

working. I ask the Minister to give serious attention to this matter. I do not want to have to approach the Government with pleas for a couple more jetties because maintenance has been neglected. Timber has been available but money is required for labour to repair the Point Samson jetty. This work has been delayed for six or eight months to my knowledge. This policy is fatal to the security of the jetties, and requires more than passing attention.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Town Planning, £1,750; Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £17,600—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.51 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1911.

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

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Introduced by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt and read a first time.

MOTION—GERALDTON-MOONYOONOOKA BUS SERVICE.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.35]:
I move—

That this House disapproves of the action of the State Transport Board in granting a monopoly to D. J. McVea, of Geraldton, to conduct omnibus services between Geraldton and the R.A.A.F. training camp at Moonyoonooka, without first calling tenders for such services, and is of the opinion that such licenses

should be waived and that tenders should be called for same as provided for in Section 10 of the State Transport Co-ordination Act.

Preparatory to presenting my case, I wish to quote from the State Transport Co-ordination Act which governs the State Transport Board. That Act sets out in Part II, Division 2, the powers and duties of the board, and states that, subject to the Act, the board may of its own volition, or under the direction of the Minister shall, give impartial and equitable treatment of all conflicting interests before granting any new license and call tenders and invite premiums in any case where, owing to the importance of the route or area in which the applicant proposes to operate, it considers that the members of the public would be best served by calling tenders. Section 14 provides that the board has power to issue licenses for an omnibus at the rate of not exceeding six per cent. on the gross earnings of the vehicle.

I propose, with the assistance of the files which I have before me, to prove that the board did none of these things. It did not, as I stated in my motion calling for the papers, invite tenders for the service to the aerodrome. It did not avail itself of the section, and require the man to whom it granted the sole right to pay any charge other than the ordinary license fee.

When one rises in Parliament and makes a statement to which the Minister replies in the definite terms the Chief Secretary adopted in virtually contradicting it, one feels entitled to enter upon a defence. If you will permit me, Mr. President. I would like to deal with the statement made by the Chief Secretary on this matter. He said that the Transport Board adopted the view that it would not have been fair to allow anyone else the right to conduct a bus service over the route, unless the party concerned was prepared to accept the responsibility of providing the service to the beach as Mr. McVea had previously done. Having devoted some considerable time to searching these files, I find they do not support the Chief Secretary in that assertion. There is nothing in them about Mr. McVea providing a service to the beach prior to receiving this license.

Further, the Chief Secretary ridiculed the statement made to me by Mr. Waldeck, of Mullewa, that the chairman of the board had told him he would have to refer the matter to Melbourne. I also found that statement

hard to believe, but I quoted the letter that Mr. Waldeck sent to me, and strange to say, I have confirmation of that in a further communication. It is entirely unsolicited and is not from Mullewa, but from Geraldton under date the 5th October, and addressed to me.

The letter reads—

I have read with great interest the debate which has been held in Parliament with regard to the bus service to the R.A.A.F. station at Moonyoonooka and would like to add a few remarks myself. I also am very dissatisfied with the treatment handed out to me by the chairman of the Transport Board, and also verify the statements made by Mr. H. F. Waldeck.

On the 18th March, 1941, I was in Perth to purchase a seven-seater Vauxhall car and had an appointment made for me by the Hon. the Premier, Mr. Willecock, with Mr. Millen, and after discussing various matters, mention was made of an omnibus license. Mr. Millen then handed me two omnibus application forms, telling me to fill one in and forward it to Perth. He then made these remarks, "Now I cannot promise you that the omnibus license will be granted to you, as all that sort of thing has to be forwarded to Melbourne, but I will send a covering letter with a strong recommendation." Now, Mr. Hall, if the chairman likes to deny this, I am prepared to come to Perth and repeat this statement under oath, and at my own expense.

That letter was written by a one-legged returned soldier who operates on the taxi rank at Geraldton—L. A. Pomeroy. It is remarkable that there should be an entirely unsolicited confirmation of my statement which the Chief Secretary characterised as ridiculous and from which he said it appeared that I had been misled by Mr. Waldeck. Another statement by the Chief Secretary was—

I have explained the situation and it seems to me that the position will be met properly by Mr. Hall making the necessary inquiries at the office of the Transport Board, seeing the papers for himself and if necessary, securing a personal explanation from the chairman of the board. If that course had been adopted, there would be no necessity for the motion—

This is the part to which I take exception—nor for some of the wild statements made by the hon. member in support of it.

The only statement I made was that a present had been made of this Moonyoonooka service to Mr. McVea. It is difficult to place the relevant matters before the House because there are three separate files. Still, I defy any impartial person to deny my statement, namely, that the right to conduct this bus service was made a present to Mr.

McVea. There was no need for the Minister to make that remark; I certainly tried to deal with the matter quite calmly.

The first file I will deal with is that of Mr. H. D. Waldeck, of Mullewa. On the 16th January, one day after the granting of the license to Mr. McVea, a duly completed signed and dated form was lodged by Mr. Waldeck applying for a license to operate a bus, and on the back appears particulars of the fares he proposed to charge. For men of the R.A.A.F. the fare was to be 1s. return, or 6d. for the single journey. On the 29th January, I forwarded a letter to the chairman of the board in which I said—

Please see enclosed. I know nothing of this matter—

That was the letter from Mr. Waldeck—

—and feel sure every applicant will receive a fair deal. Mr. Waldeck is well known to me and is a very reliable driver and in every way worthy of being considered equally with any other applicant which, as stated, I am sure he will be.

The board replied to me on the 5th February as follows:—

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 29th ult. enclosing copy of a communication which you have received from Mr. H. F. Waldeck, of Mullewa, regarding his application for a license to operate an omnibus service to the Geraldton aerodrome.

The position is that applications for licenses had been received from two applicants prior to the receipt of Mr. Waldeck's application. One of the applications received had been approved by the board before any communication was received from Mr. Waldeck. The board does not feel disposed at the present time to grant an additional license.

I would like members to pay particular attention to the statement in the letter that applications for licenses had been received from two parties. All I can say is that the files do not support that statement. Mr. Waldeck can prove that on the 10th January he put through a trunk-line call to the Transport Board. True, his application was not received until a day after the board had approved the granting of a license to Mr. McVea, but Mr. Waldeck was in touch with the board. As a result of the information he received, he, at his own expense, journeyed to Perth. It is stated that there were two applications before the board. The file shows only one other than that of Mr. Waldeck, and that was Mr. McVea's.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Have tenders been called?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: No.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is not the board compelled to call tenders?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: No, unless the Minister so directs. Members will recall that four-fifths of the Chief Secretary's reply related to a bus service to Bluff Point or the beach. I stated in my reply that that had nothing to do with the service to the R.A.A.F. station, and neither it has, as the files reveal.

On Mr. McVea's file is a typed statement signed by David McVea and witnessed by one W. Robinson who, I understand, is chief inspector of the board, and bearing the date the 10th May, 1938. I am dealing with the Chief Secretary's statement that McVea was granted the license because he offered to provide the service. Just a month before the date of McVea's statement, C. J. Allen, a well-known and reputable citizen of Geraldton, wrote to the Transport Board. I will deal with that letter in due course. David McVea's statement begins—

I am a taxi-driver and I own and drive Oldsmobile sedan car No. GN182. I have operated my taxi in Geraldton for the past 10 years.

McVea is now applying for a bus service within the townsite of Geraldton. There is no possible doubt about it at all, as the application is signed by him and witnessed by W. Robinson. Mr. Robinson's report, dated the 15th June, 1938, is as follows:—

Please see application attached from McVea, re bus route at Geraldton. I am of the opinion that this bus service would be of benefit to the public and also to school children.

There is nothing in that report about the service to the aerodrome; it has reference only to the Bluff Point beach service. The following is the record on the file about the Geraldton-Moonyoonooka service, which is the service to the R.A.A.F. station, but first I shall read a wire from McVea to the board, dated the 3rd December, 1940—

Am desirous running modern bus service Geraldton circuit and Moonyoonooka. Letter following with full particulars.

On the same day, McVea wrote to the board as follows:—

Some time ago I wrote your board with reference to conducting a bus service in and around Geraldton and the Victoria district. My intention at the time was to operate a modern and up-to-date bus service and run to a schedule; my plans, however, were upset owing to the unsettled world situation, and the

time was not right for conducting such a service. I am now of the opinion that a bus service run on proper lines and to a schedule, should prove successful in Geraldton provided the encumbrances are not too heavy.

