

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

Ayes	24
Noes	21
Majority for	3

AYES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Murray
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Naider
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Read
Mr. Doney	Mr. Seward
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hall	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Yates
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Brand

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Smith
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Triat
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. May	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Needham	

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 14th October, 1947.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Rural Relief Fund Act Amendment.
- 2, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 3, Unclaimed Moneys Act Amendment.
- 4, Supreme Court Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Late Running of Great Southern Trains.*

Hon. A. L. LOTON (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is it a fact that the oil burning type of locomotive in use on the Great Southern railway is mainly the cause of the recent late arrival in Perth daily of the train ex Albany?

(2) If such is the case, will the Minister for Railways reserve this type of locomotive for use on those lines where it has proved satisfactory?

(3) If this type of locomotive is not the cause of the late arrivals, what is the cause?

(4) What was the cause of the late arrival of the ex Albany train in Perth on Monday, the 6th October?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The "U" class locomotives have proved satisfactory on the Great Southern line, although certain minor adjustments, inseparable from all new engines, have been necessary.

(3) Various traffic causes.

(4) The engine stalled on the Cuballing bank due to insufficient steam. The employee responsible did not commence preparation sufficiently early and has been dealt with.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Poor old employee!

Hon. A. L. Loton: There is always a mug.

The MINISTER: And some ask questions!

(b) *As to Goldfields Christmas Passenger Traffic.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Have any provisions been made to cope with the Christmas passenger traffic from the Goldfields this year?

(2) Will the Minister consider placing extra trains ex Kalgoorlie for this purpose during the holiday period?

(3) Will he also ascertain if passenger trains could depart from Kalgoorlie on Saturdays during the holiday period?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Passenger trains will run from Kalgoorlie to Perth on Saturday, the 20th and 27th December, 1947.

(c) *As to Dining-Car Attendants.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is he aware that, after the 17th instant, all male attendants (who are married and are returned soldiers) on the State dining-cars, are to be replaced by female attendants?

(2) Will he investigate this matter and give reasons for this change of policy?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) On taking over dining cars at Kalgoorlie, females were employed as waitresses.

On account of unsuitable accommodation for females, temporary waiters were employed at the Perth end until suitable sleeping arrangements could be provided for women, hence the staffing of the Perth dining car with waitresses. There is no change of policy involved.

(d) *As to Allocation of Trans. Train Sleeping-Berths.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS (on notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) What is the system now adopted in the allocation of sleeping-berths for interstate passengers?

(2) To whom are they allocated?

(3) How many are allowed to each firm, person, or booking office?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (2) and (3) The Commonwealth Railways are responsible for the composition of the trans. expresses, and in normal circumstances, the standard is:—Mondays, 56 first class, 116 second class; Wednesdays, 60 first class, 80 second class; Fridays, 72 first class, 44 second class.

A master diagram is prepared by the Chief Traffic Manager's Office for each train detailing the allocation, as follows:—

	First Class.	Second Class.
Country	4	12
Kalgoorlie	4	8
Government Tourist Bureau ..	2	4
Boans Tourist Bureau ..	2	4
Cooks Tourist Bureau ..	2	4
Government and special bookings	8	12
Commonwealth	2	2
Military	2	2
Remainder public.		.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Optometrists Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

2, Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943, Amendment.

3, Commonwealth Powers Act, 1945, Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

MOTION—ELECTRICITY ACT.

To Disallow Radio Workers' Regulations.

Debate resumed from the 30th September on the following motion by Hon. A. Thomson:—

That Regulations Nos. 113, 117, 118, 119, 123, 124, 129, 130, 131, 132, 138, 139 and 142 made under the Electricity Act, 1945, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 27th June, 1947, and laid on the Table of the House on the 5th August, 1947, be and are hereby disallowed.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East—in reply) [4.43]: When these regulations were introduced, we were led to believe that they were exactly the same as the regulations brought down in 1937. No doubt the State Electricity Commission led the Gov-

ernment to believe that they were the same; but, in my opinion, the Commission, wittingly or unwittingly, led the Government to believe that they were the same.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you mean this Government or the Government of which I was a supporter?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. THOMSON: There is no question that generally we accepted the regulations framed by the Commission as being the same as those previously in existence and that we considered them absolutely necessary for the safety of the public. May I be pardoned if I stress the safety of the public, because the regulations providing for the examinations, which some of the candidates have been alleged to pass in order to qualify them for their calling, seem to me to make it even more difficult for them to follow their occupations as far as the safety of the public is concerned? I consider this point should receive consideration. Of course, I take no exception to the safety of the public being provided for; I consider special provision should be made in that respect. I congratulate the Labour members on their solidarity in supporting these regulations which, in my opinion, place more power in the hands of union secretaries than they had before. I say that the powers-that-be who framed these regulations did so with the direct object of placing still more power and control in the hands of the unions.

I cannot and will not believe that the present Government, comprised as it is of so many representatives of the country, prepared these regulations. I rather fancy they were hatched by the previous Government, which no doubt adopted the usual method of union representation and consultation, as has been admitted this session in another place by a former Minister who was accused of obtaining power by fraud. According to the minutes, he frankly admitted that it had been the practice to consult with union representatives on the appointment of nominees who were to be appointed to public boards. That is the reason why I have made that statement. The supporters of these regulations in the Labour ranks claim to represent the workers. I wonder who was fighting for the worker most in order to give him the right to live

and work out his own destiny as far as these regulations are concerned.

Hon. G. Fraser: Are you suggesting that your Government is suspect?

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Labour Party is now controlled by the unions. I myself am endeavouring to protect many of these workers who desire to step out of the ranks and improve their positions; but, unfortunately, my action is not looked upon with favour, I regret to say, by many who are in control of the Labour movement today. It is strange that even during the past week there appeared a leading article in the "Daily News," portion of which reads as follows:—

It will not be denied that the Russian citizen is free to act and vote in the manner which Mr. Stalin suggests is best for him. This is not in accordance with western democracy's interpretation of the word freedom, defined in President Roosevelt's message to Congress in January, 1941, as freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Hon. G. Fraser: What has that to do with electricity?

Hon. A. THOMSON: It has a lot to do with the subject-matter with which I propose to deal. I was surprised to note that the following statement appeared in the "Sunday Times":—

This is the sort of thing that makes Britain's internal worries even more complicated than they might be: While the coal shortage was so serious that cargoes of coal were still being rushed to U.K. the query was asked why thousands of Poles immediately available and skilled in coal mining could not be used to reinforce the British labour available. Answer was that the mining unions would not give them a ticket. And that's all there was to it.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Preference to British subjects, I expect.

Hon. A. THOMSON: We have brought out over 200 of them to Australia. They have been sent to Tasmania. As far as preference to British subjects is concerned, I think we have cause to be grateful for the excellent service rendered by the Poles during the war as soldiers, and to other assistance they gave in many ways. They will make worthy citizens. However, I propose to deal with that at a later stage. We can see what is happening to our law-abiding citizens. I draw the attention of Mr. Davies to what is happening to certain residents of Fremantle, who, for close on

40 years, have had their own Western Australian union and who have lately been told by some gentleman in the East, "You have to join my union. If you do not, I will tie up the ships, or at least no cargoes will be loaded for Western Australia." Not only were the law-abiding citizens, working under the laws of this State, made to suffer, but thousands of tons of much needed commodities are now lying on the wharves in the East because this particular gentleman says they may not be loaded.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would like the hon. member to connect his remarks with the motion.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I thank you, Mr. President. I will clearly connect my remarks with the motion. I want to show why I am objecting to these regulations being passed. I am hoping that this House will reject them so that they will be made a little more liberal in a manner which I will later explain. Not only has there been the instance that I have mentioned, but we have a section of the Fremantle waterside workers objecting to being policed so that goods will not be stolen. It seems that these unions are ruling Australia, and they also control the ships of the white race nearest to our empty north, the Dutch, who were our recent allies. Also today we find the ironworkers on the waterfront are gracefully returning to work, but they will not work overtime to carry out much needed repairs to the ships.

Hon. G. Fraser: Is the hon. member replying to the debate?

Hon. A. THOMSON: No doubt the hon. member who has just interjected, and others, are wondering what all this has got to do with the regulations. If they have closely studied them they will see that behind them all, there is, to a great extent, union control. The regulations are, presumably, the result of the deliberations of the members of the Electricity Commission. On that Commission we have Mr. Dumas, Mr. Edmondson and Mr. Taylor, and the last named is certainly an expert on electricity. But following the usual Labour policy, when it came to appointing the other members—and I am not casting any reflections on the gentlemen occupying these positions, but am only dealing with policy and what we are up against—we find that Mr. C. A. Gough, the assistant secretary of the Railway Employees' Union, has been appointed.

