

Thus the pastoralists are prepared to insure their own people rather than see a continuance of this treatment meted out to hospitals. The Mullewa district hospital took up a similar attitude except that it thought the daily rate of 12s. 6d. was too high. The letter reads—

Re Natives' Medical Fund charge.

I acknowledge receipt of your circular dated the 10th inst. relative to the above matter and have to advise that at our board meeting held on the 24th inst. the circular was read and received, and I was instructed to advise you that we consider a charge of 5s. is not adequate to cover the cost of the native's maintenance in a hospital.

We do consider, however, that a charge at the ruling rate of 12s. 6d. a day—in our case 10s. 6d. per day—too high, as we would not be prepared to admit natives into the general portion of our hospital to associate with white people, but it is considered that a charge of 7s. 6d. would be fair and reasonable.

The Mullewa district hospital is, therefore, prepared to come down to 7s. 6d. That is the position of the outback hospitals. We are not getting sufficient money to carry them on, and I earnestly request the Minister to give the matter consideration and have the Estimates increased next year to meet the extra charges. After having discussed the matter with officials of the Medical Department, I understand that the extra amount required would not exceed £3,500 a year.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.35 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 9th December, 1942.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (2).

GAS PRODUCERS.

As to "Nasco" Units.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH asked the Chief Secretary: Is it a fact that as a result of departmental inquiries "Nasco" gas-producers are now being licensed by the Traffic Department?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: No, but Nasco gas-producers are now being licensed by the Traffic Department, provided that the thickness of the fire-box conforms to the thickness specified in the S.A.A. Code.

COLLIER MINE WORKERS' PENSIONS.

As to Coal Production, etc.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the introduction by the Government of a Bill for an Act to provide pensions for workers in and about coal mines—partly at the cost of the taxpayer—will the Minister supply the House with information for each of the

years 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940 and 1941, and for eleven months from the 1st January to the 30th November, 1942, showing the following particulars relating to coal mining at Collie: (a) the average tonnage per miner per shift; (b) the average number of shifts worked per fortnight; (c) the total tonnages of coal won per fortnight; (d) the average number of workers employed in the mines for each month in the several periods named; (e) the number of stop work meetings, or stoppages of coal production for each period; (f) the number of shifts lost through absenteeism arising from all causes, excepting accident or authorised holidays during the periods; (g) the tonnage of coal lost through absenteeism during the periods named; (h) the extent to which the Commissioner of Railways' orders for coal have been short-supplied during the period named; (i) the average earnings of the following classifications of workers:—Miners, machine men, wheelers, and shiftmen; (j) the average weekly hours worked—(i) by underground workers, (ii) by surface workers?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The bulk of the information requested is purely domestic to the coal companies and is not in the possession of the Government. All information available to the department concerned will be supplied.

MOTOR SPIRIT AND SUBSTITUTE LIQUID FUELS BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report Presented.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with a typewritten copy of the evidence.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the consideration of the Bill in Committee be postponed until after consideration of Order of the Day No. 6.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Before the question is put, I would point out that it is customary, when a Select Committee's report amends a Bill, for a motion to be moved for the report to be printed and the discussion takes place on that motion.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The committee's report does not seek to amend the Bill.

Question put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings

granted to Hon. H. S. W. Parker (Metropolitan-Suburban) on the ground of public business.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved—

That during the month of December, so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be passed through all stages in one sitting, and all messages from the Legislative Assembly to be taken into consideration forthwith; and that Standing Order No. 62 (limit of time for commencing new business) be suspended during the same period.

BILL—PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

MOTION—GOLDMINING INDUSTRY.

As to Compensation and Basic Wage Variations.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [11.17]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House compensation payable under the Miner's Phthisis Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Act should be so adjusted as to ensure to beneficiaries that the rates of compensation payable to them under these Acts shall be subject to any rise and fall in the current basic wage.

The motion should commend itself to every member of this House. Recently several recipients of payments under the Miner's Phthisis Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Act asked me and other goldfields members to join in bringing under the notice of Parliament the position in which they were situated when a comparison was made with men who were not as unfortunate as were they who, for various reasons, could not work at all. The position is that the Miner's Phthisis Act, which was proclaimed in September, 1925, originally provided that any person excluded for tuberculosis would be entitled to the then ruling rate of wages in the district. The basic wage was then £4 6s. a week on the Eastern Goldfields. During the depression, recipients of relief under the Miner's Phthisis Act were subject to a deduction, reducing their payments from £4 6s. to £3 17s., which was the lowest mark reached by the basic wage during that period.

Although in depression times they suffered a cut, in prosperous times the amount

they received remained stationary. If suitable employment is found for a person who is under the Miner's Phthisis Act and he refuses to accept it, no more consideration is given to him, but if suitable employment is found and he accepts it, he is paid the ruling rate of wages for the district in which he is employed. When suitable employment cannot be found, he receives half-pay. His wife and family receive an allowance as well but the total amount drawn must not exceed the ruling rate of wages in the district where he has been working. I have already mentioned that the worker who had been withdrawn from the industry received a pension under the Miner's Phthisis Act of £4 6s. a week and the amount was reduced during the depression by 9s. weekly. Those men are entitled to the ruling rate or half the ruling rate of wages at the time they were prohibited from working in the mines. Although their pensions were reduced during the depression, their rate has not been increased despite the rise in the basic wage. Thus on the 1st July the basic wage on the goldfields was £5 5s. 7d. or almost £1 per week more than the miner receives under the provisions of the Miner's Phthisis Act.

On top of that the men in the mines were allowed up to 12s. a week as an industrial allowance, bringing the basic wage up to £5 17s. 7d. per week. The basic wage on the 1st July last in the metropolitan area and the South-West Land Division was roughly £4 10s. 10d. and at present it is about £4 18s. Surely a case could be made out in favour of the miner who has been excluded from participation in his occupation receiving the benefits of basic wage variations instead of, as at present, receiving the same amount as when he was originally excluded from the mines. It must be remembered that the rates payable under the Miner's Phthisis Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Act are fixed by regulations whereas payments under the Workers' Compensation Act are fixed by law.

Under the Mine Workers' Relief Act a contributory fund was established under which the Government, the employers and the workers each contributed one-third. Under the Workers' Compensation Act a miner can draw compensation up to an amount of £750 but the full amount that he can draw for himself, his wife and children is £3 10s. per week. That payment, I

submit, should be subject to basic wage variations. On the other hand if a man is excluded from mining work and is not covered by the Workers' Compensation Act, he receives payments under the Mine Workers' Relief Act only. He can draw for himself only 25s. per week, which is less than an old-age pensioner receives. I have already indicated that the worker has had to make payments to the contributory fund on the basis set out in the Act. Here again if he has dependants he is not able to draw more than £3 10s. a week.

When we follow the evolution of the basic wage we must remember how it applied to the Public Service. While the worker under the Miner's Phthisis Act suffered a reduction in his pension during the depression years in common with civil servants and other workers whose salaries were correspondingly reduced, with the rise in the basic wage part of the salary cut was restored to the civil servants whereas the pension of the miner remained the same as at the date of his prohibition from work in the mines. An instance was quoted in this House of a prominent civil servant who was receiving a salary of £1,400 a year but was paid the basic wage increase. That applied right throughout the Public Service. There was also what was called the prosperity loading but the miner drawing a pension under the Miner's Phthisis Act did not receive any advantage under that heading. All the workers who still possess their full faculties enjoy the benefit of the basic wage variations and even the old-age pensioners are now similarly situated.

As I have not made the necessary inquiries I do not know whether pensioners under the Superannuation Act benefit similarly. I shall not mention names but members know that within recent years many high ranking departmental heads have retired and have benefited by the application of the Superannuation Act. Their pension was assessed on the basis of what they were receiving at the date of their retirement and such individuals would receive consideration respecting the basic wage variation. It must be remembered that those officials retired much later in life than many of the miners who contracted vocational diseases due to their employment.

I shall not detain the House much longer but I appeal to members to agree to the motion. Even if effect is not given to it,

the psychological reaction on the small submerged section of the community, many of whom have not much time left on earth, will be to lend some encouragement to them and they will say to themselves, "We are not the forgotten few. There is an institution in this country that thinks we are rightly entitled in the days of our adversity and exclusion from the opportunity to work to benefits somewhat similar to those who are still able to carry on in the industry."

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South): I second the motion. We have been trying for years to have this particular scheme brought about. I have wondered why it has never been carried into effect. Of course, as it is the third party that is contributing to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, the Government practically controls it. The proposals put forward by Mr. Cornell to ensure that the persons concerned shall be paid increases that will compare with the augmented cost of living should be easy to carry out. Probably the Chief Secretary will go into the question whether the pensions authorities may not reduce the amount of pension to those who are on the fund commensurate with the other increases it is now proposed to give them.

