

other purpose would be to pay it into the current account of the local authority for ordinary purposes. What need is there for obtaining the Minister's authority to do something that must be done—put the money in its proper resting place? The Minister's proposal would involve much extra work, and at a time when the public interest demands that all such work should be minimised.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 6, Subclause (2):—Delete the words "according as the Minister may direct" in line 23, on page 3.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment is similar to the previous one, and I move —

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 8:—Delete paragraph (b).

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members of another place cannot have read the Bill, or they would not have moved for the deletion of this paragraph.

Mr. Doney: The Minister has no right to say that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If it is deleted, then there is no authority to withdraw any money from the funds. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. DONEY: If the paragraph were excised and the question of reference to the Minister for his authority had not been raised, then by reason of that very fact the local authority would simply draw on the fund as required.

The Minister for Works: The Bill gives no authority other than this for drawing from the fund.

Mr. DONEY: In the normal course of accountancy, money would be withdrawn from the fund.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Minister for Works, Mr. Doney and Mr. Withers drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

House adjourned at 6.29 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1942.

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

QUESTION—WAR RISK INSURANCE.

As to Commonwealth Charge.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Government consider the advisableness of making representations to the Commonwealth Government in favour of a reduction of the rate charged for the compulsory insurance of property against war risks?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [2.20]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session, the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, at 11 a.m.

In moving the motion, I do not wish it to be understood that it will be absolutely necessary for the House to sit during the hours on each of the days mentioned. If the motion is agreed to and the situation is such that it will be necessary for us to sit longer than we have been sitting, then we shall be able to do so without having to move that the Standing Orders be suspended.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): I am not raising any objection to the motion, but I hope the Chief Secretary will cur-

tail the sittings of the House as much as possible so that we may keep to our normal hours. Members living in the country are so situated that if we must sit on Friday afternoon it will be impossible for us to return home for the week-end. Again, it will be rather inconvenient for country members to sit in the morning, as we have other work to do then. If necessary, arrangements might be made to sit later on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, as late as members care to sit. I am sure the House would be willing to sit on through the evening; we could pull the blinds down in order to meet black-out conditions. I hope members will take notice of my comments.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East): I am in agreement with the attitude adopted by Mr. Craig. I find it difficult enough even now to attend to what might be termed the departmental work that country members are called upon to do for their constituents and at the same time attend the sittings of the House. I am prepared to accept the alternative suggested by Mr. Craig, that we should continue the sittings to a somewhat later hour. If the intention is to try to get through our business in order that Parliament may adjourn, then I think it would be better to sit a day or two the week after next rather than attend here from 11 in the morning and devote practically all Friday to the business of the House. Many country members have duties connected with the affairs of their constituents which could not be satisfactorily discharged in the time that would be available to us. I would also suggest to the Chief Secretary that, if it is workable, the House might adjourn at about 5 o'clock for half an hour so that members could have afternoon tea in order to sustain them. The sittings could then be resumed and carried on till 8 or 8.30 p.m. Almost any alternative is preferable, from my point of view, to having to devote virtually the whole of Friday to the business of the House.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (6)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Road Closure.
- 2, Reserves.
- 3, West Australian Meat Export Works.
- 4, Death Duties (Taxing) Act Amendment.

Passed.

5, Evidence Act Amendment.

6, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES (RESERVE FUNDS).

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—INCOME AND ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (WAR TIME SUSPENSION).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [2.31] in moving the second reading said: This Bill suspends the collection of State taxes payable under the Income Tax (Rates for Deduction) Act, the Income Tax Act, the Gold Mining Profits Tax Act, the Hospital Fund (Contributions) Act, and the Entertainments Tax Act, the last mentioned as from the 1st October, 1942. The necessity for this measure is occasioned by the action of the Commonwealth Government in passing an Income Tax (War Time Arrangements) Act which gave the Commonwealth the power to collect all State and Commonwealth income tax under one Act for the duration of the war and twelve months thereafter.

Members are aware that this State opposed the action of the Commonwealth and was a party to the case before the High Court of Australia to test the validity of the Commonwealth legislation. The decision of the High Court was given in favour of the Commonwealth. The State could, of course, still continue to operate a State income tax, but that would only act to the detriment of our own State taxpayers because they would have to pay the full amount of the tax assessed by the Commonwealth in addition to any State tax that might be levied. A refusal by the State to adopt the Commonwealth scheme and thereby carry on with the provisions of its own taxation laws would have meant the forfeiture by the State of its right to reimbursement from the Commonwealth of an amount of £2,546,000, representing the average tax collected by the State for the two years ended the 30th June, 1942.

In these circumstances, the Government is now taking the required legislative action for the suspension of the taxation measures

referred to for the duration of the war and twelve months thereafter and at the same time retaining to itself the right under the various Acts concerned to charge and collect taxes due to the 30th June, 1942. It will be noted that each Act is dealt with in a separate clause, the first relating to the Income Tax (Rates for Deduction) Act, which provides for the collection of tax by weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments deductions from wages and salaries. The next clause deals with the Income Tax Act, which is the taxing Act and is passed by Parliament each year. Clause 4 relates to the Entertainments Tax Act which was a tax on entertainment tickets and payable at the source. It will be found on perusal of this clause that the commencing date for the period of suspension is the 1st October, 1942, that being the date on which the State agreed to waive its rights to charge taxation in this respect. The Commonwealth only came into this field of taxation at the date mentioned, and the States agreed to the Commonwealth's imposing an entertainments tax heavier than that which was then in existence, the Commonwealth Government undertaking to pay to the States the average tax collected by the States for the last two financial years.

The amount to be paid to Western Australia is approximately £98,000 per annum. For this financial year we shall receive the tax collected by the State under its own Act to the 31st October, 1942, and for the remaining nine months of the year we will receive nine-twelfths of the average amount of £98,000. The Gold Mining Profits Tax Act by which taxation was imposed on the profits of goldmining companies, is the subject of Clause 5. Finally, the Bill deals with the Hospital Fund (Contributions) Act, which was passed for the purpose of imposing a tax of 1½d. in the pound on all wages, salaries and income earned each year. In the case of wages and salaries the tax was deducted at each pay period. The necessity for the measure is regrettable, but we have no alternative to agreeing to it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): When will Australia cease to be at war? This measure is to continue in operation to a specified date after His Majesty ceases to be engaged in the present war, and no lon-

ger. I have noticed that at the Convention now sitting in Canberra, the term used is "until active hostilities cease." It might be well to define exactly what we mean by "the end of the war"; otherwise we shall have various Acts terminating at different times. If "the end of the war" does not mean until active hostilities cease, the term might cover quite a long period. I like the term employed by the Convention. That gives a definite time, whereas the signing of peace might be delayed for some years. The term used in this Bill will probably conflict with that to be used in the measure now being drafted to confer certain powers on the Commonwealth. The Minister should consider the matter with a view to securing uniformity.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): It is rather late in the day for Mr. Craig to raise this question. Speaking as Chairman of Committees, I think members will find that at least half-a-dozen measures that have been enacted refer definitely to "the end of the war." What is meant by "active hostilities"? As I understand the situation, a war occurs and is followed by an armistice. If the previous war is any criterion, active hostilities ceased at 11 a.m. on the 11th November, 1918. Then came the interregnum between the opening of the Peace Conference and the conclusion of its deliberations, and then there was a further space to give the vanquished an opportunity to say whether they were prepared to accept the terms of the Peace Conference. The whole matter was not cleared up until at least three years after hostilities ceased, and I think that the Principality of Monaco is still at war with Germany. To attempt to adopt specific words would be futile. One or two Acts contain these words, but the sensible way of expressing our intention is to provide that our legislation shall end within a certain time of the Governor-General issuing a proclamation that war has ceased. We shall be at war officially until the Governor-General issues such a proclamation.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East): There is a good deal in Mr. Craig's contention. For a considerable time I have urged that provision should be made for measures to terminate within a certain period of the cessation of hostilities. If we employ the term "the end of the war" it might mean

a period of 15 or 20 years. When we reflect on the trouble that occurred after the 1914-18 war, how can anyone visualise what will happen on this occasion? Matters then took a lot of clearing up; in fact, some were never cleared up. This time there has been a tremendous expansion in the scope of the war. There are 26 nations on the Allied side and several on the other side, and to resolve on the conditions of peace will involve much trouble. Much water will run under the bridge before that is accomplished.

Hon. J. Cornell: Whatever our legislation says, we shall be at war so long as Britain is at war.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We are legislating for Western Australia. The Convention which is considering the question of granting further powers to the Commonwealth is proposing a period of five years "after hostilities cease." That is the correct term to use. Mr. Craig is certainly on the right track, except that, so far as I can remember, the Commonwealth legislation dealing with income tax extends over a certain period "after the war." It will be of no use amending this Bill, which will have to agree with the Commonwealth Act, because the State would not impose such taxation while uniform taxation was being collected from the people by the Commonwealth authorities. We shall have to retain the term in the Bill so that our legislation will agree with the Commonwealth Act.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (in reply): I am afraid we cannot at present do anything in connection with the matter raised by Mr. Craig. This legislation is necessitated by the action of the Commonwealth Parliament. Our legislation must be strictly in accordance with the over-riding powers of the Commonwealth. It is just as well Mr. Craig has raised the point. It has been exercising the minds of most Governments dealing with legislation of this kind. As pointed out by members, the Convention of State Premiers and Commonwealth representatives only yesterday had a long discussion on this very subject. Whether they have solved the point satisfactorily or not remains to be seen. So far as this or any other State legislation that has been introduced this session is concerned, it must be in conformity with the Commonwealth enactment. Any date that is decided upon by the Commonwealth as

being the date when its legislation shall cease must necessarily be the date when this particular legislation will cease. We might hold varying opinions on the subject, but I am afraid we cannot do very much about it at present.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

To Revoke Dedication.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution:—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State forests Nos. 27, 29, 30, 36 and 49, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Lieut. Governor on the 1st December, 1942, be carried out.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMEND- MENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [2.50] in moving the second reading said: This, in my opinion, is an important Bill because it has relation to the general well-being and health of our community. It provides for several amendments to the Medical Act, and the majority of the amendments deal with the composition, powers and duties of the Medical Board, which board was constituted under the Act passed as far back as 1894, since when only one amending Bill has been introduced and passed. That particular amending Bill provided for the registration of alien doctors under certain conditions. It will be realised that legislation passed in 1894 is certainly due for revision.