Hon. G. Fraser: And a very fine citizen he is, too.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am not casting any reflection on him at all. I am dealing with this matter from a political point of view. This shows where we are drifting. My motion is an honest endeavour to try to prevent the continuation of a policy which is slowly but surely ruining Australia.

Hon. G. Fraser: This is your own Government.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The next member of the Commission is Mr. Richter, a fitter at the East Perth power station. Again, I want it to be clearly understood that I am casting no reflection on him. The next is Mr. J. Logue, a merchant of Harvey, who is supposed to represent the country interests.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And a good man, too.

Hon. A. THOMSON: He must be a first-class man in the opinion of the Government.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He is not a Labour man.

Hon. A. THOMSON: These regulations will, if passed, seriously affect the country districts, and I want to know why he, as our representative, did not at least warn us of the possible disabilities and disadvantages. I believe that when the question of establishing the Commission was before this House, certain members strenuously argued—and in my opinion rightly so—that as the greatest proportion of the electricity produced would be used by the industrial or manufacturing section, it should be represented, but strange to relate there is not one manufacturers' representative on the Commission. If the regulations, which are before us, were actually prepared by the Commission, then they would have received a little more attention than they apparently have. In the 1946-47 annual report of the Western Australian Chamber of Manufactures we find this—

It is felt that, until the Chamber obtains direct representation on the Commission, with a right of vote, private industry, as the largest group of power consumers (with the exception of Government instrumentalities) will not have adequate recognition.

I ask those who are interested in industry: "Do they think that section has adequate representation on the Commission?" Here is one section of the community that should receive consideration and should have at least one representative on that body. Yet

we find that no less than two union representatives have been placed on the Commission. Those of us who have been in Parliament for some time know that officials are more or less affected by, and become sympathetic towards, the policy of the Government of the day. I claim that if some of these regulations had been seriously considered by the present Administration perhaps they would not be as drastic as they are, and there would have been better representation of other sections. The manufacturing section is justly entitled to representation. We were led to believe that the 1937 regulations and the 1947 regulations were exactly the same, but that is not quite correct. I do not say that anyone deliberately misled the House, for it is the duty of members to peruse these regulations and compare them.

I am not an expert in these matters, but I spent some time in endeavouring to reconcile the regulations of 1937 with those of 1947. Here and there I found slight differences which in some cases constituted an improvement and in other instances the position was rendered more difficult. One of the main reasons why I have taken such an active interest in this matter is that it seems to me that these regulations, whether intentionally or unintentionally, tend to stifle the small man. I will read some remarks made by the ex-chairman of the Radio Traders' Association, a body which is an entirely new section so far as these regulations are concerned. In his report Mr. Bean made remarks after the following effect:—

The most important episode this year was the introduction of legislation under the State Electricity Act making it necessary for radio workers to be licensed by qualification. Without doubt this must have a beneficial effect on radio servicing, as we have seen too much of the inefficiency of the part-time back-yarder.

I agree with those remarks and am of opinion that the regulations are going to be of great advantage and assistance to radio firms, particularly the larger ones. But no consideration has been given to the country districts. Last session in this House the Hairdressers' Registration Bill was passed. That was one of the most remarkable Bills yet introduced in this Chamber, for it gave a certain body the right by Act of Parliament to be-

come a close corporation. Thanks to the good offices of Dr. Hislop, the Bill was materially altered in this House and made a little more workable. It was considered by the Government of the day essential in the interests of public safety that such a measure should be passed at once. I point out that the Bill affected only the metropolitan area. If those concerned were sincere and it was essential in the interests of the community that such a Bill should apply to the metropolitan area, which contains half the population of the State, the benefits of such legislation should have been accorded to the whole State. I can recall the look of horror upon the faces of certain members who said, "You will not get people to go to the country or to work there." The regulations with which we are dealing will certainly make it more difficult to induce men to go into the country.

Hon. G. Fraser: I thought we had finished with the Address-in-reply debate.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with regulations which apply to the whole State. They apply to every hamlet and every home where there is electricity. If we have any objections to raise we should be able to do so without being told we are continuing the Address-in-reply debate: I am only saying what I believe to be correct.

Hon. G. Fraser: I have not heard you deal with the regulations yet.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I did so when I submitted my objections. I am not going to answer all the points raised by members who spoke in favour of the regulations; and Mr. Fraser was one of those. I am, however, justified in outlining the reasons why I submitted the motion. If the regulations become law a man who spent four or five years away on active service has no chance whatever under the radio section of becoming a radio mechanic or a radio proprietor because he could not pass the examinations. We promised our Servicemen everything but apparently there are influences at work which prevent them from having that which most of us would like to give them. Regulation 124 is open to argument. It says—

No person shall be issued with a radio serviceman's, general serviceman's, workshop serviceman's or bench assembler's license or be eligible to sit for examination after a period of 12 months from the gazettal of these regula-

tions unless such person submits documentary or other evidence to the satisfaction of the board that he has had five years experience in the radio trade in the section or sections to which these regulations apply.

What man who served four and a half or six years in any branch of the Services has a dog's chance of getting into the trade under that regulation?

Hon. E. H. Gray: He could come in under the rehabilitation scheme.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Many of these men are over 21 years of age. They are not able to come under the rehabilitation scheme because they were not following that calling when they enlisted. Whilst rehabilitation may apply in some instances, unfortunately in the case of a number of people I know it does not apply. That is all wrong. We are falling down on the job and are not giving these men a fair and reasonable chance. I had a friendly argument with one of my colleagues in this Chamber. He said to me, "Your main trouble is this; it is not the regulations but it is something outside. You should amend the Act to give these men the opportunity they require." The Commonwealth Government brought down legislation which was supposed to be of service to the men concerned. We are now dealing with regulations which provide that men over 21 years of age are not eligible to sit for an examination and have no chance of doing so unless they have had five years of continuous service. How are they to have five years of continuous service when they went away to fight for the country? I have here a letter from a man who made an application to the board and the reply was as follows:—

Your attention is drawn to the Electricity Act Regulations, 1947, and I desire to advise that the regulations now provide that the licenses may be issued to persons engaged as:—

(a) Radio servicemen, general servicemen, or workshop servicemen.

(b) Bench assemblers, or

(c) Apprentices or junior workers.

Licenses hitherto issued to radio personnel were issued under the provisions of the Electrical Workers' Regulations, but will now be issued in accordance with the Radio Workers' Regulations, which empower the board to issue a license with or without examination.

Enclosed are forms of application for your use, and for your guidance when applying. I would advise that the board, before issuing a

license without examination, will require the applicant to establish at least twelve (12) years' experience, greater part of which should be practical.

Twelve years! I am directing attention to the difficulties confronting these men. I shall quote no names because, if I did, the writers might be penalised, but I have a letter from one who was in the Army for 4½ years. He was an operator signalman, trade group first class. On discharge he tried to get training under the Rehabilitation Scheme. He was granted a part-time course in radio servicing with the Melbourne Technical College and afterwards took the International Correspondence College courses, and was guaranteed a license on completion of the course. Briefly put, he passed the following examinations:—electrical science, radio receiving and radio servicing, and in the three departments averaged 90 per cent. Yet, sad to relate, according to his statement, he is not permitted to sit for the board's examination because he has not been in the business for at least 12 months.

This man was over 21 years of age when he enlisted. He was quite frank about his case. He went to the rehabilitation authorities and stated, "I want to improve my position. I have done a good deal of radio work while in the Army and I want to start in business for myself, but first of all I should like to pass the examination that will entitle me to do it." Under the regulation he was turned down. A man who has given four and a half years' service in the Army should receive greater consideration. Provision should be made for such men under the regulations. I regret that the Minister did not accept the suggestion made by Mr. Tuckey that the regulations be held over for a time so that a conference might be convened with a view to ascertaining whether some satisfactory arrangement could be reached.

Another man served five years in the Navy as a seaman and, during that time, carried out a certain amount of electrical work. Like the other man, he paid for a course with the International Correspondence College, and was guaranteed that as soon as he completed the course he would be able to obtain a certificate. This man served overseas—in Africa, India, Burma and the Pacific. An electrician has been hoping to employ him as a labourer, but the man said that if the inspector found him doing any

actual wiring, his employer would be liable to lose his permit. From those letters members can appreciate the conditions that are prevailing.