There are, of course, many people who are not receiving the old-age pension, and who are simply drawing money from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Those people may have more money or property than will allow them to receive the benefit of the old-age pension. That difficulty could readily be overcome, I assume. With regard to those who are affected by miners' phthisis, I agree with Mr. Cornell that in the many years that have passed Governments have taken advantage of the decreases in the cost of living, and have reduced the incomes of the unfortunate men concerned by about 9s. a week. Many of them are now on half wages. They are living on the goldfields and the half wages would represent about £2 5s. or £2 6s. a week. That is a little below the maximum they would receive under the Workers' Compensation Act.

I notice from reports that last year the State saved about £4,000 on miners' phthisis cases, owing to the fact that some of the beneficiaries had died, or that the widows had re-married, or that children had passed the age of 16. If the trade unions on the goldfields had lived up to their responsibilities,

this proposal would have been carried into effect a long time ago. Instead of doing that, they sat back, and there the matter ended. They should have been able to look after these men who come under the Mine Workers' Relief Act and the Miner's Phthisis Act, because they are the people who made it possible for the trade union movement to exist on the goldfields. I know, of course, that if the cost of living came down, their incomes would be reduced accordingly. It seems to me the motion is one that can be carried into effect, and it has my endorsement.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East): I support the motion, which was well brought forward by Mr. Cornell. Surely the Government, which recognises that the cost of living increases are payable to civil servants, can see its way clear to grant similar increases to the men concerned, to those who are dependent upon what they receive under the various relief funds.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILLS (6)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Income and Entertainments Tax (War Time Suspension).

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

- 2, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 3, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 4, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 5, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Amendment.
- 6, Health Act Amendment (No. 2).

Passed.

BILL—MOTOR SPIRIT AND SUBSTITUTE LIQUID FUELS.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Holder of license to purchase substitute liquid fuel in prescribed quantities:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I hope the Government will take notice of the recommendations of the Select Committee. Apparently it was the intention of the framers of the Bill that the ordinary garage proprietor should be the person to be licensed and to deal with the distribution of power alcohol.

When the day arrives that we can renew normal trading, I hope we shall, instead of adopting the cumbersome method provided by the clause, allow the oil companies to treat and blend these oils, as that would mean a considerable saving to the community.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If members desire the consideration of the Bill to be further postponed, I shall raise no objection. The Select Committee did not desire to amend the Bill in any way, and that being so I did not see the necessity to take further action. The report of the Select Committee will be presented to the Government and I have no doubt due consideration will be given to the opinions expressed.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Taking samples:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of Subclause (5), after the word "analysis" the words "or an analysis made by an officer on the staff of the Government Analyst" be inserted.

The amendment is designed to provide that the check analysis of any officer of the Government Analyst's Department who is qualified to make an analysis, shall be accepted.

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

Clauses 16 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Evidence:

On motions by the Chief Secretary, clause amended by striking out the words "assistant to" in line 2 of paragraph (c) and inserting in lieu thereof the words "an officer on the staff of"; by striking out the word "assistant" in line 5 of the same paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the word "officer"; by inserting after the word "analyst" in line 1 of paragraph (d) the words "or officer aforesaid"; and by inserting after the word "Analyst" in line 9 of paragraph (d) the words "or the officer aforesaid."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 20 and 21, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommendation.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, Bill re-committed for the further consideration of Clauses 2, 11, and 13.

In Committee.

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

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 5 and 6 of proposed new Subsection (1) the words "six of whom shall be medical practitioners" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—

- "(a) The Chief Medical Officer, who shall be president;
- (b) Three duly qualified medical practitioners;
- (c) A duly qualified medical officer who is superintendent of any one of the the Government controlled hospitals for specific diseases;
- (d) A qualified member of the nursing profession;
- (e) A person to represent other interests outside the medical profession."

While it may be argued that the old method of electing medical practitioners is satisfactory, I think we should move with the times. Generally speaking, boards now have sitting on them a representative of either the producer or the consumer, that is, they represent the public. I think members will agree that the Chief Medical Officer should be the president of the proposed board. If he occupies the position of Chief Medical Officer, he should be worthy to be the president of the board. I think the Government will give due weight to the appointment of three qualified medical practitioners. A duly qualified medical officer who is superintendent of a Government controlled hospital for specific diseases occupies an important position and must be possessed of high attainments. He also is worthy of a place on the proposed board. Five representatives of the profession will give the medical men a preponderance on the board.

There is another aspect. By carrying this amendment the Government will be given a certain amount of control. It is not likely, but the doctors may deem it advisable at some time or other to strike. Many sections of the community that we did not imagine would take that course have done so in the past, and some control should be retained so as to keep this board on all fours with similar bodies. Exception may be taken to the suggestion that a qualified member of the nursing profession should be elected to the board. Such a person would give the women-folk representation in a matter in which they are vitally concerned. This board is simply to

police the actions of the medical fraternity, but to have a representative of the nurses on it would be of assistance to the medical men. Without their valuable assistance, I do not know where the patients would be. Paragraph (e) of my amendment provides for a person to represent other interests outside the medical profession.

Hon. H. Seddon: The consumer.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That argument could be used, or those interests might be called the suffering public. In making this suggestion, I am not casting any reflections on the Medical Board, but I am taking into consideration the fact that other boards include in their membership representatives of sections of the community vitally interested. My amendment will still give the medical practitioners a majority of five to two.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot accept this amendment. When introducing this measure I advised the House that it was framed as a result of collaboration between the Medical Board and the Government. Under the Medical Act the board consists of seven medical practitioners, but under this Bill, provision has been made for one layman to be a member of the board, which should be satisfactory.

Hon. A. Thomson: I am only asking for one other.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The duty of this board will be to control one of the most important of the professions. In the past it has not had sufficient power and we are endeavouring to rectify that position. It is because of that that the profession has agreed that there shall be one layman on the board. Mr. Thomson suggests first of all that the Principal Medical Officer shall be the president. Today, as it happens, he is president of the board.

Hon. A. Thomson: Then there should be no objection to that part of my amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know. I see no reason why the board should not appoint its own president. It may be that the Principal Medical Officer is a highly qualified man, but for some reason or other not as suitable as some other doctor to be president. The six medical practitioners, together with the layman, will be quite capable of electing one of their number to this position. There can be no complaint about the next suggestion which says that there shall be three duly qualified medical practitioners. But why the next one, that one

member shall be a duly qualified medical officer who is superintendent of any one of the Government-controlled hospitals for specific diseases?

Hon. A. Thomson: There should be a specialist.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know what is meant by that, and I do not know, apart from the Infectious Diseases Hospital, whether we have a hospital for specific diseases.

Hon. A. Thomson: There is Wooroloo.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We heard yesterday that the word "specific" has a particular meaning in the medical profession. Simply because a doctor is in charge of one of these institutions, does not say that he should be a member of this board.

Hon. A. Thomson: He should be.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member has his own opinions in that regard. He then suggests a qualified member of the nursing profession. No one could have more regard for that profession than I have, but this is not a board on which that profession should, ipso facto, be represented. It is really subsidiary to the medical profession. The principal functions of this board will be to lay down the qualifications necessary before a medical practitioner shall be allowed to be registered as such, and, from time to time, when necessary, to control its members. The nursing profession has no right to a place on such a board. The Bill provides for the representation of persons outside of the medical profession by the words "one member of the board shall be a layman."

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I realise that Mr. Thomson is actuated by the best of good feelings towards this board. If he were dealing with a board under the Health Act or something of that nature, his would be an excellent basis on which to work. This, however, is not a health board but one to control the medical profession. Everyone knows the respect in which I hold the nursing profession, yet I object to a nurse being on this board because nurses have nothing to do with the Medical Act. The nurses have their own registration board on which they have medical representatives and their own representatives. It works quite well. Members know that in their own businesses they can only have free discussions so long as all those present are earning their living by the same methods. If other people are

put on to this board, criticism will be stultified. I ask that this clause be left as it is. The medical men will carry out—

Hon. A. Thomson: There are women doctors now, too.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is so. If one of them were to make it quite obvious to the profession that she was a person to be appointed, I am quite certain that the Government would be aware of the fact and, if necessary, appoint her. The mere fact that we have women in the profession does not say that they should be elected to the board. If such a practitioner had earned the right to sit on a board of this nature, neither the medical profession nor the Government would stand in her way. If someone likes to move to define the seventh member of the board mentioned in the Bill as a member of the lay public, it would be acceptable to everybody.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am, to a point, satisfied with the board as provided in the measure, but I would suggest that the lay member should not be a civil servant. I propose in the event of Mr. Thomson's amendment not being accepted, to give notice of a further amendment. I intend to move that the lay member shall not be a civil servant or Government representative. Medical men are the best people to manage medical affairs, and I feel sure my proposal would make the provision satisfactory to many members.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We are frequently told that Government representatives are not wanted on these bodies and on that score I must oppose the amendment. I have nothing to say against the Principal Medical Officer, but there are reasons why he should not be appointed to this board.

