

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 26th November, 1930.

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

QUESTION—WOORLOO SANATORIUM FUEL.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, What was the reason for effecting alterations at the Woorloo Sanatorium, whereby imported oil fuel has been substituted for the local product—firewood—to fire two boilers? 2, On whose recommendation were these alterations made? 3, What costs were incurred in converting from firewood to oil? 4, On what date did operations begin with oil fuel, and what saving has been effected; and/or what extra cost has been incurred? 5, What number of woodcutters and other employees have been displaced through the introduction of oil fuel? 6, Were the alterations effected for experimental purposes or are they of a permanent character?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, The installation of crude oil engines and burners for hot water and steam boilers is being carried out in the interests of economy. The installation of the engines for driving the electrical machinery is complete and in operation. The work in connection with the installation of the oil burners for the boilers is now in course of construction. 2, The alterations are being made on the recommendation of the Government Electrical Engineer. 3, The total approximate cost will be £2,420. 4, Operations with crude oil commenced on the 7th January, 1930, and the saving effected from that part of the

plant already completed is at the rate of about £1,300 per annum. 5, Firewood has been obtained by contract, and there is no record or information relative to the number of woodcutters affected. 6, The alterations are not being made for experimental purposes, but are of a permanent character.

BILL—PREMIUM BONDS.

Introduced by Hon. A. Lovekin and read a first time.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There were 90 copies printed of the Bill I introduced last session, and as many of these are still available, I suggest, in the interests of economy, that until the Bill I have just submitted goes a little further, those that were printed last year might be used. Only the date of the introduction of the Bill will require to be altered.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

Second Reading—Amendment, Six Months

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter East) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: In this Bill authority is sought for the expenditure by the Senate of the University of Western Australia, out of certain trust moneys known as the Hackett Bequest, of the amount required for the erection and completion of certain buildings at Crawley. It also provides for the grant by the State of an annuity sufficient to reimburse the University for the expenditure from the trust moneys, and in respect to another grant for building purposes. The buildings are being erected on the understanding that the Government will find the sum of £85,000. That amount is made up as follows:—

(a) £25,000 as compensation for an amount of £21,000 levied under the Dividend Duties Act on the bequest made to the University by the

late Sir John Winthrop Hackett, and (b) £60,000—the Government's independent contribution for the erection of a building to house the Departments of Physics, Chemistry, and Agricultural Science.

The promise regarding the £25,000 was made some time ago, and was later on agreed to by the present Premier, while the £60,000 represents a direct grant by the Government. Because of the financial position, the Government are unable to make available the money referred to and, therefore, the method of financing the construction of the buildings as set forth in the Bill, is being resorted to for the convenience of the Treasury. Under the Bill, the University will, within two years from the commencement of the Act, complete the buildings, and on the lodgment of a certificate by the architect, the Government shall pay the amounts set out in Clause 5, namely:—

(a) £25,000 and interest at 5 per cent. from the 12th September, 1930, such interest to be capitalised. (b) Amounts up to £60,000 expended by the University in erecting the buildings for the physics, chemistry and agricultural science departments together with 5 per cent. per annum on the amounts expended on progress payments, such interest to be capitalised up to the date of such lodgment.

The Bill provides that if the University make a loss in the realisation of any investment, and provided the Treasurer has consented to such realisation, the loss shall be deemed an expenditure in the erection of the buildings. It is not considered that any loss will occur, but the provision is necessary under the Trust Funds Act.

The sum of principal and capitalised interest in respect to the £85,000 mentioned in Clause 5 is to be payable by the Government to the University over a period of 30 years in annual sums, covering payment of interest and principal and such annual sum will be charged to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. In other words, the capital and interest will be reducible in half-yearly payments. On the £85,000, the half-yearly instalment with interest at 5 per cent. will be £2,750 0s. 10d., and the yearly contributions £5,500 1s. 8d. Of course, the sum of £85,000 does not include capitalised interest on progress payments in completing the buildings. In order to finance the construction of the building for the various departments mentioned in Clause 4, the Senate of the University is empowered under the Bill to realise upon so much of the invest-

ments as may be thought necessary, provided that as repayments are made by the Government under Clause 6, the Senate shall restore the amount obtained by the realisation of the securities.

As previously stated, it is not proposed that the Government shall find the money at the moment. The buildings will be erected by the Senate, who will find the whole of the money and the Government is to guarantee to repay the money, namely £95,000. Of that amount, £21,000 was received by the Government under the Dividend Duties Act from the bequest to the University by the late Sir John Winthrop Hackett and it is now proposed to make a payment of £25,000 in respect to it. In addition, the Government are to find £60,000 as their contribution towards the erection of the building to house the physics, chemistry and agricultural science departments. But as the Government are unable to spare the money at the moment, the University will find the whole of the amount required, the Government undertaking to repay it by half-yearly instalments. On completion of the buildings, after the architect has certified that the buildings have been completed, the Government will begin the half-yearly payments.

The University and the Government are anxious that the Bill should pass as quickly as possible in order that the work may be started. The University is prepared to get on with the work at once, and, of course, it will absorb a certain number of persons now out of employment. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan)
[4.44]: I do not wish to delay the measure by moving the adjournment of the debate, but I would like to ask the Minister whether the transaction outlined in the Bill has received the approval of the Federal Loan Council. To my mind, it represents an insidious way of borrowing money. The Government desire to raise £85,000 and they get the University authorities to secure the funds and the Government will pay back interest and sinking fund charges out of Consolidated Revenue. That is the way we deal with all loans. We borrow money, and Consolidated Revenue finds the interest and sinking fund payments. I understood that borrowings had ceased, except with the consent of the Loan Council. It seems to

me that this is a new way of financing, which the Government, having tasted blood in this direction, may find useful in other ways for the purpose of raising additional funds on the same lines. However much we may desire to have the University well equipped, this is not the time when the country can afford to repay money received by way of estate duties on the Hackett bequest—

Hon. H. Seddon: With interest compounded.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: And give £60,000 on top of that. It is a matter for the House to consider. I do not want to do anything inimical to the interests of the University, but this is a time when we should call a halt to expenditure until we ascertain how we are going to meet our obligations.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) [4.46]: This Bill is the result of a definite contract entered into by the Government with the University.

Hon. H. Seddon: Which Government?

Hon. J. M. DREW: The previous Government. The Government of the day received £21,000 taxation under the Dividend Duties Act on the Hackett bequest. The Government realised that it was unfair to impose that tax in the circumstances, but there was no remedy except by way of legislation. It was ultimately decided that the £21,000 should be refunded to the University with a fair rate of interest added; in other words, that the University should receive £25,000. Then the University authorities decided to erect buildings on a large scale out of the Hackett bequest and approached the Government for help. The Government could not very well refuse to assist the University, which is catering for all classes and creeds of the community. They decided to make a grant of £60,000. The £25,000 was to have been paid over on the 30th September last, but owing to financial stringency it has been impossible for the Government to find the money. The £60,000 is necessary for the erection of buildings to give instruction in chemistry, physics and agricultural science. Before the University authorities undertook the scheme of building, they had a definite assurance from the Government that the money would be forthcoming, and on that assurance they made a start with the work. Consequently, this is an obligation of the pre-

vious Government and it has been endorsed by the present Government. It seems that a way has been found out of the difficulty. The £25,000 and the £60,000, together with the interest which accrues between the 30th September and the date of the completion of the buildings two years hence, will be capitalised and the payment will be extended over 30 years. In the circumstances I think the House will confirm what has been approved by the two Governments. It is very necessary that that should be done. If it is not done, I as a member of the Senate of the University know that building operations will have to cease. That would not be desirable because it would create a bad impression not only in this State and in Australia, but in the Old Country. I hope the House will recognise that a contract has been entered into and that it would have been fulfilled in ordinary circumstances, but that owing to developments not expected at the time, it has been impossible for the Government so far to give effect to the obligation.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.50]: After all that has been done for the University in the way of endowments, it strikes me as extraordinary that so early in its career it must come to the Government with serious demands for further support. We are all aware of the strained condition of the State's finances when the Government took office. Practically the whole of the trust funds had been exhausted. Consequently, it is rather hard to find that the Government have now a dead horse to work off in the shape of a promise made by the previous Government, of which we were heretofore unaware.

Hon. A. Lovekin. We shall not need Parliament if this sort of thing happens.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is a serious matter. We have been asked to sanction various new taxes because of the strained condition of the finances. It would be well to call a halt, as so many people have had to do in their private business. The Governments of Australia have promised to endeavour to live within their incomes, and they are finding it extremely hard to do so. It is the duty of everyone of us to curtail expenditure for the time being and live within his means. The Government must do the same, even if it means postponing the completion of the University buildings

till a more appropriate time. The Government cannot continue to pay out large sums of money and build expensive structures when we know they are costing much more than they will cost later when living costs generally have been reduced.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.53]: With Mr. Hamersley, I regret having to cause the Government to break their promise, but we are continually being reminded that conditions have radically changed since that promise was made. I do not desire to abandon the higher education of the young people of this State; rather do I desire to do everything possible to assist them to enter the professions and so assist in the economic life and the development of the State. I have yet to be convinced that the erecting of palatial buildings in the present time of stress tallies with the exhortations of those in authority that it is incumbent upon everybody to exercise the greatest possible economy. I think I am voicing the sentiments of my constituents in saying that. I am not averse from the erection of buildings or the spending of money that will equip our young people for life, but the country representatives have to remember one important fact. In mentioning this I am sorry to have to disagree with my colleague, Mr. Drew, in his statement that the University caters for all classes of the community. I say that the University caters especially for children of metropolitan residents. If a child of mine wished to attend the University, I should be required to pay a good deal more than would a parent in the metropolitan area whose child could live at home.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Would you suggest a university in the country?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: There is not the slightest justification for that interjection from a country member. I believe in rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. I am quite prepared to render unto the city the things that are the city's. The country people, when they visit Perth, have a right to see things that are not provided in their own districts. I refer to such institutions as the Museum, the Zoological Gardens, the Public Library and Art Gallery. We cannot have universities scattered all over the State. However, this is not the time to honour a promise made by the previous Government at a period when

conditions were quite different from what they are now. I am conversant with other promises, more vital than this one, that the Government have had to break owing to the altered condition of affairs. They are promises to give effect to the recommendations of experts, who tell us that production costs must be lowered. Those are promises that should be given effect to, rather than a promise such as this. I should like to see the palatial pile of buildings at Crawley completed. When it is completed, it will be a credit to the city and to the State, as well as to the gentleman who made it possible by his munificent bequest. Still, I think the building part of the scheme should stand over for a time. I oppose the second reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.59]: We are told that this Bill is the outcome of a promise made by the previous Government and now being honoured by the present Government.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: A contract.

Hon. J. CORNELL: A contract which was entered into by eight or nine men out of a Parliament totalling 80 members.