I have another letter—I am not acquainted with any of the writers of these letters—the writer of which protests against the passing of the regulations in their present form insofar as they relate to assemblers. He says that the regulations seem to have been drawn up with the deliberate intention of debarring any ex-Serviceman from obtaining a license and to create a virtual monopoly for the Retail Traders' Association, many of whom never heard a shot fired. He goes on to say that provisions such as being 12 years in business or serving an apprenticeship are not necessary, and that there are many capable men trained in the Services who could not comply with such provisions. He continues—

At any rate they are not in the public interest in their present monopolistic form and they infringe the principle of preference to Servicemen.

Those letters were sent to me unsolicited and I was asked to take action in the matter. We are inviting migrants to come to this country. We need migrants and plenty of them. Today, every branch of trade is short of tradesmen, whether they be electricians, carpenters or bricklayers. All of them are short for the reason that the men who, in normal times, would have been apprenticed to these trades, were away serving their country. We can understand, therefore, that a shortage does and must exist. If these regulations are to be enforced, however, it will mean that the shortage will continue for a period of five years, at least as far as our own people are concerned, until those entering the trade to learn the business complete their apprenticeship. Of course, we may fill some of the vacancies for technical and expert tradesmen by bringing them from overseas. Quite a number of tradesmen were taken to Canberra for work there.

It seems to me that these regulations need further consideration, and I earnestly hope that the House will disallow them as an indication to those in authority that a little more elasticity should be introduced so that the men who have fought for their country should have the privilege, which we promised them when they went away, of the right to live. The only thing we seem to be offering

the majority of the ex-Servicemen is pick and shovel work, and I resent that greatly.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That statement is hardly fair.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The hon. member knows it is perfectly true. I am not speaking offensively, but we must face the facts. When the question of rehabilitation was being considered, the unions laid down rules under which they would accept only a certain number of men. Some of them even refused any dilution of trades, as it was termed. I want members to realise that the men affected are fellow citizens who should have the right to work. For God's sake, let us give them that right! I have done my best in the interests of those who are likely to suffer a grave injustice under the regulations and I appeal to members to support the motion. Admittedly, regulations are necessary for the protection of the public, but some of these provisions should be reconsidered and broadened so that men, such as those whose letters I have quoted, might have an opportunity to get out of the ruck. I got out of the ruck, and I want to see others given an opportunity to do likewise.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	9
Majority for	6

AYES.

Hon. O. F. Baxter	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. A. L. Loten
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. C. G. Latham	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray	(Teller.)

Question thus passed; the motion agreed to.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

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

BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.32] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has three main clauses. The first provides for an increase in the membership of the Housing Commission from five members to seven. Of the additional members, one is to be a woman and one a discharged member of the Forces. The reason it is proposed to appoint a woman to the Commission is that that has been the policy of the present Government. I think members will agree it is only right that a woman should have some say with regard to the type of dwellings erected because, all said and done, it is the housewives who spend practically all their time in their homes, whereas the husbands are away working as breadwinners.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Will the woman have power with regard to the designing of cottages?

Hon. C. B. Williams: If she is a good cook, why put her on the Commission? Keep her at home.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: The intention is that the woman on the Commission will be in a position to help and advise members in accordance with the knowledge she has obtained as a housewife.

Hon. G. Fraser: Is it the Commission or the architect she will advise?

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: If members will read the Act, they will discover what the Commission may or may not do collectively, and the woman will be one of the seven members. The object of putting a discharged member of the Services on the board is that by far the greater number of applicants are ex-Servicemen.

Hon. G. Fraser: They kicked up a bit of a row, too.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: They form the greater number of homeseekers. There should be no difficulty in obtaining a very estimable man of knowledge from among returned Servicemen and a knowledgeable woman from among the women of the State to serve on the Commission. The second amendment is to increase the maxi-

mum advance by the Commission from £1,200 to £1,500. The reason for that is obvious—the price of a house has increased tremendously. Let me give members some instances of how costs have risen. Here are some comparative figures—

	1939	1946	1947
Brick:	£	£	£
Four rooms ..	764	1,208	1,297
Five rooms ..	794	1,398	1,493
Timber:			
Four rooms ..	491	975	1,129
Five rooms ..	531	1,049	1,210

Hon. C. B. Williams: Whom do you blame?

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: The causes of the increases are rises in the basic wage affecting labour and the cost of material, and rises in shipping freights. The third and last amendment refers to the advancing by the Commission of loans to local authorities for the laying down of streets. That is a matter I dealt with when discussing another Bill at the previous sitting of the House, and I presume it will not be necessary for me to go into the details again. To refresh members' memories, I would point out that this amendment will merely permit the Commission to enter into an agreement with a municipality or road board for the advancing of a loan, and the local authority concerned will have to repay the amount over a period, with interest, in accordance with the agreement made.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And with our Government policy, they must pay interest.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Will the State Housing Commission pay half the cost of road construction?

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: I think not, unless by arrangement. In the three Bills which contain this provision, it is set out that an arrangement can be made, but there is nothing to say that the Commission shall pay half the cost. Rather, it is implied that the Commission will lend the whole amount. The Bill has been made retrospective to the 31st July, 1947, to cover agreements already made with local authorities since that date. I commend the measure to the House, and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.39]: I secured the adjournment of the debate in order to acquaint myself with the provisions of the Bill, and I find that generally I am in agreement with quite a number of the amendments proposed. There are two clauses to which I do not subscribe. Clause 5 contains an amendment dealing with verandahs. It proposes to extend the period in which certain verandahs shall be demolished under orders from a local authority to the year 1952. I do not agree with that. Some local authorities already have bylaws providing that verandahs over public highways shall be removed by January, 1949, and I consider that they should have the right to say whether the period shall be extended. Those who know that eventually such verandahs will have to disappear, do not make any attempt to improve their condition, and the longer the period is extended in which the demolition must take place, the more dilapidated some of these structures are likely to become, because people will not spend money to keep them in a reasonable state of preservation. It is my intention, when the Bill is in Committee, to move an amendment to that clause. I also object to Clause 11 in which reference is made to the number of owners who shall vote in connection with a loan poll. I am not in accord with the proposal in the Bill, and intend to move an amendment.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

BILL—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.42]: This short Bill proposes a slight amendment to the Stipendiary Magistrates Act, 1930, and its simple purpose appears to be to facilitate work in police and local courts. I am sure there is little I can add to what the Minister outlined when he introduced the measure, although I was not here when he did so.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You do not agree with the interjection regarding our magistrate at Kalgoorlie?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Some magistrates are appointed under the Stipendiary Magistrates Act and others under the Public Service Act and, as things now stand, the unusual state of affairs exists that a magistrate appointed under the Public Service Act cannot sit in a court in a district proclaimed under the Stipendiary Magistrates Act. Mr. Rodriguez was appointed coroner under the Public Service Act, and the peculiar position prevails that if he is assigned to assist a magistrate in Perth, although he has as high qualifications as the magistrate he is assisting, he has no jurisdiction unless he is assisted by a justice of the peace. To put it in another way, when Mr. Rodriguez is appointed to take a local court or a police court in Perth, the only jurisdiction he holds is that of a justice of the peace, and he has to be assisted by or have with him another justice of the peace.

The Minister for Mines: Perhaps of 80 or 90 years of age!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is so. Of course it is a rather absurd state of affairs, and this measure proposes to alter that position. It will provide that where a magistrate or a coroner is assigned to assist a stipendiary magistrate, he will be able to sit in a court without the assistance of a justice of the peace. That sums up the position, as I see it. I think the measure is one that members can safely support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PEN- SIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.50]: The Minister, in introducing the Bill, went to a great deal of trouble to explain its provisions, and I do not pro-

pose to cover the same ground, except to say that the Bill has become necessary because since the passing of the parent Act in 1943 certain circumstances have arisen that were not then foreseen. Members who were in the House when the measure was first brought forward will recollect that it provided for a pension fund.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Was that the one that we lost?

Hon. W. J. MANN: We lost it at first. It provided for a pension fund for coal-miners who were retired on reaching the age of 60 years. Contributions to that fund were not to be a further charge on the Government, but on the men themselves and on the mineowners. From memory I think the men were to contribute one-third, and the mineowners two-thirds. There is provision in the parent Act to prevent the price of coal being increased except under certain circumstances. The Bill merely proposes to validate the position that has arisen, and to give the miners the benefit of certain increases that have been available to everyone else in industry, but which so far, by reason of this measure, miners have not been able legally to claim.