Hon. T. MOORE: I see considerable merit in the amendment. The remark has been made that nurses are subsidiary to the medical men. After considerable experience of military hospitals in the 1914-1918 war, I take a different view. I spent many months in hospital and am satisfied that the nurses, rather than the doctors, got me well again. I saw some extraordinary things done by nurses. A doctor in a military hospital wanted to amputate a man's arm and the nurse begged him not to do so. That man still has his arm, though it is not 100 per cent. efficient. Dr. Hislop raises no objection to having one layman on the board. That being so, why

not appoint a nurse, who could be selected by the nurses' organisation. Who has a better right to discuss what happens in hospitals than have members of the nursing profession? Who can say better than they how some doctors carry on?

Army doctors are the most autocratic section that could possibly be found. A man is hauled before a military doctor as a sheep before a veterinary surgeon, and the doctor merely looks at him and rarely discusses his case. I know how some of our nurses are treated by some doctors. The nurses do not always get a good deal from the autocrats of the profession. Nurses give years to training on a mere pittance, and when they are qualified, they are constantly studying the sick and injured in their care. They are the larger section in the profession and yet they are to have no representation on the board. I ask members to insist upon the appointment of a nurse.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I have the utmost respect for nurses and deprecate any suggestion that there is a split between them and the doctors.

Hon. T. Moore: You know they get treated badly sometimes.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That happens everywhere. We belong to one service, and it is no more possible for the nurse to do her job without the doctor than for the doctor to do his without the nurse. A lay person is being appointed to the board because the board is being given much more power over its own members, and it was thought wise that some outside opinion should be brought to the board. Then, if an inquiry was being held in camera, the public would appreciate that it was in the best interests of all to adopt that course. I want the public to realise that the board acts in the interests of the public while retaining power freely to criticise its own members.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Hitherto the membership of the board has been the prerogative of members of the local branch of the B.M.A., but that body apparently wants it open to others. The amendment would have the effect of appointing to the board a member who was not a subscribing member. I do not think the board would have any antipathy to the appointment of a doctor from the Wooroloo Sanatorium, but there might be medical aspects that would

need to be impressed upon the board. The Hospital for the Insane and numerous other institutions are in that category.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I support Mr. Thomson's amendment, though not because I think it could not be improved upon or could not be faulted. The Chief Secretary, from his point of view, faulted it in certain respects. However, the amendment seems to me a marked improvement on the proposal of the Bill, inasmuch as it gives recognition to the fact that there are other interests to be served. The profession is of outstanding importance to the general public. In the Bill, however, the general public does not appear to have been given overmuch consideration in respect of representation. Perhaps there is an agreement between the Government and the B.M.A. Happenings in the medical profession are of outstanding importance to the Western Australian community.

I wish the Government had been prepared to go some way in the direction of Mr. Thomson's proposal with a view to improving the Bill. I know of cases where the domestic affairs of the medical profession might have produced marked results on the public. The profession should not be left in a position where it is the sole arbiter of happenings within the profession. Six out of seven members would, under the amendment, be direct representatives of the B.M.A. As regards Dr. Hislop's reference to retaining the faith of the public in the affairs and conduct of the profession which he represents so ably, within reasonable limits the more representation the profession can be given here, the better for the public.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I want to correct some ideas members may have. This Bill has not been discussed at any great length, I am certain, with the B.M.A.; nor is the appointment of members of the board the prerogative of the B.M.A. The Government appoints men to the Medical Board, and the Medical Board has never been in association with the B.M.A. It is true that about 90 per cent. of all medical men belong to the B.M.A., but the Government might decide to appoint to the Medical Board a medical man who is not a member of the B.M.A. I refused a seat on the Council of the B.M.A. so that I could quite freely represent the public, and any member of the public or any member of the

B.M.A., in this Chamber. I am not speaking on behalf of the B.M.A. but of the medical profession. The effect of being a member of the Medical Board, however, gives a medical man added standing in his profession.

Hon. A. THOMSON: When raising this question I realised that it would evoke considerable discussion, and I naturally expected medical opposition to my amendment. The Bill before the Chamber is the result of collaboration between the Government and the medical profession. I understood Dr. Hislop to say that the B.M.A. was not consulted regarding this amending Bill. My amendment asks that there should be on the Medical Board one lay person. In ordinary walks of life, when it comes to judging a fellow-citizen it is not customary that the bench should consist entirely of members of the profession or calling to which the accused person belongs. I hold that a woman, preferably a nurse, should be appointed to the Medical Board. In matters of adjudication the wisdom of a woman who has for years been a nurse, the doctor's offside, would be highly valuable; and members of the nursing profession should be eligible for appointment to the Medical Board.

A nurse is deeply interested in matters affecting the lives and health of hundreds of women and children, and a layman could not be expected to have the same interest and knowledge. I regret that at this late stage I appear to be holding up the business of the Committee, but this is a matter of importance and it is the duty of a member who believes in his objective to submit his case to the utmost of his ability. It has been suggested that the Principal Medical Officer might find it difficult to sit on the board as chairman. At present the Principal Medical Officer is appointed by the medical men themselves, and is president of the board, so what objection can there be to his being appointed chairman? The members of the profession still have a majority. There is a board of seven, and the Principal Medical Officer would be in the chair.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Why make it mandatory?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I want this board placed on a similar footing to other boards. Mr. Mann said that one of the weaknesses of the amendment was that it would enable

a doctor to have a seat on the board although not a subscribing member of the B.M.A. Surely if one outsider is acceptable there is no reason why there should not be two. The B.M.A. still has a majority of five on a board of seven, so I am not interfering with its privileges. It is in a position to safeguard its members because it will have a decided majority in every case. I would be extremely happy if the producers throughout the Commonwealth had a majority representation on the boards established to decide their fate.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The weakness in the amendment is that it deals with something foreign to the Act. The committee has been composed of seven medical men. Mr. Thomson says that a nursing sister would be of value in considering cases. In regard to misdemeanours or infamous conduct, a nursing sister would not be qualified to take part in the proceedings of the board.

Hon. T. Moore: Would she not be able to state what she had seen?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: A sister could be called in to give evidence, but would not have the qualification of a professional man to sit on the board and give an opinion. When it is a matter of a man being expelled from the profession, we need more than a nursing sister.

Hon. A. Thomson: They would still have a majority of five.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Why put useless people on the board?

Hon. T. Moore: Then why is there a layman on the board?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I would rather not see him there.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

Motion put and passed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	14
				—
Majority against	..			5
				—

AYES.

Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. H. L. Roche

Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. T. Moore

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Soddon
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I wish to ensure that the lay member of the board shall not be a civil servant. To put it bluntly, I do not want Dr. Atkinson or Mr. Huelin to be a member of the board. I think both would be better off it.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: But Dr. Atkinson is already a member of the board.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: If that is so, then the Government could nominate him as one of the six medical practitioners. I move an amendment—

That at the end of proposed new Subsection (1) the following words be added:—"and the seventh member shall not be a member of the Public Service."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think the Committee should accept the amendment. The choice of the Government should not be restricted. If Mr. Bolton has some particular reason why a civil servant should not be appointed, he should make his reason apparent to the Committee. His suggestion is a reflection upon the Public Service generally. Perhaps Mr. Bolton let the cat out of the bag when he said definitely that he did not want Mr. Huelin or Dr. Atkinson to be a member of the board. Why is that so? Dr. Atkinson is already president of the Medical Board. I do not hold a brief for either Dr. Atkinson or Mr. Huelin. The latter has administered the Medical Department for years in a very capable manner. If Mr. Bolton considers Mr. Huelin should not be a member of the Medical Board, I would like to know why. It should not be enough for a member to get up and say that he does not desire certain individuals to occupy certain positions, and then sit down again without giving any reasons.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not desire to make this a personal matter. I merely wish the board to be open to a representative of the general public. I feel that the Government will almost certainly appoint either Mr. Huelin or Dr. Atkinson as its representative. I understand Dr. Atkinson is already a mem-

ber, and the Government may still appoint him as one of the six medical practitioners. By that means the Government will have representation on the board. My complaint against the Government respecting appointments to boards and committees of management is general. It would be to the advantage of the State if laymen were appointed to such bodies. My attitude is in no sense a reflection on the Public Service. I am certain that if the Government had appointed an outside business man of capacity who knew something of large concerns it would have been in the interests of the meat-works at Fremantle. Instead of doing that the Government appointed a committee wholly consisting of civil servants. I may have been wrong in mentioning the names of Dr. Atkinson and Mr. Huelin, but it is certainly not a personal matter.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I support the amendment. I have no objection to any particular person being appointed to the board, but I consider it would be better if the seventh member were an independent representative of the public. In saying that I do not cast any reflection upon Government officers who obviously are subject to ministerial control.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The point that impresses me is that the function of the board will be largely judicial, in that charges against members of the medical profession will have to be dealt with. In the circumstances it would be advisable if the lay member were a man possessing ability in the weighing of evidence. The choice of the Government should be as wide as possible.