I hereby wish to make application to your board for the right to conduct a bus service in the Geraldton circuit and Moonyoonooka. I am prepared at a later date to supply you with a schedule which will suit the requirements of Geraldton and the R.A.A.F. station which is to be erected at Moonyoonooka, seven miles from Geraldton.

The secretary of the board wrote to McVea in reply on the 9th December, 1940, as follows:—

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, regarding your proposal to operate an omnibus service in the Geraldton district. I would be pleased if you would set out full details on one of the attached forms. You should give an exact description of the route or routes to be followed, the fares (including sectional fares, return fares, concession fares, etc.), also particulars of the proposed timetable.

As stated by the Chief Secretary, references were obtained from the Mayor of Geraldton and from other well-known people. Waldeck referred to the President of the Senate, Hon. James Cunningham, the Hon. T. Moore, and myself. In the following further letter from McVea to the board, dated the 17th December, 1940, he states—

At the moment I am unable to submit the pink form (application for an omnibus license) because the whole scheme is dependent on the peak periods from the proposed new Air Training site, therefore you will appreciate that it is impossible for me as yet to draw up a definite timetable and scale of charges.

The board replied on the 2nd January, as follows:—

I refer to your letter dated the 17th ultimo, in which you enclosed certain particulars regarding omnibus facilities proposed to be operated by you in the Geraldton district. Before this matter can be dealt with by the board, it will be necessary for you to submit a proper application for license in respect of each vehicle you intend to operate. If the details of the vehicles are not available at present, you could leave that particular information to be supplied later, but the board must have schedules showing the proposed timetable and fares, including sectional fares, return fares, children's fares, etc.

On the 8th January McVea telegraphed the board as follows:—

My reply to yours of January second, will arrive morning of Friday tenth.

McVea's first application is dated the 7th January. In it he said, "For schedules, please see attached." By the way, I do not

like mentioning this, but it may be most important. The application form is dated the 7th January, but at the bottom is the board's official stamp, "Approved, December 15th, 1940." Therefore, an application was made to the board on the 7th January, 1941, whereas, according to the official stamp of the board, it was approved on the 15th December, 1940. Evidently a mistake was made; the date should be the 15th January, 1941. That is an indication of the way in which this matter has been dealt with. In the schedules attached to his application, McVea states his price as 1s. each way. In Waldeck's application, made the following day, he quoted 6d. each way, but I shall deal with that later. These were the fares to be charged to airmen only. In his covering letter, dated the 7th January, McVea states—

You will note that I have included six Geraldton circuit trips; this I would like to try out for, say, six weeks to ascertain if the business warrants continuing.

It was a rather elastic sort of arrangement. McVea was granted a valuable concession on the understanding that he would make certain trips. On the 7th January he wrote the board informing it that he would try the scheme out for six weeks in order to ascertain whether it would be worth continuing. On the 14th January, getting anxious and evidently knowing something about the board's methods, he wired the secretary as follows:—

Would you kindly advise your board's decision Friday's meeting re bus license.

On the 15th January he received the following reply:—

Agreeable issue omnibus license subject approval vehicle.

That telegram was confirmed by letter of the same date, as follows:—

Further to my telegram of even date, I have to advise that my board has approved of your application for an omnibus license to the 30th June next to operate an omnibus service between Geraldton and the new aerodrome, etc. This approval is subject to full details of the vehicle proposed to be used being submitted to and approved by this board.

The timetable and fares which you have set out have been approved, with the exception that in accordance with Regulation No. 28 of the Transport Regulations, 1934, any child under the age of five years and who does not occupy a seat to the exclusion of a paying passenger must be carried free of charge.

Nothing further happened until the 7th March when the board wrote to McVea as follows:—

Regarding the new Ford V8 omnibus for which you have applied for a license to operate in the Geraldton district, will you please forward the current Traffic Act licenses for inspection at your earliest convenience.

On the 24th March, McVea replied as follows:—

Attached you will find the current traffic license for my Mercury Ford V8 bus for your inspection as requested.

On the 16th April McVea made another application for a license, which was approved by the board on the 19th April, the fares to be the same as those already stated, 9d. each way. I made a mistake when quoting the fare before. I said 1s., but it should be 9d.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Waldeck's tender was 6d. each way.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: These are airmen's fares?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. I am dealing only with airmen's fares. I am glad that I have been able to correct the misquotation. The ordinary fare to the aerodrome was 1s. each way, but for the R.A.A.F. it was 9d. each way. Those fares are quoted in the application of the 7th January. Here is a written statement from David McVea of Geraldton. It reads as follows:—

I am at present the owner of a Ford V8 bus No. GN 888, licensed by the W.A.T.B., Geraldton to aerodrome. Seating capacity 28 seater. I find now that the one bus is not large enough to cope with the passengers at peak periods. There are at least 700 men stationed at Geraldton R.A.A.F. I wish to make an application for a license for a second bus to be used on this run mostly at peak periods, and also a second bus is required in case any breakdown should occur with the V8 bus. Also I wish to make a complaint against Mr. Pomeroy, owner of two taxis at Geraldton. This person is always running passengers at separate fares to the aerodrome. His usual practice is to leave just before the bus is due to leave. I am of the opinion that Pomeroy is securing his extra petrol from Ron. Marsh (his brother-in-law) both in partnership in a bowser. Marsh is the local carrier and also a sub-contractor for persons who have contracts with the R.A.A.F.

That is signed David McVea and witnessed by W. Robinson. The complaint is against a one-legged returned soldier who is earning

a living by running a taxi service. On the 23rd April the secretary of the Transport Board wrote to Mr. McVea—

My board has approved of your application for a separate omnibus to be operated in the Geraldton district.

A license fee will be issued to the 30th June next upon receipt of—

- (a) the current Traffic Act licenses for the vehicle; and
- (b) the fee of £1.

There was an application dated the 27th June which was received on the 2nd July and approved on the 23rd July. That was his third application and the fares were 6d. each way. On the 30th June McVea wrote to the board that owing to petrol restrictions and other causes he found that now that both buses were required at the air force station at peak periods, especially between the hours of 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. their stand-down times clashed with the town timetable, and asked the board's permission temporarily to cancel the town runs except the 2.30 p.m. service via a route specified in the letter. On the 2nd July the secretary of the board wrote—

I refer to your letter of the 25th ulto. in which you state that the Traffic Act license for your Dodge Graham omnibus has not been returned to you.

I cannot discover any letter dated the 25th but there is the one dated the 30th to which I have just referred. The secretary's letter continues—

According to the records at this office that license was returned to you at the same time as the Transport Board license was issued.

In a footnote the secretary stated—

When I was in Geraldton recently you stated that you desired to apply for a special license for additional fuel to enable you to continue operating. As portion of the tickets (20 gallons) have already been issued to you, I would be pleased if you would submit the application on one of the attached forms without delay.

On the 14th July another application for an omnibus license was submitted by Mr. McVea. It was received on the 21st July and approved on the 23rd July. The fares were to be the same, 6d. each way. On the 23rd July the secretary of the board wrote as follows:—

My board has approved of your applications for two omnibuses to be operated on the routes set out by you. Will you please forward—

- (a) The current Traffic Act licenses for your vehicles for inspection (including passenger vehicle licenses); and

- (b) License fees amounting to £4 (£2 each vehicle).

That was an application for those two buses to operate to the period ending the 30th June, 1942. So that the board at that late period granted McVea another year's license for two omnibuses. On the 25th July he submitted an application for another bus. The application was received on the 29th. There was a bit of slickness about this office because this application which was dated the 25th July and received on the 29th July was approved on the 30th July. That was for the third omnibus! I do not expect members to remember the dates I have given, but if they could it would help them to realise that there is something more in this matter than meets the eye.

I desire to stress the point that I have the highest regard for the three members of the Transport Board. I do not believe any one of them would be guilty of doing anything that was not strictly honourable. I mean that! What I do think is that the board, whose chairman has also been appointed chairman of the Liquid Fuel Control Board, has relied on some of its officers perhaps more than it would do in normal times, and consequently the consideration has not been given to this matter that otherwise would have been devoted to it. The other two members of the board are only part-time members.

The whole facts lead me to express an opinion somewhat similar to others that have been voiced to the effect that boards are not altogether as satisfactory as they might be. I am not retracting what I have said about the members of the Transport Board not doing anything except what was strictly honourable, but it is possible for us all to make mistakes—many of them—and I think that in this instance a mistake has been made, caused largely by the chairman having the difficult task of filling the dual positions of chairman of the Transport Board and chairman of the Liquid Fuel Control Board.