The Public Health Department, in consultation with the Medical Board, has decided that the existing Act should be brought up to date in the interests of the community as a whole and of the medical profession. The Act provides that the Medical Board shall consist of not less than three nor more than seven medical practitioners, one of whom shall be the president, who shall be nominated from time to time by the Governor-in-Council and shall be ex-officio chairman. The board is now

composed of seven members, all medical practitioners, and in accordance with the provisions of the Act they hold office for a term of seven years. The Bill provides that the board shall consist of not more than seven members, six of whom shall be medical practitioners. The other member is to be a layman, and the board shall hold office for a term of three years instead of seven years as provided for in the Act. It is considered that seven years is too long a period for the board to operate without having the opportunity of a change.

The proposal that a layman shall be included in the membership of the board is actuated by a desire that the general public shall have representation thereon. Recently a new Medical Act was passed in Queensland, and the board which operates under that Act includes a layman as a member. The section of the Act and the schedule specifying the qualifications entitling persons to be registered by the board are very much out of date. These have been revised under the Bill on the basis of recognising all Australian-issued medical degrees and any other degrees of equal standing, provided reciprocity exists with the countries concerned. There is a clause in the Bill which gives power to register specialists and to specify the qualifications which may be considered adequate for such specialists. It is provided in the Bill that before a medical practitioner can describe himself as a specialist, he must conform to certain qualifications to be arrived at by the board, thereby giving requisite protection to the profession and to the public.

It is further provided that the Governor-in-Council may, upon the recommendation of the board, from time to time prescribe by Order-in-Council what branches of medicine shall be deemed to be of a specialist character, with respect to which a medical practitioner who is duly qualified may be registered as a specialist. Another proposal in the Bill deals with the fee to be paid by a medical practitioner on application to the board for registration. Up till recently the fee payable has been £10 10s., the only payment that has to be made by the registered practitioner. A junior practitioner coming to a public hospital and staying in the State for 18 months pays a fee of £10 10s. A similar fee is paid by a practitioner who remains here for life. Almost without exception all other professional men and

women are obliged to register each year with a prescribed application fee. This Bill therefore provides that the annual fee of £3 3s. shall accompany any application for registration, such fee to be refunded in the event of the refusal of an application.

Penalties have been provided in the Bill for the non-payment of fees, and the necessary protection in this respect has been afforded to medical practitioners who are on full-time active service with the Fighting Forces, and discretionary powers have been conferred on the board to cover medical practitioners absent from this State for a period of not less than one year. There is also a provision in the Bill dealing with the action which may be taken by the board against medical practitioners guilty of misdemeanours, etc. In this respect the Act restricts the power that the board possesses. It can only deal with a doctor who is convicted in a court of felony or misdemeanour, or some offence which renders him unfit to practice, or with a doctor who is held by the board after the due consideration, to be guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect. By long usage this last term "infamous" has quite a definite and restricted meaning.

Another difficulty under the Act is that the board has little discretionary power to deal with a doctor. The one and only penalty which it can inflict in respect to all misdemeanours is to deregister the doctor concerned and to remove his name from the register for life with no possibility of his being reinstated. This, of course, is a severe penalty, and for that reason, I think, the board is naturally very diffident about finding an offender guilty. The Bill proposes to remedy all this. In the first place it provides machinery by which cases of habitual drunkenness or habitual drugging can be dealt with. It can deal with cases of improper conduct in relation to the professional conduct of a doctor. Further, it can deal with cases of gross carelessness or incompetency.

So far as penalties are concerned, the board can suspend for a stated period or it can strike the name of a doctor off the register. Where it desires to restore the name to the register it will have the power to do so under the Bill. An appeal to a Supreme Court judge against the decisions of the board is provided for in the Bill. Another proposal deals with cases of un-

qualified persons carrying on various phases of the practice of medicine. In this respect it has been found necessary to tighten up the provisions of Section 23 of the Act by enacting that no person other than a medical practitioner shall be entitled to advertise himself, directly or indirectly, as being entitled or qualified in any manner whatever to practise medicine or surgery in any one or more of its branches, or to give or perform any medical or surgical service, attendance, operations or advice usually given or performed by a medical practitioner. There is a proviso that this shall not apply to a dietitian or a chiropractor who gives advice to a person requiring dietetic or chiropractic advice if such has no relation to specific disease. A further clause in the Bill brings radio within the definition of "advertising."

Dealing with treatment by radium or x-ray, there is a provision which sets out that any person other than a medical practitioner who uses or implies that he uses radium or x-ray for treatment of any human ailment or physical defect otherwise than under the immediate personal supervision of a medical practitioner, shall be guilty of an offence under the Act. This does not apply to registered dentists who use x-rays as an aid to diagnosis in the practice of their profession. There is a stipulation in the Bill that a medical practitioner, when requested by a patient to do so, shall arrange for a consultation with other medical practitioners. There have been instances where a patient, being dissatisfied with the doctor who has been attending him, has requested a consultation with another doctor, and this has been refused. A practice appears to have developed whereby a doctor will not attend a patient if he is in the hands of another doctor. This new provision in the Bill will make it obligatory for a doctor to grant a request by a patient for any required consultation, otherwise an offence will be committed.

Other amendments in the Bill make it unlawful for a medical practitioner to give his own anaesthetic in a major operation except in a case of extreme urgency, and provide that the Medical Board may expend moneys for scientific and educational purposes. This is a brief outline of the proposals embodied in this measure, most of which are designed to remedy defects in the existing Act and to tighten up control. I am sure the House will agree that the time has arrived when the

amendments that I have outlined should be given every consideration. I believe that if we agree to those amendments the effect will prove to be of great advantage not only to the medical profession but to the people as a whole. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan): I congratulate the Government on the way in which the Bill has been handled and introduced. I feel certain that the Minister for Health (Hon. A. H. Panton) will not mind my stating that I appreciate the courtesy he extended to me and to those who are vitally concerned with this Bill in allowing us to co-operate with him in formulating so many of the clauses. I think that is the way that all technical Bills should be reviewed before they are put before members for their consideration. The result of the adoption of that method in this instance is that we are not at variance in the slightest degree with anything that was originally in the Bill, though we may be at variance with some of the amendments that have been added in another place. I would like members to realise that the Bill has been asked for by the medical profession.

I do not think the Minister for Health would mind my saying—in fact I am sure he would not, because he has referred people to me on questions concerning the Bill—that this matter arose from a discussion between the two of us and once it was made clear to him that a full revision of the Act was needed, every facility was made available by him so that everybody concerned could submit his views and so formulate a Bill of worthy dimensions. As I have stated, the introduction of the Bill has been sought by the medical profession. I would like members to realise that we have asked for many of the amendments proposed because for many years we have felt that they are vitally necessary to the proper practice of medicine in this State. The Chief Secretary has pointed out the fundamental principles of the Bill and there are but few points that I can add. I stress the fact that I am speaking this afternoon mainly because I do not want to hold up any work that should be carried out speedily.

I ask the Chief Secretary to do me the courtesy of postponing the Committee stage to a later sitting because some of the amendments made by another place deserve com-

ment, and I have only this afternoon been able to read the remarks made before the amendments were passed and the reasons that induced members to call for such amendments. The board itself previously consisted solely of members of the profession but we felt that it might help to make the public realise that this is a measure for its protection rather than for the protection of the profession if we made it open to the public by placing a lay person on the board. The profession welcomes this change in the character of the board and trusts that it may lead to further benefits. The board previously found itself in considerable difficulty. It could act only in certain circumstances. The profession has felt for many years that there have been occasions on which the board itself should have been able to institute its own inquiries and necessary proceedings. If this Bill becomes an Act, the board will have the power to instigate its own investigations. I think I can pass over most of the clauses in the Bill. I do not wish to speak on clauses on the second reading but I want to stress one or two points so that when we reach the Committee stage members will be aware of certain general principles.

Concerning x-rays, radiology, radium and the use thereof, the members of the medical profession realise that the control of powerful plant must of necessity be in the hands of trained radiologists. It must be realised that a medical man does not always actually use his x-ray unit. A person can be trained in the use of the machine provided he is under the supervision of a medical practitioner or radiologist. It is more or less realised that a well-trained technician is probably better able to handle a machine whereas the radiologist, by his training, is skilled in the interpretation of the film which is the result of the use of the machine. We had hoped to see in this Bill provision for the use of x-rays for examination, diagnosis and treatment to be given to the medical profession so far as radiology is concerned, but the Bill at the moment places only treatment in the hands of the profession. I would like to point out that there is a very great distinction between the use of x-rays for diagnosis and the use of x-rays or radium for treatment.

To give treatment adequately by x-rays requires a plant which is in very many essential details different from the type of plant

required to make a diagnosis. I do not think for one moment that anybody in the medical profession would attempt to use an x-ray plant for treatment if he were not a skilled radiologist. Therefore I cannot imagine anybody outside the profession attempting to use an x-ray plant for treatment. I want to make it clear that there is a very definite difference between the use of radiology for diagnosis and the use of radiology for treatment. They are two entirely different propositions and the plant that can be used for diagnosis cannot be used for anything but the very simplest form of treatment. The plant that is required for treatment is very expensive and there are not more than three or four such plants in the whole State. What we had hoped to do was to make certain that the person using radiology for diagnosis was a person qualified by training to use that radiology. I have said previously that I am somewhat opposed to the small plants that are scattered around the country, because the medical practitioners using those plants are not trained in the uses of radiology. I realise as well as members do that such small plants do a very good job in country areas and are necessary.

