Legislative Assembly

Friday, 11th December, 1953.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

LANDS.

(a) As to Applications for Dairying Areas.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What are the Government's proposals for civilian land settlement in dairying districts?

(2) Is he aware that genuine applications for Crown land for dairying are being deferred owing to a blanket cover over certain areas by the Land Settlement Department?

(3) Does he not consider it desirable to encourage applicants who are prepared to develop land for agricultural purposes from their own resources, and will the Government release immediately Crown land now held for Government land settlement purposes, to applicants with private capital?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The Government is anxious to facilitate civilian settlement.

Organised settlement depends upon the availability of comparatively large contiguous areas suitable for settlement.

Arrangements for the removal of millable timber before settlement are necessary.

In view of applications being received for Crown land in dairying districts, areas now reserved are being reviewed so as to permit of the throwing open of some land for general applications.

(3) The Government encourages the development of land by individual applicants. However, any immediate release is dependent upon forestry conditions.

(b) As to Clearing Work, Karridale District.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

Will he please state what work is contemplated this summer in the Karridale district by Government bulldozers in relation to a scheme inaugurated by the McLarty-Watts Government to assist dairy farmers with land clearing and include in his reply special reference to applications by Messrs. H. Chesham and A. J. Moss, on whose behalf I addressed communications to him on the 15th and the 27th October, 1953?

The MINISTER replied:

Applications have been invited through the district offices of the Rural and Industries Bank from farmers requiring increased areas cleared on their properties.

Requests covering 2,500 acres have been received so far.

It is proposed to station at least three large bulldozers in the Margaret River district.

If possible, further work will be carried out on properties owned by Messrs, H. Chesham and A. J. Moss.

ROYAL VISIT.

As to Transport Arrangements, Busselton.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Transport.

(1) Is he aware that no provision has been made for transport of residents of the Harvey, Boyup Brook, Manjimup and Pemberton districts who may desire to travel to Busselton on the 30th March, 1954, when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh will be visiting that centre?

(2) Is he further aware that only two railway road buses are scheduled to travel from each of the Flinders Bay and Nannup areas which, it is considered, will be totally inadequate to cope with the demand for public transport on the 30th March next?

(3) Will he see that public transport to Busselton is made available to residents of the districts mentioned in (1) and that additional services will be organised from Flinders Bay and Nannup?

(4) Will he also give an assurance that transport will be available to all school children in the South-West who desire to travel to Busselton on the occasion of the Royal visit?

(5) In view of this great historic occasion, will he see that all sections of the community are given every opportunity to travel to centres included in Her Majesty's itinerary by arranging for special excursion fares for passengers using public transport?

(6) Will he also arrange for special concessions to families and schoolchildren?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Special trains embracing Harvey and Boyup Brook are planned, but these will cater mainly for schoolchildren.

(2) The Railway Department has little in the way of reserve buses. It is not possilbe to run buses additional to the two arranged for the Flinders Bay-Nannup areas.

(3) Everything possible is being done within the limits of the department's capabilities, but the department is handicapped on account of the Royal Party travelling by air to the main centres over a short period, which will not permit of the locomotives, passenger coaches and train crews being switched from one centre to another in sufficient time.

(4) Special efforts are being concentrated on the transport of schoolchildren who will be given priority in all cases.

(5) No arrangements have been made for the issue of concession tickets.

(6) Answered by No. (5).

ARGENTINE ANTS.

As to Measures for Eradication.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is there evidence that over 40 square miles of the Perth metropolitan area are now infested with Argentine ants.

(2) Is he satisfied that, with the Government war upon woodyards and other known strongholds, it is within the power and the province of private enterprise to cope with private householders' problems?

(3) Does he know of any local ant or other creature that could be introduced to prey upon these pests?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A survey is in progress which indicates that there has been an extension of the area in which Argentine ant occurs. Exact details will not be available until the survey is completed.

(2) Experience has shown that concerted action by householders will control this pest.

