendment and I do not think there is need to spend any time in speaking on each amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: All the amendments are more or less interwoven and I shall not read them all.

Hon. J. Nicholson: We must insist upon our amendments.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the remaining amendments made by the Council be not insisted on.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendments insisted on.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.32]: This Bill has already been fully debated by a number of members. Each and every one has indicated that it was so interwoven with and correlated to the other two taxing Bills that they could not be separated, a contention with which the President agreed. Before the Bill is further debated, I suggest that a decision should be arrived at by both Houses. Already the other two taxing Bills are the subject of messages from another place, and that being so, further debate on this measure should be adjourned until a decision has

been reached. I suggest that this Order of the Day be placed further down on the Notice Paper.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.33]: I move—

That further consideration of this Bill be postponed until after the consideration of Order of the Day No. 8.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (West) [8.34]: I have no objection to the motion, but the reason why the Order of the Day was placed where it is on the Notice Paper was that Mr. Dimmitt had the adjournment of the debate, and it was desired to give him the opportunity to speak to the second reading.

Motion put and passed.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it declined to make the amendment requested by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment requested by the Council but which the Assembly declined to make is to the second part of the Schedule, namely, to delete the word "ten" in the third line of Clause 3 on page 3, and substitute the word "twenty."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not pressed.

There is no need for me to repeat the arguments I have used before. The Government desires to reduce the 20 per cent rebate on land and income tax to 10 per cent.; in other words, to increase the income tax by 12½ per cent. The Government deems it necessary to reduce the rebate in an endeavour to balance the budget.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I trust the Committee will adhere to its decision. In view of the heavy commitments ahead of us, the increases in taxation by the Federal Government, and the necessity for keeping down our own taxation to reasonable limits, we should stand by our decision.

Question put and negatived; the Council's request pressed.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it declined to make the amendments requested by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN: The first amendment requested by the Council but declined to be made by the Assembly is to the second part of the Schedule, column (1), (b), as follows:—Substitute "Fivepence" for "Sixpence," "Sixpence" for "Sevenpence," "Sevenpence" for "Eightpence," "Eightpence" for "Ninepence," "Ninepence" for "Tenpence," "Tenpence" for "Elevenpence," "Elevenpence" for "Twelvepence."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not pressed.

The Government could not possibly agree to this proposal. No calculation has been made as to what this would mean to the Government, but we may rest assured it would mean many thousands of pounds. The net result of the amendment would be that all rates were reduced by 1d. in the pound. I have referred to the difficulty of the Treasurer in balancing his budget this year, more particularly in view of what has already happened, and, because the difficulties have been materially increased, the Government is not likely under any consideration to agree to such an amendment.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I trust the Committee will press the amendment. Whilst the Government is prepared to reduce taxation on the two lower grades, which represent the larger number of taxpayers, by another Bill it is prepared to increase the tax on other people. If it can reduce the tax on the lower grades, all grades should be treated alike. Through the amalgamation of the financial emergency tax and the income tax, and because of the exemptions and deductions in the case of the lower grades, the aggregate loss in taxation would be about £350,000. If the Government

wishes to reduce the taxation on its own friends and supporters, I maintain it should do so on all grades.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is only equitable.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is part of the Government's financial policy. I have made the position clear, and I know that in no circumstances could the Government agree to the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	16
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	7
				—

AYES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. E. M. Heenan	(Teller.)

NOES.

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

Question thus negatived; the Council's amendment pressed.

No. 2. The Schedule, third part, column (1), (b):—Substitute: "Fivepence" for "Sixpence," "Sixpence" for "Sevenpence," "Sevenpence" for "Eightpence," "Eightpence" for "Ninepence," "Ninepence" for "Tenpence," "Tenpence" for "Elevenpence," "Elevenpence" for "Twelvepence."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not pressed.

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

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

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.52] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is for the purpose of clarifying the 1938 Act in several respects and amplifying it in other direc-

tions where the experience of recent months shows that course to be desirable. The Act became operative as from the 1st March, 1939. The number of contributors exceeds 11,000 and contributions commenced on the 1st July. Employees were allowed six months in which to give notice of their intention to contribute for superannuation. That period expired on the 1st September, but the Superannuation Board may extend the period where it considers an extension reasonable. A further period, expiring on the 31st December next, is available during which certain contributors may vary their forms of election. In view of the uncertainty that has existed regarding some phases and the proposed amendments in the Bill to remedy the position, the Superannuation Board will sympathetically consider any application affected by the amendments. The Bill is largely a Committee measure and details will be furnished during that stage in regard to the several clauses.

Employees who attained the maximum age for retirement between the 1st March and the 1st July were eligible to contribute, but no provision was made for them to contribute before they ceased to be employed. That is being remedied in the Bill. It is proposed that medical certificates be not called for in the case of employees with over 10 years' service. Some of them have had up to 30 and 40 years' service. Under the proposal outlined in Clause 13 no personal pension would be payable before July, 1940, and until 12 months' contributions have been paid. The only pensions payable before July, 1940, would be to widows and children of members who die in the current financial year. The commencing date for any pension would be the day following the expiration of the period equivalent to that for which payment for leave is made by the State.