All I have been trying to point out is that if some more skilled diagnosis is required, then a bigger plant, with a person more skilled in its use, is necessary. My whole scheme of things would be to have some zoning system whereby persons would not have to come from wayback country areas to Perth to obtain that which they cannot obtain in their country centres. It is purely a matter of zoning that I have attempted to put before this House from time to time. It must be realised that in this Bill we are attempting to limit the use of x-rays to members of the medical profession. There are only two types of persons outside the profession who can or do attempt to use x-rays. The chiropractor does use x-rays. At this stage I am not going to quarrel with the chiropractor. Even if it were suggested that he might be allowed to continue to use x-rays, I think I could pass over it without any very great heartburnings, but I want to impress upon members that it is very wrong to allow a person to purport that he uses x-rays in the treatment or diagnosis of conditions simply by placing on the front of his premises the word "x-rays."

I have no objection to any person who is qualified or skilled in the use of anything that will promote the health of the nation, making use of such qualifications, but, if we possibly can we need to protect the public against people who are attempting to use sickness to which the human being is heir, as a means of profit without first being prepared to make some effort to qualify himself for that particular work. But for this we must realise one fact—qualification at any time must be a necessary *sine qua non*. If a person is unskilled or unable to do the work, he should not be allowed to attempt it. There are temporary measures that we must take at times, but that should not stop us from attempting at the proper time to end such temporary expedients and thus come nearer to the ideal as far as the health of the nation is concerned. Therefore I feel that we should still further limit the clause dealing with x-ray control and I intend to place certain suggestions before members at the appropriate time. On the same basis, I want to say a word about dietitians. Here again I have not the slightest objection to the qualified dietitian.

Hon. L. Craig: What do you mean by "qualified"?

Hon. F. E. Gibson: The man who knows something about his job.

Hon. L. Craig: That is not the same. Is there such a thing as a qualified dietitian?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig: Qualified by whom?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Let me explain. The medical profession has never been against diet as a means of treatment. I am quite frank when I admit that diet has been one of the subjects in medicine that has possibly received less attention than any other. It is only now being placed on a scientific footing. Some years ago—I mention this to give evidence of my own honesty on the question of dietetics—I was instrumental in establishing at the Perth Hospital a clinic for the treatment of diabetics. Because we realised that under present circumstances that type of patient did not get sufficient training to enable him to conduct his own diet, we appointed to the hospital a sister and took other means in our power to ensure that she was trained to carry out her work. She took charge of the diabetic clinic at the hospital and when I last in-

quired, the sister, who had been in control from the time the clinic was first instituted, had over 400 people receiving help. She cares entirely for the diet of those diabetics. The doctor states to her what the diet should consist of, gives the basis of carbohydrates, proteins and fats and indicates the correct proportion of each that is essential for the treatment of the diabetic concerned. Then it becomes the duty of the sister to see that the patient is capable of converting those elements into the ordinary daily dietary requirements. This department of the Perth Hospital is one of the most successful we now have.

A little later it became essential to pay more attention to the diet of patients generally in the institution and we appointed to the hospital a dietetic sister. A portion of the kitchen was set aside and special arrangements were made so that the sister could take charge of that dietetic kitchen. One of the misfortunes that overtook us was that after we had been able to appoint Mrs. Audrey Kahn, a daughter of Professor Osborne, who is known to many of us, she found some few months ago that she was unable to remain in the State. With her knowledge of dietetics she was revolutionising the work at the Perth Hospital. Here is the principle on which she worked, and I think it should be laid down for the guidance of the public. A diagnosis of the patient's condition was sent to Mrs. Carne and then she composed a diet according to the needs of the particular disease.

I will lay on the Table of the House for the benefit of members one of the books I have in my possession on dietetics. If they care to peruse it, members will find there are diets for various types of illness. It is quite wrong to suppose that a patient suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis should receive the same diet as a patient who is afflicted with a chronic kidney disease. If the dietitian will make a study of diet as applied to known diseases, the profession will welcome any prepared to carry on on that basis. What I object to regarding dietitians is that a person who has no knowledge whatever of the state of health of an individual nor yet any knowledge of medicine, can set himself up as able to cure a disease, the presence of which he is unaware. Again, I would like to emphasise that the profession is quite honest

in this matter. To stress that point I shall quote an example.

Hon. L. Craig: But what constitutes a qualified dietitian? Who gives him his certificate?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I will attack that problem a little later on. I wish to emphasise the fact that there is in this city an analytical psychologist in whom quite a large number of the medical profession have a definite degree of faith and respect. He is practising on the basis that he will not accept any patient unless he is referred to him by the medical profession. That man is not looking for work today; he has a waiting list of 200 patients. I have been given that information on the best of authority. The profession has no objection to anyone that knows his job doing that work, but I and all other members of the profession have a most intense objection to the person who will, without any effort on his part to qualify himself, make money out of the sickness of the individual. Everyone knows that the sick person is not normal. He will, by hook or by crook, attempt to obtain help from someone. If an individual says, "I can cure you without the necessity to undergo medical treatment or to suffer pain and anguish," the sick person will place himself under the direction of the individual.

Surely it is up to the medical profession and to members of this House to ensure that the sick person is not led astray because of specious advertisements. If some dietitian will come here and say, "I will treat disease by diet provided you tell me first what disease the patient is suffering from," the medical profession will send work to that dietitian tomorrow, and will be glad to do so. On the other hand, the profession will not provide work for the individual who has no qualifications. If this problem is not attacked properly and thoughtfully, it will be open to anyone who desires to set up his unqualified practice, to describe himself as a dietitian and say, "I am not giving you treatment for any specific disease." I admit that when the Minister for Health first discussed this matter with us, we felt that the measure might cover our needs but on giving the matter further reflection I trust I shall be able to place some amendment before the House that will enable members to deal with this problem in a proper manner.

Regarding the question of dietitians and proper qualifications mentioned by Mr. Craig,

I am not certain at the moment that the person who comes along and says he has had some degree conferred on him in America, can be guaranteed as a qualified dietitian. I am also somewhat at a loss to answer the question: How does a dietitian become trained? On the other hand, I feel that if we amend the Act so that the Medical Board would be able to set up a standard of qualifications for dietitians and we made it the board's business to see that qualifications possessed by dietitians were obtained from some recognised body that trained in dietetics, or that the individuals had made the subject their study for a certain length of time, the effect might be better.

Hon. L. Craig: Studied where?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: In our own country or abroad. Mrs. Audrey Kahn has, or did have, a dietetic school at St. Vincent's Hospital. I do not think we would even call for certificates from dietitians providing we were satisfied that the persons had made a study of the subject. I am quite certain that no objection would be raised to their practising as dietitians in that case. What I am opposed to, however, is the person who is not prepared to give any study to the subject establishing himself or herself in the practice of dietetics here. I will not labour the point any further. I shall simply attempt to guide members when the proper time arises; but I would ask each member to give serious consideration to the question before that time does arrive. In conclusion I would like to say that we, as professional men, thank the Government for allowing the money which we are being charged for annual registration to be used by the Medical Board for the advancement of medical science. I am certain that will prove of immense benefit not only to the profession but to the public generally.

I consider, as I instanced in this House the other day, the fact that the maintenance of a school of experimental physiology costs so little it might, through this Bill, lead to the establishment of that study in our own State. Moreover, such things as the provision of libraries for country practitioners is possible when funds are placed at the disposal of the Medical Board, which will be able to assist medical men living in far-back country districts to receive journals which otherwise they would never obtain. Not for one moment do I say what the Medical

Board will be tempted to do for the benefit of country science with the money it will receive. I am only instancing two possibilities for improvement, but I am certain that the Medical Board will use that money in the best interests of the public and the profession. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE (WESTERN AUSTRALIAN) ALUNITE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [3.35]: I have little to add to the highly informative speech delivered yesterday by Mr. Seddon. I consider the House is indebted to Mr. Seddon for the trouble he must have taken in gathering so much useful information regarding the Bill. I have no doubt that the Chief Secretary will be glad to furnish answers to the questions put forward by Mr. Seddon and to give us added help in studying the measure. There are only two points to which I desire to draw attention. Mr. Seddon referred to the fact that three prominent members of the original syndicate have withdrawn from the undertaking, accepting small sums of money in reimbursement of what had been spent. Mr. Seddon wanted to know why those members had withdrawn. In the memorandum accompanying the Bill I find this paragraph—

Negotiations continued between the Government and the syndicate in this matter, with the syndicate resisting the proposal that the Government should have a majority of members on the board.

That seems to me a very reasonable explanation of the action of these three gentlemen in withdrawing. I think one might say without any qualification that they are men who have reached the very top in their respective callings. The only interpretation I can find—I have not had an opportunity to speak to any of the three gentlemen, or I should have been glad to ask them the reason had I happened to meet them—is that whilst they believe the project had a reasonable prospect of success so long as it was conducted under private management, they considered that its chances were materially lessened if they became subject entirely to Government control. If there is any

other explanation, doubtless the Minister will furnish it. There is another point. We are told in the memorandum—

The Commonwealth Government was requested to arrange for the Copper and Bauxite Committee to visit Western Australia for the purpose of examining local alunite and bauxite deposits. The committee visited the State in September of 1941, and its members were considerably impressed with the possibilities of the deposit, particularly regarding potash production.