Hon. H. Stewart: Why was not the contract submitted to us?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That indicates the full substance of the promise. If there is one department in which the State can with advantage go slowly at this juncture it is in respect of higher education. There was a time when we heard a good deal about the slogan, "Free education from the kindergarten to the University," but since those days a lot of water has run under the bridge, and I have now come to the conclusion that there is very little in that slogan. The practical result is that there are many people with a university education who ought to have gone to work, whilst there are a lot of people who are at work and who should have had a university education. When the palatial pile of buildings is erected, I venture to say not 2 per cent. of the youth in the province you, Sir, and I represent will be able to avail themselves of the advantages the University will afford. To all intents and purposes the University is a city institution, and is likely to remain so for many years to come. In my humble opinion the University could be improved, and we could have some definite method

whereby the youth who shows promise might be carried on to the University. That cannot be done to-day with respect to youths living in the country unless those youths are brought to Perth and maintained in the city by the parents or guardians who live in the country. It seems extraordinary that in one breath this House should be asked to levy a tax on sweep tickets to augment the revenue, and should also be asked to double the entertainment tax, and tax children who go to picture theatres—the theatres of the poor people—and that we should also be asked to tax almost everything from Dan to Beersheeba, and that on the other hand we should be asked to agree to an arrangement entered into by a previous Government in better times, an arrangement involving the expenditure of £85,000. I do not know what is thought of a proposal of this kind by the average man who to-day is troubled about where he may be able to lay his head to-morrow. I recognise the benefits of higher education, but I think we have arrived at an epoch in the State's history when the existing method of higher education ought to be amended in the direction of carrying on to the University those who are really worthy of a university education and eliminating from that institution those who, as I have already said, would be better at work. I am in a quandary as to the manner in which I shall vote. I think at this juncture it would be right and proper if the Minister withdrew the Bill.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.5]: Mr. Drew informed us in the course of his remarks that if the Bill were not agreed to it would create a bad impression not only throughout Australia, but perhaps in other parts of the world. If I have misinterpreted Mr. Drew's statement in my paraphrasing of it, I will apologise to him. Parliament would be wise to show to the people of the State how seriously members regard the financial position.

Hon. J. M. Drew: It would be a breach of faith not to pass the Bill.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am heartily in accord with university education and agree that it should be available to those whose mental attainments are above the ordinary and who, intellectually, might be regarded as fitted to study those sciences which assist a country in the promotion of its industries and the development of its resources. But

I have never favoured the idea of a free University because it undoubtedly gives preference to the intellectuals who reside in the metropolitan area and who thus have an advantage over those scattered far and wide throughout the State. The cost of living of those who are obliged to come to the city from distant parts of the State amounts to far more than the fees of the University, and so those from the country get a severe setback. This cost prevents many who otherwise are entitled to assistance at the University from participating on equal terms with those residing in the metropolitan area. Funds raised from fees could well be utilised for more bursaries and exhibitions to overcome the disabilities under which relatively country residents suffer. There are bursaries and exhibitions for those youths of certain mental attainments whose education it is desired to carry on, but statements have to be secured that the parents or guardians are in receipt of only a certain income. At the same time the fact is overlooked that those parents or guardians of the young people have to bear the expense of the residence of their children in the city during the University term. The position with regard to the Bill is that just at this stage I am not able to say how I shall record my vote, but I felt that I could not let the opportunity pass without raising my voice in protest against the proposed expenditure. We have, I believe, the only free University in the world, but the question is whether we can afford it. Statistics point to the fact that the higher intelligence is to be found outside urban districts. There are, I admit, a number of High School exhibitions, but they are not sufficient to permit the youths from the country participating in the benefits of the University. These exhibitions are limited in number and also in the amount of financial assistance provided. So I contend that a greater proportion of youths in the metropolitan area are more able to enjoy the benefits of a university education than the youths of country districts. Mr. Cornell drew attention to the fact that probably a good many people who have received university education would have been better off had they not obtained higher education, but rather had they followed some avocation. I am not going to follow that line of argument because I believe that any person who acquires

additional knowledge is the better for it. I also do not agree with Mr. Cornell's contention that if there is a time when we could do with less of the influence of the University, or the training and advantages it gives, that time is now. I contend that the more strenuous the times, the more desirable it is to train the best brains and intellects so that we might get the best results in connection with the application of science to industry and the development of our resources and research work. It is particularly unfortunate at this stage that we should be called upon to complete an agreement entered into by a previous Cabinet. I feel that we should honour the word of a previous Government, but I should like to know when the agreement was entered into. I should also like to know why was not Parliament, in its last session, asked to honour it? On the answers that I will receive, will depend how my vote will be cast.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.15]: I have no desire to deny the good work the University has done. Still, to say that I was astounded at the statement made this afternoon is to put it very mildly indeed; in fact I have not quite got over the shock yet. In view of the fact of what has happened in the State, in the Commonwealth and in this very House, in view of the strenuous efforts made to get £1,000 from here and from there in order to carry on, it is amazing to find ourselves faced with this proposal this afternoon. Indeed, it is altogether beyond my comprehension. I point this out in view of an interjection from Mr. Yelland, who remarked, "Repudiation," and of Mr. Drew's phrase, "breach of contract." In my opinion there is no breach of contract and cannot be any breach of contract. If so, what is the use of Parliament? On the part of Ministers there can only be a promise to put up a given proposal to Parliament. If that was not the promise made by Ministers, what are we here for? Are Ministers to be allowed to spend thousands of pounds for this, that and the other without the consent of Parliament? Is it that Parliament votes a lump sum and the Government of the day can distribute it as they think fit? Here is a specific proposal put up to Parliament. Why? Because there was a promise made to put it up to Parliament, and in fulfilment of that promise the Bill is here.

Hon. J. M. Drew: The Government required terms.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I will deal with that. If Parliament turns down the proposal in the shape of the Bill, it will not be repudiation. When we come to the question of repudiation, I may mention incidentally that this is the repudiation of that agreement which Mr. Drew piloted through the House, the Financial Agreement which created the Loan Council through which all the money the State may wish to borrow must flow. All our borrowed money now comes through that channel and that channel alone. That was a breach of a definite contract. To come here and talk of repudiation and breach of contract in the face of that fact is absurd.

Hon. J. M. Drew: But this is a debt.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. member that used the phrase "breach of contract" in supporting this Bill is making a breach of the Financial Agreement which he piloted through this House. I am well aware of what science has done; we have only to look back over the last 25 years to realise something of what science has done for civilisation. But the question is can we afford this money at the present time? In view of the evidence we have had from the Treasurer and everybody else, I do not think the State would be justified in embarking on this expenditure at the present moment. In all my years of experience in Parliament I have stood up for the carrying out of every contract that has been made, every contract that Parliament has made.

Hon. H. Stewart: Even the Lake Clifton railway.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But when we get a proposal such as this put up to us to enter into a contract, it is this House that is asked to make the contract, and I feel justified in saying I will not be a party to the making of such a contract at the present time. I will oppose the second reading.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [5.20]: I too will oppose the Bill. I regret it should have been brought down at such a time. I am opposing it only for reasons of finance; the State cannot afford it just now. As far as we know, the University has plenty of buildings at its disposal. For many years the University had to exist in very unsuitable temporary buildings in St. George's Terrace. In spite of that, the

University has attained to a very good name; it seems to have done all the teaching that was required. Yet now the University authorities come along and at a time like this ask for this large amount of money to be spent on very fine buildings. It seems to me it is quite unnecessary. Moreover, we cannot afford the money. Another thing: Can one Parliament promise for the incoming Parliament to spend money or do certain work? I do not think it can. I will oppose the second reading solely for financial reasons. I am not opposed to the University in any way. It is a very fine institution. I am inclined to think the University authorities only want this proposed new building as an extra convenience, and perhaps for the beautifying of their grounds. After all, the University work can be done just as well in temporary buildings as in this proposed new building. I will oppose the second reading.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.22]: In view of the different opinions that have been expressed by members—

Hon. V. Hamersley: There has been only one opinion expressed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It makes it difficult for a representative of the Metropolitan Province to express a view scarcely in accord with those that have been expressed by members representing more remote provinces. If members will refer to the preamble of the Bill, they will see the reason for the introduction of the Bill. The preamble reads as follows—

Whereas by reason of taxation imposed under the Dividend Duties Act, 1902, the bequest made to the University of Western Australia by the late Sir John Winthrop Hackett, K.C.M.G., LL.D., was reduced by £21,000 or thereabouts, and for the purpose of compensating the University or that loss the Government of the State agreed that it would, on the 12th September, 1930, pay a sum of £25,000 towards the cost of completing buildings at Crawley known as the Hackett Buildings, and on the faith of that argument the Senate of the University entered into a contract to complete such buildings.

The Bill, I take it, is nothing more nor less than a fulfilment of what is clearly an obligation undertaken by the Government of the day.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Has not Parliament a say in it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not going to fail to recognise the fact that Parliament has a final say in anything of the kind.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I have known of previous promises made by Governments which this House would not agree to.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The affairs of State are entrusted to the Government, and as the preamble suggests, it was on the faith of an agreement by the Government that the Senate of the University entered into a contract to erect certain buildings. There is something sacred about negotiations of that sort when they are made by the Government, who are really the representatives of Parliament for the time being. If those representatives of Parliament were to do something of a heinous character, then undoubtedly Parliament rightly would have the power to veto that which was done.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If the Government had full authority they would not have brought down the Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Undoubtedly. Given the time, one could find many instances of Governments of the past making certain terms or giving certain undertakings that a certain thing would be carried out, believing that that which they were promising was of benefit to the State. This is a matter of higher education. I am not going to discuss the question which has been raised regarding payment for services rendered in respect of higher education. I quite agree with those members who have expressed themselves in that direction. I share their views that there should be payment for that higher education in view of the fact that the financial position of the State demands an alteration in the present system. But that is all by the way. What we are here to consider is this Bill, and the honouring of what I regard as a promise of a beneficial character for the State at large. It is not for one portion of the State alone. We cannot have universities in every town in the State. The State must have some place for its higher education, and where else could it begin than in Perth? In the course of time, if our State expands and our population increases, we shall have larger cities and it will be possible for other universities to be established in those other important centres yet to be created.

Hon. A. Lovekin: As the years go on we may have more money.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, and so be able to carry out these works. I would be the last to seek to abrogate what I considered a beneficial arrangement by any Gov-

ernment. It is our duty to respect any beneficial agreement made or undertaking given by the Government.

Hon. H. Seddon: Then what is the use of Parliament?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I will try to explain what is the use of Parliament. Parliament is not sitting all the year round. Our recess is a fairly lengthy one. In consequence, works that have to be carried out and duties that have to be performed during that period are performed by those entrusted with ministerial office. They are naturally bound to do certain things relying upon the good faith of Parliament to ratify their actions, just as in the same way the directors of a company might enter into an obligation requiring ratification at the hands of the shareholders.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What would happen if the shareholders did not ratify it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If they did not ratify something that was for the benefit of the company, they would be doing something that could be characterised by a name I would not like to give expression to here. The matter before us is of worthy benefit to Western Australia.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: There are the altered circumstances.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Circumstances have altered. If this Bill had been brought down more promptly, I feel sure that no voice in this Chamber would have been raised against it. We have actually received this money, except the £4,000.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is £60,000 as well.

Hon. E. H. Gray: £21,000.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We received £21,000, and certain commitments have been entered into as a consequence. It is proposed that the total amount shall be repaid over a period of 30 years. Having regard to all the circumstances, Parliament would be doing only what is just and right in ratifying the promise, and should not do anything that would indicate repudiation. If Parliament were sitting regularly, these matters would probably be dealt with more promptly.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The agreement to which you refer was made in September when Parliament was sitting. The matter could have been brought up before.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Quite a reasonable time has elapsed since the 1st Septem-

ber. Members should take a reasonable view of the Bill. They should recognise that the Government are only seeking to do that which they would expect from their successors, the honouring of an agreement of this character. I would think very little of a Government which might succeed this one if they failed to recognise an agreement such as this.