Under the Act a single man on retirement at 60 years of age receives £2 per week. A married man receives £2 per week, plus £1 5s. for his wife, while for a child—members will realise that men of 60 do not have many children under the age of 16 years—they receive 8s. 6d. per week. The payments are made irrespective of the financial position of the retired miner. If he has been thrifty and has saved a few pounds, that is all to the good. In other words, there is no means test. To appreciate the position it must be remembered that a man is not entitled to the old-age pension at 60 years. He has to carry on until he is 65 before he can claim a pension under the Commonwealth social services scheme. The Collie miner's pension fund carries a man from 60 years of age to 65 years of age. It is laid down that the fund shall then be relieved to the extent that the man shall automatically come under the Commonwealth invalid and old-age pension scheme.

Under the conditions that existed when the Act was passed, that acted fairly and a man and his wife received a little more than the old-age pension. It must be re-

membered that they had contributed towards what they received, and that it was not to the credit of either the State or the Commonwealth Government. It is when a man reaches 65 years of age and comes under the Commonwealth scheme that the trouble begins, because he is then immediately brought under the means test. The Act provides that a man shall receive only one pension and, therefore, under present conditions, when he is brought under the Commonwealth scheme he is placed at a disadvantage. In 1945 there was an increase of 5s. 6d. in the basic wage, and in 1947 there was another 5s. increase. The retired miner has no legal right to those increases, but has been receiving them by the grace of the late Government, which agreed that, as the cost of living had risen to such an extent that the basic wage increases were justified, the miners would be at a disadvantage if they did not receive those increases.

The present Government also saw the justice of that view and has carried on in the same way, to the extent that it has permitted the difference to be made up from the Collie scheme. A married man and his wife receive £3 15s. old-age pension from the Commonwealth, while under the Collie scheme they would receive only £3 5s. The Government has agreed to wink at the action of paying 10s. per week from the fund in order to bring the amount up to the old-age pension rate until such time as the Act can be amended. That is the reason for this measure, which I think is perfectly just. I do not think it will be a burden on the State. This is an excellent pension scheme, nearly as good as the parliamentary scheme, as it costs the State nothing.

The Minister for Mines: It costs £4,500 per year.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I was not aware of that. I think members can safely support the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [6.1]: I do not intend to raise any objection to the various provisions of the Bill, but nevertheless I have never been in favour of some of them. For instance, I am not in favour of the differentiation between the length of time a permanent officer is required to serve before he becomes entitled to long-service leave compared with the conditions applying to temporary officers. I know that down through the years it has been customary for permanent officers to enjoy long service leave after a certain period, whereas those who are classed as temporary officers have to remain in their employment for three years longer before becoming entitled to their leave. I have never been able to understand why there should be that distinction. I should think the consideration should be the other way round and the officer, who is a temporary employee and whose service is liable to be terminated at any time, should enjoy preference in consideration for long-service leave. The permanent officer enjoys his salary from one year's end to another, whereas that paid to a temporary officer may cease at any time.

The Minister for Mines: Then he could not afford the expense of a holiday.

Hon. G. FRASER: There may be a lot in that. However, I have never been able to understand why the difference should arise, although I am aware that it is an old established custom.

Hon. G. Bennetts: How long has a temporary employee to work before he can become a permanent officer?

Hon. G. FRASER: There are degrees of difference between permanent or temporary officers and casuals. I was a member of the Select Committee, and one of the witnesses told us that the difference between a permanent officer and a casual employee was that one was paid fortnightly and the other weekly. He also informed us that he was a casual employee and had been in the one position for 42 years, but nevertheless was still a casual. In that case although the man was liable at any time to be told to cease his employment, he was required to

work for 10 years before he was able to claim leave extending over three months, whereas the permanent officer had to work for seven years only before he became entitled to his long-service leave.

Another point about the Public Service that I cannot understand is that the period served by an employee before reaching 18 years of age is not allowed to count in connection with long-service leave. Most of those who join the Public Service commence when they are young and may have to work for two or three years before their service counts towards their leave. I know that the State is more generous with regard to long-service leave than is the Commonwealth. The State permits that leave to be granted after service extending over seven or 10 years whereas it is granted in the Commonwealth Service only after a period of 20 years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But they get three weeks holiday annually instead of a fortnight.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but I am dealing with long-service leave.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You said the State was the more generous, but I think the Commonwealth is.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Commonwealth is more generous with respect to wages, conditions of employment and so on, but with regard to long-service leave the State is the more generous. I can speak feelingly on this matter because I had the unfortunate experience of serving for 19½ years with the Commonwealth and had only another six months to remain in my position before becoming entitled to six months long-service leave. However, being public-spirited, I decided to stand for election to this Chamber and in consequence sacrificed my long-service leave.

The Minister for Mines: There are some who may regret that you did not return to the Commonwealth Public Service and earn your long-service leave!

Hon. G. FRASER: Although I lost that privilege, I think the excellence of the work I have carried out in the interests of the public down the years has justified, and has compensated me for, the financial sacrifice I made at that time. I do not oppose the Bill and rose merely to mention the two points that have caused me some misgivings.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [6.9]: I desire to advise Mr. Fraser that at present there is no provision for long-service leave for temporary employees and it has been arranged by the parties concerned that there shall be. The reason why the permanent officers and the temporary employees are treated differently is that the latter have been put on the same basis as the wages men who get their first period of long-service leave after having been employed for 10 years, seven years being the qualifying period for a further term of leave. That was regarded as reasonable. However, should a temporary employee become a permanent officer during his service then the first period is reduced to 8½ years. That is the provision in the Bill. The Public Service Commissioner is arranging, as far as he possibly can, for temporary men to sit for the necessary examinations to qualify themselves to become permanent officers. There are many temporary employees who perhaps have not the necessary educational standards, and that position is being rectified.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Will that apply throughout the whole of the Public Service?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, I understand that is so. The second point raised by Mr. Fraser had reference to long-service leave not commencing to accumulate before an officer was 18 years of age. The principal reason for 18 years being fixed for that purpose is that many females enter the Public Service before they are 18 years of age and marry a few years later, at which stage they draw their pro rata leave. That has cost the Government a considerable amount of money and it is hardly reasonable that because a girl enters the Government Service at 15 years of age and marries when she is 19 years, she would get her long-service leave. I would remind Mr. Fraser that these matters have been arranged through the Civil Service Association, and the proposals have received the consent of the organisations concerned.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Sitting suspended from 6.12 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—ECONOMIC STABILITY ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West [7.30]: The object of this Bill is to continue for another year the operations of the Economic Stability Act, which expires at the end of the month. It relates to regulations originally made under the National Security Act by the Commonwealth Parliament. These refer specifically to prices, landlord and tenant, capital issues and economic organisation. At the outset, I feel I must say, rather reluctantly, that I intend to support the Bill, as at the present time, so far as I can see, there is no other safe course. The Minister, when introducing the Bill, pointed out what was likely to happen if the Act expired and we had no machinery to carry on—in a reduced measure, at all events—the controls set out in the Act. All the same, one might register the hope that the time will speedily arrive when these and all similar restrictions and regimentations will disappear altogether. They were useful during the war, but the time is rapidly approaching when they should no longer exist, because, no matter how one views the situation, one cannot escape the fact that in some respects these controls are perpetuating injustices and inflicting actual suffering on many very worthy people.

It is not my intention to enter into a long review of the measure, but I desire to make a few observations which have been suggested to me by the title of the Bill, that is, economic stability. It would be pertinent to ask, what is economic stability, and to follow that by another question, how far are we, as a people, and how far is our National Government functioning to bring about economic stability. If we dismiss the viewpoint of the man in the street, that economic stability is a somewhat vague and rather lofty term which politicians and others appear to delight in using and yet in many instances are unable to convey even dimly what it means, we may be able to suggest at least one interpretation that is capable of fairly easy understanding. Briefly, I would say that economic stability is a national condition that is brought about by the industry and creative power of all the people, plus

prudent, wise, skilful and long-sighted administration by those who are associated with the national Government and charged with the promotion of the national welfare.