At present any employee over the age of 30 years who was in the Government service at the commencement of the Act, has the option of taking four age-30 concession units, but if an employee has had less than 10 years' service when he becomes a contributor, there is no provision for him to increase the number of units. He has the option of taking the full number up to his salary-group, but all at the actual age rate. It is proposed to remedy this by providing that when the employee completes 10 years of service, he may increase the number of

units to that for his salary-group—at the actual age rate at the time—after having taken the four age-30 concession units. It is proposed to remove the hardship which now exists in regard to the employee whose service, although in excess of 10 years, was broken and who, therefore, is not at present qualified by 10 years' continuous service. Provision has been made for an employee to be permitted to make a deferred election to increase his number of units up to the salary-group number, subject to the conditions laid down. Another item affecting increases is being amended to remove the anomaly in Section 8 of the Act owing to the word "forty" having been retained in error instead of "thirty."

The Act makes no reference to basic wage adjustments on account of fluctuations in the cost of living. At present, the goldfields rate is appreciably higher than that applying in the metropolitan area. In one group, the goldfields rate is only £1 higher than the minimum for a salary-group, with the result that certain employees under the age of 30 years are called upon to take an additional unit. It is proposed to give employees the option in such cases. Another amendment embodied in the Bill relates to retirement between the ages of 60 and 65, which was not provided for in the 1938 Act. The principle has been established that an employee may retire at 60 years of age. When he can get a full pension at that age, it is only logical that he should be able to retire at a later age. At present the Act provides only for the ages of 60 and 65. The amendment covers ages from 61 to 64, with contributions on an actuarial basis.

A weakness in the parent Act is that an employee with very short service and who is in the vicinity of 60 years of age, may elect to retire at that age and draw a pension of £2 per week for the rest of his life after paying a negligible amount for four age-30 concession units. Provision has been made that those with less than 10 years' service cannot elect to contribute for other than age-65 retirement, unless they can complete 10 years' service before reaching that age, in which case they may retire on completing 10 years' service, if they are then over age 60.

In connection with cases of invalidity, at present the Act provides that a contributor may receive a full pension if the in-

validity is not his own fault or a smaller pension if it is his fault. There will be cases where the pension under the second heading would be a negligible amount. It is proposed to place the employee in the same position as one who resigns, by giving him the option of accepting a refund of his contributions. If the invalidity is partly the fault of the contributor, the board will require to determine the degree of responsibility and the benefits to be paid, also the commencing date of benefits. It is proposed to amplify the section regarding invalidity to provide for alternative employment in the case of an employee for whom suitable employment is available. Provision has been made to meet the objection that existed in connection with those who may be eligible for pensions under the 1871 Act. At present, the 1938 Act stipulates that if such an employee becomes a contributor, he relinquishes all claim to an 1871 pension. It is proposed to provide the options set out in Clause 5 of the Bill.

Regarding the payment for age-30 concession units, the major portion of the cost of which will be payable by the State, if an employee elects to contribute for retirement at the age of 60 years, the Act provides that his contributions shall cease on his attaining that age, but provision has been made in the Bill that he will be required to continue contributing for the concession units until his retirement, or, if later, until he has completed five years' contributions for those units. Any employee under the age of 55 would not be affected, and for units other than the age-30 concession four, the contributions would cease when the employee attained the retiring age selected, as the actual age rates would have been paid. The section dealing with investments is being amplified. Provision has been made for the Superannuation Board to accept lump-sum payments. The interest chargeable on outstanding contributions has been specified. A clause has been inserted to avoid the payment of dual pension when a male employee and his wife both contribute. Provision has been made to extend to the representatives of a female contributor the refund provision which now applies in the case of the death of an unmarried male contributor or a widower.

The definition of "department" has been amplified to admit to the scheme the em-

ployees of corporate bodies under specified conditions. The Bill makes provision for the amendments to operate as from the commencement of the Act—the only practicable course in the circumstances. When the measure was being considered last year, there were suggestions that it be regarded as a trial measure, with the likelihood of amendments being required to improve it as experience dictated. It is expected that, with the passing of the amendments outlined, the Act will be placed on a satisfactory working basis. Members who have followed my remarks will perhaps have experienced difficulty in understanding the significance of some of the terms I have used, terms that appear in the Act. However, I have briefly outlined the amendments and, if members require further information, I shall be only too pleased to supply it in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 6:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This clause proposes a definition of "department." I have hastily sketched an amendment, the object of which is to make provision so that employees of boards, such as the King's Park Board, may come under the scheme. Such boards are established under the Parks and Reserves Act and are not corporate bodies. I propose also to add a new paragraph to enable a board, with the prior approval in writing of the Minister, to apply any part of its funds towards meeting the contributions necessary under the Act. Otherwise the board would lack the power. Some of the employees of King's Park Board have long service, are worthy men and have earnestly appealed to be brought within the scope of the Act. The clause provides for the Minister's recommendation and the Treasurer's approval, and there we have a safeguard. I move an amendment—