Returning to the subject matter of the motion, here is a letter from Mr. Allen dated the 12th April, 1938, which is headed "Re Proposed Bus Service for Bluff Point, Wonthella and East Geraldton and Utacarra Residents." If the Chief Secretary had mentioned Wonthella, or more particularly Utacarra, which is on the way to the aerodrome, he would have cited a better

case than Bluff Point. This is the first application on the file. The writer says that he has the finance and intends to form a company and go into the matter.

There is one fact upon which the Chief Secretary and I agree, namely, that after the Transport Board had called tenders and spent about £8 upon advertising in the "West Australian," the "Sunday Times" and the Geraldton paper, no tenders were received, but, as I said before, that had nothing to do with the aerodrome service, nothing at all. Here is a statement written by Mr. Robinson, but that had nothing to do with the matter. Here are the tenders all set out showing the streets that the buses were to traverse. The most elaborate conditions were set out for a service for which no one tendered; but for a highly payable service, which should have been known to the board because it had its officer there, no tender was called.

The Chief Secretary: Do you say that it was a highly payable service when the contract was given?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Everybody concerned knew—it was common knowledge in Geraldton—what the strength of that camp would be, and when they fell over themselves putting in prices and making inquiries, they knew it was going to be a highly profitable undertaking. Mr. Waldeck is a poor man who conducts a school bus service. Why did he spend £10 in travelling to Perth to inquire about this matter? On the 28th April, 1939, the board wrote to the Town Clerk of Geraldton as follows:—

Re Proposed Omnibus Services in the Geraldton District:

With reference to the advertisement calling for applications for the conduct of two omnibus services in your district, I have to advise that the last day for submitting applications was Wednesday, 19th inst., but no applications were received.

The board does not propose to take any further action in the matter but where passenger transport facilities are needed at any time for the purpose of conveying passengers either to the beach or Bluff Point, etc., the matter can be dealt with by the issue of permits from your office on behalf of this board.

There was a man named Baskerville who submitted an application, but he withdrew because, as stated by the Chief Secretary, he thought the other man had a much better conveyance. Again, however, I reiterate that that had nothing to do with the aero-

drome service. Mr. Curlew wrote on the 5th April, 1940, as follows:—

I would be glad if you could advise me upon the terms and conditions which would apply for the inauguration of a bus service at Geraldton. The idea is to run the bus service round the residential areas during week days and to use the bus for excursions, etc., during week-ends.

Would you be good enough to give me information as to what restrictions, if any, would apply and conditions of operation?

The board replied giving him the conditions. On the 29th October, 1940, Mr. Baskerville wrote to the board but later withdrew his application. On the 3rd January, 1941, a body known as the Geraldton Tourist Bureau wrote to the board as follows:—

Applications have recently been lodged with your department in connection with the establishment of bus services in Geraldton. These will require due deliberation but in view of the progress of the season and the urgent need for transport in and around the town, particularly in view of the early establishment of an Air Force training school here, my committee would appreciate an early consideration of the applications and your advices regarding a finality.

That was quite a courteous letter but it was ignored. No reply was forwarded. Here is a letter from another man operating a taxi service who applied for another bus but his application was promptly turned down. On the 12th February, 1941, the secretary of the Transport Board wrote to the secretary of the Liquid Fuel Control Board as follows:—

Re additional tax license—Geraldton district. I refer to your letter of the 7th instant relative to an application submitted by one E. E. Whitby of Marine-terrace, Geraldton, for a motor spirit consumer's license in respect of a new taxi.

In view of the fact that an omnibus service will be operating in the next few weeks to cater for passenger traffic between Geraldton and the new R.A.A.F. aerodrome, the Transport Board is of the opinion that the licensing of an additional taxi in the Geraldton district is not warranted.

Then another man named Percy Burnett wrote to the Transport Board on the 12th February, which, it is true, was after the first license had been granted. In the course of his letter in which he applied for a license to run a passenger bus between Geraldton and the aerodrome, he said—

I understand there will be over 1,000 men at the Flying School and they will require several buses on the run.

The board replied to that letter intimating that it was not prepared to grant another

license for a bus at that juncture. Now I come to a man who occupies a very important position. I do not suggest for one moment that the Defence Department or the military authorities should be allowed to dictate to the Transport Board, but still, I think that the Officer Commanding the R.A.A.F. station at Geraldton should have been shown some consideration in his endeavour to cater for the requirements of his men. On the 16th March the Wing-Commander in charge of the R.A.A.F. station at Geraldton wrote to the Transport Board as follows:—

With reference to the omnibus service between this station and Geraldton, Mr. P. Burnett, of 3 Francis-street, Geraldton, has made inquiries at this headquarters relative to the possibility of augmenting the present service available for personnel during leave periods.

In view of the future rapid expansion of the station, it is pointed out that as the present licensee is fully taxed to fulfil an efficient service, the question of licensing another omnibus should be considered without delay. It is considered, in the interests of local enterprise, that a competitive basis should be established when granting an increased service.

A copy of this memo has been forwarded to Mr. Burnett to substantiate his application for a license.

On the 15th March Burnett again wrote to the Transport Board commencing with the statement—

I wish to renew my application for a transport license to operate a bus between Geraldton and the Air Force station.

On the 21st March the Transport Board replied to the Officer Commanding the R.A.A.F. station as follows:—

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th inst. urging early action towards the provision of additional transport facilities between the town of Geraldton and the new R.A.A.F. station. It is the intention of the chairman of the board to visit Geraldton very shortly to inquire into the matter of passenger transport, and he will no doubt interview you in connection with the matter.

So far as the file discloses, the chairman of the Transport Board never visited Geraldton; the secretary undertook that task, but did not think it worth while to call upon the commanding officer. On the 22nd March Burnett wrote to the board again renewing his application and stating—

I earnestly desire to be granted a chance of earning a living which a bus license will give me. I am a married man with three children.

The file shows that on the 23rd March, David McVea wrote to the Transport Board as follows:—

Further to my telephonic communication with Mr. Robinson last week, I wish to advise that Mr. Pomeroy has arrived back in Geraldton with a seven-seater Vauxhall sedan. He has not yet licensed the vehicle and I understand that it is not his intention to do so until the commencement of the last quarter of the licensing period. This gentleman already has a Vauxhall five-seater licensed on the rank and does a once-weekly mail trip of 84 miles the return trip, and intends putting the second vehicle on the rank also. He is advising the personnel of the R.A.A.F. station that when he puts this seven-seater into service his car will operate at the same price as the bus.

The bus stand allocated to me by the municipal traffic authorities is directly opposite the taxi rank in Marine-terrace and the taxis are already running to and from the air port at single fares. Owing to the fact that I have laid out a considerable amount of money in establishing the bus service and have had tickets printed, also have given much time and thought to the project, I feel that some measure of protection should be afforded me against the opposition of the seven-seater taxi running in competition. Therefore I should be pleased if you would place this matter before your board.

That indicates that the man who had secured this valuable concession did not like anyone else coming in! Burnett wrote again on the 26th April and the board replied to him on the 29th April, in which communication the secretary stated—

Regarding the transport generally, it is the chairman's intention to visit Geraldton as soon as possible after his return from the Eastern States, and you and any others interested will then be able to submit representations to the chairman on the spot.

I repeat that, as far as the file discloses, the chairman never paid that visit to Geraldton. Then there is a letter from the traffic inspector of the municipality of Geraldton under date the 27th May, and in his communication to the Transport Board that officer stated—

I would be obliged if it is possible for you to send one of your inspectors to Geraldton to check up on the omnibus run from Geraldton to the R.A.A.F. station.

I have every reason to believe that the taxis of Geraldton are charging separate fares for airmen on this run. Owing to the fact that it is very difficult for me to get the evidence required, also the fact that I can only work within the council boundaries, I would be grateful if you would send one of your inspectors when available.

The board replied to the traffic inspector's letter on the 25th June as follows:—

I refer to your letter of the 27th ult. in which you suggested that one of the board's inspectors might visit Geraldton in connection with the transport of passengers to and from the Geraldton R.A.A.F. station.

I was in Geraldton during the past week-end and very much regret that the time at my disposal did not permit of a discussion with you regarding not only the question of transport to the aerodrome, but also various other matters. Unfortunately I was unable to complete all the business awaiting and it may be necessary at a very early date for either myself or some other member of the board's staff to make a further journey, when matters can be discussed.