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

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 23:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I move an amendment—

That in line 20 of proposed new paragraph (3) after the word "to" the word "a" be inserted.

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

Clause 13—New sections:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am doubtful as to the meaning of certain words that appear in proposed new Section 25C. I should like to insert in line 3 after the word "is" the words "in practice and" and after the word "operation" in line 4 to insert the words "and available for service."

Hon. L. CRAIG: I think the words "and is available" will leave the door very wide open. A doctor may say he is not available because he desires to go fishing. Who would prove that he was available? A doctor may be "present," but not available.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I suggest that Dr. Hislop moves an amendment to insert the words, "and is in practice and present within five miles." I think that would overcome the difficulty pointed out by Mr. Craig.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of proposed new Section 25C after the word "is" the words "in practice and" be inserted in lieu of the words "resident or" struck out in a previous Committee.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am not convinced that the spelling of the word "dietician" in this Bill is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Under the Standing Orders the Clerk can make clerical corrections. I point out that there is an argument in another place as to how the word should be spelt.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill again reported with further amendments and the reports adopted.

MOTION—TRAFFIC.

Government Petrol Buses and Stands.

Debate resumed from the 24th November on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:—

That the Government is deserving of strong censure for using petrol-driven omnibuses to supplement the transport service to South Perth and Como when the conservation of such fuel is a national necessity and other fuel can be used; and, further, this House objects to the regulations of the Perth City Council, as to bus stands, having been ignored, and the overriding of the parliamentary decision in rejecting the State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment Bill of 1941.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [2.35]: By this motion Mr. Baxter desires to censure the Government for carrying out what really is its policy and for giving effect to certain undertakings which it had given to the residents of South Perth over a considerable period. I wonder how far the hon. member hopes to get with a motion of this kind. The first point he desires to make is that the Government should not use petrol-driven buses in this service. Surely, he cannot

complain about the use of such vehicles in South Perth if he is prepared to agree that they should be used in some other suburb. I think it is only necessary for me briefly to state the facts of the case.

For a number of years the transport position in South Perth was most unsatisfactory. There was a large section of the suburb from which the residents had to travel long distances in order to take advantage of the transport services which were then available, namely, the tramway service to the Zoo or to Como and the private omnibus service running along the Canning-road. The Government promised the people of South Perth that it would at the earliest opportunity give them improved transport facilities. It even went so far as to say that the facilities to be provided would be trolley-buses, which, of course, would have run in conjunction with the present tramway service. Unfortunately, as time went on and the war situation developed, trolley-bus chassis were unobtainable. The Government, in order to honour its undertaking, eventually procured the eight chassis mentioned by Mr. Baxter, so as to provide better travelling facilities for South Perth. I do not know that the department or the Government can be blamed for having done that. Mr. Baxter must admit that the transport position in South Perth was at that time worse than in any other part of the metropolitan district. By providing the buses of which Mr. Baxter complains, it has been possible to give South Perth a reasonable transport service.

Hon. G. W. Miles: At the expense of the trams.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was going to deal with that point. Before the inauguration of this service the trams had to be double-banked in order to cope with the travelling requirements of South Perth. Since the inauguration of the service the tramways have been relieved of a great deal of pressure, so much so that it has been possible to use trams formerly running to South Perth on other sections of the tramway service, thus relieving the position elsewhere.

I have figures showing how popular this service is with the people of South Perth. In the first week of the new service, 30,766 passengers were carried; in the second week, 30,975; in the third week, 31,739. The figures have, I understand, increased each

week since. The hon. member complained that the buses are petrol-driven. What are the actual facts? The tramways own a large number of vehicles—11 buses, 120 tramcars, 28 trolley-buses, five gas-producer buses, eight petrol-driven buses, and one Diesel engine bus. Therefore only eight of the vehicles employed by the Tramways Department are at present petrol-driven.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are those the eight on the South Perth run?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. In view of all the circumstances, that is a good record. The Tramway Department was exceedingly anxious to instal a trolley-bus service that would not require the use of imported fuel but would enable us to use our own native fuel. In view of the impossibility of obtaining the chassis we did the next best thing. The question of fuel and tyres is extremely important and due attention was paid to that matter by the department. Had it been possible for the department to substitute some other form of transport service, it would have done so. The next point about which the hon. member complains is the route. He suggested that the State Transport Board had been ignored in this matter. The inquiries I made showed that that was not the position at all. Before this route was finally decided upon, many inspections of the district were made, and on such inspections the Transport Board was represented.

The route decided upon was approved following on an inspection by the Minister for Railways, in company with the Commissioner of Railways, the general manager of the Tramways, the chairman of the State Transport Board, Inspector Rathbone of the State Transport Board, and Mr. Cross, M.L.A. The approval of the route was conveyed to the secretary of the State Transport Board by letter dated the 6th August, 1941, and no objection was raised by the board to the route. How, then, can it be said that the Transport Board was ignored in regard to the question of the route? The hon. member objects to the termination of the route, which is along portion of the Canning-highway. In my opinion Canning Bridge is a suitable terminus for this service and the small portion of Canning-highway which is traversed by these buses simply rounds off the route. I do not think anyone should complain of that.

The next point made by the hon. member deals with the stand allotted on the north side

of St. George's-terrace. As a matter of fact in recent times the Traffic Department has recommended that all these bus stands be removed from the south side to the north side. Surely the development of transport in this State makes it only reasonable to assume that at some time or other the north side of St. George's-terrace must be used for this purpose. I understand that Mr. Baxter objects to the Commissioner of Railways deciding that these buses should start from the north side. The Commissioner has authority under his own Act to determine where the bus stands shall be. I think everyone will agree that the present position is preferable to allotting a stand to these buses so far distant from Barrack-street, as would be necessary if it were on the south side. The present stand certainly does not interfere with anybody; it does not interfere with any other buses or transport services and at the same time satisfactorily meets today's requirements.

Those are the points raised by the hon. member. One could say quite a lot more regarding the necessity for improved transport services throughout the metropolitan area. This Government has endeavoured, to the best of its ability, and as opportunity offered, to provide proper transport services for all parts of the city. That, of course, is proved by the fact that quite recently two small tramway extensions have been effected and that trolley bus services have been instituted in different parts of the metropolitan area. Now that the Government has carried out its promise to the South Perth residents and given them an improved service—although not the one actually promised, but still the best it can give at the moment—Mr. Baxter suggests that the Government should be censured for having had the effrontery to give this improved service. I hope this House will not agree that the Government should be censured for having carried out its obligations.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [251]: In dealing with this Bill I could not help but think that the situation has been adequately met by the National Security Regulations. I have always been of the opinion that the passing of the original Act was superfluous as the situation at that time was completely met by the laws of the Commonwealth Government. Conditions today are such that no one is building houses for the purpose of letting them. There is another point, too; no one will take the risk associated with the building of houses to let. There is not sufficient return, and the landlord is always being shot at. The tenant in every case receives the benefit. This Bill aggravates the position. Whereas under the Act the lease which was in operation in 1939 determines the rent, Clause 2 now extends the scope to a much larger extent.

Much might be said in favour of the second amendment which provides that a person shall not refuse to let a house to anyone on the ground that it is intended that a child shall live in it. Most of us agree with that principle. No penalty should be imposed on people because they have children. But there again the position is made mandatory. No recognition is taken of special circumstances. A man might desire to rent his home and might not wish to let it to a family with children because of the chances of destruction of his property. In those circumstances he would be quite justified in adopting that attitude, but this Bill provides no option. He is not even allowed to inquire if there are any children. Had the Government intended to be reasonable it would have provided some safeguard to protect the person who wished to let a furnished house. The Government might consider that point now.

The third amendment provides for the keeping of a record. In most cases one is kept, but this clause provides that it shall be available for inspection by any tenant. A house may have been let at a certain rental and then circumstances have changed. For example, they have changed on the goldfields. It may become necessary to reduce the rental for the time being. Conditions may change again

so as to justify the landlord in reverting to the former rental. But he is ordered to exhibit a record to the incoming tenant although he is only asking for a reasonable thing. The incoming tenant feels aggrieved and simply imposes, in these circumstances, trouble on the owner. The House would be well advised to reject the Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: Members of the Fighting Forces can do what they like when they get in.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes, the National Security Regulations protect them completely. The House should reject this Bill and rely on the National Security Regulations to meet circumstances as they arise.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (in reply): Both Mr. Cornell and Mr. Seddon are under a misapprehension in regard to this Bill. The National Security Regulations do not cover any part of the Act, with the exception of Section 12, dealing with leases and evictions. The legislation, therefore, is necessary, and so is this amending Bill. Today there is a serious house shortage.