That after the word "instrumentality" in line 7 of the definition of "department" the words "also any board appointed or" be inserted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I regret having to oppose the amendment. I can understand that employees of semi-Governmental bodies which are not corporate bodies would desire to come within the scope of this measure. If proper safeguards can be found removing the danger of the Government's having to find the money for that purpose, the matter will receive favourable consideration. There are scores of such bodies throughout the country which are not corporate bodies. If the employees of the King's Park Board, for instance, come within the scope of the Bill, the Government will be called upon to supply finance. I hope the amendment will not be carried. A scheme has been arrived at as the result of considerable work, and from the Treasurer's point of view the Government cannot accept the proposed responsibility.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I recognise the difficulty of giving immediate effect to Mr. Nicholson's suggestion. A Superannuation scheme, however, should be made as wide as possible relatively to employees of the Government.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I recognise that on the part of members of the Government there is a desire to meet the position of certain men who are employed by the King's Park Board and other similar boards. The King's Park employees, for instance, should be placed in precisely the same position as public servants. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 33:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This amendment removes the anomaly that a person becoming a contributor under the 1938 Act renounced all claims he might have to a pension under the Act of 1871.

Clauses 5 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 40:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 22 of proposed new Subsection (5) the word "minimum" be struck out.

The word is unnecessary, and it gives the idea that there may be some other period, which is not the case.

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

Clauses 11 to 19—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

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

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 23rd November.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [9.38]: After having waited for three weeks and a day—

The **PRESIDENT**: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on the Council.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am sorry.

The **PRESIDENT**: I assume the hon. member has withdrawn the remark.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I certainly withdraw it, if it offends the Council.

The Chief Secretary: There have been more adjournments asked for in connection with this Bill than any other Bill this session.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I think the Bill has been adjourned on only one occasion; but that does not alter the fact that I certainly feel somewhat like the small girl who, after having waited for hours for her turn in an elocution test, rushed on to the stage in tears and said she had forgotten her part. I am afraid that is my position regarding this measure. It is three weeks since it was first introduced and I consider it unfair to ask members to recall, after such a lapse of time, the arguments that were used for and against it. I have expressed the opinion before that it would be in the interests of this House and of the legislation we pass, if when once a Bill is introduced and the second reading debate has been reached, we proceeded to deal with it without the considerable delay that often takes place. We are frequently forced to rush important measures through in the closing hours of a session. It is the old story. Members have complained about such delays before; and it appears to me that the position will be the same this year unless members are very

careful. During the last moments of a session Bill after Bill is thrust upon us and in the rush of dealing with them, other measures—like the one now before us—fade from our memory, so to speak. I fail to understand the Government's attitude towards the present measure. We have a Minister who I believe is perfectly sincere and honest in his endeavours to develop our industries on the one hand while on the other hand he is doing—in my opinion at least—everything possible to retard our industries. The amendments proposed to the Bill have been very carefully dealt with by Mr. Baxter clause by clause; and at this late stage I do not propose to weary members by traversing the Bill myself. It is brought forward with two objects, to override industrial awards and industrial agreements. In the past unions may have had some excuse for approaching Parliament to secure laws to help them out of what they considered to be their difficulties, but that is not the position today. Until probably some 12 months ago, complaints that the Arbitration Court was far behind in its work could fairly be made, and the unions may have had some justification for taking action which could not be regarded as correct. No such excuse can be made today, for the reason that since the appointment of a second or assistant Judge to the Arbitration Court, the work of the court has been expedited. I believe I am right in saying that today fewer cases await hearing in the court than ever before in its history. The Bill, as I say, is an attempt to interfere with industrial awards and agreements; in fact, it is an attempt to override the court decisions in many matters. There is not the least doubt about that. Some unions do not seem prepared to go to the Arbitration Court, apparently feeling certain that what they seek will not be granted. Consequently they are endeavouring to persuade the Government to ask Parliament to place some of their requirements or demands on the statute-book. If this Bill were passed, they would probably be quite satisfied with what they had achieved. On the other hand they are willing to accept an award of the court only if it happens to suit them. In years past we have had union after union refusing to accept awards of the court that did not meet with their approval.

I propose to deal with only two of the clauses of the Bill. Mr. Baxter dealt with

the measure very fully from A to Z. It is a pity so long a time has elapsed since the second reading was first taken in the Chamber because it is possible that the remarks of the hon. member may have been forgotten and that some hon. members will not recall the excellent replies he gave to the Minister's introductory speech. Clause 3 of the Bill proposes to amend Section 28 of the principal Act by adding at the end of Subsection (2) the following words:—

But in any such case all time worked in excess of 8¼ hours in any one day or 48 hours in any week shall be deemed to be overtime and shall be paid for at the rate of not less than time-and-a-half for the first two hours and double time thereafter.