The file shows that a letter expressing regret was despatched to the commanding officer of the R.A.A.F. station under date the 25th June. That letter reads—

During the past week-end I visited Geraldton in connection with various matters, and it was my intention to discuss with you the question of the transport facilities available to and from the Geraldton R.A.A.F. station. Unfortunately I had very little time at my disposal and was unable to transact all the business on hand.

One particular question which I wished to discuss with you was that of the omnibus service to and from the station. I interviewed Mr. McVea, the present operator, who informed me that he was endeavouring to obtain a third omnibus, and that he had already discussed the position with you. He advised that the Air Force had in the past issued ration tickets to personnel for the conveyance of themselves and others to and from the station, but that you proposed in future to discontinue that practice, provided that Mr. McVea was in a position to run extra trips with his bus, in which case he would require additional petrol totalling 50 to 60 gallons a month.

If you have any views to express in connection with the above matter or any other matter connected with liquid fuel or transport, I would be pleased to receive your advice of same.

It would appear that the Commanding Officer at the Air Force station has some justification for expecting that the matter would have been discussed with him, or at any rate, that a reply would have been sent to him, but there is no record on the file of any such reply.

I am sorry to have delayed the House so long in dealing with this matter, but an important principle is at stake. Here we have a board whose chairman holds a dual position. I regard that as wrong. If that was not the position, I do not think the situation I have disclosed would ever have arisen. The chairman was to have paid a

visit to Geraldton but did not do so. Had he visited that centre he would have been satisfied as to what should be done. In this instance the board should have exercised discretion and called for tenders. Another point must not be lost sight of, particularly when we are continually being told that there is a shortage of petrol. I would like the House to know that there is a good bitumen road from Geraldton to the Air Force station, which is seven miles distant. I would be pleased to know why the Transport Board did not insist upon a gas producer plant being installed on the buses used on this route. Do you, Mr. President, know what quantity of petrol is used in connection with this particular service? Of course you do not, nor do I.

Hon. G. Fraser: Then why ask us?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am going to convey to the House the information that has been supplied to me. I have been told that these vehicles are consuming and obtaining without any trouble at all, between 500 and 600 gallons of petrol monthly. That quantity is provided for this particular service at a time when I and many other members of Parliament are being besieged with requests from our constituents to secure for them enough petrol to enable them to earn their living. That is a matter concerning which inquiries might well be made.

I ask the House to approve of my motion, drastic though it may be. I am well aware that the Government can treat it with contempt. I did feel disposed to move for the appointment of a select committee to investigate the matter, but I was constrained to adopt another course in order to save the expense and time that would be needed for such an inquiry. I have endeavoured faithfully to place before members a summary of the contents of the files, and I now leave the matter in the hands of the House for determination.

On motion of the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. H. Tuckey, Bill re-committed for the further consideration of Clauses 5 and 8.

In Committee.

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

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 87:

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I move an amendment—

That in lines 11 and 12 of proposed new Subsection 6 of Section 87 after the word "every" the words "ballot paper issued during any year" be struck out, and the word "counterfoil" inserted in lieu, and that after the word "number" in lines 13 and 14 the words "and its counterfoils shall bear the same number" be struck out.

That provision in the Bill would do away with the secrecy of the ballot. I fail to see any need for the proposal in the Bill which, if enacted without my amendment, means that practice will continue. Under the present system it is easy to discover for whom a postal vote was given. The ballot paper and counterfoil are placed in separate envelopes, which are placed in a third envelope addressed to the returning officer; but it is easy for the numbers to be seen and compared with the numbers on the counterfoil, which bears the name and address of the voter.

The HONORARY MINISTER: An Act dealing with this matter was passed in 1919. The object of the counterfoil is to give ready access to ballot papers in the event of an appeal. The elector goes to the returning officer and makes a declaration on the counterfoil. The counterfoil is placed in a separate envelope. It is checked with the roll before the envelope containing the ballot paper is opened. If the matter appears to be in order, the ballot paper is taken out of the envelope and placed in the ordinary ballot box in the booth. After the election the ballot papers are sealed and sent on to the Minister. The subject was debated in both Chambers in 1919, and it was recognised then that great care had to be exercised in the taking of postal votes. It is useless to put a number on the counterfoil unless a number is put on the ballot paper. Therefore the process is not absolutely

secret. A returning officer could see how Jack Brown voted by opening the ballot box and sorting out all the ballot papers. The need for extreme strictness is recognised.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: After the year 1914 the position became very different. Previously almost anyone could take an absentee vote. Since then, however, the Act has been amended; and there are now very few postal vote officers. There are means of dealing with officers who may act as the Minister has described. Why is not the absentee voter granted the same protection as the ordinary voter? There is no need to continue the numbering, which should never have been introduced.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I should very much like to support Mr. Tuckey, but feel that I cannot reasonably do so. For at least 25 or 30 years road boards were in the habit of having their absentee ballot forms printed in local offices. My office has printed many of them. Some distinguishing mark is necessary, because no matter how careful a printer might be, it would be quite possible for ballot papers to be printed over and above the number required; and frequently the ballot papers are hand-numbered. Usually 10 or 20 more ballot papers than the number required are printed. If the people concerned are careful, they will see that the surplus ballot papers are destroyed; but it is quite possible for unscrupulous persons to get hold of two or three ballot papers, tear off portion, and drop the papers in the ballot box.

One does not work in a printing office for years without learning what unscrupulous persons will do. I know of a case in which two boys were given money to go through the rubbish bin of a printing office to see if they could find a copy of a document. I feel that the present system is the nearest to being watertight. In a closely contested election a man might easily forge another man's signature on a ballot paper and drop the paper in the box.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I am quite unable to agree with Mr. Mann. It is useless to say that an unscrupulous person could take a ballot paper and write a name on it, because that ballot paper would not correspond with the official one. All ballot papers have to be initialled and stamped. It would be difficult to pass off such a ballot paper for an ordinary vote.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Not at all!

Hon. H. TUCKEY: What about the ordinary voter? He can go into the booth and write something on a paper behind the screen and place the paper in the ballot box.

The CHAIRMAN: This method follows the example respecting the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: But the Assembly's ballot paper has no number on it.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, it has.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I disagree with the numbering system.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: What is the practice in State elections? It is undoubtedly objectionable that the secrecy of the ballot should be violated in any way.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot offhand answer that question. I hope the Committee will not alter the existing procedure. That which has happened in the past has given rise to the inclusion in the Act of the particular section with which we are now dealing. All kinds of things can happen between the time of the taking of the vote and election day. It has been found on many occasions that although technically this method does not constitute a secret ballot, it is safer to follow that system than to adopt another.

Hon. H. Tuckey: If a secret number is put on the ballot paper, that renders it informal.

The CHAIRMAN: In this instance, the voter signs the butt, and not necessarily the counterfoil. He is given a ballot paper initialled by the postal vote officer. The paper is numbered. The counterfoil is put into one envelope and the ballot paper into another, and these envelopes are marked "Counterfoil" and "Ballot paper." Everything is then put in another envelope and sent to the returning officer, or the presiding officer at the counting place before the close of the poll. The envelope is then opened and the counterfoil compared with the roll. If everything is in order, the ballot paper is extracted from the envelope and marked "Ballot paper," and the ballot paper goes into the postal vote ballot box.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: There is nothing to associate it with the counterfoil.

The CHAIRMAN: No. It is not looked at. If the counterfoil is not in order, it and the ballot paper are pinned together, laid aside, and not allowed. The idea is that it is possible to trace fraud. Unless numbers are used, that cannot be done.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: When these papers are taken from the ballot box they are separated and placed according to the candidates in whose favour they are.

The Honorary Minister: That is not so.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: They have to be examined at some time. It is not a secret ballot, because the numbers can be traced. Several people may be in the booth.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The fact that two or three people may be in the booth makes the whole thing still more secret.

Hon. H. Tuckey: What one man does not see, the other will.

The HONORARY MINISTER: People could not see the numbers if they wanted to. When the counterfoil is in order and the name is found to be on the roll, the ballot paper is opened and, without examination, is placed in the ballot box. The validity of the vote is only questioned afterwards.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I have ascertained from the secretary of a road board that the procedure outlined by the Honorary Minister is followed. It should not be possible for anyone to find out how I have voted. My two votes, on one occasion, were placed in the box, and went to the returning officer in an envelope. When that officer received the envelope, he opened it, put the votes into the ballot box, and checked the counterfoil with the roll. Had my name not been on the roll I do not suppose my vote would have been admitted. A double check is made, firstly by the man who accepts my vote, and secondly by the returning officer who has to see that the vote is correctly lodged.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: My contention is that Mr. Piesse's vote could have been foreseen. Postal vote papers are numbered. That number would appear on the counterfoil and on the voting paper. The returning officer could look through the votes and could have told how everyone had voted. Some 50 persons might have been involved. I find that people do not like to vote by post, because they are afraid the road board secretary or the returning officer will know how they have voted. Anything we can do to allay that feeling should be done.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	11
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	2
				—

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. J. Holmes

Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. T. Moore
Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. A. Thomson
(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the Committee passes on to the next amendment, I point out that almost every member, in the amendments he places upon the notice paper, infringes the Standing Orders. Apparently the desire is to strike out words, and put them in again during the same Committee.