(3) No.

EDUCATION.

(a) As to Removal of School, Whittaker's Mill to Jingalup.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has a start yet been made by the contractor on the work of removal of Whittaker's Mill school to Jingalup?

(2) Is a time fixed in the contract for completion of the work?

(3) If so, what is that time?

(4) When is it likely the work will be completed?

(5) Will he have action taken to ensure completion as early as possible?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. Actually the contractor has not yet signed the contract, although a notice of acceptance of his tender was forwarded to him on the 13th November last.

(2) Yes.

(3) The 29th March, 1954.

(4) Some delay appears inevitable because of the delayed signing up and the fact that the contractor has several other school contracts in hand. However, the building should be ready for occupation by the 1st June next.

(5) Efforts will be made to have the work completed as soon as possible.

(b) As to School Bus Services, Payments and Milage.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What is—

(a) the highest daily rate paid to school bus contractors;

(b) the lowest rate paid?

(2) What is—

(a) the highest daily milage operated;

(b) the lowest daily milage operated?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) £11 5s. per day.

(b) £2 9s. 6d. per day.

(2) (a) 115 miles per day.

(b) 23 miles per day.

(c) As to Domestic Science Students' Fares, Armadale School.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that children who have reached the age of 14 years, travelling from Armadale to Perth to attend the domestic science classes, are being charged full fare?

(2) Could not some concession be made to these children as at the moment it is imperative that they travel to Perth, as no facilities are available at the Armadale High School?

(3) Is he aware that it is taking up to three months for the reimbursement of these fares to the parents concerned and thus in some cases is causing hardship?

(4) Could some system be devised whereby reimbursement is made monthly?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, but the department will refund the full cost of fares on application.

(2) See answer to No. (1).

(3) Yes.

(4) As there are only 6,000 claims for refunds of fares, it is considered that payment at the end of each term is reasonable.

Payment at more frequent intervals would add considerably to administrative costs.

(d) As to Metal Work Training, Armadale High School.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that metal work training has not been available for first year students attending the Armadale High School, even though a pamphlet entitled "Your Son's Education" indicating that such subject would be available has been sent to parents of each child attending?

(2) Are arrangements to be made for students in the coming year to receive such training at Armadale, or, alternatively, will training be made available in Perth?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, but the pamphlet states that courses will be provided during a three-year course and not necessarily during the first year of that course, which is all that has been provided at Armadale to date.

(2) Arrangements will be made for non-Junior second-year boys at Armadale Junior High School to receive in 1954 metal work training in one of the metropolitan metal work schools.

(e) As to Unsatisfactory Condition of North-West Schools.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the dilapidated, overcrowded and generally unsatisfactory condition of all schools in the North-West, will he have the Director of Education make a personal inspection of all schools in that area with a view to having these unsatisfactory conditions remedied?

The MINISTER replied:

The Director of Education is aware of the condition and accommodation position of all schools in the North-West, and the necessary steps to effect improvement where required will be taken as soon as possible.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Use of Land, Marchamley-st., Carlisle.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Housing:

Is it the intention of the Housing Commission to make use of the lots held in Marchamley-st., Carlisle, in the near future?

The MINISTER replied:

The use of this land is at present under consideration and a decision as to its use in the near future is yet to be reached.

(b) As to Vacant Homes, Country Towns.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Does he still adhere to his statement made in the House on the 29th October—

> Owing to the ill-planned programme of the previous Government officers of the State Housing Commission are now canvassing for clients because houses have been vacant and there are no tenants to fill them.

in view of letters appearing in the Press from Merredin, Albany, Kellerberrin, Collie, and Three Springs indicating that the statement was not according to fact in those particular towns?

(2) (a) If "Yes" is the answer to No. (1) will he withdraw the statement that he made?

(b) If "No" is the answer to No. (1) will he make a statement to that effect?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, in view of the further details supplied in answer to the hon. member's question replied to on the 17th November, 1953.