Hon. V. Hamersley: What are we to say about cancelled railways?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is that not just as much repudiation?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The authorisation for those railways still exists. No one is seeking to remove it from the statute-book.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The authorisation is there but the money has gone.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This is nothing more nor less than an authorisation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is what has got us into our present trouble.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We are doing nothing more serious than the hon. member did when he voted for these authorisations. This is a matter of honouring an agreement made under certain conditions.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Was not an agreement made with the settlers when these railways were authorised?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member cannot point to any agreement.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The failure to carry out the agreement has meant ruination for many of them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It was intended that the railways should be built. The hon. member suggests voting against this Bill, whereas he voted for the authorisations or the promises or agreements that were made with respect to the settlers. I should like to see every one of these authorised railways constructed, but I realise that times have changed.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You know the money was borrowed with which to build them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I know that appropriations were made.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And you want to re-appropriate some more for the purpose.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not want to re-appropriate anything. We ought to honour an agreement of this nature. I agree with members in their observations with regard to making a suitable charge for University education.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about those who cannot afford to pay?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That difficulty can be overcome by instituting the bursary system. It would be an inducement to men with money to provide bursaries and give an opportunity to those who could not afford the money to gain the advantages of the higher education. We are not justified in giving this free education when we have not the money available. This particular agreement is one which, in all the circumstances, should be honoured. I support the Bill.

HON. SIR CHARLES NATHAN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.35]: Although I support the second reading, I wish to make it clear that I shall look for drastic amendments in Committee. My reason for voting for the second reading is that apparently certain commitments were made by the previous Government which the present Government desire to honour. Those commitments have involved the University authorities in obligations which at the moment are not apparent, but it would be disastrous if by the rejection of this Bill the University were placed in an awkward position. I have conscientiously endeavoured to support the Government in their attempts to meet their financial responsibilities and square the ledger. Last night the Government came down with a Bill to bring in a matter of only £5,000 on sweep tickets but I felt it my duty to support them. I cannot at the moment see what obligation is cast upon the Government in respect to the £60,000, though there may be one with respect to the £25,000. Whilst my mind is open, I shall want to see strong justification for the expenditure of the £60,000. I fully recognise the value of the University, and would be the last one to retard its progress. But I do feel that any programme to which the authorities are not legally committed might reasonably be postponed for a year or two. In Committee I intend to oppose the clause dealing with the methods by which the money is to be raised. If I read it aright, the University authorities propose to raise the money by realising on certain investments and lending it to the Government. One knows at present just what the difficulty is of realising on investments. I have tried it myself. Property to-day would prob-

ably realise 20 or 30 per cent. less than in normal times. The Bill provides that in the realisation of the assets, the University authorities make a loss, the amount of such loss will be considered as part of the value of the new buildings to be erected, and will form part of the money which is to be reimbursed by the Government. In other words the Government will guarantee the normal value of the assets and reimburse the University for any loss incurred on realisation. Unless the clause is amended, that is sufficient to condemn the Bill. I shall not oppose the second reading because I feel we should understand the position better. I shall, however, consider myself at liberty to support any amendment, even of a drastic nature, that will result in the Government obligation being kept down to a minimum.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.40]: It seems as if the House for once in its history, will be able to deal with a Bill at one sitting. I have listened to the speeches this afternoon, and can find hardly one, except that of the Leader of the House, Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Drew in favour of the Bill. When the Government and the University authorities discussed this position, values were at their apex. When the arrangement was made for financing the proposition, and for the University to sell their securities for the purpose of finding the £60,000, it was not thought likely any loss would be incurred. Who will say to-day, however, that this hope will be realised? I am satisfied that a heavy loss will be sustained, so heavy that we should call a halt and ask the authorities to reconsider the matter.

Hon. J. M. Drew: That has all been satisfactorily arranged.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The Bill does not say so. Clause 7 says—

In order to provide the aggregate sums of principal and capitalised interest as mentioned in section five, the Senate is hereby authorised to sell and realise upon so much as may be thought necessary of the funds and investment now controlled by the University and known as the Hackett Bequest: Provided that, as repayments are made by the Government under section six, the Senate shall, as soon as practicable restore the moneys realised by such sales and realisations, and thereby make the same again subject to the present trusts applying to the Hackett Bequest.

Since I have been associated with Parliament, these bequests have cost the Government nothing by way of interest. Now they are asked to capitalise the interest, which at 5 per cent works out at £5,500 a year, and in addition guarantee the capital of £60,000. That seems to savour of frenzied finance. It is so reprehensible that members who know anything about finance can hardly be expected to support the Bill in its present form. I regret the cheap gibes of members representing country provinces and their references to the University being in the city. They have claimed that equal opportunities are not afforded to children in the country.

Hon. H. Stewart: Where is the inaccuracy of the statement? It is not a cheap gibe.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: It is a cheap gibe. The University belongs to the State, not to the city. Possibly, if Mr. Stewart had been earlier enough with the request, the University might have been built in Wagin.

Hon. H. Stewart: I have not the slightest desire for that. Yours is a cheap gibe, all right.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I regret that such a tone should enter into a debate of this kind. The city is the centre of the State.

Hon. H. Stewart: Of course it is. No one denies that. But this is University finance.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Metropolitan members, having supported the establishment of a University, should not criticise the institution to-day. I agree that the Bill should go to second reading for the purpose of giving the agreement which has been entered into, that consideration which it ought to receive at the hands of the House. Then, I fear, the measure will get hard treatment if members generally are of the same opinion as I am.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.46]: I am surprised at the tone of this debate. In my opinion, education should be the last thing to be touched, even in times of depression, because such a course means striking a blow at the State itself. One phase of this Bill is that it will provide employment. Hon. members are following the example of hundreds of financiers outside, who try to stop progress everywhere by closing banks, shutting down trade, and bringing

things to a standstill. Do we want the University to become like Parliament House, half finished? It is probable that had we known what was in front of the State when the University plans were first drawn, those plans would have been modified and less money expended. Seeing, however, that the plans were drawn and that a policy for the University buildings was adopted, seeing also that the Government have entered into an agreement to provide the necessary funds—

Hon. E. H. Harris: According to "Hansard" it was an arrangement, but not an agreement.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We are faced with an agreement which we should honour. The fact that the University authorities are able to go on the market and raise £25,000 will be a comfort to people who wish to see work started in the metropolitan area. Will it not assist employment? Is it not far better that the money should be expended in creating an asset?

Hon. H. Seddon: Cannot you find a better way than this of employing the money?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I would be the last to interfere with the University vote in times of depression. I would rather increase it. We cannot afford to cut away the educational facilities of the rising generation. I support the Bill because I consider that we should honour the obligation and the agreement entered into, and also because it is necessary that the buildings be completed. Every possible assistance should be rendered towards the completion of the University buildings.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [5.49]: I find it indeed hard to understand the opposition to this Bill. There are two points in the measure—one dealing with the sum of £25,000, the other with the sum of £60,000. The sum of £25,000 has reference to the refunding to the University authorities of the amount of money which had to be paid out of the Hackett bequest for probate duty. The sum of £60,000 has reference to the erection of a building to house the physics, chemistry and agricultural science departments of the University. We have all expressed regret that it is not possible for the present Government to raise money in order to provide work for the unemployed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Who has expressed that regret?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I think most members have.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Not having regard to the manner in which the Premier wants to find the money.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I am not concerned with methods. I simply say I think every member of the House has expressed regret that it is not possible to secure money in order to provide work for the unemployed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: By taxation.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The method does not matter. Am I right, or am I wrong? I think I am perfectly right in that statement. Here is the position with which we are faced: the University authorities say they are in a position to finance the Government £60,000 for this purpose.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No. They say they will sell their assets.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The University authorities are prepared to raise that sum of money. The Government say, "Very well; we will accept it in that way, and we will introduce a Bill into Parliament securing you to the extent that the money will be repaid to you together with five per cent. interest."

Hon. H. Seddon: That Bill was to be introduced after the elections, was it not?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It does not matter when the Bill was to be introduced.

Hon. H. Seddon: Yes, it does.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That is a side issue altogether. The Government are to be commended for endeavouring to honour a promise to which the previous Government committed themselves. What objection can there be to that? What is going to be the position if we do not agree? The University will not be able to go on with the building, a work that would employ quite a number of tradesmen. Moreover, there is the aspect of repudiation. I have heard a lot of talk about repudiation in this Chamber during the present session. If the House turns down this Bill, we shall be laying ourselves open to a charge of repudiation.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Other members do not agree with you.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: They can please themselves as to that. I am simply saying what I think.

Hon. G. W. Miles: No Government should have entered into that agreement without the consent of Parliament.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The hon. member knows full well that on many occasions Governments have had to do things without the consent of Parliament, relying on the fact that they can as a rule get that consent.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The promise should have been made conditional upon Parliament agreeing.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The arrangement is quite a reasonable proposition. We should be thankful that the University authorities are in a position to provide the sum of £60,000 in order that the building may be proceeded with, when the Government cannot find the money.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Have you considered the price we are going to pay for the buildings when all this is paid?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It seems to me that the price is 5 per cent. on the money.

Hon. H. Seddon: For 30 years.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: We cannot complain of the rate of interest. Could the money be got anywhere else at a lower rate? In my opinion, the rate is perfectly reasonable. I see nothing to take exception to in the Bill, and I shall support the second reading.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.53]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill, and hope the House will reject the measure. Ministers and ex-Ministers who have spoken seem to regard Government as a supreme being. Parliament is elected by the taxpayers of the country. Any Government making a bargain of this nature should make it subject to the approval of Parliament.

Hon. V. Hamersley: You may be sure that was done.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Members say we ought to be thankful that the University can raise the money. As already pointed out by Mr. Lovekin, in passing the Bill we shall be repudiating the Financial Agreement, which this Chamber adopted; we shall be going behind the back of the Loan Council to raise money. It is the taxpayers' money that is being given away to the

University, and at a time when we cannot find enough funds to provide employment.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The passing of this Bill will help to find employment

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Loan Council have decided that loan moneys must be spent on reproductive works only. Will this building be a reproductive work? In 20 or 30 years from now we may receive some benefit from it. A proposal to spend such a large amount on a building for the University at a time when we cannot find enough money to balance the ledger seems to me an insult to the intelligence of the House. The debate on the Bill in another place took five minutes on the 5th November. After the second reading had been passed, the Standing Orders were suspended and the Bill was rushed through. This is some more hasty legislation which the Council is asked to approve. The Leader of the House indicated here to-day that the measure was urgent. In another place the Bill was passed through Committee and read a third time within five minutes. The Government are bringing forward a Bill which commits the country to making good any loss incurred by the University in the realisation of its assets. At all events, we cannot get away from the fact that the House is asked to agree to a liability of £85,000.

Hon. E. H. Gray: No; £60,000.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is £85,000 plus interest. And this at a time when we cannot raise money to pay our way. The Premier goes around the country saying, "If I could only get money, I would be all right." The Bill proposes a backstairs way of securing a loan without the knowledge of the Loan Council. Members of Parliament are responsible to the taxpayers of the country, but the present, like the previous Government, do not appear to realise that they are responsible to the people. I oppose the Bill.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.58]: I want to comment on certain remarks made with regard to this Bill. It appears to me that if the House allows an obligation of this description to go through without challenge, the best thing we can do is to throw up our job. To me it is inconceivable that any responsible coterie of men, especially when constituting the Government of the day, should make a promise of this description without the proviso, which is always understood in any Government promise,

that the arrangement shall be subject to ratification by Parliament. Such a position indicates a sense of responsibility that is not only deplorable but liable to land this or any other State in serious difficulties.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: How could that decision be affected during recess?

Hon. G. W. Miles: No Government should make such a decision during recess.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I will deal with the argument advanced by the Minister and also by Mr. Nicholson.

Hon. G. W. Miles: These Ministers think themselves tin gods!