Hon. L. Craig: And this will increase it!

THE HONORARY MINISTER: It cannot do that. It will, however, remedy an evil. This legislation is not aimed at the fair landlords.

Hon. H. Seddon: They will get hit by it.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: No. It is aimed to protect the public and tenants from unscrupulous landlords. The shortage of houses in the metropolitan area has been largely accentuated by the migration of women with families from the country to the metropolitan area. The letting of rooms, as well as of furnished and unfurnished houses has been exploited. Due to the shortage of dwellings, prospective tenants are too frightened to argue the point over the rent. The objection Mr. Thomson raised to the measure dealt mainly with the present Act, and therefore carries very little weight. It has been discovered that, due to the house shortage, tenants are willing to pay any rent demanded. When these tenants move and others come in, they are asked to pay the same exorbitant amounts. It is not unreasonable to provide legislation to prohibit that practice. The Bill will not affect the hundreds of landlords who carry on business in a proper manner. It is designed to stop the unscrupulous landlord and his

agent from carrying on as they have in the past.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And the unscrupulous tenants.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: Do not the same rates apply now as in 1939?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: No. The rent was pegged as from that date, but new houses have been erected since and tenants who have rented them are not protected under the existing legislation. If the House rejects this measure, the Commonwealth Government will be compelled to bring into effect in this State the appropriate National Security Regulations. It would be unwise for Parliament to refuse to carry out its ordinary work. If we do not pass this legislation, the Commonwealth Government will have to implement National Security Regulations to do the job. We would be very unwise to permit that to happen. Furthermore, this House is regarded as a stronghold of the landlords.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is not so.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: If we refuse to pass this legislation, that assumption, in the minds of many people, may be strengthened. I appeal to the House to do a fair thing by passing this Bill. I do not want any member to be misled by the false prophecies of speakers against the measure, because I feel sure that this legislation is definitely required and that if we do not provide it, the Commonwealth will act under its National Security Regulations.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why does the Commonwealth Government apply the National Security Regulations to Section 12 only?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot say. The amendment of which Mr. Cornell has given notice, in my opinion, is out of order because it is not relevant to the Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is relevant to the subject matter of the Bill.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Many landlords frown upon prospective tenants who have children. This is a matter of common knowledge. It has become the fashion with landlords to look for tenants who have no children and it is our duty to put a stop to that sort of thing. Mr. Wood spoke about a man with a large family looking for a furnished house, and how unfair it would be to let him have it. I think the hon. member was citing an extreme case.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No, you should see some of the destruction that is done.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The success of this legislation depends upon the administration, and I do not think any trouble need be feared on that score.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you know that the department never attempted to administer the Act?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know that it has been administered. In the Crown Law Department we have a special officer whose duty it is to assist both landlord and tenant.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But that is on the legal side.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He is there to give advice and help to both parties. Landlords need protection as well as do tenants. These three simple amendments are designed to protect a tenant who rents a house first let after the 31st August, 1939; to prevent the present practice by landlords of refusing to let houses to tenants with children, and to compel a landlord to keep a record of the rent received in respect of any premises let or leased. I do not think the difficulty foreshadowed by Mr. Seddon will occur. A tenant taking a new house and doubtful of the correct rent should be supplied with the information. This amendment will prevent the practice indulged in by some unscrupulous landlords. When a landlord is a man of good reputation, there will be no difficulty. Throughout the metropolitan area tenants have been paying ridiculously exorbitant rents for houses, furnished and unfurnished, and for rooms.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And for flats.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is our duty to legislate for these difficulties, and I ask members to ignore the opinions of those who have spoken in defence of the landlords. It is highly necessary that this legislation be passed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	12
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	4
				—

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. C. R. Cornish
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser

Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. T. Moore

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch
Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. V. Hamersley

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. F. E. Gibson
(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.
Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. M. Heenan

NOES.
Hon. J. G. Hisleop
Hon. H. L. Roche

Question thus negatived.
Bill defeated.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

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

MOTION—POTATO INDUSTRY.

As to Commonwealth Regulations.

Debate resumed from the 1st December on the following motion by Hon. H. V. Plesse—

That, in the opinion of this House, the suggested action of the Minister for Commerce to lift the regulations governing the sale of potatoes will cause chaotic conditions in the industry in this State and financial loss to the growers who, through the promise of controlled marketing and requirements of military supplies, were induced to sow potatoes, and, in many instances, to plant an increased area; and further, that the Government be asked to protest emphatically to the Prime Minister against the threatened action of the Minister for Commerce.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [3.12]: The action contemplated by the Minister for Commerce has been viewed with the greatest concern by the Department of Agriculture, so much so that it has already taken the required steps to protest to the Prime Minister. Likewise, the Australian Potato Committee has been approached and has protested to the Australian Potato Controller, Mr. A. C. Foster. A member of that committee has been in the Eastern States dealing with this and other matters affecting the industry, and so the House will realise that the department appreciates the seriousness of the position. Everything reported in the Press came to pass. So far as I know, there has been no official announcement as to the intention of the Minister for Commerce. Certainly his action would create a serious position; that is, if the newspaper reports prove to be correct.

Hon. L. Craig: Potatoes are being left undug now. Growers are refusing to dig them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: More particularly is this so in view of the fact that we have had a visit recently by the Australian Potato Controller and also the fact that the Deputy Potato Controller, Mr. Grogan, made announcements over the air three or four weeks ago intimating that there was not likely to be any alteration in the position as it was then known. Consequently, if we pass the motion, there is little more that can be done in view of the action already taken by the department.

Question put and passed.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the previous day of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. H. V. Piesse in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 59:

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I had intended to speak on the second reading of the Bill, but it seems I may achieve my object in Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: That depends on how far the hon. member goes.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I wish to amend Clause 2 so as to make it read as it stood upon the original introduction of the measure in another place. My desire is to insert words declaring that the question of exemption of any portion of an area shall be subject to the approval of the Minister. The relevant words were struck out on the motion of the Minister for Agriculture. The omission will result in injustice to many farmers. I know of a case where an area of less than 2,000 acres was subdivided by two cross roads, and a portion of the area was cut off from the main road wash-aways and the presence of salt. It was entirely unfair to require that farmer to net the whole of his area in order to secure a rebate.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: In introducing the Bill here, I referred to a property of 11,000 acres, of which 8,000 were on one side of the road and 3,000 on the other. Five thousand

acres of the property is fenced off with rabbit-proof netting, and under the Bill it will be impossible to get a rebate of the rate in respect of any portion of those 5,000 acres. There are many small properties which will fall under the same disability. I support Mr. Bolton.

HON. L. CRAIG: At present any person having a holding must rabbit-proof the whole area before he can get a rebate of his vermin rate from the road board. Mr. Bolton's proposal is that any portion of a holding that is thus netted shall be exempt from the vermin rate imposed by the road board. The Minister should not come into the matter at all. Under existing circumstances one must sometimes fence much useless land in order to obtain exemption in respect of good land. Let the rebate be automatic.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Mr. Bolton should move the amendments he has suggested. There must be someone to sit in judgment as regards any portion of a property that is to be exempted. If the rebate is warranted, the Minister will approve. The department will not allow any rebate, and neither will a road board.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The sponsor of the Bill would be well advised to stick to his Bill. The objection to Mr. Bolton's suggested amendment is that it anticipates that untold difficulties will ensue.

Hon. L. Craig: What rubbish!

The HONORARY MINISTER: The suggestion is that the matter will occasion dispute among members of road boards.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: A principle is at stake, but I am unable to visualise such an amendment being accepted elsewhere.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I want the clause to read as it read originally.

The CHAIRMAN: Such an amendment should be easy to draft.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If a man is prepared to rabbit-net any portion of his property, that netted portion should be exempt from vermin rates. That is what the original Bill provided. Why the matter should be referred to a Minister I cannot imagine. It has nothing to do with the Government.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Did the original Bill provide for that?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No. Mr. Bolton suggests that should be put in. I see no reason

for it. The Act should give that exemption automatically if a portion is fenced. The amendments as set out in the original Bill submitted to another place provided all that is required.

Sitting suspended from 3.32 to 3.58 p.m.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am rather interested in the view expressed by Mr. Craig but I would like further enlightenment. He mentioned that this provision should apply automatically, but if that is so, who will settle any dispute that may arise? The road board might levy a rate applying to the whole of a man's holding, but the farmer may contend that he has fenced a certain section of it. An argument may arise and who will decide the issue?

Hon. L. CRAIG: He will have the land enclosed.

Hon. G. FRASER: But unless there is something more specific, I think there will be trouble.