(2) (a) No.

(b) The statement made in the House is supported by the information furnished in reply to a question on the 17th November, 1953. This information was based on the official record of applicants held by the State Housing Commission in respect of each centre referred to. Support is also given to the statement by the fact that one local authority has seen fit to approve of the insertion of an advertisement in the local Press requesting all applicants to register their names and addresses at the municipal chambers. The way is open for every family in need of housing in any centre to make application without being invited to so do.

(c) As to Erection of Flats, Subiaco.

Mr. YATES (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

Can he inform the House of the latest developments in connection with the negotiations between the State and Commonwealth Governments concerning the erection of the flats at Subiaco?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter is still in the hands of the Crown Law Department which, several weeks ago, wrote to the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor on the basis, more or less, that there was no answer to the case, and seeking the view of that department in connection with the matter. The latest information I have is that no word has been received from the Commonwealth department, and accordingly it is proposed to test the matter through the court.

NATIVE WELFARE.

As to Caste Natives on Reserves.

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

If the Aborigines' Welfare Bill becomes law—

(1) What will be the position of caste natives living on aboriginal reserves?

(2) Will these people be required to leave the reserves?

(2) If so, where will they be expected to go?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Section 15 of the present Act (Clause 20 of the new Bill) authorises the Department to permit any person to enter or remain on a reserve for any purpose whatever.

Caste natives will be permitted by the department to live on aboriginal reserves until suitable arrangements have been made by them or on their behalf for alternative accommodation.

(2) No.

(3) See answers to Nos. (1) and (2).

RAILWAYS.

As to Ton-mile Return on Shooks.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that the executive of the Fruit Growers' Association of W.A. estimates that had the current freight rates on shooks been operative last season, then the average return to the railways for shooks, paid by fruitgrowers in the South-West and Great Southern areas, would have been in excess of 6d. per ton mile?

(2) If he does not agree with the accuracy of the estimate in (1), would he advise the House what the correct average return per ton mile would have been?

(3) Does he agree that unsubsidised road transport can cart shooks at the same or cheaper rates than the current rail freight rates?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Without considerable time to permit of a tabulation of the relative information, it is not possible for the average return per ton mile for shooks used by fruit growers in the South-West and Great Southern areas to be quoted. For the transport of shooks from Pemberton to Mt. Barker referred to yesterday by the member for Stirling, however, the return per ton mile to the Railway Department is 3.32d.

(3) No. Railway rates are telescoped to permit of assistance to those requiring long hauls, long distance rates being very low. Road transport may be able to compete at rail rates for short distance hauls.

OIL.

(a) As to Publication of Information.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the fact that the fluctuation of oil shares has been unreal in many ways and disastrous for many people, will the Premier ensure that all information that comes to his hands officially will at once be made public? I ask this because information on the last occasion was withheld for a month by the Government. I think it is very unfortunate that it was so withheld.

The PREMIER replied:

I disagree entirely with the contention of the member for Mt. Lawley. If information is given to the Premier, to any Minister or to the Government as a whole on a completely confidential basis, we will honour the confidence imposed on us.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It was not in confidence. It was made under the provisions of the Act.

The Premier: It was not.

(b) As to Requirements of Act.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

I do not desire that any information given confidentially to the Government should be disclosed to the public, but is it not a fact that all information relative to the boring for oil has to be supplied officially under the provisions of the Mining Act or the Petroleum Act? Will the Minister make available to the public as soon as received such information as must be, or should be, supplied under the Act?

The MINISTER replied:

The position is covered by the Act, but it does not provide for any publicity being made by the department. If it is considered wise to retain in the department information so received, it will be withheld.

TRAFFIC.

As to Survey of Origin and Destination of Vehicles.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is the published report of his action in contacting all vehicle owners done in co-operation with the town planning authority.