Why should this Parliament attempt to interfere with an award of the Arbitration Court? Through this Bill the Minister is attempting to interfere with the overtime and holiday pay fixed by the court. I cannot see any use whatever in the measure. Clause 7 was dealt with by Mr. Baxter but perhaps I will be excused for referring to it again. It contains a proposal to prohibit employees working in shops on any day on which such shops are required to be closed to the public. Everybody knows that at certain periods of the year it is necessary to take stock and to do certain repairs. Such work cannot be undertaken at a time when the shops are open, but the Government proposes to make it impossible for employees to be allowed to work at times when shops requiring to do such work would be closed.

Hon. J. Nicholson: They will be forbidden.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, absolutely forbidden. I ask the Minister whether that is a fair proposition. The Arbitration Court has provided for employees to work under conditions that are perfectly fair and favourable. When employees undertake such work as I have mentioned they do not do so at ordinary rates but are paid a reasonable rate of overtime. It is necessary that they should be permitted to work on certain days under the conditions I have stated. It is suggested that provision should be made for another union. We know that this particular union is working under an award that was granted some six years ago. The union is now asking Parliament to intervene to fix certain conditions of employment for its members. Why should Parliament be asked to have anything to do with the matter?

The Arbitration Court and industrial boards were created to undertake these duties. If the union is not satisfied with the conditions under which its members are working, surely it can approach the court and ask for an amendment. From beginning to end the Bill is nothing but an attempt to override the decisions of the Arbitration Court and industrial awards in various industries, and by doing so it will add further burdens on industry in this State. What is the use of the Minister for Industrial Development attempting on the one hand to assist industries, and on the other hand to retard them? I am sorry the Bill has been left to such a late stage of the session, but I am sure the House will give it the short shrift it deserves on the second reading. I shall vote against the measure and hope every member will do the same.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [9.52]: But for the fact that this House has got back to normal conditions, I would refer to the Bill as a nasty piece of work. That is my opinion after having analysed it. The Bill sets up impossible conditions for secondary industries in this State. I noted Mr. Bolton's reference to Mr. Hawke. My opinion is that there appear to be two Mr. Hawkes. I have never known a man who could act so well in a dual capacity as the gentleman referred to is doing. Picking up the Bill I find it was introduced by Mr. Hawke, the leader of the campaign for the development of secondary industries in this State. I have not had time to inquire, but I believe that this is the seventh Bill he has introduced his session, the effect of which—irrespective of the objective—would be to paralyse secondary industry. What is Mr. Hawke's answer? I think he admitted to the Grants Commission that all provisions of this kind are likely to cripple the State, but he says that his object is to bring conditions in the Eastern States up to our level. That is a matter for the Eastern States and not for Mr. Hawke. If he is to succeed in establishing secondary industries in Western Australia he will have to relieve those industries of a lot of the impositions that exist. I hope that the House when it finishes with the Bill will relieve industry of the additional impositions placed upon it by the measure. Written on every page of the Bill is a distinct at-

tempt to undermine awards of the Arbitration Court. The court made those awards after hearing all the evidence, yet this House is asked by an amendment of the Act to override those awards without any evidence whatever except a speech delivered by the Minister when introducing the Bill. Up to the time of the death of Mr. McCallum the policy of the Government was "Hands off the Arbitration Court." One thing for which I always give Mr. McCallum credit is that he did try to keep hands off the Arbitration Court. Since his death, however, the policy of the Government has been "Hands on the Arbitration Court." By legislation it has done its best to defeat awards of the court.

The Bill provides for overtime before a body of men commence work in the morning. That is an innovation the court has refused. Overtime commences after work has been done during the day, but the Bill provides that a man whose duty is to get up steam for a factory before any work is done is to get overtime. That is one of the objections I have to the Bill. The Arbitration Court has fixed rates for the first two hours and a rate for every hour thereafter, and the Bill proposes to override the decision of the court. On Good Fridays and Sundays the men concerned have to be paid $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the usual rate, and in addition they are to be entitled to not less than one week's holiday on full pay, and where their employment is terminated before the completion of 12 months' service, they must be allowed paid holidays.

The Act provides that a factory inspector shall say what is necessary to be provided in a factory, after having inspected the premises. He would decide what would be the proper lighting for the premises. The Bill, however, proposes to take that function out of the hands of inspectors and to settle the matter by regulations. All is to be done by regulation, and the regulations may have the effect of shutting up some of the factories that are so dear to the heart of Mr. Hawke; that is to Mr. Hawke No. 1. Mr. Hawke No. 2, of course, is another gentleman altogether. Who is the better judge as to what lighting is required—the inspector who makes the recommendation or the Crown Law Department officer who draws up the regulation? I have heard about two-headed pennies and about two men under