The answer, at least in part, to the second question, how far the people and those whose province it is to govern are functioning to ensure economic stability, is not far to seek. As we look round we see that in very many instances Governments seem to be functioning almost in an opposite direction. Let us take the case of the people first. I think we all agree that there has grown up amongst us a spirit of indifference to the bigger things of our national life. This spirit, if persisted in, can only in the long run end in national disaster. Industry, production and lasting progress are being effectively throttled in some respects. Personal initiative is being steadily destroyed. Here we have to admit freely that even individual rights are being denied in many directions. One need only walk along the street and ask men how they are getting along, to hear in very many instances complaints about the existing condition of affairs. People complain very bitterly at a time when they have an opportunity, through the ballot box, to make a change in the Government. However, they do not appear to take sufficient interest; at any rate, they are not insisting upon getting the kind of Government which they desire.

If we allow the average person to follow his own inclinations and desires, we shall find that the great majority of those responsible for the production of the national wealth appear to be perfectly willing to direct their energies towards a betterment of existing affairs. True, they rightly expect good conditions and reasonable remuneration, but we have arbitration courts whose province it is to see that these things are provided. We can say with a great deal of truth that the conditions of operatives in industry are fairly well catered for; the conditions are better today than they have ever been, the remuneration is higher, and so in every respect there should be an incentive to the highest possible production. Unfortunately, there appears to be in our midst what one might term a somewhat poisonous minority who have obtained increased, and are rapidly obtaining still further increased, control of industry. In some instances they have already reached the stage where they completely dominate industry;

and, instead of encouraging to the fullest extent what all reasonable people desire—economic stability—they seem to be doing everything possible to make that ideal unattainable.

Members have only to cast their minds back to the almost daily strikes, lock-outs, sit-downs, hold-ups and a plethora of such things, to realise how they are operating against really stable conditions. I have listened to some of the advocates for the people to whom I am referring; they seem to delight in doing their best to wreck all the plans and schemes of those who want to see the country progress. I am often told, "Well, after all, they are only a handful and do not matter very much." I would say to the people who unfortunately have that type of worker in their employment, "The sooner you wake up to the fact that this type of person is going to bring about your downfall, the better it will be for you and the country." The time has arrived when unions and organisations of all kinds should rise up and throw out, neck and crop, those people who will not do the right thing. It will have to be done sooner or later if the present position is to be improved.

We shall never get far along the road of economic stability while the doctrines of these national wreckers are permitted to continue. One does not need to go far to get illustrations of what is happening. One could bring along sheaves of notices, Press cuttings and such like indicating just what is happening. In this morning's issue of "The West Australian" there is a very pertinent paragraph from Sydney pointing out the position that has been brought about by certain persons today refusing to load ships. They are oblivious to the interests of the people. The article I refer to is by a representative of John Lysaght Ltd. He points out that the time taken for loading a vessel has increased from five days in 1939, to 14 days at present. We cannot get anywhere along those lines.

It is futile for people to get up and say that if we give them shorter hours, more money and certain conditions, the position will improve. It is steadily getting worse, and it will bring this country to its knees before very long. Proceeding a little further in the same paragraph we find that the backlog of orders is alarming. The tonnages of materials awaiting shipment for different

States has reached huge proportions. For Victoria there is 26,900 tons; for South Australia 4,347 tons; for Queensland 12,000 tons, and for Western Australia 5,677 tons. The same writer goes on to say—

Stocks of steel sheeting on hand at July 7 were 3,602 tons; at the end of last month stocks on hand were 9,845 tons. Production for the week ended September 27 was 2,563 tons, and yet deliveries were only 904 tons. We have housing shortages. People are desperate for homes. Some employers are almost desperate in their efforts to find work to keep their men employed because they cannot get materials. Yet, this kind of thing is permitted by the Commonwealth Government, and I charge it with being anything but firm in this direction. We have the Prime Minister and other Federal Ministers frequently telling us what the Government is doing, and what we should do to bring about economic stability. What I have mentioned is merely one small factor of many operating today. We cannot get anywhere unless that kind of thing is stopped. We are never going to bring about economic stability until the people and the Government have a change of heart. We have to get a completely new outlook and a very much greater appreciation of the desirable conditions under which we have lived in the past.

We must take care that in reaching out for the shadow we do not lose the substance. I feel that never before were we proceeding on such dangerous lines as we are today. We are increasing the burden on industry all the time, but we are getting very little in return. I have referred to the lack of appreciation by the people. On the other side of the picture we see the Government's attitude. Because of the manner in which the Commonwealth Government has filched the powers of the States in the past, the more important functions and opportunities of the State Government are largely circumscribed. On the other hand, we have had experience of the fact that the powers of the Commonwealth Government are almost unlimited. But with all its powers it has failed to show Australia anything worthwhile in the direction of bringing the country back to a really stable economy. It is now two years since the war ended, but the burden on the people today is as great as or greater than it has ever been previously.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do not you expect that?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not think we do. We are entitled to expect that at the end of a couple of years the burden would be eased to a considerable extent. It is true that there has been a percentage reduction in income tax, but that reduction has been more than counterbalanced by increased cost of living and increased prices in other directions. We have not gained anything as a result. It is extraordinary, if one takes time to look at the few figures published from time to time, to see just where we are heading. In 1938-39—just before the war—the total Federal and State income tax was £42,000,000. In 1941-42—before uniform taxation—it was £109,000,000, and in 1945-46, with uniform taxation, it rose to £215,000,000. The estimate for the current year—and this is a year of peace and not of war—is £223,000,000. That is more than it was during the war! In addition there is indirect taxation totalling another £100,000,000.

The total Federal taxation today is £46 12s. 6d. per head of population—that is for every man, woman and child in the Commonwealth. The national debt is now £2,800,000,000, or £400 for every man, woman and child in the country. Can any sane man say that conditions today are better than they were during the war? The mania for squandering, on the part of our national Government, is such that it seems to be quite incompetent to bring about some reasonable balance. One would think that with taxation so high, the Government would set about reducing expenditure. We are beset by boards of every description, and we are regimented and controlled by armies of civil servants and bureaucrats for which we had no use prior to the war. But they have come into existence and the Government seems to accept them. They look as if they will become permanent. We cannot get economic stability while such conditions obtain.

I know, of my own knowledge, that certain Federal departments in this State are overstaffed to a large extent. I was told only last week by a man in authority that he was at his wits' end to find sufficient work to keep his team employed. I think members will have some knowledge, if not of that particular instance, of analogous cases. We cannot become a country progressing on sound lines while that sort of thing is permitted to continue. I think it

was the ex-Premier of Victoria, Mr. Dunstan, who complained the other day that there were 543,000 people in Government employ in Australia. That is an extraordinary number—over half a million—all drawing big wages from the public purse. That cannot continue; we must have a showdown.

If we are to have economic stability we must see that we act in a manner that will do something worthwhile towards bringing it about. We know, too, that many civil servants are becoming dictators. I am concerned in a charitable institution which has a little money that was put into loans, and the bonds deposited with the bank. The other day I got a letter to tell me that the account had been transferred to a branch of the bank in another town. I was not asked whether it was convenient.

Hon. A. Thomson: Was it the Commonwealth or the State Bank?

Hon. W. J. MANN: It was the Commonwealth Bank. Which branch of the bank we chose to do our business with was no concern of the bank, but still it wrote to me, without a by-your-leave or anything else, to tell me what I should do. Only yesterday a man told me that, in another town, he went to the Commonwealth Bank and sought to withdraw a sum of £100. Before he got it, the manager said to him, "What do you want this money for?" The man replied, "I think that is my business." The manager said, "Well, that is what I want to ask you." The man replied, "My answer is, 'It is my business, and you can please yourself, but I want the money.'" The manager said, "It does not matter to me, but those are the instructions I have received. I have to inquire what you are going to do with the money before you take it out."

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was that the Commonwealth Savings Bank?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I think it was. Mr. Latham knows the man to whom I am referring. This sort of thing is becoming serious, very much more serious than we are inclined to admit. While the State Government is impotent to a large extent, we can offer a very indignant protest against the way things are being conducted at present. I support the second reading.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan Suburban) [8.2]: Mr. Mann told us at the beginning and again at the close of his speech that he intends to support the second reading and, during the intervening half hour he gave a series of reasons why he should not do so. Apparently he has not convinced himself. I want members to take their minds back to the end of last year. On the second last day of the session, a Bill dealing with economic stability was introduced by the then Leader of the House, Mr. Kitson. It was in the afternoon, and after he had made his second reading speech, there were only two other speakers. Their remarks consisted mainly of criticism of the late arrival of such an important Bill in this House. Apart from that criticism, very little consideration was given to the Bill, which passed its three stages on the voices and became an Act.