Considerably impressed! What did the committee say? Could we have an opportunity of seeing its report? The memorandum proceeds—

In October of 1941 on behalf of the State and the syndicate, the State Government supported an application to the Commonwealth Government for £45,000 to be made available to assist in developing the potash industry at Lake Campion. In December of the same year the State Government agreed to make £45,000 available on certain conditions. The syndicate was to raise £30,000. The Commonwealth Government indicated it could not see its way clear to financially assist the development of the industry but was willing to assist in every other way possible.

Apparently, though the committee of experts sent over by the Commonwealth Government was "considerably impressed," it was not able to impress the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government refused to take any financial part in the concern. To my mind, that is open to only two interpretations. Either the report of these experts was not such as to make the Commonwealth Government think the project was worth going on with, or else the Commonwealth Government—and this is a possibility by no means to be ruled out—treated Western Australia badly in not assisting this war-time project. If the war-time project has any prospect of success, then it should be the Commonwealth Government's duty to aid the State to develop it. We know that the Commonwealth Government is fathering another project, regarding which we shall probably hear more later on. In that instance the Commonwealth Government is asking the State Parliament to pass legislation so that the Commonwealth Government shall be protected against loss—presumably at the expense of the people of this State.

It seems to me that if this alunite project is one with reasonable chances of success, then the right course would be for the Commonwealth Government to aid the pro-

ject financially and leave its conduct in private hands. Under those conditions, if the venture failed financially, the State Government would certainly lose less than it would if carrying the venture entirely on its own shoulders. Again, had the venture proved a success, the Commonwealth Government would be entitled to the return of any money it had advanced. Further, the Commonwealth Government and the State Government would undoubtedly be entitled to representation on the board watching their interests. That seems to me a project under which there would have been reasonable prospects of success, and naturally those members of the syndicate whose judgment I for one would be prepared to follow, would remain members of the syndicate and would give the benefit of their expert knowledge in one case, and of their great business knowledge in all cases, in an endeavour to make this project a success.

There is also the question of manpower. I do not know to what extent that enters into the matter, but it appears to me that there is a good deal to be said against withdrawing manpower from essential industries, which must be carried on to maintain the economy of the State, and using it in an experimental matter of this kind, unless success is very reasonably assured. So far as I am concerned, I can only say that up to now the information placed at my disposal is not sufficient to justify me in voting for the second reading of the Bill.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): This Bill is the result of an extraordinary business. I do not doubt that the Chief Secretary could tell members quite a story about it. The Commonwealth Government resisted all efforts to develop this State's deposit of alunite, one of the richest deposits of its kind in the world. The strongest opposition—and I suppose the Chief Secretary knows all about this—was raised to Commonwealth experts being sent over here to examine our deposit. When the discovery was first made, it was highly desirable that deposits containing aluminium should be located, and a body was appointed by the Commonwealth Government to investigate all bauxite deposits. This is not a bauxite deposit, but a deposit of alunite. A Minister went East for the specific purpose of having the deposit examined, and eventually, after a great deal of trouble, got the Com-

monwealth Government to agree that the experts should examine not only bauxite deposits but also the alunite deposit at Lake Campion. If the Minister had not personally gone over, I do not think anything would have been done today. Such was the position.

I understand the real purpose of this Bill is to get potash. Aluminium is, of course, far more expensive to handle. To deal with it would require immense power, which is not available in this State. However, that is not the present proposition, which is to secure potash—an essential war commodity. The men originally interested in the deposit believe that it has enormous possibilities, and that it may prove a small Broken Hill show in a way if only sufficient capital is put into it. I discussed the project with one of them, and he said, "We are getting on in years. We started the show as a national work, to found an industry. With the present difficulty of manpower and labour you will never get private industry to put money into a show of this sort. The risk is too great, and if one is successful one has no possibility of getting any return."

This proposal is in the same category as the meat works, showing good profits but with no possibility of providing dividends. To make a success of this show, people might have to put in £100,000 or £200,000, and with taxation at its present rate there would be no possibility of the shareholders ever receiving a decent dividend. I can see no possibility of the establishment of big industries in Western Australia until we get back to a normal rate of taxation. I can see a shrivelling up of big industries so long as the present high taxation continues. Unless the position is eased, it will not be possible to obtain capital from people having it in order to establish large new industries. I do not blame those people, either. Only this morning I heard of the case of a man in a private industry who was making a profit of five figures, say, £10,000, and who after paying his taxation received less than the amount he had paid his manager. Where is the incentive? It has gone. People are sitting back. They say, "I am not going to bother; I will simply make half or a third." In order to be successful, one must take risks. If, after taking risks, a person gets very little out of his venture, the kick has gone out of it. He loses his incentive and does not

feel inclined to take risks again in the future.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: There will be no taxation to collect when the Government controls all industry.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is one of the reasons why people will go out of industry. There is nothing in it for them, and the risk is very great. A huge amount of capital is required to establish a project like the meat works. The industry with which this measure deals is essential. Consequently, there is no alternative but for the Government to step in and provide a large proportion of the capital required. That is inevitable. As long as the present high taxation continues, it is inevitable that the Government will have to provide capital for these large undertakings. I support the Bill and sincerely hope that the industry will expand to large dimensions. Tests have been made at the University, pilot plants have been constructed, and there are all the possibilities of an enormous industry being established. but it will have to be a Government undertaking. Private enterprise will not take the risk entailed, and there are risks, as there were risks connected with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company. I know a man who was offered, but who refused to accept, one of the syndicate shares in the Broken Hill venture.

Hon. H. Seddon: Do you contend that the Government could have developed Broken Hill?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The original founders of the Broken Hill concern made millions out of the proposition, but they took tremendous risks.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: If the Broken Hill undertaking were handed over to the Government would it be what it is now?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, it would not be half of what it is today. But a success was made of Broken Hill and the people who invested in it obtained a big return for their money. Today the incentive to invest money in that way has gone. People reasonably well off and on in years are unwilling now, because of the high taxation, to invest their savings in such enterprises. I hope this new industry will prove as great a success as the richness of the deposit indicates. The by-products are valuable. But I am afraid a tremendous lot of capital will be needed,

and it will have to be provided by either the Commonwealth or the State.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West): For the reason that on a number of occasions I have advocated in this House that attention should be directed to the development of the Lake Campion deposits, I feel I should say a word or two at this stage. I have not a deep knowledge of the subject, but it may interest members to know that some years ago I, with others, prospected these deposits. I took a 50-lb. parcel to Melbourne and was fortunate enough to be able to hand it over to one of the best-known chemists in the Commonwealth, a man well known in this State and highly respected both for his ability and his character. I interested another man, also well known and holding high positions in the Commonwealth. The parcel I submitted was subjected to careful tests, and I was assured that it was extremely valuable. That bears out the assertions made by Mr. Seddon as to the high quality of the potash and the percentage of alumina in the deposits. But I was impressed by those people with the difficulty of setting about the development of the deposits, for the reason already stated in this Chamber, namely, the cost and the need for special plant and highly technical men.

Later I proceeded to Adelaide and saw Sir Douglas Mawson, whose name has already been mentioned in connection with this matter. With that gentleman I discussed the problem at the Adelaide University. The professor had great knowledge of the subject and he foresaw all the difficulties we are encountering today. I recollect that the question of treating the deposits for the production of aluminium was discussed, and that it was suggested that the concentrates—if I may so term them—should be sent to New Zealand and treated there by electricity generated by water power, because that was then the cheapest known source of electricity. All the connections I had with the scheme impressed upon me the fact that this State owned deposits of extremely high value. Like Mr. Craig, I cannot at present see how private enterprise could possibly be expected to work the deposits. Therefore, it seems to me that the expenditure of public money on them is justified. There is a demand for potash, and it will continue. If we

are to keep our primary industries alive, some source will have to be tapped for potash. I would like a little more information as to the terms of the agreement that has been referred to. I cannot bring myself to oppose the Bill because I consider we are justified in supporting it. I would like to corroborate what Mr. Craig said with regard to the bitter opposition that came from New South Wales. On one occasion when we discussed this project it was pointed out to me that there were deposits in New South Wales which the people there were anxious should be investigated and brought into production. It seems to me merely another case of vested interests in that State opposing anything in any shape that seems to conflict with their ideas. I put down a great deal of the opposition that arose in the Commonwealth sphere to this project to the influence of interested parties in New South Wales.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): I certainly intend to vote for the Bill and I think the Government is to be commended for taking this risk, because, as was mentioned earlier this afternoon, there is a big risk attendant on a venture such as this. I would rather the Government had made financial assistance available to people who know more about these deposits than do those at present in charge of them. The undertaking would then be in the hands of men better versed in dealing with big business concerns. I listened with very great pleasure yesterday to Mr. Seddon. The Government should take heed of the note of warning which he sounded as to what might happen to the industry when the war ended. Does the Government think it will make a success of this venture by exportation? If so—I hope I am wrong—I am very much afraid it will be doomed to disappointment.

Last night I had the pleasure of listening to Professor Mauldon, who stated in emphatic terms what was said this afternoon by Mr. Craig. He said that no matter how efficient Government officers were, they had not—this is the word he used—the imagination necessary to make a success of big undertakings of this kind. The professor said also, “I speak as one who has spent some time in the Government service.” He was not referring to his present position. Be that as it may, the fact remains that men in charge of huge enterprises should

be possessed of the imagination necessary to make a success of them. That is why I would rather see this undertaking in the hands of men free from some of the failings that are attendant on Government operations. Of course, those men would have to be assisted by the Government.