Hon. H. SEDDON: That argument was, in effect, that, the Government of the day having to honour an undertaking given by their predecessors, members of Parliament were tied hand and foot, and had to agree to what the State had been committed to under that arrangement. According to that, members of Parliament have to stand by Government decisions made without consultation with them, and have to adopt that course for fear of a charge of repudiation. That argument means that if the Government enter into an obligation that they are unable to carry out, then we, as members of Parliament, ought to recognise our responsibilities as such. In the interests of Parliamentary representation and of the best government of the State, the fle dealing with the negotiations between the Labour Government and the University authorities should be laid on the Table of the House. It is evident that the text of that arrangement may be of serious importance regarding the attitude we should adopt towards the whole question. Another point arises here. We are now informed for the first time that the Labour Government undertook certain commitments, which the present Government have to honour. That at once gives rise to suspicion as to whether there are any other commitments on the part of the Labour Government, the responsibility for which has been passed on to the present Government, and which may have to be honoured at an equally inconvenient time in the future. In view of what has happened, I can quite understand the virtue in Mr. Lovekin's request for a thorough investigation of the financial commitments of the State. I would like to ask the Minister now, so that we may have something definite on the point, if he will, when replying, inform the House as to

whether there are any other commitments to which the present Government are bound by reason of actions of the Labour Government, what such commitments, if any, may be, and what they involve. We should have any such revelations now, and not have to wait until some inconvenient moment in the future.

Hon. J. M. Drew: I understand the whole position regarding this matter was published in the Press at the time.

Hon. H. SEDDON: When the arrangement was made originally, the Labour Government should have provided for the undertaking they gave to be carried out. I can quite understand the Leader of the House interjecting as to how an arrangement could be made during recess. I do not appreciate the necessity for urgency in connection with this matter. The date on the Bill shows that it cannot have been regarded as a matter of extreme urgency, otherwise the Labour Government would not have entered into a scheme that could not be handled until the 12th September, 1930. The commitment involved in this transaction was entered into prior to the last general election. It was entered into without Parliament being consulted, and before the people knew anything about it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And when the Labour Government went to the country, the people turned them out.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Quite so; but this question was not brought up during the election campaign. Certainly it was not one phase of their policy upon which they asked to be returned. Then we come to the frenzied finance incorporated in the proposal. The Government are to provide £85,000 and payment is to be spread over 30 years and will carry interest at the rate of 5 per cent. The effect of that is that with the interest compounded, the amount will represent something like £340,000. I understand that the annual payments will amount to £2,250 and simple interest on £85,000 will absorb a large proportion of that money. To ask Parliament at a time like the present to ratify such a proposal is to assume that Parliament will endorse an arrangement that should be utterly condemned by the people.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Many prominent people are objecting to such methods of finance just now.

Hon. H. SEDDON: There are two aspects of the position that must be taken into consideration. First of all, we have a serious responsibility to those who are charged with the task of production in Western Australia. We are told by those who represent the farming community that the agriculturists are in a most precarious position. What will the farmers say if we agree to the proposition now before us?

Hon. J. Cornell: They will go to the University when they are out of work!

Hon. H. SEDDON: When they appreciate the fact that the Government endorse the proposal for the expenditure of £85,000, while at the same time they refuse the farmers assistance that is considered just and equitable, what will they say? What about those unfortunate men who met outside Parliament House to-day? What will they say when they hear that the Government are prepared to furnish money to be spent on beautiful architecture at the University? I do not say a word about the buildings there; I am not dealing with that phase.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Will not the erection of the buildings provide work for many men?

Hon. H. SEDDON: It will provide work for a number of highly-skilled and highly-paid tradesmen. Hundreds of men who are out of permanent employment, are able to get but a day's work or a day and a half's work a week. They will not be affected by this proposal. All that the Government will accomplish is the employment of a few highly-skilled and highly-paid tradesmen on the erection of a building or buildings, that we could do without for the next 20 years.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: The money will not be available unless the Bill is agreed to.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And it will be a good job if it is not agreed to.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If the Government are in a position to raise the money required under the Bill, there are many better ways in which the money could be spent—

Hon. H. Stewart: Under present-day conditions.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. I am entirely in accord with the suggestion that every young man and woman should be furnished with opportunities to secure the highest education possible. I contend, however, that, with its present equipment, the University

could provide those educational facilities. In the circumstances, perhaps, it may be desirable at the present juncture, as an encouragement to members to agree to the extension of the University building scheme, for examples to be quoted in this House of young people who have passed through the University of Western Australia, and have attained any eminence in their vocations.

Hon. H. Stewart: That would be a good idea.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That would be of advantage, particularly because of one or two instances that have come under my notice. At a few inquiries with which I have been associated, some young men, who received their training at the University, have appeared before us, and I say with regret that they impressed me very unfavourably. The responsibility for quite a number of very serious defects in the carrying out of various works was directly traced to those young men. Naturally I had to form an opinion as to the calibre of the young men on their appearance when submitting evidence before the inquiries. In these circumstances, it would be in the interests of the University and of the students, if someone could place before the House some evidence of a contrary description. If that could be done, no one would be more pleased than myself. To lend point to my meaning, I will tell hon. members a story to illustrate what I mean. In charge of some works was an engineer who had had to fight his way from the very bottom. He had secured a University training, but he had obtained it at great inconvenience and cost to himself.

Hon. H. Stewart: As a result of personal sacrifice.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is the point. Whenever a University student came to him for a job, he always found work for him. He always provided the student with the most laborious task he could find on the job. One young student came to him and asked for work. The engineer gave him a job in the stoke-hole wheeling ashes in a barrow. After a month the University student went to the engineer with disgust written all over his face. He said to the engineer, "I did not go through the University to undertake the work of wheeling ashes from the stokehole." The engineer replied, "All right. You have been wheeling ashes for a month. What can you tell me about wheeling ashes? What weight of ashes

do you carry away each trip? How many barrow-loads of ashes go to the yard and how many yards are there in the dump? What does it cost to take the ashes out of the stokehole on to the dump? What equipment does your University training enable you to suggest, as necessary to effect the removal of the ashes more cheaply and expeditiously?" The young man was dumb-founded. The boss said to him, "I can see that your University training has been entirely wasted upon you. Your job is what you are on now. All you are capable of is wheeling ashes. That is about the height of your ambition, and that is all you are cut out for."

Hon. E. H. Gray: But he was absolutely wrong in saying that, was he not?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. The young man went back to his job looking very crest-fallen. Two or three days passed before the boss took any further action. He then shifted the young man on to another job, and after he had been on it for a while, he began questioning him about it. The young fellow was able to give him facts and figures that showed he had been taking notice of various factors. The boss said to him, "Now I am prepared to reverse the decision I voiced earlier, and to recognise that your University training has been of some value to you." I quote that illustration because if ever the University authorities had an opportunity to train young men under conditions that never before existed in this State, that opportunity is with them now. It is essential, therefore, that we should endeavour to find the best way of making use of our University trained men and women, and the opportunity before the University to-day is to turn out students who will point out the way we can best follow to conserve and spread capital, so as to provide work for our people. We want them to be trained so as to point the way to economical working and the best use of our capital.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And you cannot do that yourself.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I quite admit that young fellows should secure an adequate training in our University, and I claim that can be forthcoming with the present equipment and the present facilities. They are adequate to enable young people to be trained so as to give them an opportunity to take their stand in the battle of life. In the circumstances, we should not be

asked to authorise expenditure to which the Labour Government had no right to commit us, and respecting which the present Government are not justified in asking Parliament to agree to. As I contend we should not ratify the arrangement, I move an amendment—

That the word "now" be struck out, and the words "this day six months" inserted in lieu.

That will enable the House to evade any charge of repudiating a contract, and during the next six months the question may be gone into with regard to commitments of which we have no knowledge at present.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: You want to postpone action.

Hon. H. SEDDON: In six months' time, we shall know whether or not the financial position will be such as to justify our endorsement of the proposal embodied in the Bill, and whether the Government will have to face other commitments of a similar description.

On motion by the Minister for Country Water Supplies, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Hospital Fund (Contributions).
- 2, Totalisator Duty Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL — ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [7.30]: The purpose of the Bill is to divert from hospitals the amount of money now derived from the entertainments tax and pay it into Consolidated Revenue. There is much to be said for and against the proposal, but we have a Hospital Fund Bill before the House, and assuming that we pass this amending Bill first, and the Hospital Fund Bill is not passed, a rather interesting position will be created. I should like to know what the intention of the Government is in the event of this Bill being passed and the other Bill being lost. The proper course to adopt

is to hold this Bill in abeyance until the fate of the other Bill has been decided.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: I intend to hold this Bill in abeyance until the fate of the Hospital Fund Bill is known.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—HOUSING TRUST.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [7.35] in moving the second reading said: This Bill was forecasted by the Premier in June last when he announced that the Federal grant made to this State to relieve unemployment would be used partly to build cottages, similar to those erected on the group settlements, for the use of persons in unfortunate circumstances, such as a widow with young children, or a man with a large family whose earnings were not in keeping with his domestic responsibilities.

Under the scheme it is proposed to erect cottages of four rooms for about £250. The houses will be built for two classes of tenants, one the life tenants, who will live in the cottages entirely free of interest, rates and taxes, but will have to pay a charge of about 10s. per year for insurance. The other class of tenant will be the purchasers. They will be those who find themselves unable to provide their own homes. A purchaser may be a man or a woman in a delicate state of health, but with a big family. For the houses being purchased 5s. per week will be charged, which amount will include rates, taxes, insurance, etc.

The scheme will not only give people in difficult circumstances a chance of comfort and independence, but will provide immediate work for carpenters in building the cottages. Its beneficence will not end with the first lot of cottages built, for as repayments are made by the occupiers, funds will become available for the erection of other cottages on the same conditions. The concession will not be confined to the metropolitan area, as cottages will be erected in the country districts as occasion demands. The sum of £20,000 is available for the scheme, of which £15,000 will be taken from the Commonwealth grant, whilst the balance will be

the £5,000 generously donated by Mr. and Mrs. Charles McNess to be applied by the Premier, in his discretion, towards the relief of unemployment.

It is considered that approximately 80 cottages can be erected, and they will be allotted to widows and deserving applicants, subject to the essential qualification that the unfortunate circumstances of an applicant are due to no cause within the control of the applicant. If the applicant is sick, aged, or unable to earn sufficient to pay rent on the ordinary scale and keep the family in reasonable comfort, he or she will be eligible for one of the cottages. The homes will be allotted to qualified aged or infirm applicants, free of any payments other than the sum to cover rates, taxes, and insurance during the life of the occupant, or alternatively the home will be sold to the applicant at actual cost on terms of about 5s. a week, free of interest.

The system of purchase has much to recommend it, because the occupier will take greater care of the property. Moreover weekly payments will be an offset against the purchase price, and if the occupier vacates the property or dies, any equity will be protected. The sale of a cottage will not reduce the number of homes available under the scheme, because the accumulated purchase instalments will be applied to the erection of additional cottages.

On the administrative side the measure is to be administered by an honorary trust consisting of Colonel Collett and Mr. Alfred Carson, with the Secretary of the Workers' Homes Board as Secretary of the trust. The trust will make the necessary inquiries and approve of applicants for cottages, which will be erected by the Workers' Homes Board. The Board will collect all payments and attend to all matters affecting the protection of property just as it does with homes under the ordinary scheme.

Doubtless, in the operation of the measure other conditions will need to be stipulated. If the necessity arises, the new conditions can be framed by the trust in consultation with the Workers' Homes Board, subject to the approval of the Government. The guiding principle of the trust will be to allot the homes to the most deserving applicants, and the trust will determine the towns in which the homes will be erected. Travelling expenses for the trust and cost of management of the scheme will be borne by the

Government and not debited to the trust's funds. The Workers' Homes Board will hold the funds in the name of the trust.