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 245:

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added—

(c) If in any year the net income and the proceeds of the loan rate imposed under paragraph (b) of this subsection are together insufficient to meet the commitments of the Board in that year in respect of any such undertaking the Board may pay the deficiency out of its general revenue.

This amendment is moved at the request of the Road Boards Association. Members will recall the argument advanced by the Minister in another place, as well as by the Honorary Minister in this Chamber, to the effect that the Bill had been brought down because certain road boards have asked for it. The Wyalkatchem and Kondinin Road Boards some time ago imposed a loan rate out of which they paid for their town halls. As the years went by they found that the rent from the buildings and the loan rate were not sufficient to meet their commitments. Accordingly, the deficiency was made up out of general revenue. The object of the amendment is to legalise something that has already been done. In my view, the Bill does not go far enough in that direction, hence the new paragraph I now bring before the Committee. I have been asked by the Crown Law Department to add these words, "and in such case Subsection 4 of this section shall apply."

Hon. A. Thomson: It is already provided for.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am advised by the Crown Solicitor that this amendment is redundant, but will do no harm if inserted.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The amendment does not provide for repayment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am advised it is not necessary to insert those words to ensure repayment. I have no objection to the amendment if the Committee wishes to accept it.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I have to differ from the Honorary Minister and the Crown Solicitor, and I am backed up by the auditors. The road boards are continually in trouble with their auditors who say that Subsection 4 does not cover the position. I ask the Committee to accept the amendment. It will satisfy the auditors and do a lot of good.

The CHAIRMAN: This Bill has been re-committed from the third reading, and this proposed amendment is not on the notice paper. It is questionable whether the Committee can go beyond that amendment, but I will relax a little. I will ask the Honorary Minister to add the words.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move—

That the amendment be amended by adding the words "and in such case Subsection 4 of this section shall apply."

Hon. L. Craig: It really brings the position back to that of the original Act.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the wording of the amendment moved by Mr. Wood is rather serious. If a road board raises a loan to introduce a system of deep drainage or something else which only applies to one section in a scattered district, the loan expenditure would be borne by the whole community on behalf of that one section.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: My amendment has nothing to do with that aspect. Subsection 4 deals with the objection raised by Mr. Hamersley. In order to meet the position he mentions he should move to delete that subsection. My amendment deals with reproductive undertakings such as town halls.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Provision is made in the Health Act for drainage, as suggested by Mr. Hamersley. It lays down that if a drainage system is adopted only

those persons who derive benefit from it are responsible for the payment of the rates or levies necessary to meet the expense incurred. That has actually taken place in Katanning. That town had, for years, a most objectionable method by which all the slop water was tipped into underground tanks and later pumped out. The stench was abominable, and it was most expensive. Only those who benefited by the introduction of the new scheme were responsible for meeting the expenses. Mr. Hamersley need not worry about drainage, and as pointed out by Mr. Wood, Subsections 4 and 5 cover all the other provisions.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—INCOME TAX.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—WILLS (SOLDIERS, SAILORS AND AIRMEN).

Second Reading.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [6.12] in moving the second reading said: This measure is necessary because of the war. The Wills Act of this State follows exactly the English Wills Act of 1837, which made special provisions for soldiers and sailors on active service, and allowed them to make wills. It provided that a soldier who was a minor, under 21 years of age, could make a will. A soldier or sailor could make a will which was not in writing; that is, if he made an oral will it was legal. He could make a written will and it need not be witnessed. All these provisions now apply to soldiers and sailors, but doubt has arisen as to whether they apply to airmen. There were no airmen when this legislation was first passed in England. This Bill provides that what applies to soldiers and sailors shall also apply to airmen.

Hon. A. Thomson: Does it apply to nurses?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, this Bill does not provide for nurses. It is not considered that nurses will be in such circumstances that they will be unable to make a written will, or have it properly witnessed.

Hon. T. Moore: In the present days of submarines they are in great danger.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No provision is made in this Bill for nurses.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is there any reason why they should not be provided for?

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is considered dangerous to render too easy the making of a will. Cases of fraud have occurred in such circumstances.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I was explaining that the Bill provides that airmen shall be classified as soldiers and provision is made for them, although they may be minors, to make wills under the same conditions as do soldiers. The Bill also defines what is a soldier and what is a sailor. Under the old Act adopted from the English statute, a soldier was constituted as such for the purpose of making a will only when he was on the point of going overseas from England. The Bill provides that it shall apply to all members of the Australian Military Forces. Later on I hope to move an amendment. As the result of a consultation with the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) it was considered inadvisable that the Bill should apply to all soldiers because many are enlisted for home service only and facilities are available here for the making of wills in the ordinary way before witnesses.

An amendment will be moved to confine the Bill to soldiers and sailors who have been accepted for active service anywhere outside Australia. A sailor was defined as a sailor who was at sea only. This Bill provides for the inclusion of marines who may be at sea or a sailor who may be in port. The Bill also proposes to empower a soldier to appoint a guardian of infant children. That was not provided for in the original Act. After the 1914-18 war the Wills Act in England was amended to bring in the provisions we are proposing here. Last year in South Australia, New South Wales and I think in Victoria, Acts were amended to make provision such as is proposed in this Bill.

As I have already explained, the Bill provides that soldiers, although minors, may make wills, but no provision has been made for a minor who has made a will, been to the war, returned and been discharged, to revoke the will.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would not a subsequent will take its place?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Being a civilian after being discharged, he would not have the right to make a will if he was a minor. On his discharge he would become a civilian and the right of making or revoking a will would be taken from him, though, as a soldier, he had made a will. An amendment which will be put on the notice paper tomorrow will provide that a civilian, who is a minor, has been a soldier and has been discharged, may revoke a will made by him as a minor and a soldier.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: A civilian who is a minor cannot make a will.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, but a soldier who is a minor may do so, and the Bill sets forth how it can be done. Those are the main features of the Bill. I do not think it contains anything that is controversial. After consultation with the member for West Perth I have given notice of three amendments, and they are not controversial, either. I hope the House will agree to the Bill and the proposed amendments. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 2, 3, and 4.

In Committee.

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

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) the word "six" be struck out with a view to inserting the word "four."

If the amendment is passed, I propose to move for the insertion after the word "hundred" of the words "and fifty," which will make the qualifying wage for compensation £450. We are fixing a maximum that will stand for all time, not merely for the present when high costs and special conditions prevail. I have consid-

ered fully the various branches of industry and believe that an amount of £450 will meet requirements.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I hope the amendment will not be accepted. The question of increasing the amount has been considered by the Premiers of the Commonwealth. The main reason for the increase is the fact of skilled men being engaged on munition contracts to meet the war situation. They are working overtime, not of their own volition, but as part of the war effort. They are called upon to work on shifts and on Sunday. Even in those States where the amount is higher than here—the exception is Victoria—the present position demands that these workers should be protected. In my opinion no sound argument can be advanced why these workers should not be covered. This applies in Western Australia, in South Australia, more so in Victoria, and in New South Wales.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Is the amount £600 in Victoria?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Skilled men are receiving high wages because they are engaged on special work and are working long hours.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We have not anything like so many men working in munition factories here.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have men working on munitions at Midland Junction, and in a couple of months or less the factory now being built should be in full production.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Has it not been mutually agreed with the workshops people that £425 would cover them?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It will not cover them. We should not leave these men uncovered and exposed to the risk of suffering through accident. A sum of £450 is not sufficient.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: In Victoria £400 covers them.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The purpose of the Bill is to afford protection to workers who are receiving greatly increased wages because of the war. This is an entirely wrong way of meeting a situation of that sort. We have read the very convincing speech of the new Prime Minister in which he said that every shilling wasted was a gift to the enemy. To my mind

there can be no argument whatever against men who are required to work long hours being paid adequately for the additional work, but the only manner in which such extra payment can be reconciled with the necessities of the country from a war point of view is that it should be deferred until after the war. What we should have is not an amendment to increase the amount from £400 to £600, but an amendment to constitute a man a worker even though his pay and deferred pay may amount to £600. The party responsible for the introduction of the measure has pronounced its unshakeable hostility to the principle of deferred pay.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not defer profits.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: We seem to be going about things in a wrong way. We are living in a fool's paradise. Is there a single wealth-producing industry in the State at present that can be said to be truly solvent? I know of none. The wool-grower's prospects are brighter, but we all know the period of drought through which he has passed and we know the uncertainty of the future. The wheatgrower's position is still more desperate; he is entirely dependent on Government assistance. Skilled labour is being taken from our secondary industries for service in the Eastern States, where industrial activity is greater. In face of all this, it is proposed to cast an additional burden on industry, as increased insurance premiums will make it still more difficult for our few struggling secondary industries to carry on.