We often complain that the Government does not do this or that. Now, when it has come out courageously in an endeavour to tackle a big industry such as this promises to be, no vote of mine shall defer it. I wish it every success in its undertaking. I have visited the locality and have seen the commencement of the works, although I do not know anything about them. I hope that every precaution will be taken to build them up, slowly perhaps but solidly, because, as the professor also warned his audience last night, the overseas trade we now enjoy will, after the war, be subject to great alteration. I hope that not too much of the public money will be spent in anticipation of what we may do with these deposits or the by-products after the war.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East): I take this opportunity of commending the Government for the step it has taken, and also to wish the venture every success. It is obvious that in times like the present, private enterprise, for the reasons pointed out by Mr. Craig and others, is not prepared to take a risk. The Government has shown commendable enterprise because at this juncture, such an undertaking as this is badly required. I am pleased to know that Mr. Norwood is connected with it. Members may not know much about him, but we on the goldfields know him to be a young man who has had experience in practically every mining field in the world. I know for a fact that he has been in America, Spain and Russia. He is highly regarded by the best mining brains on the goldfields. I am sure that while he is associated with the venture, success will attend it.

HON. G. W. MILES (North): There is a lot of truth in the arguments raised by members about private enterprise not tackling undertakings at the present time, but that was no argument in support of the State putting the taxpayers' money into these ventures. I congratulate Mr. Seddon on the thoughtful speech he prepared for the benefit of members, and regret that

there was not a larger attendance in the House to listen to him and his criticism of this measure yesterday afternoon. Our thanks are due to him. It is a technical Bill, and he put a lot of work into the preparation of his speech.

The Chief Secretary: Would you call it a criticism?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I think so. He made one suggestion to the Minister which I hope will be noted. He suggested that if the Government goes on with this business, it will use its influence to see that it is allowed to write down depreciation to a substantial extent. He said that in other countries, Canada in particular, the writing-down is as much as 50 per cent. of the capital cost of plant involved in these war activities. Something of that sort should apply here. This is only a war industry. The Government should use its influence with the Taxation Department or the Commonwealth Government to see that fair depreciation is allowed. If that were done, private enterprise could carry on. I entirely disagree to the Government going on with such schemes. Of course we had the argument about these wise men who put their money into it for the benefit of the country. Mr. Craig used that argument.

Hon. L. Craig: They did not put their money in for that purpose.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The hon. member said that they did it for patriotic purposes. They did it to make money, the same as Mr. Craig or any other man does when he puts his money into a business investment! To say they did it for the sake of their country—

Hon. L. Craig: I did not say that.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Of course they are glad to get out!

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member should address the Chair.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Mr. Craig will keep interjecting when I speak. I want to emphasise the point that the arguments he raised were on behalf of the shareholders. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Thorn are people who know what they are doing; they are getting out. Then members argue that, although these wise men, who know what they are doing, are getting out, the Government should step in with the poor taxpayers' money and take it on. As I said the other day, step by step we are letting the Govern-

ment get control of everything; there will be no private enterprise left.

The Labour Party is carrying out its policy with the assistance of these Nationalists who, as Mr. Menzies said the other day, have not the courage to come out in the open and stand up for their rights. They have a policy and parties and platforms. These things go on, and where are they going to end? This scheme is not good enough for the shrewd businessman, but it is for the Government. Who is the Government but the taxpayers of this country? It is their money that is going in and, under Government management, they will have to keep on meeting the bill of losses on State trading concerns. If we must go on—and it seems that we must with the House constituted as it is today, because when a vote was taken the other day there was only one voice against a Bill dealing with another trading concern—

Hon. J. Cornell: And that was a loud one.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It was, and had there been two I would have called for a division. I hope two voices will be raised against this measure. If it goes through, I trust the Minister will take notice of the criticism levelled by Mr. Seddon. If the Government used its influence to see that depreciation to a reasonable extent was allowed on these wartime industries, private enterprise could carry on, and these patriotic people would leave their money in to make a profit. I intend to vote against the Bill.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [4.10]: The two main provisions contained in this Bill are such that they are not open to much argument. I do not think the House will have much diffidence in giving assent to them. The first one provides a penalty for any person who refuses to let a dwelling-house to anyone on the ground that that person has a child. It further enacts that if an agent refuses, he also is liable. It then provides a penalty in the case of a person inquiring from another whether that other

has a child or children. The other provision is to the effect that the owners of premises must keep a record of rents which have been paid since the 31st August, 1939.

Metropolitan members will know better than I how in circumstances such as exist these days, a good deal of racketeering in rent is going on. We have had that experience on the goldfields and know that when there is a shortage of houses there is always one section of the community prepared to pay anything in order to get accommodation. It comprises people more favourably placed than others, and they obtain houses simply because they are better off financially. This measure, I hope, will cope with the position existing at present in Perth. I understand from the goldfields people I have met in the metropolitan area that it is almost impossible just now to obtain a house in Perth.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, and the rent has nothing to do with it.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am pleased to hear that, but the danger is that when there is such a demand for houses, certain people will take advantage of it and get hold of tenants able to pay, and exclude people who have children. None of us wants that position to arise. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to obtain a house at a reasonable rental. I hope the provisions in this measure will tighten up the existing law and bring about a condition which we all desire. I support the Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): I wish to ask the Honorary Ministry this question: Do I interpret his remarks correctly in believing that if this Bill is agreed to the National Security Regulations applying here will be withdrawn—all of them?

The Honorary Minister: No.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then why tinker with it at all? The Honorary Minister told us that we should have our own Act. But what he wants to include in our Act is already contained in the National Security Regulations. If that is so, it is a farce. Now he tells us that he only wants a certain proportion included. It is adding a premium to the farce. If the National Security Regulations cover the position and the Minister wants his own Act, why not embody all of them and not merely those that suit him? On what the Honorary Minister has told us, I ought to vote against the second reading, because it seems to be

a waste of time to debate the question if his statement that the matter is provided for under National Security Regulations is correct. I understand that under the existing law a lessee is bound by the rent ruling at the 31st August, 1939, but that a subsequent lessee is not so bound and that the rent could be raised without going to the court. The Honorary Minister proposes to move in Committee an amendment to the effect that if the landlord is prepared to accept from a second, third, fourth or fifth lessee what the first lessee paid, there will be no appeal to the court.

There is one provision in the Bill that has nothing on Himmler. It states that persons shall not inquire from any prospective tenant of a dwelling-house whether the prospective tenant has any children or whether it is intended that a child shall live in the dwelling-house if it is let to that prospective tenant. The penalty for an offence is £20. The Gestapo has nothing on that. A man could be prosecuted simply for asking whether a prospective tenant had a child. Another provision is that a person shall not instruct any other person not to let, or state his intention, whether by advertisement or otherwise, not to let a dwelling-house to any person if it is intended that a child shall live in the dwelling-house. The object is that the fact of a prospective tenant having a child shall not be a bar; any landlord must let a house regardless of whether the prospective tenant has children or not.

The Honorary Minister: Quite right.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But if he cares to let the house, he may not inquire how many children the prospective tenant has. That is absurd.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: He should not be inquisitive.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Quite so. Last session, when we were dealing with this legislation, I proposed an amendment which was carried in this House. Another place disagreed to it on the ground that it would cover dwelling-houses. The Council accommodated another place to the extent of confining the amendment to business premises. The proposal was that at the expiration of a lease, consideration could be given to the value of alterations and improvements effected or penalties to which the landlord had been subjected during the currency of the lease and ask the tenant to accept a new

lease. A conference between the Houses was held at which the Honorary Minister, Mr. Craig and I were the managers for this House, and there we were told that it would be useless for us to insist upon the amendment because the position was covered by National Security Regulations and our provision would be inoperative.

I intend to have another try to get a similar amendment inserted in this Bill because I have been told on the best authority that last session I was sold a pup and that the National Security Regulations did not go to the extent stated. I hope the House will support me again on this occasion because members were almost unanimous on the point last year. The Minister says he wants embodied in the State law something from the National Security Regulations. I also want embodied in the State law something from the National Security Regulations, and so there can be no argument between us. At this stage I propose to support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th November.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.23]: I am sorry to weary members by asking them to listen to me twice on the one day, and I am also sorry to say that I cannot adopt towards this measure the attitude I disclosed towards the Medical Act Amendment Bill. This is very definitely a technical measure. It is something dealing with the treatment of a very difficult class of infectious disease. Before entering upon any criticism of the Bill, I intend to make an offer to the Chief Secretary that if he will allow me to consult with the Crown Solicitor, I feel certain that I can bring proposals before the House to do that which the Chief Secretary desires and will keep within the bounds of technical possibilities in the treatment of these cases. Or, should the Chief Secretary feel that this is too reactionary a method, I suggest that members seriously consider the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the matter of treatment of recalcitrant patients suffering from venereal disease.

To offer some reasons for my action, let me point out that it is intended to alter in the first place the section which deals with the sale of the sulphanilamide group of drugs by a pharmaceutical chemist, so that he cannot offer or sell any such drugs for the treatment of venereal disease. I agree with that entirely, but this measure does not take into account that earlier in the proposed new subsection there is a provision that permits a pharmaceutical chemist to sell any patent medicine or drug which has been approved by the Commissioner of Public Health as treatment for venereal disease. I do not think for one moment that it can be regarded as wise to stop the sale of a drug of the sulphanilamide group which, properly handled, can cure or at least go a long way towards curing venereal disease whilst still allowing the sale of such old-fashioned drugs as the chemist is now, under the Act, permitted to sell. Let me name one of these—sandalwood oil—which can still be used by quite a lot of people in the treatment of this disease. I do not think the sale of that drug would be prevented. Thus the chemist would still be allowed to treat venereal disease by the sale of sandalwood oil or some mixture.