Hon. L. CRAIG: What happens in practice is that a man may have 1,000 acres and may fence a portion of the holding. He then goes to the road board secretary and says, "I have fenced 400 acres. Will you exempt that portion from the vermin rate?" It is a question of measuring up the land and saying what acreage is fenced. If a board has any doubt about the matter, it can instruct its vermin inspector to verify the farmer's statement. It costs from £90 to £100 per mile to rabbit-net land. That is an expensive proposition, and therefore a farmer will not rush in to save a small amount of vermin rates by paying for miles of rabbit-proof netting. Farmers who net are careful and diligent. If they erect a fence, they will see that it is maintained in excellent order.

Hon. T. MOORE: Mr. Fraser raised a point that may be alarming. There are arguments at road board meetings, but I would point out that ratepayers have a right of appeal. After all, an officer of the board could easily check any information given to the board with respect to rabbit-proof netting; consequently there will not be any argument in that respect.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the country members are satisfied, I am.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (a) the word "such" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 of paragraph (a) the words "as comprises the whole of the land in one or more titles" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 of paragraph (b) the words "comprises the whole of the land in one or more titles and" be struck out.

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

Clauses 3 to 6, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—LOAN, £310,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.11] in moving the second reading said: This is an important Bill by which it is proposed to consolidate and amend the law relating to the prevention and extinguishing of fires and the protection of life and property from fire. The Bill is presented in a consolidated form at the request of the W.A. Fire Brigades Board, and the opportunity is taken to incorporate in it several amendments deemed necessary for the proper and efficient conduct of fire brigade matters. Minor amendments have been made to this legislation in recent years; but with the trend towards modern fire brigade methods, it is now necessary that some action be taken for a proper overhaul of the legislation. Some of the proposed amendments are framed in accordance with Eastern States legislation.

One of the most important proposals in the Bill is that which provides that all municipal and road districts in the metropolitan area—which districts are detailed in the Second Schedule to the Bill—shall be united as one district to be known as the Metropolitan Fire District. Another important provision is that the amount to be contributed by local authorities embraced in a united fire district shall be apportioned between them in the ratio of the water supply authority's annual values within their respective districts. Under the present Act,

the 21 contributing local authorities in the metropolitan area are divided into no fewer than 10 fire districts. Three are separate fire districts, the other eighteen local authorities being divided into seven different small fire districts.

In these united districts the contribution is apportioned in such a manner as is mutually agreed upon. In case of disagreement, the contribution is determined by the Minister. Where mutual agreement is made, the apportionment has been fixed upon such divergent methods as the respective municipal annual values, the respective populations and flat rates. There are many reasons why these two suggested proposals should be brought into operation, namely—

(1) For practical fire protection and extinction purposes the board already deals with the whole of the metropolitan area as if such were only one fire district, and not comprised of several.

(2) A fire brigade knows no boundary when fires have to be extinguished. With its appliances it may, and often does, proceed from its own district to another in the metropolitan area to render assistance at fires. This is authorised by Regulation No. 71 made under the Fire Brigades Act, 1916. If a large fire occurs in Perth, suburban brigades are called upon for assistance. If a fire happens in one district and that particular district's brigade is away at the time fighting another fire, then another district fire brigade would be called in to attend to the fire.

(3) The board considers, as a matter of equity, that if the metropolitan area is dealt with as a united fire district for fire protection and extinction, it should be similarly treated in the matter of fire brigade rating.

(4) The cost involved in erecting a new fire station, or appointing additional permanent firemen, falls very heavily on the local authorities contributing to the district concerned. Such fire protection improvements benefit the metropolitan district as a whole. If such costs were spread amongst all the local authorities in the metropolitan area, the increase to each would be relatively small, and the board would not have to disapprove or defer improvements solely because of the financial aspect upon certain contributories.

The proposal for a united fire district is one which the Fire Brigades Board has advocated for many years. This is the first occasion on which an opportunity has been given to the Legislature to give effect to that desire, which is in accordance with the methods followed by other metropolitan areas in the Commonwealth.

(5) United metropolitan fire districts exist both in Melbourne and Sydney. Both those cities are larger than our metropolitan area. In those States this system is working equitably and efficiently.

There is a clause in the Bill by which it is proposed to give the Fire Brigades Board the necessary power to make charges for attending grass and rubbish fires. Members know of their own knowledge that in recent years numbers of grass and rubbish fires have occurred throughout the metropolitan area. Unfortunately, the Act does not contain any authority empowering the board to make charges for its services in these directions. Another important amendment deals with the constitution of the Fire Brigades Board. There is a proposal in the Bill that the membership of the board shall be increased from nine to ten, and that the insurance companies shall have a greater representation on the board by increasing the number of the companies' representatives from two to three.

It will be remembered that in the amending legislation which was passed last session, insurance companies were called upon to make a larger contribution towards the expenditure of the Fire Brigades Board. That Bill provided that the insurance companies' contribution should be increased from 3/8ths to 5/9ths, whilst local authorities were reduced from 3/8ths to 2/9ths, and the Government's contribution from 2/8ths to 2/9ths. In view of the increase in the insurance companies' contribution, it is considered that they are entitled to increased representation. In order to avoid a possibility of a complete change of personnel following an election of board members, it has been suggested that the term of office of certain members be staggered. At present all members retire on the same day. The Bill, therefore, provides that half of the members of the board shall retire on the 31st December, 1944, and the other half on the 31st December, 1945. This procedure is considered preferable as it will result in the continuity of office of half of the members of the board who will have at least a year's experience in fire brigade matters.

The same proposal was put forward in this Chamber when dealing with another board. Members will agree that it is desirable that in a board of this kind we should have continuity of policy which can only be assured provided that all members of the board do not retire at the same time. The board comprises representatives of various sections of the community. The Government has two representatives, the local authorities have a representative, the

Perth City Council is represented, and also the country local authorities, together with the volunteer fire brigades and the insurance companies. A perusal of Clause 9 will indicate the method by which it is proposed that representatives of the various interests comprising the board shall retire in rotation.

Regarding board fees, an aggregate amount of £250 per annum is at present paid to the board of nine members. The Bill proposes that the members of the board shall be entitled to receive remuneration at rates to be prescribed from time to time by regulation, provided that the total amount which shall be paid to all members in any one year shall not exceed the sum of £550 in the aggregate. It is considered that this will be commensurate with the duties required to be performed, and that it is more in keeping with fees paid to members of other instrumentalities. Accident compensation, whilst members are on board duties, is also prescribed in the Bill.

Clause 33 sets out the general duties and powers of the Chief Officer of Fire Brigades. The provisions of the existing Act have been adhered to, except for one amendment, and this provides that the Chief Officer of Fire Brigades shall, at all reasonable times, have free access to any premises, and if, in his opinion, there exists in or on any premises any potential danger to life or property from fire, he may direct or order the owner or occupier to abate such danger within such reasonable time as is named in the requisition made. Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of such a requisition shall be liable on conviction to a penalty not exceeding £50. It is highly desirable that the chief officer should have this power. Any person aggrieved by any requisition may, within seven days after receipt of the order, appeal to a magistrate. At the present time the chief officer can only report to the several authorities on these potential dangers. No power is provided for enforcing compliance with his requirements. It is considered necessary that this amendment be included in the Bill so that the board can fully discharge its duties to protect life and property from fire.

Dealing with the installation of fire hydrants, provision is made in the measure whereby the Fire Brigades Board can order a local authority to establish necessary hydrants at specified locations. These

hydrants are necessary for the proper functioning of the brigades' work and great difficulty has sometimes been experienced in convincing certain local authorities of their need. There is a provision that any person having an insurable interest in property situated within fire districts, which property is not insured against fire with a contributing insurance company, shall himself be deemed to be an insurance company for the purposes of the Act. This relates mainly to oversea owners of local property insured with oversea insurance firms, and the provision is inserted in the Bill in order that these owners shall not avoid their responsibility for local fire protection. There are several other amendments in the Bill, most of which are of a minor nature and these can be explained, if necessary, when the Bill is being dealt with in Committee.