The proposal is not in the interests of the workers on the bread-line; it is not for the protection of the poor man's family. It is for the protection of the aristocrats of industry, those whose wages are far in excess of what it is at all possible for people who are producing the real wealth of the country to earn. I would have no objection to the proposal if a system of deferred pay were introduced. Under such a system, a man who customarily earned £6 or £7 a week and who is now earning £10 or £12 a week would have his extra earnings taken away as deferred pay. These workers should not be allowed to have all their money for present spending, for doing just those things that the Prime Minister has so vigorously denounced. I support the amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: The statement just made by Sir Hal Colebatch is one of the most startling I have heard. He suggests that a worker should forgo portion of his wages, to be held for him like Kathleen Mavourneen—

Hon. L. Craig: What about our soldiers?

Hon. G. FRASER: But that is a definite condition of their contract.

Hon. L. Craig: You could make this a condition also.

Hon. G. FRASER: But the position is entirely different. If Sir Hal Colebatch's suggestion were adopted, legislation would be needed to implement the scheme. Further, some definite provision should be made to enable the worker to get his deferred pay when it actually falls due. What protection would the worker have otherwise?

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Just the same protection as investors in the Commonwealth war loans have.

Hon. G. FRASER: The proposal would affect not only Government workers, but all the workers in the State. They would have no guarantee that the deferred pay would be forthcoming when it fell due.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: They would have the same guarantee as has the man who lends money to the Government for war purposes.

Hon. G. FRASER: If Sir Hal Colebatch does not mind my telling him so, that is not true.

Hon. L. Craig: It is.

Hon. G. FRASER: Why not pay the money to the worker instead of to the Treasury?

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Because in the latter case it would be used for war purposes.

Hon. G. FRASER: It would be used for those purposes if the worker got it. I would rather that the worker received his wages, because the money would be circulated. Sir Hal Colebatch assumes that the main increases in the cost of industry are due to burdens such as this insurance, but a large part of the increase is due to the higher cost of living.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: But not up to £12 a week!

Hon. G. FRASER: A large part is due to the increased cost of living. The basic wage has risen about 20 per cent. in the last couple of years.

Hon. L. Craig: No, 6¼ per cent.

Hon. G. FRASER: It has risen from £3 11s. to £4 11s. Is that an increase of 6¼ per cent?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: In two years?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. The increase during recent years has been nearly 20 per cent. If an increased burden will be cast upon industry, the insurance companies—not the workers—will be responsible. The reason for the amendment is to have workers covered who in the past have always been insured. Insurance companies will not be running any greater risks; the number of men employed at present is not so great and the benefits to be derived from this insurance will not be increased. The insurance companies are proposing to insure practically the same number of men at higher premium rates and this is what will increase the burden on industry.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am pleased the Committee is giving this matter a thorough overhaul. We have embarked on a discussion that I think should have taken place at Canberra. What deferred pay has to do with workers' compensation is beyond my comprehension. Sir Hal Colebatch has been off the track; he evidently thought he was back in the Federal Parliament.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: I would be sorry to be there.

Hon. T. MOORE: His contribution to the debate would be an excellent addition to the Federal "Hansard." Why introduce the question of deferred pay at all?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He is throwing a spanner into the works.

Hon. T. MOORE: He is throwing a whole machine into the works. Sir Hal Colebatch said that our industries were declining. I venture to say that the goldmining industry is flourishing.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: It is decaying. The output is dropping each month.

Hon. T. MOORE: It is showing a profit. That is the point. We may find another Boulder tomorrow. Workers engaged in the goldmining industry and earning high wages are covered by insurance. Why are they paid high wages? Because the mining companies wish to get their work done cheaply. The industry is not carrying an extra load in that respect. Men earning over £400 a year receive the benefits of workers' compensation and it is right that they should. No one could make out a case that industry is carrying a greater burden in those circumstances.

In my young days workmen were treated very badly indeed. No workers' compensation payments were made in those old days. If a horse became lame, it would receive more attention than would a man who met with an accident. It would be cared for until it was fit to work again, but the worker had no protection at all. He was thrown out on the world. As I have said before, he was carried on by the good old boarding housekeeper, and the companies did not worry about him. We have travelled far since those days and witnessed great advancement over the years. I want to know from those who say that things should be better in this world of ours when a start is going to be made to inaugurate the new order of which we hear so much. I find that many members of Parliament are quite prepared to fight to hold all they have, and give nothing to those who have worked hard all through the years.

Hon. L. Craig: And you are a farmer, too!

Hon. T. MOORE: I look after my men! This does not affect the farmer in the slightest degree. I am prepared to stick to the man who takes his coat off. The good old drones who live on interest—those who never take their coats off—are the ones who are a burden on industry.

Hon. H. Tuckey: There are few of that kind.

Hon. T. MOORE: Industry is having its work done by fewer men, and in that way those who are working are earning over the £400. I appeal to members to leave the amount over £500 at any rate. Many a time I have had to take around a list for unfortunate people who have nothing. Their mates kept them until they were fit enough for the companies to re-engage them. As a result of my experience, I am naturally biased in favour of the men. We need to make this world better. Under this measure, no man will draw more than £3 10s. a week, and he will still be at a disadvantage if he has a family. A lot of our workers have large families, thank Heaven! That is what we want, but they are at a disadvantage all the time. If members pick up their papers they will see how many accidents occur. Of course, some members do not get that good paper, "The Worker." Some of them are laughing. They are biased! But I read everything, the papers representing

their views, and other papers as well. We can discover how many accidents occur by reading.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Motor accidents!

Hon. T. MOORE: The big fellows, doing 60 miles an hour, are concerned in those! Workers receiving compensation will have only £3 10s. a week. Men are working hard under the system introduced in the mining areas. The companies want the work done, and those who are paid for extra work because of the shortage of men should receive fair treatment.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Make it £500!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I desire to contradict a statement by Mr. Fraser about the rise in the basic wage. Last week Mr. Moore spoke in rather different terms from the Minister. One concentrated on war industries, and Mr. Moore spoke of the mining industry, which hardly comes into the picture. The mining industry is protected all the time; not legally perhaps, but there has never been any question raised. The Committee has more or less agreed that those who have been protected under the Workers' Compensation Act in the past owing to a rise in the basic wage should still be protected. It is right that a man should not lose protection through an increase in the cost of living. The date of the first fixation of the basic wage was the 1st July, 1926. The wage was £4 5s. on that date. On the 28th July of this year the basic wage had risen to £4 10s. 5d., that is, 6½ per cent.

Hon. G. Fraser: You are dealing with 15 years ago; I was dealing with the past few years.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Since the basic wage was first introduced there has been a rise of 6½ per cent.

Hon. G. Fraser: We are arguing from different angles.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Mr. Craig is giving facts and figures.

Hon. G. Fraser: So was I!

Hon. L. CRAIG: Multiply 6½ per cent. by four to bring it to the £400 mark, and there is a rise of £25. The cost of living from the time the basic wage was first fixed has increased £25, so that the protection required would be £425. Mr. Baxter's amendment adds another £25 for contingencies such as overtime and so on.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is only to strike out "six."

Hon. L. CRAIG: I presume it is Mr. Baxter's intention to bring the figure to £450.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the Committee that if any member has a higher figure to suggest, he should be permitted to move it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We cannot go on for ever and say that whatever a man earns he shall be protected. There must be some limit, beyond which a man should look after himself. I am not tied to any particular sum but I think it is desirable we should not bring in people who have not previously been covered, such as senior clerks. There are many folk in the £500 to £600 category who would be affected, and that would add to the cost of industry. I want to be fair but not stupid, and I consider that to suggest £600 is extreme. The State is already badly handicapped in the way of industrial costs. For three years I carried about with me figures showing that costs were 400, 500 and 600 per cent. greater in this State in some industries than in other States. With regard to the timber industry, the insurance cost was up to £30 per cent. as against 147s. in Victoria. I think Mr. Baxter's suggestion is a fair one, and £450 is the limit to which we should protect a man.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I want to be quite clear that the amendment is only to delete the word "six."