What I dislike about the measure is that it hands over to the Commonwealth rights that correctly belong to the State. This Parliament should be extremely jealous of the rights and privileges it possesses and should think twice before giving to the Commonwealth a repetition of an Act which simply perpetuates an abrogation of State rights. Under the Act, this Parliament handed over to the Commonwealth complete control of prices although, on our own statute-book there is a Profiteering Prevention Act which was passed by this Parliament early in the war before the National Security (Prices) Regulations were promulgated by the Commonwealth. If we reject this continuance Bill, the Commonwealth controls will still continue until challenged in the High Court and until the High Court rules that they are ultra vires the Constitution. In such a case, our State Act dealing with profiteering prevention, which is virtually the control of prices, would come into operation automatically. The same thing can be said regarding the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act, which was passed by this Parliament in the 1939 session.

I direct the attention of members to the important fact that the Commonwealth under its defence powers, has all the authority this Bill seeks to confer. The Commonwealth has operated in the past and can and will continue to operate in future under the defence powers which give the Commonwealth the op-

portunity to maintain the control that the Commonwealth considers necessary. I wish to quote a statement made by the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, Hon. Sir John Latham, only last year. He said—

The defence power includes not only a power to prepare for war but also a power to wield it after the war to restore conditions of peace gradually, if that is thought wise, and not necessarily immediately by the crude process of immediate abandonment of all Federal control.

Members should bear in mind that the war in both theatres ended more than two years ago. Since the cessation of hostilities, the Commonwealth has continued to operate under its defence powers, and those powers have not been challenged. I suggest that those powers are not even likely to be challenged but, if they were, we have the opinion that I have just read to the House, given by an eminent authority, Sir John Latham, and I suggest it would be Sir John Latham who would preside over the court before which a case would be heard. So any fear of these powers being taken from the Commonwealth, I suggest, is entirely groundless, and therefore a continuance of this Act is entirely unnecessary. If by any chance the defence powers were successfully challenged, our State Act controlling rents and prices would immediately be invoked, and, if this Parliament considered it necessary, legislation could be passed to deal with capital issues and economic organisation, which are the other two powers dealt with under this Bill.

I consider it high time that many of these controls that are exercised by the Federal authority should be eased and some of them should be entirely discontinued, but that is another matter and is not the subject of this Bill. Whether we pass this Bill or reject it, however, the Commonwealth will continue these controls under its defence powers. I warn the House that the States of Australia have had an unfortunate experience in handing over powers to the Commonwealth.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is so.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: We handed over to the Commonwealth the sole right to collect income tax as a war emergency measure under the distinct promise that, when the emergency had passed, that power would be restored to the States. But what do we find? The Commonwealth is loth to hand

back to the States the powers that were passed to it. By sheer downright dishonesty the Commonwealth continues to arrogate to itself a power that should have been returned to the States and rightly belongs to the States. So I say we should be jealous of our privileges and should not lightly hand over to the Commonwealth, even for one year, a continuance of the control outlined in this Bill. For those reasons, I intend to vote against the second reading.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan)

[8.11]: I regret that the first time of my speaking in this House after returning from a journey abroad, I find myself at variance with a Bill recommended by the Minister of a Government of which I have heard nothing but praise, but I should be very neglectful of my duty to the citizens of this State if I did not express the views I hold in consequence of the knowledge I have gained as a result of my travels. I find myself in a difficult position in that, should I vote for this Bill, I would be in effect announcing to the Commonwealth that I consider it should continue to exercise these powers until the end of next year so that a referendum may be taken by the Commonwealth asking for these powers over price control to be given to it in perpetuity. The Preamble to the Bill presages that we should hand over to the Commonwealth until 1948 control over prices.

The Minister for Mines: I think there is a misunderstanding. We are not proposing to hand anything over to the Commonwealth. The Bill merely provides for the time when the Commonwealth powers cease to operate. The Commonwealth has the power at present.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is not a power; it is only a trouble to us.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It really means that we shall be making no longer dubious powers that at present are dubious. The Commonwealth knows that its powers in this matter are dubious.

The Minister for Mines: That is so, and, if they lapsed when our Parliament was not sitting, we could carry on.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am much in favour of having these powers brought nearer to our people than I am of having them

exercised in Canberra. Recently I heard of an incident, and I have no reason to disbelieve the man who told me. He submitted a price list and sample of goods proposed to be imported by him and it took 2½ months to obtain the prices from the Federal body, and now it is no longer of any use to import those goods. I hear this sort of thing on every hand. I should have no regret whatever if the Commonwealth power lapsed and the power returned to our hands. I am beginning to wonder whether any of these powers are at all necessary at this stage, particularly so after what I learnt while abroad.

One fact we must realise is that the Commonwealth Government has grown to such massive proportions that should we by raising these regulations lessen the number of people employed in Government departments, we would to some extent control prices by allowing those people to return to their original place in industry. We are becoming a nation that is top-heavy in employment. Recent figures would suggest that one in three or four of those who are working is paid out of the Commonwealth Government's purse or at least out of some Government purse. I am opposed to the Bill for the reason that I do not now approve of the economy we are endeavouring to stabilise. I realise I am not an economist and I am not trying to make the House believe that I am.

I happen to belong to a profession that is regarded as not having any knowledge of how to conduct its financial affairs. But I am an ordinary citizen who has travelled abroad and who has seen differences in the various parts of the world; and I have come back with a different outlook to that which I possessed when I left these shores. I am not at all certain that the economy we are trying to stabilise is the real economy which Australia deserves. I wonder if there is any sense in an economy which allows industrial shares which I may hold to soar in price while it prevents the land which I hold increasing financially in value at the same rate. I wonder whether my friends from the Country Party believe there is any real incentive to a farmer to put money back into his farm while the price of that farm is fixed at the discretion of bureaucracy.

I wonder whether we really have any vision of the future while we attempt to

hold things down in this unequal manner. I wonder also whether the holding of our money at such a low scale of remuneration to the individual is a wise economy. It is this low price of our pound or the low return for the pound to the worker that is preventing our trading with America. America has inflated her money and she is only escaping the results of inflation for one reason, and that is that she is the main producing country in the world.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Do you say she is escaping the effects?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: She is escaping the effects of inflation, and inflation within one's own borders does not mean as much as inflation does when facing the question of external economy. America is the country with which every country desires to trade today, and provided we continue to trade with America we are safe. It is not a question of America; it is a question of every British-speaking person and his safety that is involved when we discuss trade with America. What we really should be doing if our economy were put on a sound basis is buying the dollar at six or eight to the pound instead of three dollars twenty cents to the pound; because, frankly, the dollar today is buying exactly what half a crown will buy, relatively speaking of the two countries. If we will persist and if we try to persist in buying dollars at three dollars twenty cents to the pound and try to continue trading with America on that basis, we will find that no matter what efforts we make we will be faced with a financial deficit in our trading with that country.

If America is reluctant to sell her dollars to us at six to the pound which, while we continue with our English relationship, would make the English pound equal to eight dollars; if she is reluctant to do that, I believe we should consider inflating our money in the same proportion as America has done. Then we would be able to trade with America. Inflation has been one of the processes of human life that has been going on for centuries. What we pay 5s. for today was bought for 6d. five centuries ago; and it looks as if it will be a continuous process until we develop an entirely new economy between trading nations. Do not let us for one moment believe that the American dollar is coming back to its pre-

war basis; because it is not. All through America today one can see in the newspapers statements that the dollar today buys 41 cents worth and leading articles in the major American newspapers make it quite clear that there is no desire whatever to bring the dollar back to its pre-war basis.

Those with whom I discussed this matter believe that American prices may fall 20 per cent. but not lower. They believe that the average person in America is better off with a degree of inflation than was the case before. Time after time I saw newspaper articles—not letters to the Press, but considered articles—stating that the dollar must never be allowed to fall to its pre-war standard. If we believe that all we have to do is keep our economy on this same low basis and America will come back to us, we are living in a fools' paradise. So if it looks to be impossible for us to trade on anything like an even basis with America, we must look for disaster amongst British-speaking people. Nothing surer in this world can happen. If we look for a degree of safety in the future, there must be trade between those who speak English, even if we cannot arrange trade between all nations.