I do not think the proposed new subsections would prevent anybody from putting up sulphanilamide as a patent medicine and giving it a label or the chemist from selling it. I admit the Act says that the Commissioner shall approve of such patent medicines, but it may be difficult for the Commissioner not to approve. I give that instance to show one portion of the technical difficulties confronting those engaged in the handling and treatment of these cases. The whole Act should be tackled in the light of modern knowledge. I assure the Chief Secretary that to do this would not take long. I believe that 48 hours seriously given to this measure would produce an Act in conformity with our present knowledge. We must realise that modern treatment has altered even since the introduction of the parent Act. Under the provisions of the Act, a person suffering from venereal disease in one particular form must appear before the doctor at least every 14 days, but no action can be taken against the person who does not turn up once a fortnight even at the infectious stage.

I feel that there should be some more general principle such as declaring that a

sufferer from such a disease shall carry out such instructions as are given to him by a registered medical practitioner, because in another section of the Act it will be found that only after ten days have elapsed following the day of appointment that has been missed can a medical practitioner notify the Commissioner of that lapse on the part of the sufferer. The result is that as the provision is worded the sufferer is now given 3½ weeks' grace before his name is sent to the Commissioner of Public Health. A lot of trouble could be caused in that period and I consider that those experienced in the handling of this disease should be given an opportunity to see whether the provision could not be tightened up, in addition to the other portions of the Act which the Chief Secretary wishes to have dealt with. I assure members that nobody wants to see this Bill put through quickly more than do I, but I cannot approve of the measure in its present form.

It is intended by these new amendments that the Governor may prohibit a practitioner in private practice from treating members of the Armed or Allied Forces. I think it would be better to be much more definite and explicit and state that no medical practitioner in civil practice can treat a member of the Armed or Allied Forces unless authorised by those Forces to do so. Let us think for a moment. A man on active service with the Armed or Allied Forces if he has been treated by a civil medical practitioner, will not advise the medical officers in the Forces that he is suffering from this disease and the consequence is that he will be able to appear for treatment only on his days of leave. The result must be that his treatment is ineffective.

At the expense of wasting some time I would like to tell members the interesting story of the ineffective treatment by sulphanilamide. When this drug first appeared on the market it was heralded as a cure for gonorrhoea and it was stated that gonorrhoea would soon disappear from our midst. Unfortunately that has not been so. If we had known, at the date of the introduction of the drug, the correct method of handling it, and had we placed it strictly in the hands of medical practitioners, it might have done all that was claimed. What actually happened was that once it became known that the drug was effective for the disease, every person

who was afflicted and those who wanted methods of prophylactics armed themselves with a certain quantity of the drug. The result is that in many cases the germ causing the disease has been made resistant to the drug. If sufficient of the drug is taken, the characteristic of the gonococcus will be altered so that the germ becomes quite resistant to even large doses of the drug. Not only so, but that gonococcus can be converted into a type of germ which, even when transmitted to someone else, will still be resistant to the sulphanilamide type of drug. Consequently the drug has lost a lot of the possibilities that it might have had.

In peace-time when the present wave has died down and treatment is in a more orderly state, that drug may again do all that we claim it will do. That is the reason we had to consider preventing chemists from selling sulphanilamide and also why we have been very mindful of the fact that adequate doses must be given to ensure results. With adequate doses the more frequent appearance of the patient before the doctor is necessary, because the drug itself can be so extremely toxic that it is no longer wise to tell a patient that here is a drug that will last him for more than a short period. He must report in order to discover how the disease is progressing and what effect the treatment is having on his general condition. It becomes necessary to alter quite a lot that has gone before.

In altering that particular section we must provide that a man in the Armed or Allied Forces must be given the right to go to a specialist in the disease in order to reassure his mind, first of all that he has the disease and then later, if necessary, that he is cured. A clause of that sort should be included. Another clause we must add is one to allow a member of the Allied or Armed Forces to receive treatment during his period of leave, if it is known to his medical officer in the Forces that he is going on leave. Take the case of a member of the Armed Forces who is suffering from syphilis.

Hon. F. E. Gibson: Would it not be better to prevent him from having leave?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No. A man who is away from camp for a certain length of time should be able to have a weekly dose of n.a.b. These are provisions that should be considered in connection with this Bill. As we go on we find that there are all sorts of other matters we should take into consid-

eration. In the parent Act Section 275 brings up the well-known bogey of a certificate of cure. Some more definite statement of cure should be embodied in any such Act as this. One of the most contentious provisions in the Act is that which sets out that no prostitute shall be given a certificate of cure, though anybody else can be given such a certificate.

One wise authority on the disease makes it plain that every attack of gonorrhoea can be cured except the first one! That gives some idea of how curable is the disease. Therefore, a certificate of cure must be couched in some different terms from just those bald words. When we go further into the Bill we realise that we still have left with us a certain amount of mid-Victorianism. All that the Commissioner is going to receive from a medical practitioner treating cases, and all that he has received in the past, is a plain statement that the practitioner is treating a case of venereal disease and the age and sex of the person being so treated, without any name or address. We have left out the name and address because of our susceptibilities in dealing with this problem of the infectious diseases of the generative organs.

We are not nearly so diffident when it comes to tuberculosis. We will send in the name and address of the person suffering from tuberculosis and he has no redress. What is more, a visitor goes to his place of abode and discusses his disease with him. But in this Act there is no provision for the name and address of the sufferer to be sent to the Commissioner. This is something that technical advisers might well look into. It might be considered whether the persistence of that idea is sound. I do not think for one moment that it does what it is intended to do. It seems that the Commissioner does not receive the name of the person suffering from venereal disease until that person becomes recalcitrant, but he does receive the name and address of every other person suffering from every other infectious disease. Is there any rhyme or reason why we should not send the name and address of the sufferer from this disease to the Commissioner of Public Health? I think it is something that should be considered at the present time when we are attempting to stamp out this disease, which has increased to such an extent in our midst.

Hon. L. Craig: There is the disgrace attached to it.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The old question of a person not coming in for treatment if his name is sent to the Commissioner has not stopped the person with tuberculosis having to come for treatment.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Do you not think that people would hide the fact that they had the disease if there were more publicity?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Are we publishing the disease if we notify the Commissioner? Surely he is a person who keeps things to himself! We are not broadcasting the name. In the case of tuberculosis we send a visitor or a trained nurse to the sufferer.

Hon. L. Craig: There is something different about this disease.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: We should have reached the stage where there is no longer any disgrace attached to venereal disease. Members have to realise that this disease is acquired in altogether a different manner from any other infectious disease. If we are going to distinguish between the ways infectious diseases are acquired, we are going to make all sorts of difficulties for ourselves. If I thought that by requiring those handling these cases to send the names and addresses of sufferers to the Commissioner, the disease would be sent underground, I would be against the idea. We must put a lot of thought into this measure before we pass it. We must rid ourselves of the idea that there is a certain amount of disgrace attached to a venereal disease. We shall never get rid of it until we treat it openly.

Hon. L. Craig: That does not take away the disgrace.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The person suffering from tuberculosis still feels that he is under a certain measure of disgrace.

Members: No!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I have looked after tuberculous patients in Perth for over 20 years, and I can assure the House that they do harbour that feeling. Because they are segregated and given treatment of that nature, such a feeling is engendered.

Hon. L. Craig: One is social; the other is not.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: We must realise that the trend of events in dealing with all infectious diseases is to treat them on the basis I have indicated.

Hon. J. Cornell: But in one instance the illness may be contracted without personal contact.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I want members to go further. The principal Act contains some extraordinarily difficult proposals that must be taken into account. Section 285 provides a drastic penalty of £100 for any person who publishes any statement or affixes any such statement on anything that is visible to persons in any street, railway or public place and so on, concerning any cure for venereal disease or one affecting the generative organs or functions or of any complaint relating to sexual intercourse or menstrual irregularities. I can assure the House that before the National Security Regulations had the effect of excluding many such advertisements from the newspapers, we saw in almost every newspaper evidence of the contravention of that particular section. If we are able to play fair with one half, let us play fair with the rest. Let us take out what should not be included in the Act and insert what should remain there.

If we are to have any real control over these people and if the Act is to achieve the results we hope for, we must not let ourselves be led away hastily or foolishly by what has taken place recently. An amendment is included in the Bill under which the Commissioner of Public Health may send to a gaol hospital in the first instance persons regarding whom he has been informed there is reasonable ground for suspicion. Even if members will not go as far with me as they may respecting the treatment of these diseases from a general point of view, I hope they will support me when I claim that a gaol hospital is not a fit place to send such patients in the first instance.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Let us look at the type of person we are trying to handle. I have asked those who have been associated with the handling of them what the difficulties are. I have learned that of all the cases they have had through their hands a small proportion—six or nine was the number mentioned to me—was found difficult to handle. I am referring to the experience at one institution—Perth Hospital. We must be careful that in legislating for six or nine we do not injure the interests of the majority. We should not include a provision in legislation of this type that will

allow us to send people suffering from venereal diseases to the gaol in the first instance and even in the second instance.

Hon. J. Cornell: The trouble is that you cannot hold some of them.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The trouble is that we have not got a place in which to hold them. The question arises: Is that the correct method of approach to the problem? Is it the correct approach to put them into a gaol hospital because we have not the means of holding them elsewhere? What I would like to hear from the Chief Secretary or, if necessary, from a Select Committee, is the answer to the question: Has any attempt been made, rapidly or cheaply, to obtain space in which to keep these patients? Let us consider the reception home at Heathcote. People are detained there and on odd occasions evade custody—but that is very seldom. The patients are kept there by the device of locked doors and the use of wiring from one portion of the building to another. Has it been considered that it might be possible to do something similar in places where these V.D. patients are held for treatment?