When Mr. and Mrs. McNess gave the £5,000, it was stipulated that it was to be used to help the unemployed. To use the money as proposed by the Premier will provide a certain amount of work immediately, for with the exception of the iron for the roofs, the whole of the building material will be produced within the State, and it will really represent expenditure on wages, with the additional advantage of providing opportunities to help deserving people who are in distress.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Will all the timber firms be competent to supply timber, or will the State Sawmills alone supply it?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The State Sawmills have large stocks of timber for which they owe the Treasury a big overdraft. If the requisite timber is in stock, the State will not be committed to any expense on that account, but will use the timber on hand. If, when cutting other orders, scantling is made available, it will be used instead of drawing upon stocks. Double handling would be involved if we used timber from stocks and then stocked the scantling cut from current orders.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is where the Treasurer comes in.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is said that the State Sawmills have not the necessary weatherboards. Is there any truth in that?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: That is not correct. The State Sawmills have sufficient weatherboards on hand.

Hon. E. Rose: You might get the timber cheaper if you called for tenders.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: But the sawmills are indebted to the Treasury for a big overdraft. Really, the State has the timber on its hands, and naturally the Government will use that timber instead of finding cash to pay for timber obtained outside its own sawmills. If we had to find ready cash for the operations under this measure, the work would be restricted considerably, and that would not be advisable. As the repayments accumulate other homes will be erected and allotted. The Government hope that the repayments will be sufficient to permit the erection of four new cottages every year, and as the

scheme will ensure work that will continue for all time, it is felt that the wishes of Mr. and Mrs. McNess will be fully observed.

Mr. Carson and Colonel Collett have already had several preliminary conferences with the Workers' Homes Board and in the latter part of July matters were well in train for the carrying out of the objects of the trust. As a result of the conferences it is considered that on the basis of the payment of 5s. per week being applied to meet rates, maintenance and insurance, the balance being in repayment of the capital cost, a period of 30 years may elapse in the process of repaying the cost of the cottage. Already many proposals have been received from the metropolitan and country districts and formal applications are in the course of being arranged in regard to many such proposals and arrangements have been made by the Workers' Homes Board to call for tenders for a number of houses in localities approved by the trust. It has been decided that the homes are to be erected by contract, with alternative tenders for iron or tiled roofs, with a view, if possible, to providing for the use of the local article and promoting employment.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Could you not shift a few cottages from the Peel Estate?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The cottages will not be erected in clusters or groups. That determination will avoid anything of an institutional stamp upon either the cottages or the locality, and it will assist also in preserving the self-respect of the occupants.

To facilitate the objects of the trust, local authorities will be invited to suggest areas within their boundaries suitable for building the class of cottage contemplated; also the co-operation of those bodies will be sought in exempting trust cottages from exacting by-laws. Notwithstanding the comparatively recent date of the appointment of the trustees, 322 proposals have been received by the trust, from which to date 264 applications have matured—143 from the country districts and 121 from metropolitan districts.

Until the recently approved first payment of the Commonwealth grant was made available, the trustees were temporarily limited to the gift moneys of £5,000 from Mr. and Mrs. McNess. With that money the construction of 19 cottages was authorised by the trustees, but owing to the cost being

high, and the objection to the type of cottage by the Geraldton Council, it has not been possible to proceed with the building in every case.

Authorisations to erect cottages have already been issued in the following districts: Albany, Belka, Bowelling, Bunbury, Busselton, Cottesloe Beach, Fremantle, Geraldton, Katanning, Kwoylin, Manjimup, Merredin, Narrogin, Northam, Osborne Park and York, and cottages are already occupied in some of those districts. The nature of the cases already approved is not without interest, and cover such as a comparatively young married man with 6 children ranging from 13 years to an infant. That applicant was most seriously injured in an accident, and his record over a long period of service as an employee in a country workshop was exemplary, but unfortunately his wage was barely sufficient to provide shelter and food for his young and growing family. His accident totally incapacitated him from any further physical labours, notwithstanding his most sincere wish to do everything he could to help. His townspeople rallied to his assistance and provided the family with many essentials in different ways, supplemented by a local effort to raise funds to tide the family over their troubles. There was sufficient income possible to the family to enable them to pay 5s. per week. The family are now housed in a cottage, and it will be possible for quite a large amount of charitable funds to be directed towards food and clothing instead of rent.

There is another case of a part-caste family with an excellent standing for behaviour in their town, but the husband has been stricken with paralysis. There are six children ranging from 10 years of age to one month to provide for, and the family have been living under very bad conditions with regard to their housing. Another applicant, considerably on in years, has been deserted by her husband. The family have all grown up and have serious responsibilities of their own. The old gentlewoman is dependent on a very slight income from pensions to enable her to live and care for an invalid son. To quote fully only one other instance, that of an old age pensioner, who is a widow and bedridden, dependent upon the assistance of neighbours, and with a daughter who is both deaf and dumb, and whose income is entirely dependent upon a slender pension:

In this particular case a friend, animated no doubt by the same spirit of magnanimity as that of Mr. and Mrs. McNess, has not only contributed the land but also a very substantial sum to add further comforts and improvements to the cottage. Details of such cases could be quoted at considerable length. Those mentioned have not been specially selected by any means, but they can be taken as a fair average indication of the class of applicant which is approved by the honorary trustees.

The Bill provides the essential machinery to enable the trust to be effective. The clauses are unusually self-explanatory, and for that reason I do not think it necessary to detain members with a recital of the provisions. If, however, further explanation is required I shall endeavour to give satisfying information when the Bill is in Committee. In conclusion, I desire to say that such a Bill as this has an unusual interest. Owing to a combination of circumstances, such as the difficulty of the times and a generous inspiration on the part of a highly respected family, the opportunity of presenting such a measure for consideration does not very often occur. The principles of the Bill must appeal to every member. The State is fortunate in possessing citizens who are prepared to assist the poor and needy in this manner. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [7.53]: The purpose of the Bill commends itself to me, but I presume that if this House were to reject the Bill, it would lay itself open to a charge, perhaps not of repudiation, but one of evasion. I understand that the trust is to consist of Colonel Collett and Mr. Carson, two very estimable gentlemen. But I have read the Bill and I fail to see any necessity for the trust at all. Amongst other things, the Bill proposes to utilise the donation of £5,000 made by Mr. and Mrs. McNess, for the purpose of building cottages, and according to the Minister this will be the total amount that will be available. The trust has been created to function only in respect of the bequest of Mr. and Mrs. McNess, but the Bill proposes that a trust fund shall be kept at the Treasury, etc., and such moneys as may be made available to the trust from time to time by Government grant, Federal or State, shall go towards the trust funds. If I understood the Min-

ister correctly, he said that as soon as the money was available under the Federal housing scheme, some of it would be given to the trust. If my memory serves me, a session or two ago we amended the Workers' Homes Act to empower the Workers' Homes Board to deal with the moneys available for that housing scheme. But to carry out the laudable object now proposed, a trust is to be appointed. I contend that the Workers' Homes Board would be just as capable of dealing with the applicants as Colonel Collett and Mr. Carson.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They might do the work even better.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I submit not one bit better. If the trust is to carry out the full functions of the Bill, there might be something in it, but as far as my reading of the position is concerned, the land will be purchased, not in the name of the trust, but in the name of the Workers' Homes Board, and then when the time arrives for getting right down to the business of approving of the applicant, who is to do the job? The Workers' Homes Board. The board will also call for tenders and build the cottage. The board will also look to the maintenance. Therefore I cannot for the life of me see the necessity for the trust. I think it would have been better had the powers of the Workers' Homes Board been enlarged to enable that board to carry out this very laudable object. So far as I can see, the Workers' Homes Board will be a medium under the direction of the trust, and that will be altogether unsatisfactory. There are other provisions in the Bill that would be better carried out by the Workers' Homes Board. The board has all the necessary machinery under the Workers' Homes Act, and consequently I see no necessity for the Bill. Further, in the interests of smooth and efficient working, and seeing that no one will suffer, I consider that the Bill should be sent to a select committee to inquire into the ramifications of the Workers' Homes Board and what that board will be expected to do under the Bill. Comparisons could also be made between the Bill and the Workers' Homes Act in regard to the fee simple purchase of cottages, and Clauses 14 to 17. I think it would be found that under the Workers' Homes Act the conditions would be even more liberal. That is a phase that should not be tolerated for a moment. I cannot see any difference between the pur-

chase of a fee simple cottage for £250 and the purchase of a workers' leasehold dwelling at £600. The principle is exactly the same; or even where an applicant puts up a certain amount under the freehold principle and pays off the balance himself. I strongly urge that the Bill be sent to a select committee. Were I not Chairman of Committees I would move in that direction when it passes the second reading. A select committee could materially improve the Bill. The object of the Bill is a most laudable one, and I have nothing but helpful criticism to offer in respect of it. I think a select committee would evolve machinery that would give a minimum amount of friction with a maximum amount of effectiveness in the measure.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [8.1]: It is a very pleasing duty to support the second reading. I hope the passing of the Bill will induce other citizens to come along and donate their spare cash to the scheme. It is very gratifying to note the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. McNess. It will be for all time an example to other citizens. As to the appointment of the trust, I take a view diametrically opposed to that of Mr. Cornell. I do not think it would be possible to improve on the personnel of that trust.

Hon. J. Cornell: But is it necessary?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes, because of the special work of selecting the applicants.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Workers' Homes Board will have to do that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No, they will not be selecting people who are maimed, or injured or old. The Workers' Homes Board is based upon hard business principles. The experience Colonel Collett has had over a term of years as president of the Returned Soldiers' League has given him a unique knowledge of those with whom he will come into contact.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is no better fitted than is Mr. Carson.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Mr. Carson has had long experience as a prominent member of the Silver Chain, and has done very hard work in the organising of infant health centres. All that has given him a valuable knowledge possessed by very few. Anyone who has taken part in this kind of work will know that hard-headed business people can scarcely see any reason why there should be applicants for help of this character. I

have often been secretly amused at the way people have been taken down.

Hon. J. Cornell: On the Indeterminate Sentences Board?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Even there sometimes. From work of this character one obtains a knowledge of human nature which is of great value in carrying on such work. Because of the experience of Colonel Collett and Mr. Carson, I do not think it would be possible to get two other men better fitted to administer this measure. Members of the Workers' Homes Board are not brought into close touch with the class of people who will be making applications to this trust. Those two gentlemen will be faced with much the same problem as faces any public man; they will have to push aside a large army of people ever ready and willing to take an opportunity to get something for nothing. Long experience is required to befit a man to deal with such people. I think the Bill is a good one, and that the creation of the trust is essential.

Hon. J. Cornell: Has the hon. member compared it with the Workers' Homes Act?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes, I have. I will vote for the second reading.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [8.5]: Whatever other improvements we may make to the Bill, I hope the provision for the appointment of the trust will be allowed to remain. I have known Mr. Carson for many years and I am aware of the work he has done, very hard work too, for charities, and in providing many homes for indigent people. He has had long experience, and he is a gentleman that ought to be associated with the work proposed in the Bill. Not only is there the experience he can bring to bear, but he could do what the Workers' Homes Board could not do, namely, he could get other people as generously disposed as Mr. and Mrs. McNess to contribute to the fund, and so extend these homes. The Workers' Homes Board could not do that. With so many calls being made upon us, if we wanted to protect ourselves we should vote against the appointment of the trust, for that would preclude Mr. Carson calling upon us for assistance. But that is not the view we should take; rather should we desire to do the most good we can at the least possible cost. If we stick to this trust we shall have a good selection made of

those going into the homes, and we shall have the fund added to as the result of the well-directed energies of the two members of the trust. The erection of the buildings will be in the competent hands of the Workers' Homes Board. Whatever Mr. Cornell may desire to do in the way of amending the Bill, I hope he will not attempt to cut out the provision for the creation of the trust.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [8.7]: The Bill seeks to achieve the very laudable object of providing homes for people in necessitous circumstances. I think if the Tenants, Purchasers, and Mortgagees' Relief Bill should pass, there might be an opportunity for the Government to utilise homes, if they can get enough of them, for the unemployed, who might be removed from the houses in which they are now living and for which they are unable to pay the necessary rent. The Minister said that chiefly Western Australian products would be utilised in the construction of these proposed homes. I think he made an exception of galvanised iron. Presumably to get the galvanised iron we shall have to pay Lysaghts, a company that has been very severely criticised in the National Parliament on account of the charges they are making, and the rates of wages that have been paid by the Commonwealth Government for the manufacture of this galvanised iron by Lysaghts. I understand there is in Western Australia a company manufacturing corrugated fibrolite that could be used for the roofing of these homes. If we have to buy galvanised iron the money will go out of the State, whereas if we were to make use of this locally-produced fibrolite, which apparently is very durable, the money would remain in the State. That is all I have to say.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [8.10]: I can assure Mr. Harris that every effort was made to secure as nearly as possible the exclusive use of Western Australian products in the construction of these homes. Presumably the committee to whom the work was entrusted did not have sufficient confidence to select the corrugated fibrolite as against galvanised iron.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Are not the State Sawmills agents for galvanised iron?