Let us for one moment think of what would happen if we insist on Empire preference and exclude America from our trade. I am glad to see that already America is endeavouring to lower Empire preference. Not that I have any desire to see our Empire in difficulties. I am speaking as I do because I want to see our Empire safe. If we do not trade, then unemployment must occur in America. If unemployment occurs in America, she can no longer distribute millions of dollars, as she has been doing, to assist the economy of Europe. And when she can no longer assist Europe there is only one answer for Europe, and that is Communism; and when that spreads we have lost the war. So long as we of the British-speaking nations can stick together, we can dictate terms to the world.

But Russia today is using very steadily the fact that there are certain of the British-speaking nations in distress. Unless we can present a common front together we may face the same disaster as occurred when we had to stand against Hitler. There can be no doubt whatever

that the same totalitarian tactics are being used by Russia as were used by Hitler because together we show a sign of weakness. Those who have been watching the affairs of the United Nations Organisation can only be led to one belief, and that is that our failure to unite has given a false idea of strength to Russia. I think one has only to realise the methods that have been used in the last month or two by men like Vyshinsky to understand that they ring very close to the tactics of Hitler.

When Vyshinsky was asked on his arrival in America what he was prepared to do for those Russian women who had married Americans, he said he was not interested in them but he was interested in the oppressed minority of Russians living in the British zone. Those people living in the British zone had never been Russians but had left the countries which Russia had absorbed. The speech he made accusing high-ranking officers in America can be remembered by most of us as having the ring of a Hitler speech. Almost every organisation today that has any attitude of fear for the future is being charged with partisanship and I shall probably be included amongst the group. Therefore, as a warning to every one of us, I say that our future does not lie in some small economy which we may as a people try to arrange but it lies in an economy between those nations which look to the democratic way of life.

If we are to survive, we must unite as one people with one common idea—the preservation of the rights of the individual and the right of that individual to live his democratic way of life. Let me try to show how I believe our economy is wrong from another aspect. Having been abroad in America, wandering around some 8,000 miles and mixing with the people who are so like ourselves that I was led to wonder whether I was really away from home, I was impressed by the fact that they lived in an era which is different from ours. And yet we endeavour, with our methods, to copy the era in which they are living. I use those terms in order to impress members with the fact that the American mode of living is entirely different from ours. I think the answer is that we, as part of the British Empire, built up our nation in the days of cheap human labour. America is living in an era in which there is no longer cheap

human labour, but cheap production, the answer to which is cheap power.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The slaves were cheap enough labour.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That was before the war between the States. North America realised that cheap slave labour in the South was the greatest impediment possible to the progress of America as a whole. We must realise that our viewpoint has to be altered and that we can no longer believe in an era of cheap human labour. Human labour must never again be cheap. I will give briefly some idea of the rates of wages paid to various groups in America. While on the western side of America—I forget in which State—I read that the policemen had claimed, from the State which employed them, a rise of 350 dollars a year, which would bring their salaries to 3,500 dollars, or about £1,100 per year. I inquired what would be the salary of a first-class typiste, stenographer and secretary, who in Australia today would be paid about £6, or 18 or 19 dollars per week. I was told that the average salary for a person with those qualifications would be in the neighbourhood of 250 dollars, about £80 per month. The economy there is so different that one wonders whether our economy can continue.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: On the other hand, what would a suit of clothes cost?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The relative value in relation to the wage would depend on whether it was a product of America, a product of mass-production or a product of human endeavour. This is the point that I desire to emphasise, and again it brings forward the point that human labour cannot again be cheap. The suit of clothes that I am wearing would cost, made to measure in America—according to the tailor—from 100 to 150 dollars, or from £30 to £50. Bought—as it is commonly termed—off the hook, it would cost from 50 to 75 or 85 dollars, according to the situation in which it was bought and the material of which it was made. If one wanted a summer suit of material grown in America it could be bought—beautifully finished—for 23 dollars.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Off the hook?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes. It must be realised that we cannot have a high wage cost of that type without having a high

cost of living, but it must be realised that the worker has the ability—in a country in which the economy is built on cheap power—to buy the mass-produced goods from the small amount that he can save. As I see it, the difference between the two countries is this; to raise wages in this country at present would mean prices chasing costs, but if we are to join in the new era we must look for some means by which we can make production cheaper, and that brings us back again to the question of power. I do not think we can look for any mass migration from America to this country, where we have nothing to offer but sheer hard labour, as America is migrating, within itself, to the areas of cheap power. The land of the South to which Mr. Heenan recently referred has long since lost its slave labour and is introducing cheap water power with the result that people from North America are migrating to the southern portions of North America.

If one looks at maps showing the migration within America one finds a considerable drift from the more thickly populated areas of the North to the South, and particularly to the West. California, which was the baby State of America, has increased its population by one and a half millions in five years, and now has within its borders more than the total population of Australia, due entirely to the cheap power. I therefore believe that we must view our future in a somewhat different light from that which has obtained hitherto. We must look to a full use, within this State, of everything that can give us reasonably cheap power. Admittedly we are not blessed with the high mountains that are found in some countries that have adopted cheap water power, but we must look to the use of every natural resource that we have.

I was unfortunate in not being able to see the Tennessee Valley Authority at work, but I was able to discuss it with many individuals who were aware of the value of its efforts and the results that have been achieved by sheer vision and hard toil. The Tennessee Valley Authority has spent about 750 million dollars in harnessing the Tennessee, but it has provided from three to three and a half million people, whom it now serves, with real value for the money spent. One can safely say that the Tennessee Valley Authority has raised the incomes

of the people in the areas which it supplies by 50 per cent. more than the rise in income of individuals in other parts of America. It has only just completed the work of harnessing that turbulent river, and the full future of that area is still to be seen. I am not an engineer or a geologist, but when I returned to this State with the idea of what vision—vision in its widest sense—can do, I wondered whether we could not look at the problems of our State with a much broader view than we have had in the past.

As I travelled—on the first day of my arrival back—from here to Albany, I was impressed by the fact that land that I had previously been told was a bar to the progress of Albany was now—as the result of the use of a bulldozer and superphosphate—showing itself as green pasture, feeding large numbers of sheep. I realised that there would be a period of time in which we could not carry the same number of stock on that pasture, owing to lack of rain, but at the same time I felt compelled to ask “Is there not a possibility of irrigating that land?” I may be talking geological and engineering nonsense, but I ask the House—even as a hypothetical case—what would it matter to the State if it cost £20,000,000 to put a forty-feet wall round the Porongorups in order to dam water for the irrigation of that land? That may not be feasible, but in this State we need vision of the kind that speaks not of hundreds of thousands of pounds, but of millions.

If we are to look forward to people coming here from other parts of the world we cannot ask them to go on to virgin land and work for years, hoping to obtain results in the end. We must get men, with the kind of vision that impelled those in charge of the Tennessee Valley project, to bring our land into production before we appeal to people from other parts of the world to settle on it. Even if we gave only a promise of that, we might get them to come here, but, as Mr Churchill said recently, we cannot get men to come to Australia and take up land that we ourselves have not the courage to take up.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We lack the population.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: We will lack population as long as we lack vision.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But we have not the population to select all our land.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: What I am trying to impress on myself, as well as on members, is the need for a broad outlook in this State. I am trying to make members realise that we will not get people to come here while all we can offer is toil, without modern amenities. Until we can offer those amenities we will only be crying in the wilderness. I have tried to give the answer. Our difficulty, as I see it at the moment, is that we must go to the Commonwealth authorities cap in hand and ask for money that is rightfully our own. Until such time as we, as a State, demand that we get our rights back, I am afraid we must linger in despair. If we are, as a people, to look for any economic stability in the future, we must offer to migrants not only the possibility of making progress but some incentive to make that progress.

As a nation we have at the moment lost our personal initiative. When I say we have lost it, possibly it would be more correct to state that we have had our personal initiative taken from us. There are more industrial troubles in Australia today than could ever be possible in a land that looks for economic stability. What is the answer? I believe that the individual today is working only about 60 per cent. of his total capacity and he has been taught by his unions or shall I say by the agitators within the unions—I have no desire to condemn the unions as such and am only condemning the agitators and their propaganda—to wonder what would happen if he worked to the full 100 per cent. of his capacity.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Does that not apply to business men and professional men in these days?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I think it applies to everyone in Australia. Whilst 60 per cent. is the effort exerted by the worker, industry is still paying dividends. Despite price control, the price of industrial shares is rising. I doubt whether industrial shares have ever stood higher in the market than they do today. The question amongst workers is quite common in these times as to what share they would receive from industry if they were to exert an additional 40 per cent. of effort.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is customary to say that about the workers, but where would industry be if it were not for their efforts?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Perhaps I should say that the people of Australia are the workers and that we, as a nation, are not exerting more than 60 per cent. of our capacity to work.