It must be appreciated that some of these people are not only suffering from gonorrhoea; they are suffering from a psychological disorder. To put a psychologically disordered patient in a gaol hospital is not the correct method of treatment. I think we might well embody in the legislation under discussion some attempt to look after the psychological disorder phase, which has allowed some people to become recalcitrant sufferers from gonorrhoea. There is another side to the problem which we must not forget. We recognise the right to send these people to a gaol hospital either in the first or second instance. When they are in receipt of a certificate of cure they are allowed to return to mix with the civil population, but there is nothing whatever to indicate that any attempt is made to rehabilitate them. It may be suggested that an individual can be cured and in that event the risk of further infection is very small. I do not think it is. I think it remains very much the same problem as in the first place. If it is regarded as necessary to send these people to the gaol hospital, it should be equally necessary to ensure that afterwards there shall be some inquiry into their future home, means of living and their rehabilitation in their life in the community. The

one problem goes hand-in-hand with the other.

Also contained in the principal Act are other difficulties that I would like members to consider. For instance, the Act provides that the Governor shall have the right to maintain guardianship over these people. He has the authority to say how long they must stay under supervision and where they must stay. That power is now to be handed over to the Commissioner of Public Health, and in view of the fact that some cases may take a very long time to reach the stage of arrest that entitles the individual to discharge, the Commissioner may exercise control over such people for very long periods. To maintain them in custody for a long period in the gaol hospital would be wrong, unless some adequate steps were taken to investigate the psychological condition of the individual. These are problems that require very careful consideration.

I sympathise with the need for amended legislation, and the steps that have been taken to bring the matter under the notice of Parliament, but I feel we should be very careful in handling those suffering from these diseases in order that we may be satisfied that the legislation proposed will do all we desire. I trust that the Chief Secretary will accept my offer to endeavour to remould the measure with the aid of those who are accustomed to handling these diseases, together with some other members of the profession.

The Chief Secretary: You do not suggest that the Bill has been compiled without consultation with those who know something about the subject?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am sorry, but I do not know that I would like to reply to that interjection, because I feel that the amending Bill was handled by people who are more used to the administration of the Act than to the actual handling of patients. It is the latter side of the problem that I think should be investigated more fully. If the Chief Secretary does not care for the suggestion I made, I ask members to consider whether they would not be justified in asking a Select Committee to consider this very technical Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): In offering a few remarks on the Bill I think I am safe in saying that this is the first major effort to amend the original Act since 1915.

If my recollection is correct, there has been no attempt since then. When I carry my memory back to the galaxy of talent interested in the subject at that time and the manner in which the gallery was filled with the good women of Perth, I am reminded that only five of us who were members at the time are still in the Chamber. The late Mr. Jabez Dodd had charge of the Bill and, despite the high-flown speeches delivered, carried through the legislation. I know of no subject that people are so prone to evade discussing openly than that now being considered. They will discuss it around the camp fire or over a convivial glass, but they shrink from tackling it in the open. If my research and reading informs me aright, the whole trouble began in Europe with Columbus and has progressed ever since.

Hon. L. Craig: It was long before Columbus.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No.

The Chief Secretary: You are not blaming him, are you?

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, but I think he brought the disease from America to Europe.

Hon. L. Craig: It was in evidence in Egypt before that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think Dr. Hislop will agree with me when I say that, of all the ills that ravage society today, none approaches venereal disease. Yet we are afraid to tackle it; we are even afraid to mention it. We adopt that attitude despite the fact that so many human beings are affected by it now and that it will also leave its mark on generations as yet unborn. We must attack the problem with an honest and firm attitude. I know that efforts in the past have been more or less supposititious. There was no method of control. A lot of us can be wise after the event. The Chief Secretary has told us that within the last 12 months the incidence of the disease has increased by 100 per cent. Well, James Cornell was a wise man before the event. On the 20th September, 1939, I spoke as follows on the Bill to prevent the sale of contraceptives:—

I commend the Bill to all the medical men in the State who served in the A.I.F. One thing they should insist upon is that all those methods of prevention that were in use at the dissolution of the A.I.F. should immediately be re-introduced.

I was speaking before a number of our men went away.

Before the last war the cry was, "Save the civil population from the soldier." During the Great War the cry was, "Save the soldier from the civil population." Standing in his place in this Chamber—as members can confirm by reference to "Hansard"—the late Dr. Saw said that one of the greatest calamities that followed the demobilisation of the troops was that all the excellent work done by the medical men in the field of venereal disease prevention, not only in the A.I.F. but in the Allied Forces, including America, had simply gone by the board. He said it was all wasted; it should have been carried into civilian life. Having served for 18 months in the A.I.F. I make this plea. My suggestion should be accepted at once and put into operation. There are doctors in this State—Dr. McWhae and Dr. George Barber—and in other States—Sir Earle Page, as well as others—who I hope will assert themselves and take immediate steps to re-introduce the desirable practices followed during the Great War.

Now, what was done? Practically nothing. The D.M.S. A.I.F., General Burston, a good soldier and also a good doctor, ought to have known that might happen. It is now brought home, when the incidence of the disease has increased by 100 per cent. The "Bulletin" did me the honour to publish that statement word for word; and I had letters from soldiers of the last war saying that then was the time to tackle the problem and not to wait until the disease became rampant. But did they tackle the problem? Did they agitate? They did nothing at all. I was wise before the event, and I know that any member of the Armed Forces of that period would confirm what I have stated. I want to know whether medical officers will put into practice as far as the Armed Forces are concerned what was the practice overseas during the last war. Then there would be no reason at all for part of this Bill.

There used to be weekly inspection, and once a man was found to have this disease—why, goodbye till he got better again! An armed guard kept him under restraint. He did not go on leave. Dr. Hislop suggested that a man affected going on leave should get treatment while on leave. But the man did not get that then, and so far as I am concerned he will not get it now. I am more concerned about the Armed Services than I am about the civil population, for if the Services live up to the traditions of 1914-18, the disease can be coped with. At the end of the first world war its incidence

in the A.I.F. was less than 4 per cent.—which amounts to an achievement. Then as regards our Armed Forces, there is the difficulty involved in the Allied Forces, who are under a different system.

Our American cousins, with all the high-flown intentions they profess, when sending their troops to France in 1917 declared, "We will make it a court-martial offence for any American soldier to contract venereal disease." Now, it is well known that in a very big city in France there was an armed guard at each end of a certain street to keep American soldiers out. But that arrangement had simply the effect of driving American soldiers into parts of the town that were not controlled. Very soon the heads of the American Forces woke up to the fact that, after all, though Old England might not have much to say, her way was the best—not by way of an armed guard but by way of prophylactics. In Australia, I understand, there is a different method for the American Forces. I do not know about the Dutch; but I do hope that the Americans, in conjunction with our Armed Forces, will arrive at a common policy. Now with regard to gaol hospitals. There is no place to send venereal cases to, so far as I understand the position. If the heads of the Armed Forces say that once any of their personnel contract the disease they shall be withdrawn from the task they enlisted to do and shall be put in a compound under guard until cured, and if that is the sensible method with Armed Forces, it is the sensible method with our civil population. I admit that we have only tinkered with the question up to date.

Occasionally Dr. Hislop and I have crossed swords, but I will help the doctor all I can to tighten up the law so that we may take at least one step towards preventing those who have the disease from disseminating it further. But I will not do it in a mealy-mouthed way. I say that what is good for the soldier is good for the civilian. If for a very obvious reason the soldier has to be pulled out of his job, the civilian in similar case must also be pulled out. My last point is that, generally speaking, we are too mealy-mouthed. Some people look upon venereal disease as a visitation from the Almighty. We know that is not so, but the sooner we break up the situation the better, and the only possible way of tackling it is the hard and stern way. That

will get us somewhere. I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAY FREIGHTS AND FARES.

Debate resumed from the 26th November on the following motion by Hon. C. B. Williams:—

That in the opinion of this House, the all-round increase of 12½ per cent. in railway fares and freights—as suggested by Mr. Raynor, Deputy Secretary of the Railway Department—would be an unfair tax on mining, agricultural and pastoral producers; and further, that no increase in railway charges should be imposed without submission to Parliament.

That this resolution be sent to the Legislative Assembly with a request for its concurrence therein.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.13]: I feel bound to say a few words in support of this motion. Increases in railway freights and fares should not be levied; but, as I interjected when the motion was moved, "Chickens are coming home to roost." Just recently the mover of the motion supported the action of the Premier in granting increases in wages behind the back of the Arbitration Court. He did not care where the money was to come from to pay the increases. Now my contention is that the Railway Department finds itself burdened with increases in wages and must make up the difference somehow. The proposal is to make it up from the residents of the back country.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Don't stutter about the back country!

Hon. G. W. MILES: The hon. member was not here when I said that the chickens were coming home to roost. I said the hon. member did not care where the money was to be got to pay the increased wages. Now the Railway Department proposes to get its share of the increases from—

Hon. C. B. Williams: One cannot stop a man from being a fool, can one?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must not interject.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I heartily support the motion, and hope the Government will see that railway freights and fares are not raised.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan): I shall be very brief, but I wish to tell the House a story which is apropos of this

motion. I forget whether this happened in 1921 or 1922, but I was on holiday in Germany when inflation was in force, and at a time when the British pound would buy a large number of German marks. My train fare from Frankfurt to Munich—an eight-hour journey in a rapid train—with a first-class sleeper, cost me 11½d. English money.

Hon. C. B. Williams: For how many miles?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: My geography is not equal to that. My breakfast the following morning at the Kaiserhof Hotel, however, cost me 3s. 6d. English money. I give that little instance so that members may realise what will happen if the Government continually raises the basic wage and yet prevents the railways from recovering their costs. The same thing might happen here; we may be able to travel a long distance on one of our trains at very little cost, but we may have to pay a great deal more for our breakfast the following morning.