(2) Does he not think that any decision based on present information could be upset within a generation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Any decision now made in any direction could be upset by developments in the next generation, but it is necessary in order to do something at present to act upon the information which is made available to us as a result of this survey, and due regard will be had to forecasts made because of developments taking place within Australia.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Survey of Northern Areas.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will he make available to me privately the report by Mr. Gibson (Agriculture) and Mr. Bryden (Hydraulics) presented earlier in the year following on the inspection made by them of the Mt. Magnet, Cue and Murchison River areas regarding underground water supply and general water survey?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

CATTLE INDUSTRY COMPENSATION BILL.

As to Proceeding with Measure.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the strong opposition expressed by the Farmers' Union, dairying organisations and other farming and pastoral interests throughout the State to the Cattle Industry Compensation Bill, which has been introduced, does the Premier propose to proceed with the measure?

The PREMIER replied:

The question of proceeding or not proceeding with the Bill is now under consideration. As the Leader of the Opposition will have noticed, the item is well down on the notice paper.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. H. H. Styants) [11.25] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for a number of what I consider to be necessary amendments to the principal Act. All these amendments have been thoroughly discussed with all parties or organisations that would be concerned, and agreement has been reached on each proposal.

The first amendment, which is to Section 9 of the parent Act, proposes that local authorities outside the metropolitan area shall be enabled to stagger the issue of motor vehicle licences so that the licences shall expire on the last day of March, June, September, or December. This amendment has been requested by all organisations connected with the Road Board Association, and by all executive officers of local authorities outside the metropolitan area.

At present all licences expire on the 30th June, and the rush of work entailed by the renewing of the licences interferes badly at this time of the year with the end of the financial year's activities. If licences could be staggered in the manner I have explained, it would be of great assistance to country local authorities.

The next amendment is designed to rectify what might be described as an omission from the Act. There is no authority in the Act enabling a licensing authority to request payment of any amount undercharged on the issue of a licence. Conversely, the licensing authority has not the statutory power to make a refund of any overcharge on a licence. With regard to this matter, the Auditor

General has stated that unless statutory authority is provided to require a refund of any overcharge, he will have no option but to instruct the officer responsible to make good the overcharge. The Bill, therefore, seeks to give the licensing authority the power to refund overcharges, on demand, and to require the prompt payment of an undercharge.

The Act provides that in certain circumstances free motor vehicle licences may be issued, such as to ministers of religion, charitable organisations, permanently and totally incapacitated persons, etc. No authority exists in the Act, however, for the withdrawal of a free licence. Cases have occurred where a vehicle so licensed has been sold to a person not entitled to a free licence. No action, however, can be taken to cancel the free vehicle licence until the end of the current licensing period. The amendment in the Bill will give this authority.

At present the Act provides that where a vehicle is licensed by one local authority but is used mainly on the roads of another authority, the latter may claim an appropriate proportion of the licence fee, based on the milages traversed in both districts. The Commissioner of Police is the licensing authority in the metropolitan area, but he is not responsible for the maintenance of roads. The possibility could arise that a country local authority might claim portion of licence fees from the Commissioner of Police. If this should occur the Bill suggests the claim should be referred to a magistrate for decision.

The object of the amendment contained in Clause 5 is to bring that part of Guildford-rd. extending from the boundary of the City of Perth that is, the Mt. Lawley Subway, to Johnson-st., Guildford, within the compass of the principal Act, so that traffic fees may be utilised for the reconstruction of the road. At present the local authorities, through whose districts the road passes—that is, the Perth, Bayswater and Bassendean Road Boards—are the only local authorities within the metropolitan area that do not have a main road in the territories maintained from the Traffic Trust Account. To maintain Guildford-rd. at a level commensurate with that of a main highway is beyond the means of these three authorities.

Section 17 of the parent Act provides that if a person is convicted twice in one year for offences under the Act, the court may in lieu of, or, in addition to, any other penalty, order the cancellation of the offender's motor vehicle licence. This would prevent the offender from obtaining a licence for a similar vehicle for the period of the cancellation. The Traffic Advisory Committee has agreed with the recommendation of Mr. Rodriguez, R.M., that in exceptional cases the court may be empowered to order cancellation for a first offence.