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: That is not a very exalted view to take. The object of the Government was to render the construction of the homes as cheap as possible. Apart from the roofing of galvanised iron, which is not as costly as a tiled roof, there will be in these cottages only the glass windows which will not be Western Australian made. For the information of those members who seem to think the Workers' Homes Board will control this venture, I may say it will be controlled by the trust. Since it will be financed from a trust fund, it is necessary to appoint a trust to handle that fund, and I am sure members will agree that two gentlemen more suitable than Colonel Collett and Mr. Carson could not have been chosen for that responsibility. Like Mr. Lovekin, I feel that once the Bill gets into operation other citizens will come forward and emulate Mr. and Mrs. McNess in the support they have given to this project.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Housing trust fund:

Hon. H. STEWART: I should like the Minister to tell us what amount of money there is in the trust fund at present.

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: The total is £20,000—£15,000 from the Federal Grant, and £5,000 donation from Mr. and Mrs. McNess.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9, 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Life tenures:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I cannot see why these cottages should be granted to people for life. Some of these persons may in a little while recover their positions, or they may receive assistance from relatives or friends. In such cases there should be a right to terminate the tenancy, and hand the cottage to some more needy person. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (a), after the word "life," the following be inserted:—"or such lesser period as the trust may think fit."

Hon. H. Stewart: Why not strike out "life" and insert some shorter period?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I am prepared to accept the amendment, but would advise the hon. member to let the paragraph stand as it stands.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (b) the following words be added:—"or during such lesser period as the trust may think proper."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Paragraph (e) deals with rates and taxes, a matter that is quite separate and apart from life tenures. I move an amendment—

That the letter (e) at the commencement of the paragraph be struck out, and "(2)" be inserted in lieu.

This will convert the paragraph into a sub-clause.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: By this paragraph we are taking away from local authorities the right to charge rates to occupants of these cottages. How will they be recouped for any expenditure they may incur in connection therewith? I know of tenants of dwellings of this character who are doing so well as boarding-house keepers that they are competing with other people in the same locality, and yet, because of their privileged position, they can refuse to pay rates to the local authority.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I do not think it at all likely that the class of person for whom these houses are to be provided will be able to keep a boarding house. It will take such people all their time to look after themselves. They could not possibly pay rates. Surely other ratepayers would be content not to extract rates from such unfortunate persons. The amount involved is very small indeed.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: What the Minister says may be all right, but the hon. gentleman seems to assume that the condition of life of such persons will never alter. Children of life tenants will grow up and become earners. It is unfair to rob local authorities of charges for communal services.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The only persons exempt from rates will be life tenants at 10s. per annum. The number involved is so small as hardly to be worth consideration.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I hope to see rating values much lower than they are today. Before long we shall probably get for £250 a building of the type worth £1,000 now.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair is whether these words shall stand as a paragraph or be made a subclause. After that amendment has been disposed of, a member can move that the paragraph or subclause be struck out. I cannot permit further discussion as to exemption from rates.

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

Clause 12—Obligations of life tenant:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: We have not had an opportunity to peruse the Bill carefully and to put any amendments on the Notice Paper. As to paragraph (b), dealing with insurance of the premises, will the life tenant be able to go to any insurance company he pleases, or will he be pinned down to the State Insurance Office? With regard to payment of taxes and assessments, the erection of such a cottage in close proximity to a private residence may increase the insurance premium to be paid on the latter, as premiums are frequently based on distance from the nearest building.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The matter of insurance is entirely for the trust. I cannot say what the trust will decide.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Will the life tenant not have to pay the insurance premium?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The office in which the property is to be insured will be a matter entirely for the trust.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have repeatedly noticed during this session that the Minister takes a Bill into Committee immediately after the second reading has been carried. I suggest that the Committee stage should always be taken at the next sitting, instead of Bills being rushed. Business people in town have said that a Bill recently passed here was rushed through without proper considera-

tion. Progress should be reported on this measure now.

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: This is one of several small Bills on the Notice Paper. The point raised by Mr. Hamersley is the last I thought would be raised. However, I am quite willing that progress should be reported. I would point out, however, that members are looking forward to the end of the session, and that we want to finish in reasonable time without all night sittings.

Progress reported.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [8.41]: in moving the second reading said: This short measure is necessary to enable land to be set aside for, and disposed of by, the housing trust under the Housing Trust Bill now before the House. There is no power in the Land Act to permit the setting apart of land for purposes such as those of the Housing Trust, nor is there power to dispose of town and suburban lots in fee simple without submitting them to auction. The objection of the housing trust would not be met if the land were sold by auction. It is necessary under that Bill that the Lands Department should be in a position to dispose of land to persons selected by the trust without payment of any consideration. However, it may be necessary in the future to charge legatees or successors in occupation of land disposed of under the Housing Trust Bill the value of the land, and therefore this Bill makes provision for the framing of regulations to meet such a position, and to prescribe the form of Crown grant to be used.

Much depends upon whether a cottage is to be subject to a life tenancy or is to be leased. In the latter case, at the end of the term the block of land will have to be paid for as well as the cottage. In the event of a person holding land with a cottage on it and proposing to sell the property, the intending purchaser will have to pay for the land. At present the Government propose to set aside land for the trust, with power by regulation to enable the trust to charge for the land if the property is sold.

If the Housing Trust Bill does not become law, it will not be necessary to pass this Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.44]: Practically, the entire Bill is contained in Clause 3. Under that clause, I take it, land held by the State may either be given free to the housing trust or be paid for in cash by the housing trust. It seems to me that the clause gives those two alternatives to the Government—either to make a present of the land, or to charge a price for it. The Bill deals only with Crown lands. Why is there this differentiation, in the case of Crown lands, as to giving or selling? There seems to be an anomaly there. Apparently the object of the Bill is to avoid the necessity for submitting blocks at auction, so that the land can be given to the trust free or can be sold. Is it too much to ask the Minister to tell the House off-hand what is the number of this amendment of the Land Act? I think there must be something like 39, and this will probably be the 40th.

Hon. H. Stewart: I have been trying to secure a copy of the Land Act to ascertain what this means? I think the debate should be adjourned.

The **PRESIDENT**: The hon. member has already spoken.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [8.46]: I hope hon. members will not seek to adjourn the debate. I will not take the Bill through Committee at this stage because, if the Housing Trust Bill is not agreed to, there will be no necessity for this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [8.48] in moving the second reading said: Under this Bill for the amendment of the Entertainments Tax Act of 1925, it is proposed to increase the rates of tax on payments for admission up to 2s. 5½d., and to impose a tax on payments for admission

above that amount. On a ticket of not less than 9d. or more than 1s., the present tax is 1d.; and the new tax will be 2d. On a ticket exceeding 1s. but not exceeding 2s. 5½d., the present tax is 1d. for the first 1s. and ½d. for each additional 6d. or part of 6d. The new tax will be 2d. on the first 1s., and 1d. on each additional 6d., or part of 6d. On a ticket of 2s. 6d., the new tax will be 2½d. On a ticket exceeding 2s. 6d., the new tax will be 2½d. on the first 2s. 6d., and ½d. on each additional 6d. or part of 6d. The reason for the apparent discrepancy in the rates below 2s. 6d., and on 2s. 6d. and upwards is that the Federal tax commences to operate at 2s. 6d., and consequently the existing rate of tax from 2s. 6d. upwards will be duplicated. The tax on tickets up to 2s. 5½d. will be doubled for the benefit of the Treasury, but the benefit to the State on the higher priced tickets will not be doubled. Last year £37,137 was received from the tax on tickets up to 2s. 5½d. If the existing rate of tax on tickets up to 2s. 5½d. were doubled as proposed in the Bill and if the House concurred in the proposal to levy a tax on tickets from 2s. 6d. upwards, it was estimated that the yield would be about £56,000 in a full year. Unfortunately that estimate is now considered too high in view of the increasing depression. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

BILL—TENANTS, PURCHASERS, AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 20th November.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [8.50]: I take it the Bill is regarded by the Government as an emergency measure necessitated by the prevailing depression. I have to acknowledge that, in the face of present circumstances, the Government are charged with a serious responsibility and have many difficulties to face in what must be deemed an unparalleled situation. Naturally one has to consider the adoption of some means that will be fair and equitable to all sections so as to relieve the prevalent distress. There may be some differences of opinion as to what is fair and equitable in a Bill of this description, but

it will be admitted that we can arrive at a wise determination only after a frank discussion of the matter. There is no doubt, however, that everyone has the fullest sympathy for the person who, because of the depression in industry, has suffered the misfortune of losing his or her employment and means of livelihood. The Bill suggests means of protecting persons renting houses or dwellings, those who are purchasing their homes under an agreement or have paid for their homes and have possibly had them transferred or mortgaged. I understand that the Minister in another place, when moving the second reading of the Bill there, said that similar legislation had been introduced in Queensland. I notice in to-day's paper that references were made to legislation of a similar character in Victoria.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Similar legislation is in operation in South Australia.

HON. J. NICHOLSON: In one sense, the measure must be looked upon as something in the nature of a partial moratorium. Naturally we are forced to consider the consequences of such legislation and to ask ourselves whether it will effect a remedy without inflicting undue hardship on other members of the community. That is the real question. I am inclined to think that legislation of this description may produce an effect similar to that which follows the administering of an opiate to a sick person. A reaction may follow such as will produce a state of affairs more disquieting than present conditions. I regard the Bill as unfair because it will impose a burden on one section only—the landowner and mortgagee. The means to be adopted in according relief should, in such a measure as this, be such as will distribute the burden fairly over all sections of the community. The cause of the existing conditions due to unemployment arises out of the general depression. That being so, there is one obvious remedy. It is for the Government to devise means of providing employment for the people, not merely contenting themselves with passing over their obligations and duties to one section of the community to bear. In the meantime, if any relief is needed, it should be such as would be borne by every section of the community. When I mention that, I do not want it to be thought that I am proposing a dole or unemployment tax. I

notice from the reports in the Press that the Federal Parliamentary Labour Caucus decided recently that the Federal Parliament should not adjourn until provision had been made for coping with the unemployment difficulty. The report in the Press was that Caucus had instructed Federal Ministers to continue the present session of Parliament until steps had been taken to relieve unemployment.