While we may feel that a sudden impost of 12½ per cent. is too great, the House should not hamper a Government instrumentality in its attempts to meet its costs. We must realise that as here, so also in Germany in 1922, railway fares declared on the 1st June each year could not be altered until the 1st January. Therefore, the return to the Government would become rapidly less and less. I suggest to members that they view carefully the fact that it may not be altogether wise to increase the basic wage and at the same time limit Government undertakings in their efforts to meet their costs.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East): I support the motion and hope it will be carried. Dr. Hislop mentioned Germany, but we do not want to be misled by what that country imposes upon its people, whether it be an imposition on railway costs or on anything else. Probably the extra costs that the railways have to meet at present are due to the transport of troops to distant parts of the State.

Hon. L. Craig: That is all being paid for.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not know whether it is or not. The transport of troops would involve the curtailment of services in various parts of the State, and that may have had a great deal to do with the increased running costs of the railways. The

goldfields people have no desire to meet a 12½ per cent. increase in fares and freights. Mr. Heenan pointed out how the people in the North were situated. Quite apart from freights, they were unable to obtain enough commodities to live decently. I have a feeling that the 12½ per cent. increase will not be imposed, but it is right that we should get in with an early protest. I shall not delay the House longer. I hope the Government will see fit not to go further in the matter.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East): I listened with much interest to Dr. Hislop, who spoke on a subject of which he certainly has considerable knowledge. I cannot agree with his statement, however, that we should not try to hamper the Government in its effort to meet rising costs. If members will refer to the return of the Commissioner of Railways for 1942, they will find that the earnings from coaching, mails and goods, including livestock, amounted to £3,848,381. On page 6 they will find that the income from passenger fares and money derived from suburban freight amounted to £177,004. If we deduct that from the above mentioned amount of £3,848,381, we have a remainder of £3,671,377, which is the money paid to the Railway Department by people living outside the metropolitan area. When we were discussing the State Transport Co-ordination Act, the Commissioner's representative said that the department would use every means in its power to increase the use of the railways from Fremantle to Perth; but the department was unable to compete successfully with the road transport, which picked up goods at Fremantle and delivered them direct to warehouses in Perth.

Goods carried by the railways for the metropolitan area are a negligible quantity. We find that people outside the metropolitan area contributed £3,671,377 to the railways. A 12½ per cent. increase on that sum would amount to £458,922. That is the amount that would be paid entirely by the people living outside the metropolitan area. I ask the House whether it is fair or reasonable even to suggest that there should be any increase in railway freights at all, especially when such increase has to be borne by only half the population. That is the point I raise. Half the population of Western Australia today resides in the metropolitan area. Our country industries

have been deprived of manpower. Mr. Heenan has supplied the House with information showing the alarming reduction of population in the goldfields towns. In such circumstances, it is amazing that railway officers should even suggest such an increase as is proposed.

When a question was asked by Mr. Watts in another place on this matter, the Minister for Railways replied that Mr. Raynor's proposal was in transit to the Government. Therefore, we have to assume that it is the intention of the Railway Department, if it obtains the Government's permission, to make this proposed increase. I shall quote the Government Railways Act, which provides that the Commissioner, or anybody deputed by him, may fix rates independently of Parliament. That is what I had in mind when I put my proposed amendment on the notice paper. Members will recall that I was fortunate enough to secure a majority in favour of a motion to disallow regulations placed on the Table of the House imposing an increase of 50 per cent. in railway freights. As I indicated on that occasion, that increase would have had to be borne entirely by people outside the metropolitan area. Section 22 of the Government Railways Act provides—

The Commissioner may, with the approval of the Minister, from time to time, by notice in the "Government Gazette":

(1) Fix scales of charges to be paid—

(a) by persons carried on or using a railway; or

(b) for goods carried on a railway.

In my opinion, the Government resorted to a subterfuge to over-ride the wishes of Parliament. Despite the fact that this House disallowed the regulations to which I referred, we find that the Government took advantage of a proviso to the section I have mentioned. That proviso is as follows:—

Provided, however, that the Commissioner, or any officer of the department duly authorised by him, may from time to time fix special scales of charges to be paid in lieu of the ordinary charges upon special occasions, or for such time and in respect of such railways or parts of a railway as he thinks fit.

I endeavoured to have that provision struck out. I regret to say that while the majority supported the disallowance of the regulations I have mentioned, it could not see its way clear to go as far as I wished. If the Government desires, it still has the power to do that. The Commissioner has the authority to do it under that proviso,

which was never intended to be applied that way. This House disallowed the regulations and that was, therefore, an instruction that the impost should not be placed upon the people of the country. The proviso meant that if there was an extraordinary class of goods, heavy weights, or possibly in connection with special occasions such as drought relief and so forth, the Commissioner would be enabled to make a special rate apart from the ordinary charges laid down in the rate-book.

I cannot agree for one moment with Dr. Hislop when he states that the Government should be permitted to increase its charges because of basic wage and cost of coal increases. I object to that because in these times of stress our country's industries are being denuded of manpower and are suffering a reduction of output. There are many empty houses and shops in the outback areas and the womenfolk naturally come to the metropolitan area to be as close as possible to their menfolk in camp. That is why we deemed it advisable that the Government should introduce a measure such as the one to restrict the increase in rents. There is a big influx of population into the metropolis. If we are to be fair to all sections of the community the whole of the people should bear the burden. Reverting to the railway figures, I pointed out that 12½ per cent. represents £458,922. Turning to the Commissioner's report, on page 6 he makes this statement—

Basic wage increases and the payment of "war loading" to certain sections of the staff account for the payment of an extra £100,000 for salaries and wages and represent one of the main contributing factors in the increase of £268,000 in working expenses. Of the increase on account of pensions, etc., the sum of £45,125 represented the railway proportion of the State's share of the payments during the year under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, 1938-39.

Why should not the whole of the people pay for that instead of trying to load it on to the country? The report continues—

Pay-roll tax and war damage insurance accounted for £60,374 and £17,100 respectively. The cost of fuel showed an increase of £55,000 An additional amount of £12,000 was expended on renewals and replacements of tarpaulins; while increased contributions for workers' insurance (£4,300) and to the Railway Accident and Fire Insurance Fund (£2,700) totalled £7,000.

If we take the increase in the working expenses and deduct it from what it is pro-

posed to raise by the 12½ per cent. impost it shows a nice little margin of £190,922—near enough to £200,000. If we were experiencing normal conditions and the country was engaged in manufacturing industries, these increased costs could be passed on to the public and I would say, "Very well, there is no reason why you should not do so." Possibly the Minister will reply that these costs are for services rendered. But we know that through the State Transport Co-ordination Act and because of the petrol restrictions at present operating, much motor transport has been driven off the road. That transport at one stage provided far cheaper cartage rates than the Railway Department was prepared to apply.

If it was in the interests of the Railway Department to pass the State Transport Co-ordination Act—and it was brought down for the benefit of the railways—surely in a time of stress and under war conditions it is reasonable to say that at least for the duration of the war we shall not impose any additional burdens upon the country districts which have had their population so depleted. I shall move an amendment, and I hope the mover of the motion and the House will agree to it. I am afraid that if the motion is carried as it stands we might find ourselves in exactly the same position that we did when members disallowed the regulations which sought to impose a £50,000 increase. On that occasion the department got over the difficulty by using Section 22 in a manner which, I say, did not reflect much credit on the Government. I move an amendment—

That in line 8 the words "without submission to Parliament" be struck out and the words "for the duration of the war" inserted in lieu.

The PRESIDENT: I would ask members, when speaking to the amendment which is now before the Chair to confine themselves to discussing the striking out of the words proposed to be deleted.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan—on amendment): I did not intend to speak on this question, but after the remarks of one of my colleagues I feel bound to say, as a metropolitan member, that I strongly support the motion. I would like Mr. Thomson to consider whether his amendment does not rather weaken the position. As the motion stands, no increase can be made with-

out the consent of Parliament. If the amendment is carried, directly the war is over increases could be made without the consent of Parliament. I have no objection to the amendment, but it seems to me rather to weaken the motion. Incidentally, if there is one service in this State or country that does not reflect credit upon the Government, it is the railway service of Western Australia.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East—on amendment): Like Sir Hal Colebatch I think the motion moved by Mr. Williams meets the position better than Mr. Thomson's amendment. The motion, as submitted in its original form, at least throws the onus on the Administration to present to Parliament any proposed increases in railway freights although as the result of experience some years ago, it appears possible for the department to ignore the expressed wish of Parliament. Nevertheless we should retain the right to require such matters to be submitted here. We will then be in a position, as the Parliament of this State, when the opportunity offers, to hold responsible those persons who flout the wishes of the representatives of the people. I oppose the amendment.

HON. J. CORNELL (South—on amendment): I hope Mr. Thomson will not persist with his amendment. Superficially it looks all right, but it carries with it contradictions. It is more or less in the nature of a Kathleen Mavourneen. We had a discussion here today as to what "the end of the war" meant. It may be years. No member of this House desires to carry a motion that will do nothing. There is another phase. I protested on the original question when a motion was moved to disallow a by-law which sought to do a certain thing. That was ignored. What we are asking for now is to preserve the free and undoubted right that we thought we had. If there is to be an increase in freight, the suggested rates should be laid on the Table of the House and then if we do not disagree to them, all right, but if we disagree, the proposal will not be put into effect.

Hon. A. Thomson: They would still impose it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The position would be exactly the same under the hon. member's amendment. After all, we are demonstrating to the Government what we think. If Parliament approves it can be carried out.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East—on amendment): I desire to support Mr. Williams's motion.

The PRESIDENT: The amendment to delete certain words is before the Chair.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I feel, in speaking on this amendment, that my colleague, Mr. Thomson, has taken a great interest in this matter of increased railway freights. We in the country realise that the rural areas cannot, like the goldfields, afford to have any increase in the rates. I am sure that the House will support this motion as originally proposed by Mr. Williams. I must oppose Mr. Thomson's amendment.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT AMENDMENT.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—
That the House at its rising adjourn till tomorrow, Thursday, at 2.15 p.m.
Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.47 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1942.

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