one hat, but have never yet seen anyone who can play the double game that Mr. Hawke can play. The court provides that under certain conditions the men may work after hours and be paid double time or time and a half, that is at such times as shops are closed. If ever there was a time when those conditions should exist that time is the present. Many of our shops and factories are short of supplies, and do not know when other ships will arrive. When they have a public demand for their goods and part of the staff has gone away to fight for the country, they will not be allowed, by this Bill, to work their people overtime during any period when the shops are closed. Is this the way to stimulate interest in our secondary industries? Apart from all other holidays the Bill provides that employees in shops are to have an extra week's holiday. I leave that point to members representing country interests. The award made under the Factories and Shops Act was made $6\frac{1}{2}$ years ago, and the union has never approached the court for an amendment to it. The court with the evidence before it will not comply with the wishes of the union, and so we find it trying to undermine the court by a Bill of this kind. In $6\frac{1}{2}$ years no action has been taken to amend the award. Written on every page of the Bill is an attempt to short circuit the Arbitration Court, and that, too, by a Labour Government wedded—so we are told—to arbitration. If members have studied the Bill there would be no need for me to say more. There is only one thing to do, namely, put the Bill out on the second reading, and my vote will be given in that direction.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [10.3]: From the speeches of members it is evident they do not like this Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: You can exclude me from that remark.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Opposition to the measure has been based on a wrong foundation. Both Mr. Baxter and Mr. Holmes have misunderstood its purport.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You should not work us so hard.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am sure I shall be able to convince them that they are wrong in their views, although it seems that the intention is to defeat the Bill on

the second reading. Members who have spoken are hostile to any amendment to the Act being made this session. Nevertheless, the Bill contains important amendments, and it is in the interests of the public, of the employers as well as the employees, that the Bill should be passed, even though members may modify some of its provisions.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why smother the Bill with a lot of other stuff?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Some of the clauses may be modified in Committee should the Bill reach that stage. The burden of the opposition, especially that put forward by Mr. Baxter, is that the Bill proposes to interfere with the functions of the Arbitration Court. That is not true, though it may do so to a slight extent in one or two instances.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is written on every page.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Members have misread the Bill and have got a wrong impression of it. To appreciate the extent to which the functions of the court may be interfered with by the proposals, I would refer to the provisions of section 168 of the principal Act, under which any of the appropriate provisions of the Act may be varied, altered, modified, or excluded by any award now made or hereafter to be made by the Court or by any industrial agreement now made or hereafter to be made under the Act and which has been declared a common rule by the Court. One very important reservation must be considered. Subsection 3 of that section preserves the restriction of overtime for women and boys imposed by section 33, and neither an award nor industrial agreement may extend the amount of overtime which may be worked by women and boys under that section. Mr. Baxter's objections in this respect are to the proposed definition of the term "day" (clause 2), and to the proposed prohibition of the employment of women assistants between the hours of 12 midnight and 6 a.m. in all-night cafes. It is only recently that all-night cafes have come into prominence, and there are now a number located in the metropolitan area, some of which display conspicuous signs, such as "We Never Sleep" and "Open All Day and All Night."

The conditions of employment of workers, including women and girls, in these places are governed by an award of

the court which was delivered eleven years ago, in 1928, viz., No. 15/1928, and the employment of women in cafes after midnight was not then prevalent but has recently become so. The award certainly permits the employment of women at any hour of the day or night in such places, but, so far as I am aware, the court has never had an opportunity to consider the desirability of awarding more favourable conditions.

Members may say—"Why not leave this question to the union concerned?" I do not think that that is a fair answer to the proposals of the Bill. There are conditions of employment which become a matter of public and Government policy, and overshadow even the Arbitration Court and any union of employers or employees that may be concerned in the industry. The question to be answered is one of public interest, both for the welfare of the girls who are now working all hours of the night, and the peace of mind of the parents.

Is it not a fair proposition to say that if people desire to be out all night until the early hours of the morning, and they require attention in cafes of this character, they should be served by men instead of girls? Is it a fair proposition to expect young girls to knock off at 2, 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, or to resume work at these hours in the morning? Many of them reside in the suburban areas, and it is not desirable that they should be compelled to walk round the city in the small hours of the morning with no possible means of catching trams, trains or buses, or be compelled to walk home, very often, long distances.

I think if this was put to the public of Western Australia there would be only one answer—that these girls should not be subject to such conditions of labour, and that any work of this character should be confined to men only.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: There is nothing to prevent these people from going to the court instead of coming to Parliament.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is a matter of Government policy to preserve the health of young people. This House must take the full responsibility if it decides against the amendment which proposes to remedy this undesirable state of affairs. In a recent investigation made by inspectors of the Factories Department, it

was disclosed that many women were employed in all-night cafes, and most of them commenced work at 6 p.m. and did not complete their shifts until 2.30 a.m., and in some cases 4 a.m. on the following day. In some instances a break of only 4 to 5½ hours occurred between finishing one shift and commencing another, and, in others, there was a break in the spread of the shift from 2 a.m. until 6.40 a.m., obviously an undesirable period for a female to have to take time off in a shift.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why do they not go to the court?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is for Parliament to take the necessary action if the union does not do so. The acceptance of the proposed definition of the term "day" will not in any way affect the provisions of the Caterers' Award in respect to male workers or the decision of the court referred to:—"Overtime rates will not be payable for work done after midnight by males who are subject to the Award." If clause 8 of the Bill is agreed to, the proprietors of the all-night cafes will still be able to carry on with the assistance of male employees only, after midnight. People who can afford to keep their premises open all night can afford to pay the extra wages involved in paying men.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Why will not the union go to the court?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This particular union has not done so. A statement was made that overtime rates will have to be paid for getting up steam or making preparations for work in a factory. This is not quite correct as, if the clause is agreed to, overtime rates will be payable to these workers working in excess of 8¾ hours for the day or of 48 hours in a week. These men are not covered by any award.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why not?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I suppose that is because they are not organised. This clause refers to workers not under Arbitration Court awards but those who are outside the ambit of the Arbitration Court; and, surely, if those workers not covered by an award have to work overtime they should be paid for so doing, but in the majority of cases the men referred to will have no overtime to work as they will work within the prescribed 48-hour week period. Mr. Holmes has evidently misread the Bill. It

will not affect any award of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why should men get 2½ times the ordinary rate for working on Christmas Day?