The Minister for Mines: I am the one exception. I am working 100 per cent!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: In my opinion the employers will have to devise some means whereby that extra 40 per cent. of effort if put forward could be shared by all concerned.

Hon. W. J. Mann: If they get it.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I believe they can get it; and if we are not going to obtain it, we shall not survive as a race. Assuredly no race can survive without working. The phase that impressed me during my journey abroad was the personal incentive apparent in everyone I saw, together with the desire to achieve something in life—which meant work. Here in Australia we have lost, to a very large extent, the desire for achievement. We have no personal incentive or personal initiative left, because under our present economy they have been taken from us. If this is the economy that we desire to stabilise in Australia then, as I see it, the sooner we change our economy the better it will be.

Simply to say that by a form of bureaucracy we are to control prices within our State appeals to me as asking us to adopt the attitude of Canute and to sit on the shore commanding the waves to roll back. When controls are lifted prices will rise because we cannot in this small corner of the world keep our economy at a level different from the rest of the world. In conclusion I want to put forward once more a plea to the House that somewhere in this country there shall arise a statesman who can see above the common everyday measures of life and realise that if we are as a people to survive, we cannot institute measures that prevent trading one with another, especially amongst the British speaking nations. I feel that we have not very long to prepare.

I hate to say it, but I believe that the two outstanding ideologies of this world will clash before long while we show any

signs of weakness. We have I feel some security for the future if we can join the British speaking nations together, if only on a financial basis. I would like to see this idea of clamping down on personal initiative, saying that prices must be controlled in one avenue while those in another can be left untouched, done away with. I would prefer to see our statesmen arise with a plea to British speaking peoples to join the nations together, realising that that is the only way in which any of us can view the future with economic stability.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAW REFORM (CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE AND TORTFEASORS' CONTRIBUTION).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.54] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is of a technical character for the purpose of altering the law as regards negligence or what lawyers know as contributory negligence. It might be easier to understand if I mention that under maritime law, which is known as Admiralty law, if two ships collide, the law apportions the damages according to the negligence of each ship. That principle does not apply on land with, say, motor accidents. The person who has the last chance of avoiding an accident and does not do so is the one that has to pay—unless the other person is negligent. That is contributory negligence, which arises when one person contributes to the accident. Although he may have been negligent only in a minor degree he is debarred from obtaining damages in consequence.

The Bill proposes to alter the law in that respect and to provide for the amount of negligence to be apportioned. An example is given of where a man has driven a car along a highway at an excessive speed, having regard to time, date, place and circumstances. He is unable to pull up in an emergency and avoid possibilities that may arise. B might, without taking heed of the approaching traffic, step off the footpath and not look both ways. As a result he may be run down by A, who could not

avoid hitting him. In those circumstances B could not recover any thing from A. The court would hold that he had been guilty of contributory negligence.

Take another instance. Supposing A is driving a car at excessive speed and B steps off the footpath in a heedless manner. A observes him from some distance away but the brakes on his car are out of order and he is unable to pull up, with the result that he runs B down. In those circumstances the court would hold that A was substantially to blame on the ground that he had the last opportunity to avoid the accident and did not do so. In consequence of his negligence A had not exercised reasonable care in seeing that his brakes were in order.

Another case, which is the law at present under an English decision, is where an animal is left on the highway fettered by the fore feet or hobbled. Of course it would be negligence on the part of the owner to leave the animal there. When a person drove his horse and cart, collided with the hobbled animal and killed it, its owner was held entitled to recover damages because the man driving the wagon should have seen the animal and pulled up, although it was negligence on the part of the owner to leave the animal there. The Bill proposes that the judge shall decide in respect of such cases as to who was negligent and the degree of negligence on the part of each party and to award damages accordingly.

Then again two cars driven by A and B respectively collide and A brings an action for damages against B while B counter-claims against A. The court finds that both drivers were negligent but that A's negligence was in a greater degree than B's the cause of the accident, the proportion of negligence being fixed at, say, two to one. Damages sustained by A are assessed at £300 and that sustained by B at £120. B will be ordered to pay two-thirds of the amount of £300 awarded to A and A will be ordered to pay one-third the amount of £120 awarded to B. That is to say, B will owe A £200, but A will owe B £40, so that B will have to pay A £160 to settle.

In a case where both parties are found to be negligent but only one has suffered damages—as in the case of the animal left

negligently in the highway and killed by the negligent driving by a wagoner—if the damages sustained by the owner of the animal were fixed at £10 but both parties were held to be equally negligent, then the owner could recover only half of the amount assessed, that is to say, £5. That seems to be a reasonable proposition.

Hon. H. Tuckey: What about straying stock?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It all depends on the damage. The judge will find whose fault it was. He may find that the accident was entirely the fault of the owner of the straying stock. If the hon. member were driving his car to Mandurah and he had no brakes, the magistrate might find that the fault was his and accordingly the hon. member would not recover full damages.

Hon. H. Tuckey: But if the animals strayed through no fault of the owner?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think that is a matter you might refer to the Attorney General.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Or to another lawyer.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Or to another lawyer, as the hon. member has interjected. The law relating to fatal accidents provides that if a man is killed, his widow or next-of-kin, as the case may be, may take action as administrator of his estate. Provision is made that if the widow or the next-of-kin takes action, then the same law will apply. If the deceased were negligent to a degree, the judge would take that degree of negligence into consideration in awarding the amount of damages. Again, as to joint tortfeasors—tort is another word for damages and tortfeasor is the person who causes the damage—the law at the present time is that if a person sues two individuals for a wrong, say for damages caused by a collision in a motorcar accident, and obtains judgment against one individual, he cannot proceed against the other, notwithstanding that he does not collect from the person against whom he obtained judgment because the latter is a man of straw. A person has to stand or fall by the first judgment.

Again, if a judgment is obtained against the two and a person proceeds to collect from one, he jeopardises his position to collect from the other. A man might say, "I will collect from A, because he is easy to

get at." A pays the whole of the damages and B goes scot free, because there is no contribution between joint tortfeasors. The old law was that a person could not derive a benefit from a wrong. Having committed a wrong, a person cannot ask another to pay for half of his wrong. The usual example given is that of two thieves who have stolen a watch. The owner may recover damages from one thief but that thief could not claim half the amount from the other thief. He has to pay the lot. Things have altered very considerably nowadays, as members will appreciate.

In the case of motorcar accidents, damages can be claimed against the owner and the driver, the court deciding what proportion each shall pay. A person can recover the whole of the damages from the owner or the driver, and then either tortfeasor can collect from the joint tortfeasor. Further, if a person elects to proceed against a man of straw, he still has his remedy against the other, who is not a man of straw. This measure will bring the law into line with the English law. I suggest to members that they read the Bill, and if they have any doubt as to the meaning of a clause, I will do my best to explain it in the Committee stage.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are sure the title to the Bill should not be "Fees for Lawyers"?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am trying to point out that this Bill will deprive lawyers of fees, because at present the law is much more complicated than the Bill proposes to make it.

Hon. G. Fraser: It will make the claim much more complicated than it is today.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then it will be good luck to the lawyer; it is the first luck he has had for a long while. I commend the Bill to the House. For the benefit of Mr. Fraser, I may say that this law was approved and brought in by the present socialist Government in England. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 14th October, 1947.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Rural Relief Fund Act Amendment.
- 2, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment (Continuance).
- 3, Unclaimed Moneys Act Amendment.
- 4, Supreme Court Act Amendment.

QUESTION.

SUGAR.

As to Inadequacy of Supplies.

Mr. LESLIE (on notice) asked the Honorary Minister:

(1) Is she aware of the fact that householders are unable to obtain adequate supplies of sugar from their usual suppliers?

(2) That the quantity being supplied to householders and families is much below actual normal requirements and much less than the amount which was available to householders and families when sugar rationing was in force?

(3) Is the above circumstance due to—

(a) a shortage of sugar stocks in Western Australia?

(b) stocks being withheld by manufacturers and/or distributors in anticipation of a likely increase in price?

(4) Will she investigate the present very unsatisfactory position and take appropriate action to ensure that adequate supplies, and being not less than the amount