The CHAIRMAN: That is so.

Hon. A. THOMSON: When that is deleted, anyone may subsequently move any word to replace it?

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that we start at "five" and go downwards. That is the simple way.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I supported Mr. Baxter when this matter was before the House previously and quoted extensively from the Government Statistical Abstract. At the time I was under the impression that this was going to increase costs to industry, but the position is that when an employer takes out a comprehensive policy, he pays a premium only on the actual wages paid in the 12 months, up to a certain amount. I intend to support the amendment, and unless someone else does so, I propose to move for the insertion of

"five" in lieu of "six." That seems to me to be a reasonable compromise, and should meet the wishes of those desiring to have men in certain industries covered. We hear a great deal about the new order and what should and should not be done.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Then there will be a lot more accidents!

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Act provides that a man will still receive only £3 10s., exactly as he does today. No increased profits would be received even though the amount were augmented.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: What is the objection to increasing the amount?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Some members felt that an additional burden would be imposed upon industry. I repeat what I have asserted time and again without achieving any degree of success, that the present system is entirely wrong. We are discussing workers' compensation that is allegedly compulsory whereas it is certainly not compulsory respecting the man who has a stake in the country. If the whole position were reviewed, it would be found that many men who have suffered accidents have received no compensation at all because their employers had failed to take out the necessary cover or were men of straw.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Instances such as you mention would be exceptional.

Hon. A. THOMSON: There are many more instances that some members are inclined to believe. I am anxious about the position of pieceworkers who, because of action taken by an accountant or a secretary of a concern, may not be regarded as workers within the meaning of the Act and may not therefore, be covered with an insurance policy. That provides a loophole respecting which I have endeavoured for a long time to secure some redress. In my opinion the Government should control the whole of this form of insurance, so that workers would receive the compensation due to them.

Hon. G. FRASER: Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: This matter has been discussed for two nights and if members have not made up their minds by now, they never will.

Hon. G. FRASER: I merely wish to point out that many workers, particularly under existing conditions, do not know when

they will be called upon to work overtime or on Sundays and are therefore, not in a position to know what they will actually receive in the course of a year.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We had an amendment to cover that position but you would not agree to it!

Hon. G. FRASER: Because it was too vague and referred to no specific amount. From the insurance point of view it is quite likely that, unless the Act is amended, it may be found that although a man may be covered by means of a payment through his wages bill, on account of his earnings by the end of the year exceeding the amount prescribed in the Act, he may find himself without cover. Such instances have happened.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Do you know of an insurance company that has turned down a claim under such circumstances?

Hon. G. FRASER: We are at present investigating that matter.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: It would be a peculiar company that did that.

Hon. G. FRASER: In the instance I have in mind the man could have no knowledge of what his wage would total for the year because of the overtime he earned.

Amendment (to strike out word) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	7
Majority for				8

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitchin
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. M. Heenan	(Teller.)

PAIR.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker	No. Hon. C. B. Williams
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Amendment thus passed.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in lieu of the word struck out the word "five" be inserted.

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

Clause 3—New sections:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of proposed new Section 20D after the word "or" where it appears the second time the words "in the case where the worker is unable for any reason deemed satisfactory by the committee to make any complaint himself" be inserted.

As the proposed new section stands, it will be open to anyone to lodge a complaint. It should be left for the worker in the first instance to make the application, and if it is impossible for him to do so then someone else could act.

Hon. G. Fraser: The worker may have died.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In which event he could hardly make the application!

The HONORARY MINISTER: I oppose the amendment, which would make the provision cumbersome. The original wording is quite satisfactory.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I agree with the Honorary Minister that the amendment would make the provision more cumbersome; but the more cumbersome we make it, the better I shall like the provision. This is the clause of which the doctors are scared. They say, "We are liable to be shot at by anyone who likes to shoot at us." One doctor said to me, "If that clause is passed, I shall not send a patient back to work unless my opinion is confirmed by that of a specialist working in the same line. I shall want another opinion to protect myself." If any member can make the provision still more cumbersome, I shall support him.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not like the amendment at all. We should be obliged to Mr. Craig for his very frank statement. His attitude is remarkable. Many cases may be dealt with by one medical man without anybody being prepared to make a complaint.

Hon. L. Craig: The Minister can lodge a complaint at any time on complaint being made to him.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not if this amendment is agreed to. The Minister cannot lodge a complaint unless the worker can show good reason why he has not complained. The amendment virtually says that the Minister shall have no right to hold an inquiry unless the worker can give a good reason for not having made the complaint. There are certain people who will endeavour to take full advantage, up to the hilt, of

every opportunity to wreck this measure. That is why it is being amended. Is it not possible that there might be collusion?

Hon. L. Craig: Relative to the worker, yes.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not wish to reflect on anybody.

Hon. G. FRASER: I can understand the cutting-out of the near relative for the purpose of obtaining an inquiry, but not the cutting-out of the worker himself. It is possible for the worker and the doctor to be in collusion, and Mr. Baxter's amendment cuts out the employer unless the worker gives a satisfactory explanation. The amendment makes the worker mainly responsible for laying a complaint. The others cannot come in unless the worker gives a valid excuse for not having taken action.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The clause should be left as it is. The doctor who made certain remarks to Mr. Craig undoubtedly exaggerated the position. Frivolous complaints will of course be made, but they will not be investigated. I am inclined to think the amendment does not make much difference.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I am not entirely satisfied that Mr. Baxter's amendment is in the right place. It should be inserted after the word "employer." The Honorary Minister should recognise that there is some danger in the clause as it stands. It includes a dozen different people. To my mind it is not right that any one of those half dozen different people should be entitled to make a complaint to the board, even though the worker himself was entirely satisfied with the attention he had received. Of course if the worker was dying or disabled, it would be perfectly right that the relatives should intervene. He might, however, have recovered, and the near relative might not be satisfied. I can understand the amendment resulting in cases being brought by near relatives, though not too near.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I fail to see how the clause will be cumbersome. The person to make the complaint first of all is the worker himself if he is able. If not, all these other people come in. The Chief Secretary spoke of collusion. How many times do we hear of unscrupulous people in another profession taking cases without proper foundation? This is a very serious matter and the medical profession might be very harshly

dealt with. This clause is at present too stringent. The amendment will not reflect on the worker.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have further examined this amendment, and I think Mr. Baxter will agree that to achieve his object it will be necessary not to include the word "or."

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is not necessary; I have not done so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The question before the Chair is that the words shall come in after the word "employer." To achieve what Mr. Baxter desires the words should be inserted after the word "or" and not after the word "employer."

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is what I have moved.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is a different proposition. I raise no objection to this amendment if it is inserted after the second word "or" in line 2 of the proposed new section. There will not be a great number of inquiries.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of proposed new Section 20D after the word "Minister" the following words be inserted:—"made within twelve months after the occurrence giving rise to such complaint."

Some time should be specified in which to make a complaint, and 12 months is quite long enough.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added to proposed new Subsection 20D:—

"If the Committee dismiss the complaint it may order the person making the same (other than a person authorised by the Minister) to pay to the medical practitioner whose conduct or charge is complained of, the costs of and incidental thereto, to be taxed by the Master of the Supreme Court, for which costs the Master shall give his allocatur, and such order may be enforced and such costs recovered by execution or otherwise in the same manner as if the Master's allocatur were a judgment of the Supreme Court for the payment of a liquidated sum of the amount at which such costs are so taxed and allowed."