Member: Quite right, too.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There is occasion to regard the matter seriously. The view I take is that the Federal Government are themselves assuming this particular duty and that, I claim, will relieve the State Government from the necessity to proceed with a measure such as that before us.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: That is a very weak argument.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the Federal Parliament pass legislation dealing with unemployment, then the present Bill will be unnecessary. On the other hand, if we agree to it, we shall make double provision, which is not intended. When the Government prepared the Bill, I do not think they contemplated that the Federal Government had such a measure in view. Now that the Federal Government are about to consider the matter seriously, it follows that the present measure is quite unnecessary.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: You have a wonderful faith in the Federal Government.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think it is a reasonable view to take and I hope the Minister will view the matter in that light and defer consideration of the measure. I am told that the Federal Caucus wields considerable influence with the Government.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: That is merely reported.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am speaking not only of what is reported, but of what has actually taken place.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Something that the Press understands.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Caucus wields the influence; it is the power behind the throne. If Caucus gets its way, there is no saying what might be done. We do not want to be double-banking measures of that nature. There is no provision in the measure that it shall cease to operate in the event of a Federal measure such as I have indicated coming into force. Tenants and

others would be receiving the benefits of this measure and also the benefit of Federal legislation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They would have to be unemployed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They may be unemployed and receiving payment from the Federal Government.

Hon. H. Stewart: You suggest deferring it until the Federal Government have taken action?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes; give the Federal Government an opportunity to do something. If, pending the passing of legislation by the Federal Government, the State Parliament considers it necessary to do something to relieve the distress caused by unemployment, the method suggested in this Bill is not the correct one. The method I suggest for the Government's consideration is to provide suitable relief works. When I mention suitable relief works I mean works that will be useful to the progress and development of the State.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Works that would provide more than mere sustenance?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am speaking of useful works.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: If the men did not receive more than sufficient to provide sustenance, how could they pay rent?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have not said anything about sustenance. I have suggested that the Government provide proper work.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Relief work.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Proper relief work which would be helpful to the development of the State. I am not speaking merely of work such as is provided at present through the local authorities.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: If relief work were provided, and the payment for it were not more than enough to provide sustenance for the family, how could the family pay rent?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am speaking of work for which the standard rate of wage would be paid. The men would be employed on work which might be regarded as of a permanent kind. I have always understood that men here were not anxious to see the dole system introduced. I am glad to know that is the feeling. Nothing is more calculated to demoralise men than that system. The decent working man wants to preserve his manhood and to give a fair

day's work for a fair day's pay. We want to encourage such a man and help him to maintain his ideals. If such work as I suggest were undertaken, we would be doing something to assist the men to rehabilitate themselves, and it would probably also help materially towards rehabilitating industry, because it would stimulate the circulation of money throughout the country. The circulation of money is an important factor. With it the working man would be able to pay the rent of his house, and when the landlord received his rent, he would be able to pay his rates, taxes, insurance and interest on his mortgage. If the working man was purchasing a home, instead of placing the vendor in a difficult position, as many vendors as well as mortgagees will be placed if this measure be passed, each would receive the money that would normally come to him in good times, and business would be restored to a more or less even keel. Some time is bound to elapse before works of the kind I have indicated could be established, and for that reason it would be worth while for the unions to consider more seriously than they have done the question of part-time employment. Some unions did agree to part-time employment, but I note with regret that later they decided against it. The other day I received a paper from the Old Country, stating that the men engaged by the London General Omnibus Company recognised at the beginning of the winter that a certain number of the men taken on during the busier time in summer would of necessity have to be dismissed. Representatives of the company and of the men met at a round-table conference and discussed the situation and decided that, in order to save some of the men from being dismissed through the lessened work in the winter months, each man would work fewer hours and accept a proportionate reduction of wages.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: They were satisfied there would be no abuse of part-time work.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I believe there would be no abuse here.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: It has occurred.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the parties concerned frankly discussed the matter at a round-table conference, much of the misery occasioned by the present lack of employment could be overcome.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do away with the Trades Hall and the agitators.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not want to say anything about agitators, because there are some fine men associated with the Trades Hall.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: We have some fine agitators here also.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I believe there are men identified with the Trades Hall honestly trying to do their best to solve the difficulties with which we are confronted. We are passing through a very serious stage, and unless all sections combine to lighten the load, each one bearing his part, times will become very much harder. We can avert many hardships if only we act like sensible individuals. I feel that there are many sensible men in the Trades Hall as well as outside of it who recognise the need to meet the situation by part-time employment. If one set of men are employed and another set are unemployed, the unemployed are without the means of getting the bare necessities of life, whilst the employed might be actually getting more than they need. If the burden were distributed, a continual flow of capital would be maintained, which would ease the burden for everyone and would probably help to rehabilitate our industries instead of crushing them. If we all regarded the matter from that standpoint and exerted our best efforts to maintain industry, we would probably ride the storm more surely than otherwise would be the case. I have given the instance of the London General Omnibus Company, and I hope that it will be thought over and taken into account. Their example might be copied by others. I come to the main part of the Bill. If we pass the Bill I am afraid it may be the precursor of other Bills of a similar nature. The Bill affects only those particular people to whom I have referred. There is the tenant on the one hand, and the purchaser and the mortgagee. They are the people who will be concerned. Besides those people, there are many others to be considered. For example, the protection afforded here is a protection which is afforded as between those particular people mentioned in the Bill, and if a man has run up credit, and necessarily must run up credit wherever he can get it from trades-people, there is nothing to hinder these creditors from taking such steps as they may think proper against the unfortunate debtor. It may be that that unfortunate debtor is the tenant, or it may be that the debtor is the unfortunate land-

owner who has not been receiving his rent, or the unfortunate mortgagee who has not been receiving his or her interest, and we know there are many cases where the mortgagees are men or women—some of them widows, who have invested money and who are solely dependent for their livelihood on the interest which they look forward to being paid to them. Immediately this Bill is passed any person who comes within its four corners can apply for an order to be protected by reason of the tenant or the purchaser of the property or mortgagor saying "By reason of unemployment I am unable to pay my rent or purchase money" as the case may be. And at the sole discretion of one individual—the Commissioner or magistrate who may be appointed to administer the Act—that person may be given the protection order, and the other party will not be entitled to exercise the remedies which are available at the present time, notwithstanding that the person who is dependent on the rent or interest has himself no other means, and he may be proceeded against by outside creditors such as the butcher and baker. I know of cases of industrious working men who in their younger days saved as much as they could. They managed to buy a cottage and began in that way, and by time payment paid off all that was owing in the property. Then later on, when they had saved a little more, they bought an adjoining cottage, or one in the vicinity. That man and his wife, on growing old, look forward to the day when they will be able to live on the income to be derived from the other cottage, having the one free and the other probably carrying a small mortgage. If this Bill passes, that man and woman in their old age may be prevented from getting the very necessities of life. They will have no protection as against the grocer or the baker or the butcher. The trades people may come down upon the man for the bills unpaid, and they may pursue their remedies against him, but he, the unfortunate landlord of this particular cottage, is placed in the invidious position that he cannot move to exert his rights because the occupant of his other cottage is unemployed and therefore unable to pay rent. I call attention to Clause 4 which says—

Upon the application of any tenant a Commissioner may make a protection order in respect of the dwelling occupied by such a tenant.

Then it goes on—

No such order shall be made unless the applicant satisfies the Commission that, by reason of unemployment, he is unable to pay the rent in respect of the dwelling as it falls due, and there is no immediate prospect of his becoming able to do so, and that his failure to pay any rent owing, which has become payable before the date of the application, is and was due to the same cause.

That is, unemployment. All that an applicant has to do is to go before the Commissioner and say, "I am very sorry, but I have been out of work for six weeks, and owing to unemployment I am unable to pay this rent." The same thing applies later on in Clause 6 in the case of a mortgagor. He can say that owing to unemployment he is unable to pay the interest on his mortgage. Then he applies for the protection order.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Are you suggesting that it is compulsory for the Commissioner to agree to grant a protection order?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I happen to have a pretty good idea what the Commissioner would do in such circumstances. According to the Bill he is supposed to exercise his judgment in the matter, but what I would point out is that all this man has to do is to prove he is unemployed. The individual may have a wife who may be earning something, and the Bill is so worded that any applicant would immediately claim that the Commissioner was not entitled to make inquiry as to whether the wife was earning anything or not, although she would be living in the home with him and enjoying the benefits of that home. Under the clause, I do not think the Commissioner could insist upon receiving evidence in regard to that.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Surely the hon. member has read Clause 8.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Clause 8 provides—

No order shall be made under Sections 4 or 6: (a) unless the applicant satisfies the Commissioner, that he has made all reasonable efforts to obtain employment, and that he is and has been unable to obtain employment through no fault of his own

It emphasises unemployment right through.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Does it not completely answer your argument?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It confirms the attitude I take up. So that when we realise what is in the Bill and what may follow in consequence of it, we have to ask ourselves

that question, and it is a pertinent question too, namely, what will the effect be? Will the passing of a Bill such as this be calculated to stimulate activity in industry? There can be but one answer to that, and it is that it will kill industry because no one will be able, or prompted in the circumstances which exist, to invest money in the building of houses which, as we know, is a great source of activity in industrial life. We are aware that when building is brisk, we are in a happy position indeed. Building affects industries, such as brick-making, joinery, sawmilling and many others. A large number who are engaged in those industries will find that instead of avenues being open to them, they will be closed, and in the place of finding ourselves in the happy position of a busy hive of industry, we will find ourselves getting into more difficulties. I should like to ask who would buy houses for investment purposes. Even if Mr. Kitson wanted to purchase property as an investment, I am sure he would hesitate if a law like this were passed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He might be inclined to regard it as protection.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member might buy a house in which to live, but I have too high a sense of his astuteness to imagine that he would buy property as an investment. I think he has too much wisdom to be tempted to buy a house with a law like this in existence. The result of all this will be that if there are no willing buyers, values will depreciate enormously. That will be a bad thing for our State. The effect will be to bring ruin to the thrifty who have been the mainstay in the progress of Australia. The thrifty section is the section that will suffer because that section has worked hard to acquire property.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about the man who has paid for his house?

Hon. J. Nicholson: You are going to destroy him. That is what is going to happen. It is the thrifty people who will be made to suffer. By passing such a Bill the Government will be destroying the very men whom it is their duty to save. Then, suppose anyone having a property of substantial value should find it necessary to borrow some money. I should like to know where he is going to borrow that money with a Bill like this hanging over him. I do not know if the Minister can assure me that the

sources of useful investment will not be dried up by a Bill such as this.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Are they not already dried up?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the Minister admits that, he must admit he is at the end of his tether. I should like him to consider what the effect of the Bill will be on a man who may have a little money for investment, whether he is likely to invest that money in the face of the Bill. Recently we have read a lot about the inflation of currency and the deflation of values. I predict that if the Bill be passed it will bring about deflation of the worst and most pronounced type.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Is that a threat?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There will be even less money in circulation than there is to-day and many people will be penalised, if not pauperised. A few days ago the Premier was reported to have referred to this question of deflation.

The PRESIDENT: We are not dealing with deflation in the discussion of this Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I thought it was more or less connected with the Bill, which will certainly bring about deflation in values. The Premier was bemoaning the existence of people who were deflating values all the time. He gave the very good advice that we should keep our heads. It is a good man who can keep his head in a time of difficulty. If we can succeed in getting capital into circulation, I do not think we shall hear any more about the deflation of values which threatens us when Bills of this character are passed; for we shall then remove the necessity for such Bills. This Bill is merely the forerunner of others. Already we have had three stamp Bills and a multiplicity of entertainment tax Bills, and I do not know how many of the nature of the one before us will be brought down. I am opposed to any inflation of currency because probably that would do more harm than deflation.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Has there not been a lot of inflation of property values during the past few years?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, I think what inflation there has been, has been quite justified.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: There have been hundreds of cases of property inflation in this city.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I should not like to say that. I was sorry to notice in the Press to-day that attention had been called to the alleged combination between the Premier of this State and Mr. Lang, the Premier of New South Wales, in respect of the Loan Council. When our Premier gets mixed up in a controversy of that nature, it might well result in liability to serious deflation. Our Premier I am sure has the best interests of the State at heart, and we do not like to imagine him engaged in an unholy alliance with Mr. Lang. I strongly advise our Premier to keep clear of that gentleman and so help to avoid deflation. Let us look at the other side of the picture: If the Government would strive to find suitable employment for all, money would be kept in circulation, than which nothing is more essential to prosperity. In such a case the man whom it is thought to protect by the Bill will continue to pay his rent or his instalments of purchase money.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Suppose he cannot?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But he will be able to. Prosperity will help him over his difficulties. We require to get back to prosperity as soon as possible. Then the mortgagee and the vendor in their turn will be able to meet their obligations, and gradually we shall find ourselves back on the high road to prosperity. I do not know whether it is necessary to call attention to some of the clauses in the Bill. It would be a grave mistake for the Government to proceed with the Bill in view of what the Federal Government have under contemplation. Our Government would be well advised to consider the Bill a little further before they proceed with it.