The HONORARY MINISTER: These men do not come under any award. The limits of working hours prescribed in section 28 apply to workers in factories generally, but Subsection 2 excludes from those limitations workers employed in trades referred to in the Third Schedule, which include freezing works, fellmongeries, jam factories, bacon factories, continuous process plants, etc. In those factories workers may now be employed for an unlimited number of hours in any day or in any week, and they are not now entitled to any overtime payment at all. The Bill proposes that if these workers are required to work excessive hours they shall be paid penalty rates for hours in excess of 8¾ in a day or 48 in a week. The contention that this is a matter for the Arbitration Court is answered by the fact that the clause will apply only to those workers who are not covered by an award or industrial agreement. It is a fact, however, that these particular workers would have an advantage in respect to overtime rates over those employed at other tasks and in other trades, as Section 33 does provide for time-and-a-quarter for the first two hours, and time-and-a-half thereafter for overtime worked in factories generally. If members think that is too much they can alter it; but this does not mean an interference with the Arbitration Court.

The query as to why the words "Subject as hereinafter mentioned" are substituted for "Except as hereinafter provided" is one which I cannot answer. So far as I am aware there is nothing behind the alteration other than that it is a phrase adopted by the Parliamentary Draftsman. Mr. Baxter's contention that the rate of time-and-a-half for work done on Christmas Day and Good Friday be paid to workers employed in industries where the work is of such a nature as to render it essential for work to be performed on all holidays really constitutes double time and a half, is, in fact, correct, because in addition to the time and a half for work done on those two days a whole paid holiday must be allowed within one month. This does not override any awards of the Court of Arbitration but will apply

only to workers in those industries that are not covered by an award. Presumably, it is considered that, as far as possible, workers should be allowed to observe Christmas Day and Good Friday as special holidays, and, if required to work on those days, should be paid special rates for such work. Factories not covered by Arbitration Court awards, where continuous processes are in operation, have been allowed to break the law, no action having been taken against them pending the passage of amending legislation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why do not you fine them?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why do not you take them to court?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The HONORARY MINISTER: It has nothing to do with the court. These concerns are not covered by any awards. Mr. Holmes criticised the Minister for Labour who has introduced this amending legislation for the very purpose of saving those employers from being fined. This is to protect those employers. If members do not agree with the measure, they must accept the responsibility. Regarding Mr. Baxter's criticism of Clause 6, I point out that Section 61 (d) of the principal Act gives the inspector no alternative but to require the provision of a window or natural light area of not less than one-tenth of the floor area in every factory, and that is mandatory. In recent years the science of artificial lighting of buildings and factories has advanced to such an extent as to render the existing requirements of natural light areas obsolete. It is now possible to instal glareless and shadowless light in workrooms by artificial means, which is quite as good as natural light and not so variable as it is unaffected by climatic conditions. The reason for the proposal to prescribe by regulation what is sufficient and suitable lighting is that different processes and classes of work require different standards of illumination to enable them to be performed efficiently and without danger to the health and eyesight of the operatives, and the adoption of the proposal will enable the establishment of the respective standards of lighting measures by foot candles to be prescribed by regulation. The clause has been copied from the latest amended Factories Act of Great Britain.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But a different set of conditions applies there altogether.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That legislation was passed by a Conservative Government.

The PRESIDENT: May I ask the Honorary Minister to address the Chair? We shall get on much faster if he does.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Clause 7 provides that persons employed in shops shall be allowed a paid holiday on the day on which the shop is required to be closed on specified and proclaimed public holidays, but that does not overrule any award of the Arbitration Court. Section 116 requires certain shops to be closed on certain specified and proclaimed public holidays. Section 118 prohibits the employment of assistants in those shops when they are required to be closed under the section referred to, but there is no provision by which a mean employer can be prevented from practically nullifying the holiday by deducting a day's wages in respect of it. Stocktaking is not performed on public holidays by any traders so far as I am aware.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Cannot the court rectify that?