Members can see the reason for this; it is to deal with frivolous cases. There must be some provision to prevent people causing unnecessary trouble and expense. The

punishment is not very grave; they have to bear the costs. This is nothing new. It is practically on all fours with the timber mills agreement with the doctors; and Section 26 of the Legal Practitioners Act is almost word for word with this amendment. If it is necessary to protect one profession it is more than necessary to protect this particular profession which deals with a peculiar set of circumstances. Where a legal practitioner operates in one avenue the medical profession deals with workers' compensation cases, and very aggravating ones.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I understand this amendment deals with the case of a complaint being dismissed with costs against the complainant. I do not like the wording of the new amendment. It is too cumbersome.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: In what way?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: For one thing it states, "The Master shall give his allocatur." That is part and parcel of the taxing costs and of the Master's job. It states, "Such an order may be enforced and such costs recovered by execution or otherwise in the same manner as if the Master's allocatur were a judgment." The Master of the Supreme Court never gives an allocatur; the Taxing Master does so.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Section 26 of the Legal Practitioners Act contains similar wording.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Then it is time we improved on the wording of these statutes. Since that Act was passed, the Interpretation Act has come into force and also other Acts. I suggest, in order that we may make this amendment shorter, that progress be reported and the amendment be put on the notice paper.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Has there been any difficulty with the Legal Practitioners Act?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not know.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Well, you ought to know.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I do not like the proposed amendment. The procedure before the committee will be that if a doctor is charged he will be entitled to have counsel to represent him. If a complaint is considered frivolous, a doctor should have some redress regarding the expense to which he has been put. If a complaint was made at Kalgoorlie, according to the amendment, the proceedings would have to be

removed to Perth and the costs taxed by the Master of the Supreme Court.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This proposal is ridiculous. It would apply not merely to workers but also to insurance companies. If a man thought he had just cause for complaint and was liable to pay expenses, the only effect of the amendment would be to hamper the work of the committee. Such a body should be given a free hand to make its investigations.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I assume that the committee might receive complaints that would be thought not worth while investigating, but if the committee thought that a prima facie case had been made out, and after hearing the evidence decided to dismiss the complaint, it would be most unfair if, in the case of a worker, he was saddled with the expenses of the hearing. This might not be a matter of much concern to the insurance companies because they would not make a complaint to the committee unless they had a sound case. It is not merely a matter of a frivolous case being dismissed; there would be borderline cases. Possibly every justification might exist for making an inquiry, though the committee might eventually conclude that further action was not warranted. If the committee decided that a case should be investigated, there should be ample opportunity to hear it. If, after the hearing, the case was dismissed, the penalty involved in this amendment should not be inflicted upon the person who made the complaint.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The speeches of both Ministers have shown the necessity for the amendment. Without it people may make complaints as much as they like. Apparently there must be no consideration for the professional man. He must incur the expense of legal representation, while the person making the complaint would go scot free, even though the charge was groundless. What is good in the timber workers' agreement is apparently not good in this measure. What is right in the Legal Practitioners Act is not right here.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Who said that?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: You did, and the amendment is a copy of Section 26.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask members when replying to interjections not to use the word "you," but to refer to "the hon. member."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is wrong to amend the Act in this way, but it is apparently right for another profession to protect itself by a similar provision. Protection should be afforded to medical men against frivolous complaints that entail expense, trouble and anxiety.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	10

Majority for 5

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. V. Plasse
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. W. J. Mann	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. M. Keenan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. W. H. Klason
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of First Schedule:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) be struck out.

The intention is to take into account the yearly or the weekly amount earned, whichever is the larger sum. Surely that is not reasonable to industry! At present the average for the 12 months or for the portion of the year that a worker is employed is taken, which is a reasonable provision. A person might be earning £250 per year, but on seasonal work such as shearing he might earn £10 or £12 a week. The unreasonableness of the paragraph is obvious.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Mr. Baxter apparently does not know what he is talking about. If a shearer earned £30 a week, his earnings would be above the maximum provided by the Act. Mr. Baxter also said that civil servants should be brought under the Act. But the whole point is this: The maximum compensation payable is £3 10s. per week, inclusive of 7s. 6d. for each child. Does an insurance company ask an employer how many children his worker has? Of course, the insurance companies do not make any such inquiry.

Hon. L. Craig: They presume the worker has three or four children.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes. The worker cannot get compensation of a greater amount than that provided by the Act. Why, then, should the cost of insurance increase? I speak of what I know, not from a case prepared for me.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: If the amendment were carried, would the effect be to take away the provision of 7s. 6d. for each child?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No. That would stand.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This provision is designed to rectify an acknowledged injustice to men deserving of the fullest consideration. I refer to men who live by casual labour, who go from house to house doing gardening work and other jobs. These persons refuse to apply to the Government for assistance; they battle along and make a living somehow. They might have two dozen employers. The insurance companies admit it is difficult to assess the incomes of these men. They might earn 15s. a day for a couple of weeks and then might be out of work for some time.

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

Ayes	5
Noes	19
Majority against	14

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. V. Hamersley

Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. H. Tuckey (Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. Hall
Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. W. H. Kilsen
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. T. Moore
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt (Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—PUBLIC TRUSTEE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [9.35]: My remarks in support of this Bill will be brief, because I think the ma-

jority of members will applaud the Government for having introduced it. It will bring our State into line with all the other States of Australia. The Bill, which is comprehensive, will deserve much consideration in the Committee stage. My intention is to confine my remarks to general principles.

The Bill proposes to repeal the Curator of Intestate Estates Act and the Official Trustee Act, and to amend the Lunacy Act, the Mental Treatment Act, the Administration Act and the Workers' Compensation Act. If passed, it will abolish the offices of Official Trustee and Curator of Intestate Estates and will substitute in lieu the public trustee, who will apparently carry out the duties of those officers, in addition to controlling a big sphere of other activities. I consider that a public trustee is needed in Western Australia. Apparently the other States concluded that such an official was required, and investigations show that in those States the office is justifying its existence.

One of the chief virtues of the measure is that it will awaken the public conscience to the necessity for paying attention to making a will or giving consideration to what will become of people's property after they die. It is true that at present we have the Curator of Intestate Estates, who is doing excellent work within his limited sphere. It is also true that we have two trustee companies with a long period of honourable service. Apparently the business of those companies is conducted in a manner with which no one can find fault. Yet even those two companies, in addition to the Curator of Intestate Estates, do not cover the full sphere of activities proposed in the Bill.

The usual thing that happens when a person dies intestate is that his wife or some near relative makes an application for letters of administration. That occurs when no will is left. If such a person happens to be in some remote part of the State there are great difficulties in the way. Much expense is incurred in engaging a solicitor in Perth. On the other hand, if a person dies in a country town where there is a solicitor, the expense is greater than if the individual had died in Perth. I suggest that that state of affairs will be remedied to some extent by this measure.

Another provision that appeals very much to me is that regarding estates of under £500. Under the provisions of this Bill the public trustee will not have to apply to the court for a formal grant of administration. He could take over the administration of the estate within three months or after three months have elapsed and in that way I think the estate would be wound up more expeditiously and much more cheaply. I have in mind that the great majority of people who die, leave something under £500 and also that their relatives are the ones who are unable to incur legal costs. In many instances they have not the faintest idea of what is required in the way of winding up an estate. The public trustee will have all the various Government departments at his disposal. There is a clerk of courts in almost every important centre throughout the State and undoubtedly these men will be agents for the public trustee. Similar officers operate in every State of the Commonwealth and they will undoubtedly collaborate with the public trustee. In that way the office should be able to function in a manner that will give general satisfaction.

The proposal to establish this office has been criticised on the ground that it will constitute another State trading concern. I do not think that criticism is very sound. Undoubtedly the office will have to pay its way. We do not want it to be a burden on the general taxpayers, but at present part of the functions it is proposed the public trustee shall carry out are already being undertaken by the Curator of Intestate Estates and by the Official Trustee and apparently no complaint has been made. Additional public servants will be engaged and they will have to be men of high capacity, but they will be carrying out a duty that I think is badly needed in every State. I am sure that the office will vindicate itself.

As stated earlier, I also think it will awaken the public conscience to an aspect of business which at present is not given much attention. There is provision that anyone can make a will and deposit it with the public trustee. That is a very good provision. Many people make wills and they are lost and later on when the person dies his wishes are not carried out. Poor people who have estates worth a few hundred pounds are not the ones who hand over their business to the trustee companies. I think that when the Government office is

established and the public comes to realise the value of it, it will be found to be of great benefit to the community. I expect the House will agree to the general principles of the Bill. It is of a fairly comprehensive character and has apparently been drafted after careful consideration of measures operating in the other States. Probably some minor amendments will be needed. I have pleasure in commending the Bill to the House.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.37 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1941.

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

QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

Sale of Scrap Steel.

Mr. TRIAT asked the Minister for Works: 1, Who purchased band joints taken from the Goldfields water pipeline on the section from Meckering to Northam, for scrap iron? 2, What was the price paid by the purchaser? 3, Was the price inclusive of loading and freight to Perth?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Hadfields W.A., Ltd. 2, The sale was negotiated by the W.A. Government Tender Board and covered all scrap steel on the Goldfields water supply system, of which the band joints were only a portion. The price paid by the purchaser was £2 per ton. 3, Yes.