This measure is long overdue. For many years the Fire Brigades Board in this State has functioned successfully within the provisions of the Act as it stands today, but there have been several directions in which it has been inconvenienced, and in some cases embarrassed, because it did not have sufficient authority to function as it should. Fire protection is a most important duty, particularly in a country such as Western Australia, and more especially in the metropolitan area. It is not necessary for me to speak at length on the fire risk that exists at all times in the city, but more particularly during the summer months. We are fortunate in that Perth has been comparatively free from large conflagrations. A good deal of credit can be given to the administration of the Fire Brigades Board, and particularly to the fire brigade itself, from the Chief Officer down, for the fact that we have been so free from serious fires. In conclusion I assert that the amendments included in this Bill are essential for the proper functioning of the Fire Brigades Board, and if this House agrees to them, as I feel sure it will, they will lead to greater efficiency in the prevention of fire in this State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan): Many clauses of this Bill will be carefully considered in Committee. I do not propose to speak at any great length on the measure, but I wish to congratulate the Government on bringing it down for the purpose of con-

solidating the Fire Brigades Act. Generally it will be received with satisfaction. In one or two instances, local authorities—those that under the new conditions will have their costs slightly increased—will, of course, not be nearly so happy as those that, from the same cause, have had their costs reduced. But we can readily understand that any Bill which overhauls an Act as this one does must cause disadvantage to some and advantage to others. I feel sure that this House will pass the Bill almost without alteration. The inclusion of the war costs clause is one, of course, that makes the measure from the point of view of this Chamber quite satisfactory because on a recent occasion we had quite a long discussion on that phase. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): Having been a member of the Fire Brigades Board for many years, I have naturally taken a great deal of interest in its work. During the debate on the Bill of last year, I referred to a matter regarding which only a few weeks ago I received a further communication. About six years ago the British Government appointed Lord Riverdale as a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the matter of fire brigades. I had the privilege of furnishing him with full particulars of our Western Australian system, and although it may appear somewhat in the nature of the mouse helping the lion, he was good enough to say that it had been of great service to him because it had shown the disadvantages of divided authority and lack of uniformity in equipment. Whereas in England one town could render very little assistance to a fire brigade in a neighbouring centre, because of this lack of uniformity, here in Western Australia, notwithstanding our scattered areas, we had reached a high measure of uniformity of control and an adequate measure of uniformity in equipment. Following on Lord Riverdale's report the British Parliament passed a new fire brigades measure, and it was passed just in time. It meant that uniformity of equipment and authority was established, and for those reasons the fire brigades in England were able to give great assistance to mitigate damage caused by raids, which would have been quite impossible had the conditions that prevailed only half-a-dozen years ago still continued.

There is only one feature of the Bill to which I shall refer. Last session I took some interest in the financial provisions of the Bill, and I am glad to see that this Bill preserves the proviso inserted by this House excluding from the annual assessment moneys spent for special equipment for the prevention of war damage. Whatever justification there may have been for that amendment last year, it is strengthened tenfold this year because we now have a body known as the War Damage Commission. A few days ago I asked the Chief Secretary whether the Government would consider the advisableness of making representations to the Commonwealth Government with a view to securing some reduction of the rate charged for the compulsory insurance of property against war risks. A rate of 4 per cent. is charged on all real property throughout Australia. The Chief Secretary was good enough to say that the matter would be taken into consideration, and I am quite willing to leave it at that. Although no balance sheet has been published—probably one will be published in due time—we know that by the collection of the compulsory 4s. insurance an enormous fund has been built up. The proceeds of the fund have for the time being been applied in the only possible way, namely, in contributions to the war loan, but the time has arrived when that compulsory charge might well be reduced.

Meanwhile there should be no question whatever that out of that fund, and not from any local governing authority, the insurers or the State Government, should come all the money necessary to further the equipment of the fire brigades in order that they may be in a position to deal with war damage. There cannot be a shadow of argument against that, and I hope the State Government will see that neither it, the local authorities nor the insurers are charged for this expenditure. When we have a Commonwealth fund and when millions of money have been taken compulsorily from the people of Australia to provide that fund, any necessary portion should be available for strengthening the fire brigade resources so that we might be able to mitigate any damage arising from war causes.

HON. F. E. GIBSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of members. It has been my privilege to be a member of the Fire Brigades Board for a number of years,

and this measure is the realisation of the desires and experience of the last few years. The full explanation given by the Minister makes it unnecessary to deal with the measure in detail, but I can understand that there might be some concern at legislation calling for a further impost on one section of the community while others are getting some relief. Those who get relief receive it gladly, but those who pay more are not so pleased.

I have received a communication from one of the local authorities in the metropolitan area, the only one to raise much objection to the Bill. I feel sure that when this measure has been in operation for a little time the benefit that will accrue to that local authority, in common with others, will compensate for any little money it has to provide to meet the added expenditure that will be called for under the Bill. The Chief Secretary has directed attention to the lack of fire-fighting facilities in that particular area. This has been a question of great concern to me and had it been possible to provide the money, the fire-fighting equipment and personnel in that district would have been increased. It is said that this is a residential area, but I have a list showing large and important buildings. I do not intend to weary the House by reading it. I am convinced time will prove that this is a most equitable measure for providing the money to meet the expense incurred in maintaining our fire brigades and will be accepted by the district to which I have referred, and that eventually no fault will be found with the Bill.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West): The introduction of the Bill marks an important period in the history of fire brigades in this State. Rarely do we have a Bill of more than 70 clauses containing so little matter that might be described as contentious. The compilation of this measure has been the work of men who have given earnest consideration to fire brigade work in this State for many years. They have been men imbued with aspirations and ambitions. I have heard on occasion executive officers complain that, but for the lack of authority in the existing Act, considerable progress might have been made. There is very little in the Bill to which exception could be taken. I support the remarks of Sir Hal Colebatch regarding war damage. It is a wrong prin-

ciple that the whole of the contributions made to war damage should be directed to channels other than that of assisting to provide for any damage that might possibly occur. We hope it never will occur, but provision should be made to meet this contingency, and if heavy expenses have to be faced, the fund should be available for portion of the finance needed by the fire brigades.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West): I support the second reading. I regret that the introduction of a Bill of more than 70 clauses should have been deferred until the last few days of our sitting. There is not time to do justice to the measure in one day, and I hope it will not be taken into Committee this afternoon. There are some clauses on which I desire information. I cannot agree that there should be a provision for compulsory insurance, but I understand that everyone in this area will have to insure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Interpretation:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am anxious to make progress with the Bill, and the fact that it contains a large number of clauses is a reason for proceeding as far as we can this afternoon. Should there be any clause on which Mr. Tuckey desires time for consideration, I will agree to postpone it so long as there is a real necessity for that being done. This is a consolidating measure and most of the clauses are taken from the existing Act. Consequently there can be little contention regarding them. As to the amendments, if I have not given sufficient explanation I will be pleased to supplement it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 73, First, Second, Third and Fourth Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—NATIONAL EMERGENCY (STOCKS OF GOODS).

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a war-time measure. Its purpose is to authorise the execution by the Treasurer of this State of agreements in connection with the provision of emergency stocks distributed throughout the State. It also seeks to ratify an agreement already entered into in this connection, and to provide for exemption from stamp duty in respect of the agreements concerned.

Members are no doubt aware that the various States of the Commonwealth have been authorised by regulations under the National Security Act to set up Emergency Reserve Stock Committees to control and regulate the supply of emergency reserve stocks of essential foodstuffs, and that such a committee has been established in this State. Recently the Minister for Agriculture circulated amongst members a confidential memorandum in which he detailed the widespread nature of the work carried out by that committee—work in a national scheme to protect the civilian population. The emergency stocks of goods which have been placed in certain depots throughout the country have been supplied mainly by wholesalers with their own capital, and so long as these stocks remain as emergency supplies they are still the property of the suppliers. Subject to the decision of the Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee, these stocks, or portion thereof, may be released to retailers for sale to the public. Losses in the value of these goods must be expected. Deterioration must take place, and deteriorated goods must of course be eventually sold at reduced prices. I think it will be realised that it would be unjust to compel suppliers to bear any financial loss in this connection. Then again, by reason of the fact that these goods must remain as emergency stocks for long periods, it must be obvious that financial accommodation in connection with their purchase by the wholesalers must involve them in interest charges.

In consideration of this, the Commonwealth Government has empowered the Commonwealth Bank to make an agreement with each State for the purpose of ensuring that the wholesalers shall not suffer losses through the supplies made available, and that the in-

terest charges shall be paid jointly by the Commonwealth and the State concerned. Under that agreement the Commonwealth is to meet two-thirds of the interest due, and the State one-third, up to a maximum of 4 per cent. on the money which the wholesalers have to find to purchase the additional goods for emergency stock purposes. The terms of the agreement are set out in the appendix to the Bill; and whilst it was thought sufficiently binding on both parties not to require the ratification of Parliament, the local manager of the Commonwealth Bank states that the branches of the Commonwealth Bank in all the Australian States are asking for the agreement in each instance to be ratified by the State Parliament concerned. Accordingly, the Commonwealth Bank's wishes in this respect are being met by the submission of this Bill. The agreement was signed on the 5th March of this year, and it has been operating since that date.