The HONORARY MINISTER: All are working under the Factories and Shops Act! The provision of an annual holiday of one week for shop assistants is a matter of Government policy. This will, of course, apply only to those assistants who are not covered by an award, but the principle has been established by the Arbitration Court in Award No. 41 of 1936, which provides for paid holidays on ten specified days, and, in addition, a paid holiday of one week on completion of each year of service. With reference to Clause 4, I would point out that Section 39 of the principal Act makes it obligatory that every person employed in a factory shall be allowed holidays on full pay on the days specified in the section, and holidays may not be allowed on other days in lieu of the days mentioned in the section. There are many factories, which are not governed by an award or agreement under the Arbitration Act, such as cheese factories, milk processing and cooling plants, Industrial Extracts Company's fac-

tories at Belmont and Boddington and others, where the nature of the work renders it necessary for work to be done on holidays. If the clause is not adopted and the existing section is enforced in these industries, it will greatly inconvenience the respective industries. Here again there is protection for the employers. The clause, if adopted, will enable work to be carried on as usual, and the employees to be granted holidays on other days within one month of the specified holidays to which they are now entitled.

Section 138, paragraph (g), provides that, in order to prevent persons being employed in factories, shops or warehouses without reasonable remuneration in money, no able bodied adult woman or adult male shall be paid less than the lowest minimum rates prescribed in any award or industrial agreement for such persons. When that provision was inserted in the Act in 1937, it was believed that the amendment would prevent any adult employed in a factory, shop, or warehouse receiving less than the applicable basic wage. While there are no awards or industrial agreements providing less than the female basic wage for females, two agreements were discovered which laid down a minimum wage for male workers less than the current basic wage. One of these industrial agreements has been cancelled, but the other agreement, covering vineyard workers, is still legally operative, notwithstanding that the union concerned is defunct.

That is a brief reply to the criticism of members. I conclude by saying that those who have spoken against the Bill have not understood its provisions. This legislation does not represent an attack upon the Arbitration Court nor an attempt to undermine that tribunal. The object is to afford protection to those not governed by Arbitration Court awards.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	15
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	7
				—

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray

Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. W. H. Kilson
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. M. Heenan
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo
Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. L. E. Bolton
Hon. L. Cridg
Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. W. J. Mann

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.

Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. T. Moore
Hon. W. R. Hall

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. H. Seddon

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

Message from the Assembly requesting a conference on the amendment insisted on by the Council and notifying that at such conference the Assembly would be represented by three managers, now considered.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move—

That the Assembly's request for a conference be agreed to, and that the conference be held in the President's room on Tuesday next at 7.30 p.m.

I take it that the House will ballot for the managers.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not nominate Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Parker with yourself?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I would prefer that the managers were chosen by ballot.

Question put and passed.

Conference Managers Appointed.

Ballot taken.

The PRESIDENT: The result of the ballot shows that the managers appointed are, Hon. E. H. Gray, Hon. H. S. W. Parker and Hon. J. Nicholson.

Message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [10.48] in moving the second reading said: An unfortunate illness has compelled the Hon. H. V. Plesse, who was to have introduced this measure, to ask me to act for him in the matter. The amendments contained in the Bill have been drawn up by a committee of practical men associated with rural industries, and by one lawyer, on behalf of

the Country Party. This committee had the opportunity of visiting the Eastern States, where its members interviewed the various farmers' organisations, and were able to obtain evidence from bankers, mortgagees, farmers, and graziers. Further, they have carefully studied the report of the Royal Commission which was authorised by the Federal Government. The report sets out the suggested conditions of writing down by the board. All States are referred to in the report, which, after dealing with the unsecured position in Victoria, proceeds:—

That in regard to secured creditors who have not agreed, the board may—

- (a) suspend all rights and remedies of such creditors against the farmer for a period not exceeding five years;
- (b) reduce the interest payable to such creditors;
- (c) at the termination of the period of suspension reduce the debt to an amount equal to the value of the asset by which the debt is secured, and extinguish the excess, if any. This provision, however, does not apply to a mortgagee in possession.

It is essential that we do all things possible to keep our lands productive, and also to encourage men who have put their life savings into their farms. A similar measure is working satisfactorily in Victoria and New South Wales. It has been stated that if the Bill is passed in its entirety, it will dry up the credit of the farmers. If a farmer is properly rehabilitated financially, the supply of seasonal credit can be arranged on an ordinary bill of sale or general lien with an Associated Bank or an insurance company. It must be borne in mind that Australia today owes its financial position abroad to the export of its primary products, which at present are a losing proposition to the farmer.

The Bill provides that after arriving at the value of a property and ascertaining the total of the secured debt, the difference between the liability and the valuation is suspended; and if there is no improvement in the value of the property at the end of a three-years or five-years period, the trustees under the Bill have the power to write off the difference. In passing may I mention that that facility already exists in respect of the Agricultural Bank. The Bill begins with a definition of a secured creditor, with whom the measure is almost entirely concerned. In the absence of relief from se-

cured debts hitherto impracticable under a previous composition where the debtor has been only partially rehabilitated, he still has the right to apply under this measure for relief from his secured creditors. The trustees have power to deal with the first mortgagee, whether the application mentions him or not; and the trustees' power under this clause shall be free of restriction. The measure does not propose to interfere with the provisions of Section 5 and Section 6 of the existing Act, which give the trustees power to declare that no debt or portion shall be free of interest. The method to be adopted is that the trustees are to determine the value of the property concerned as prescribed under the Bill; and on any surplus debt over that value, no interest will be charged during the suspension period; but interest will be chargeable on that part of the secured debt which equals the value of the property, and the interest charged during the period of suspension is not to exceed the rate or average rate of interest charged during the period of 12 months immediately preceding the application; and the period of suspension must not exceed five years and shall be at the discretion of the trustees. At the end of the period of suspension a revaluation on the prescribed basis is to be made, and the excess value of the property is to be then written off. The basis of valuation is to be on a productive capacity in assets. With the position as it is today, there should not be any justification for the writing-down of any property in favour of a new owner, so that the present holder cannot retain the property, if it can be proved that the new holder has a reasonable chance of carrying on. Surely the mortgagee will lose a similar amount of money if the property is sold to a new purchaser.