The PRESIDENT: The Committee stage is the proper stage at which to deal with clauses.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Very well. I will leave it at that. If the Minister does not feel disposed to withhold the Bill for a time, until he sees what the Federal Parliament is going to do, I confess the measure is one which requires close investigation and should be referred to a select committee.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [9.45]: I have never heard Mr. Nicholson to worse advantage than this evening. His arguments seem quite puerile. I have heard him refer to the Federal Parliament, the Federal Labour Party, and the Federal Lab-

our Caucus on previous occasions, but this is the first time he has admitted he is quite in agreement with the Federal Labour Caucus.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I did not say I was in agreement with them.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: He suggests that because it is reported in the paper that this body might be going to do something, this House should do nothing until after the Federal House has done something. That is what his argument amounts to. There is neither sense nor reason in it. The position here is too serious for us to look at it in that way. There are many cases of serious hardship due to unscrupulous property owners pressing their claims upon people who cannot pay. I congratulate the Government upon bringing down a Bill which makes provision for both interests, the unemployed tenant who cannot pay his rent, and the purchaser on time payment of a property, who is unable either to meet his interest or pay his instalments. When Mr. Nicholson was speaking I interjected that I might be inclined to look upon this measure as one of protection to the property owner. I am justified in taking that view. There are many landlords who are debarred from taking action which they will probably be able to take if this becomes law. I admit all the hon. member has said about the thrifty workman who, as a result of his savings, has become possessed of one house and lives in another. He is entitled to all the credit he can get. If the tenant of one of his houses is unable to pay the rent, there is ample provision in this Bill whereby the owner can be protected.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I do not know where it is.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It is in Clause 8.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That in no way protects him.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It gives him ample protection.

Hon. J. Nicholson: None whatever.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Not if the tenant cannot pay him rent.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The clause says that no order shall be made under Sections 4 or 6 unless the applicant satisfies the commissioner that he has made all reasonable efforts to obtain employment, and that he is and has been unable to obtain employment through no fault of his own; that no order shall be made under Sections 4 and 6 if the commissioner is satisfied that

the landlord or mortgagee by reason of the circumstances will suffer no undue hardship in the event of the order being made. Is there no protection there?

Hon. G. W. Miles: What does the protection amount to if the tenant cannot pay?

Hon. J. Nicholson: There is no protection.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: There is ample protection. It protects any man from taking advantage of his unemployment and remaining in the house to the detriment of the landlord, who is relying upon the rent for his livelihood.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It has not that effect.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That is my reading of the clause. No order can be granted unless by a commissioner. That officer must have the qualifications of a judge or a magistrate. I have heard Mr. Nicholson talk about the qualifications possessed by these officials. Does he suggest that any of our judges or magistrates would give decisions that would be unfair to either party?

Hon. J. Nicholson: I am not suggesting that.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Is it not necessary to have a tribunal to which these people can appeal? Is it not possible for the owner of a property who is not satisfied with a decision to appeal against it?

Hon. J. Nicholson: What is the effect of such a law?

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member not to interject.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: There is very serious distress in the metropolitan area. Something must be done at once whereby relief can be afforded. We should not put the whole responsibility upon one section of the community, and I do not say this Bill is doing so. What it does is to give an opportunity to both parties to get a fair deal, when one party finds that, through no fault of his own, he cannot carry out the bargain. The hon. member suggests that if relief work can be provided for the unemployed, it would be better to do so than to pass this Bill. It is time the necessary relief works were put in hand. Up to date the Government have done nothing beyond profess to be able to find work for all.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You wanted them to find £80,000.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: No. I told the hon. member there were means by which £80,000 could be spent in the metropolitan

area, and whereby the money could be raised from a source outside usual Government channels, money that could be repaid in 30 years. Anyone who opposes that scheme is working to the detriment of the unemployed.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Nonsense.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Mr. Nicholson was careful to suggest that the relief work should be different from that in operation elsewhere. Much of that work is being provided by local authorities. In most cases they are only providing work that is equivalent to the amount of sustenance the unemployed would have received had they not been doing the work. It does not amount to more than 2s. or 3s. a week in addition to sustenance payments. These unemployed would prefer work to receiving the dole, but they are in a worse position than they were in when they did receive it in rations.

Hon. V. Hamersley: There is not enough to go round.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: When they receive their pay, very often the landlord is waiting for them on the doorstep to take his share of the money, and the family has less to exist on than is required to keep them. I would welcome any relief work that would provide sufficient employment and sustenance for these people, and the money necessary to keep a roof over their heads. Our troubles would be solved if we could get work for the unemployed. We should not hear anything about depression then. It is time we looked to that side of the question.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Unless they join a union they cannot get a job.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That is ridiculous and untrue. If we could find work for 8,000 or 10,000 people within three months, everyone would be prosperous.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Reproductive work.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: We would forget we were in the doldrums and had no money. Instead of members agitating for the further dismissal of men, they should be advocating employment on reproductive work. Such work cannot be done without money, but there are ways and means by which it can be secured. Within two or three months I believe those means will be adopted, and that at least some money will be found. Mr. Nicholson says it is essential to keep our heads in this crisis. It is easy for those in comfortable circumstances, who are getting three meals a day

and have a decent roof over their heads on seven days in the week, to keep their heads; but it is not so easy for the married man with a wife and children, who is subsisting on 15s. or £1 a week, and who must face his landlord and contribute towards the rent, to keep his head. Sooner or later the unemployed will cease to take things as they have done in the past. They will begin to retaliate. There will come a time when they cannot stand any more. The demonstration we had this afternoon in front of Parliament House must tell members that the married unemployed are waking up to the fact that they can wait very little longer. It is no good promising them that something will be done. Something must be done at once. This Bill will assist a limited number of people who are suffering severely through no fault of their own. I congratulate the Government on having brought it down and hope it will be passed. If it does not become law, or some similar measure is not put upon the statute-book, we can take it for granted that the unemployed will adopt measures similar to those adopted by another section recently in the metropolitan area. They have banded together to protect themselves. They are prepared to adopt violent measures to prevent the landlords from taking the remedy which now is in their own hands.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: To prevent the shearers from working.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: We who know a little about that trouble know there are faults on both sides. Times are too serious to adopt the attitude taken by Mr. Nicholson. Irrespective of whether the Federal Government do anything or not, the State Government should do something quickly. If there is any truth in the statement made by Mr. Nicholson that the Federal Parliament are likely to do something in the near future by providing a certain amount of money for those people who would be protected under this Bill, an additional factor would be set up in favour of the landlord when an application was made to the commissioner for a protection order. There is no point in the hon. member's argument. I support the second reading of the Bill. ..

HON. H. STEWART (South - East) [10.0]: Mr. Kitson having said that people suffering from lack of employment, perhaps getting only one day's work per week,

are highly restive and that we may look for some stern measures, I tell the hon. member through you, Mr. President, that that is not the only section of the community which is becoming restive. An essential section of the community is also growing restive—the section that has been told to grow more wheat, only to find the price down to 2s. per bushel. That section has lost the whole of its income, and can secure no further consideration. The Federal Government still go on talking of possibly doing something; but those behind the movement with which Mr. Kitson is associated are not prepared in this case, as in others—for instance, sugar growing in Queensland—to stand for an increase in the price of the product. In the Queensland case it is a matter of preserving the White Australia ideal; in this case it is a matter of extending some consideration to people who have lost the whole of their income. It is quite possible that the definition of “dwelling house” in this Bill may include a house on a farm. The definition reads—

“Dwelling-house” means a dwelling-house or any part thereof, and includes the premises appurtenant thereto.

On general principles I fail to see why that definition should not include the dwelling on a farm, a pastoral holding, or a timber lease. If the definition is extended to farm houses, the Bill will include a section in as difficult circumstances as the other section which has been mentioned. At Mr. Kitson's instance, Mr. Nicholson read Clause 8, which deals with the qualification of an applicant for a protection order. Clause 8, however, must be read in association with Subclause 2 of Clause 4, which provides—

No such order shall be made unless the applicant satisfies the Commissioner that by reason of unemployment—

Only one reason is given—

—he is unable to pay the rent in respect of the dwelling that falls due, and that there is no immediate prospect of his becoming able to do so.

That definition is not sufficient, because a person may have lost the whole of his income through this very Bill.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Then that person would get relief.

Hon. H. STEWART: Charitable relief?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Yes.

Hon. H. STEWART: The difficulty is that the commissioner might not make the order if such a case were proved. Moreover, there are cases where properties may be in the hands of trustee companies acting on behalf of persons drawing their incomes from rent, and that matter would not come before the court.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: That is ridiculous.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask hon. members to allow Mr. Stewart to proceed.

Hon. H. STEWART: Should the Bill go into Committee, it would be perfectly reasonable to amend the paragraph so as to give an alternative reason, namely, loss of income. Then the Bill would give relief to another section besides tenants of what are only dwelling houses without productive lands attached to them. There should be no distinction made between one section in difficulties and another section equally in difficulties.

On the motion of Hon. J. J. Holmes, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 26th November, 1930.

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

QUESTION—TRAFFIC AUTHORITIES.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Police: 1, Is it a fact that Mr. W. J. Carey was refused permission to replace Fiat car No. 10267 on route No. 8? 2, Is it also a fact that Mr. M. Dicton was granted permission to replace his car under exactly similar conditions asked for in this instance, and refused by the traffic authorities? 3, Under what section of the Traffic Act did the traffic authorities demand Mr. Carey's transfer of his license to the receiver for Nash cars? 4, Is he aware that the traffic authorities kept Mr. Carey out of employment for a period of six weeks awaiting a decision on the condition of the Fiat car for which he asked a replacement, and why was the condition of the Fiat car brought into the matter of a replacement at all? 5, Was the attitude of the traffic authorities governed by their desire to assist a certain finance company in direct opposition to the wording of the Act, which states "the owner of the license shall be the person who has had possession of the vehicle for three months or over?"

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied: 1, Mr. Carey and Nash Cars Limited have been given to 30th November to reinstate the car on Route 8. 2, No—the facts are altogether dissimilar. 3, Mr. Carey has handed back the car to Nash Cars Limited and the license must go with the car, and any person becoming the owner of a vehicle must obtain a transfer in accordance with Regulation 158. 4, Mr. Carey has not been kept out of employment by any action of the traffic authorities. The bus is fit to run on the road when minor repairs are effected at a cost of £10. 5, No. See answer to No. 3. The definition of "owner" has not been fully quoted.

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYED AS PROSPECTORS.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the fact that there are amongst the unemployed a number of men receiving Government sustenance, and who are prepared to go out prospecting if the sustenance is shifted from the metropolitan area to the place they wish to prospect, will the Government be prepared to do this in order that these men will be given a chance to do some good for the State?