It is pointed out that the Commonwealth Bank has gone ahead, without any delay, with the financing of any supplies of these emergency stocks so that they will be available at the earliest possible date at the various depots throughout Western Australia. The Bill, in addition to asking Parliament to ratify the agreement already made, seeks the necessary authority to authorise the Treasurer to enter into any further agreement which might be required in the future, under the National Security (Emergency Supplies) Regulations. That is a brief explanation of this plain and simple measure, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—BUSINESS NAMES.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [5.2] in moving the second reading said: The Bill provides for the registration of firms, individuals and corporations operating under business names, and for the improvement of the existing Act so as to enable the public

to obtain better and more reliable information as to the persons carrying on business under business names. Opportunity is taken under the Bill to consolidate and bring up to date the existing law in relation to the registration of firms, which was passed as far back as 1897. Since that date only one amending Bill has been submitted to and been passed by Parliament. That was in 1940, its purpose being to prohibit the use and registration of a firm-name containing words such as "Commonwealth," "State," "Crown," "Empire," "Royal," and so on, without the consent of the Governor.

The effectiveness of that amendment, however, has been nullified to some extent by the shortcomings of the Act as it stands, and when it is realised that that legislation was passed in 1897, and that business practices and principles have advanced over the past 40 years, I think it will be conceded that there is every justification for some action to be taken to amend the law to meet present-day requirements. Rather than attempt to do this by piece-meal amendments, the Government decided to introduce a new measure repealing the original Act and at the same time retaining the provisions of the 1940 amending legislation in substantially the same form. Most of the proposals in the Bill have been based on legislation in the Eastern States where action has been taken in recent years to amend the law in this connection, and it is pointed out that the provisions of this Bill will come into operation on a date to be fixed by proclamation, not earlier than the 1st January, 1944.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the idea of that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is an amendment which was inserted in another place to give persons or firms an opportunity of reviewing their position and complying with the provisions of the measure. The Bill lays down the necessary procedure which must be followed by every firm, individual or corporation required to be registered. Under the Bill firms already registered under the Act will be protected so far as that registration is concerned, but with the object of bringing the registration up to date they will be obliged to re-register within 12 months of the commencement of the provisions in the Bill.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And pay another fee?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, the fee has been altered. Subject to this, a registration shall continue for a term of three years, and prior to the termination of that period and each successive period of three years a new registration shall be effected. Re-registration will entail no hardship, as the fee is only a nominal one of 5s. Specific cases are detailed in the Bill where registration is not necessary, such as where the addition to the name of the proprietor merely indicates that the business is carried on in succession to a former owner of the business. The penalty provided for non-registration has been made more severe in the Bill than under the existing Act. This brings the penalty into conformity with that applying in other States, and is a means of inducing persons to comply with the requirements of the Act.

There is a provision that an individual registered under a name, not including his surname, shall display his surname, together with at least the initials of his christian name outside his place of business. It is also provided that where the business name of the firm does not include the surname of one of the partners, the names of the individual members of the firm must be displayed outside the premises. This is to enable persons doing business with firms operating under business names, to know with whom they are dealing, if they require the information, without being forced to search a register at the Supreme Court. This particular provision is framed on the relevant section of the New South Wales Act.

People can be misled by the name of a firm and might find too late that the proprietors are persons with whom they do not wish to have any business dealings. Those who trade under a name other than their own usually choose a title which they think will attract business. There are some undesirable people trading under names not their own, just as there are many people who trade in a fair and proper way. One of the objects of this legislation is to prevent trading which deceives the public. There are few firms which have more than three or four members, and no person should be ashamed of having his name outside his place of business.

Machinery is set up under the Bill for the purging of the existing register, which contains a very large number of extinct firms whose names have accumulated since 1897.

Provision has also been made whereby the register may be kept free of defunct firms in the future. The urgent need for the purging of the register is occasioned by the fact that since the commencement of the Act approximately 25,000 registrations have taken place. It is estimated that at least two-thirds of these comprise firms which are no longer in business. There is a huge number of firms which ceased business without the knowledge of the Companies' Office, with the consequence that anybody searching the register is unable to ascertain whether a firm is still in existence or whether a registered firm-name is still being used.

Many popular firm-names now probably in disuse cannot be allowed to applicants because they cannot prove, as required under the Act, that the firm already registered under that name has ceased to carry on business for more than 12 months. Any person, firm or corporation ceasing to carry on business or abandoning the use of a business name under which he or it is registered, will be obliged under the Bill to notify that fact to the Registrar so that registration may be cancelled. There are many other provisions in the Bill, most of which are of a machinery nature.

The Bill should not be regarded as being of a controversial nature, and, as I said at the outset, its provisions will not come into operation until a date to be fixed by proclamation, but not earlier than the 1st January, 1944. I would remind the House that, arising from the fact that there has been no amendment of the Act since 1897, apart from the small alteration in 1940 to which I referred earlier, it is extremely difficult at present to know where we stand in regard to persons trading under firm-names. Consequently the Bill will be of great advantage to business people and the public generally. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): I am not offering any opposition to the Bill. There are good reasons for the arguments advanced by the Chief Secretary. He has told us that the explanation of the proposal not to make the Bill operative before 1944 is that business people may adapt themselves to the provisions of the Bill. That is an excellent reason. But if the measure is passed now, the provisions will apply and could not be altered without an amend-

ing Act. I do not pretend to say that there is a single thing in the Bill that is not right. But it is of sufficient importance to the business community for that community to have an opportunity to express an opinion, and I ask the Chief Secretary if there is any good and sufficient reason why further consideration of the measure should not be postponed until after the Christmas adjournment.

Personal Explanation.

The Chief Secretary: So far as I know, there is no reason why the Bill should not be agreed to at the present time. It cannot come into operation until the 1st January, 1944.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Has the business community, through the Chamber of Commerce or any other authority, expressed an opinion on the provisions of the Bill?

The Chief Secretary: The Bill has been before another place for a considerable time and so far I have not heard of any objection being raised by anybody interested. One of the reasons submitted for delaying the proclamation is that the business community, and even those people not complying with the existing Act—and there are quite a number of them—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Is the Chief Secretary closing the debate or making a personal explanation?

The President: I understand the Chief Secretary is closing the debate. I expected there would be other speeches.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I thought the Chief Secretary was making a personal explanation.

The Chief Secretary: If I may, I will make it a personal explanation, in order to give the hon. member an opportunity to speak to the Bill if he so desires.

Debate Resumed.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East): I have been trying to wade through the Bill to see what it means. I had not gone very far before I found it was going to be difficult for business people. It is not the simple Bill the Chief Secretary would have us believe. It is not to be proclaimed till January, 1944. People engaged in commerce—I can speak particularly for myself—would like to go through the measure before it is placed on the statute-book. It is all right to say we

will have an opportunity to amend it. We may not. The matter could very well stand over till January to give us an opportunity to digest the Bill thoroughly. I do not feel disposed to agree to the second reading now. I suggest the Chief Secretary allow it to stand over until tomorrow at least. I will be perfectly satisfied then. I have had no opportunity to consider it fully. So far as I have gone I am not satisfied with some of the clauses which deal with commercial life.

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

House adjourned at 5.16 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 9th December, 1942.

SELECT COMMITTEE—RAILWAYS, MR. WATTS'S INVENTIONS.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. McDonald, the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee was extended for two weeks.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS [11.5] in moving the second reading said: The necessity for the introduction of this measure has been brought about because of the closing by the Commonwealth of certain banks in country towns and districts. This has rendered mortgagors of those banks liable to pay stamp duty and fees in respect of mortgages to the banks which are taking over the securities. Such amounts might well reach a considerable sum. After the passing of certain National Security orders applying to manpower, and after certain institutions had been closed, an approach was made to the Government by the Bankers' Association. Members will recall that the member for Pingelly mentioned the matter in this Chamber. Correspondence has taken place between the Government and the Associated Banks with regard to facilitating these transactions. As I said, certain stamp duties would be payable, as well as fees for registration of mortgages, etc.

It is the Government's intention to charge only the Titles Office fees for the registration of mortgages or transfers of mortgages. The stamp duty on a transfer of mortgage is 1s. per £100; the stamp duty on a mortgage is 2s. 6d. per £100, while the duty on a collateral mortgage is 6d. per £100. The Government has no wish to take advantage of the difficulties in which mortgagors in country districts find themselves, and it has therefore decided, as I have said, to waive the stamp duty on these documents and to charge simply for the actual work done by the Titles Office. Each banking institution has a different mortgage form. The form used by the Bank of New South Wales differs from that used by the Union Bank and the National Bank. It is, therefore, necessary to take fresh mortgages. Members will notice that the Bill pro-

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

PRIVILEGE—NEW SOUTH WALES STATUTES.

Mr. Seward and Missing Volume.

MR. SEWARD: I would draw your attention to the fact, Sir, that the 1941 volume of the New South Wales Statutes is not to be found in the House. It contains the Coal Miners' Pensions Act of New South Wales. I draw your attention to this matter because someone may have taken the volume from the House and may have finished with it, but not yet returned it.

MR. SPEAKER: Inquiries will be made.