Some years ago one of the difficulties facing the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board was that they had not power to write down the value of securities. We believed then—and fortunately we were able to impress our belief upon the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Angwin—that the Agricultural Bank Act required to be amended in such a manner as to empower both the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board to write down security values. We argued, "What is the use of forcing a man

who has spent 10 or 12 or possibly 14 years on his block of ground to yield the result of his work to a newcomer?" Although the debt on the property might be £3,000, the actual value of the property might be only £1,500. Our argument was that the man who had spent years of his life on a property should, if he was a worthy and respectable man, have the privilege of carrying on the farm at the written-down value—£1,500 in the case given as an illustration—instead of allowing a newcomer to enter. That is all this Bill asks for.

Livestock firms have stated that the Bill would curtail the credit being tendered to the farmer and the grazier. In arriving at the productive capacity of a farm, the farm and the livestock and plant must be taken as one; but that is only for the purpose of arriving at the value of the land, as such value is based upon the net productive capacity capitalised at 6 per cent. In the case of a stock and station mortgage, the value would be assessed over the land, stock and plant. But the position is that a stock loan security is over livestock only. The Bill makes provision that the stock shall be valued separately, and on such a basis as the trustees think proper. This would surely result in a fair valuation of stock; and stock firms do not, except on rare occasions, allow their debts to exceed two-thirds of the value of the stock. There can be neither suspension nor writing-down in such a case. Trustee companies, for instance, when the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act was brought into force, declared that they could not carry on under that legislation. I have, however, heard leading officials of a trustee company say that this Act had really been a good protection for them, as it had permitted them to reduce their interest, which never could have been paid, and even under the trusteeship Act could not have been reduced without permission granted by an Act of Parliament.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I am a director of a trustee company which finds it highly difficult to work under the Act.

Hon. A. THOMSON: We consider that our banks and financial institutions might find themselves in a similar position to that which I have described. Under their articles of association they may not be permitted to write down debts, whereas if this Bill passes it will justify them in such action. I am sure our financial institutions would like to

see the industry of primary production put on its feet and given an opportunity.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Will you tell us how a trustee company can wind up an estate with this Bill hanging over its head?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Certainly it can.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: With five years' suspension!

Hon. A. THOMSON: There is protection today under the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act. I hope the House will not make a hasty decision. The Bill represents the considered opinion of the party to which I have the honour to belong, and I ask hon. members to give it favourable consideration. I regret that I have been obliged to omit a large portion of the matter specially prepared by Mr. Piessé, who, I deeply regret to say, is prevented by a heart attack from attending here today. I repeat, all that the Bill asks for exists today so far as the Agricultural Bank is concerned. It has the power to revalue the man's assets, and that is all we are asking for.

Hon. L. Craig: The other banks do that voluntarily.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The position is not so easy as Mr. Craig suggests. No harm can be done if we grant privileges to those who are indebted to banks and institutions.

Hon. L. Craig: What the mortgagees object to is compulsion.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Some members are not consistent; we have already passed one or two strong measures this session compelling people to do certain things.

Hon. L. Craig: But not to break a contract.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I know. But the position is that in New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand measures similar to this are already in force. The credit of our farmers will not be affected; it is simply a matter of suspending payment of interest for a period of five years or less. That having been accomplished, what is the position? The farmer is then told, "Your farm will produce so much, and you will be charged on the producing capacity of your property at the rate of 6 per cent." At the end of the period of five years or less, the property is subject to a revaluation.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Do you think we can get any advantage at all?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Assume the reverse position. Suppose the property has depreciated in value, then the mortgagee can exercise his power of foreclosure and force the owner off the property. The mortgagee would thus be obliged to write down his security, in the same way as banks and financial institutions do. I confidently submit the measure to the favourable consideration of members and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 5th December.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 30th November, 1939.

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

QUESTION—AGRICULTURE.

Flour Tax Payments, Price of Wheat.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it possible to obtain immediately the September and October payment of the flour tax as promised by the Federal Government? 2, What action has been taken and has there been any reply in regard to the motion carried in this House relating to the payment of three shillings and fourpence per bushel for wheat at sidings for this season's harvest?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, This information is expected today by telegraph from the Commonwealth authorities. 2, No reply has been received from Canberra.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD.

Allowances to Members.

Mr. NEEDHAM: asked the Premier: 1, What fees and/or allowances are paid to—(a) the Government's representative; (b)