The Road Board Association has requested that the Act be amended to compel local authorities to co-operate in the appointing of a traffic inspector or inspectors in cases where is was considered essential, and where the local authorities concerned refused to do so. As members know, some local authorities do not possess traffic inspectors. If it was considered necessary in the public interest for two or more authorities to join in appointing an inspector, and if they refused to do so, the amendment would enable the Minister, with the Governor's approval, to make the necessary appointments.

Under the Act all drivers and conductors' licences operate for 12 months from the date of issue and the date of reissue. Thus, if a licence expired on the 1st August and the holder failed to renew it for a period, the date of reissue would be the date on which application was made for the reissue, notwithstanding the fact that the culprit had probably continued to drive or conduct a vehicle.

There are 140,000 licences on issue, and it is estimated that a loss of revenue of approximately £2,900 a year occurs as a result of failure to immediately obtain renewals of licences. To overcome this defect, the Bill proposes that all renewals shall commence from the expiry date of the previous licence.

The next amendment is of considerable importance. It refers to penalties in connection with drunken, dangerous and reckless driving. I propose to quote for members statistics relating to fatalities and injuries sustained in traffic accidents during 1952, which, of course, are the latest available for a period of 12 months. During 1952, 187 deaths resulted from traffic accidents throughout the State. The responsibility for these were attributed to—

	per cent.
Careless driving	29
Pedestrians' faults	23
Excessive speed	21
Intoxicated drivers	7
Vehicular defects	7
Other causes	13
	100

The total number of casualty accidents during 1952 was 2,367. Careless driving, such as inattentiveness, non-observance of rules at intersections, failing to keep to the left, etc. accounted for 35 per cent. of these injuries, while 8 per cent was attributed to excessive speed, and 2 per cent. to drunken driving. I think members will agree with me that these figures lead to the belief that it is as imperative to provide salutary punishment for dangerous and careless drivers as it is for the drunken variety. It has long been said that a motor vehicle in the hands of a drunken driver is a dreadful weapon. There is

not the slightest doubt of this, but the same remark can apply to the dangerous or reckless driver.

In view of the number of accidents and the evident fact that there are drivers who have little regard for other persons, the Government, by the Bill, seeks to increase the penalties provided. At present a person convicted of driving recklessly or negligently, or at a speed, or in a manner, dangerous to the public, is subject to a fine of £20 for a first offence, and £50 or imprisonment for three months for any subsequent offence. The Bill proposes to increase these to a penalty of £50 for the first offence, and £100, or imprisonment for three months, with suspension of the driving licence for not less than three months for any subsequent offence.

There are still far too many drivers charged and found guilty of drunken driving. There is absolutely no excuse for a person in such a state to drive a vehicle, and to imperil the life and limb of children and adults. Apparently, the penalties provided in the Act are not a sufficient deterrent. Therefore, I submit it is our duty—in fact, we have no other recourse—to increase these penalties to endeavour to mitigate the peril. If this action is unsuccessful, then we must look to sterner measures.

The present penalty for driving while under the influence of drink or drugs is, for a first offence, a fine of £50, or imprisonment for three months, with a licence suspension of three months. It is not proposed to alter this penalty.

For a second offence the Act at present provides a fine of £100, or imprisonment for thre months, with a licence suspension of six months. The Bill seeks to maintain the fine at £100, but to increase the imprisonment penalty from three to six months, and the suspension of the licence period from six to 12 months. I think that this increase of punishment is warranted. If an offender did not profit from his first lesson he should be severely dealt with.

So far as third offenders are concerned, there should be little sympathy shown them. The Bill proposes to increase the fine from £150 to £200, the imprisonment term from six to 12 months. Nothing can be done in regard to licence suspension for a third offender as the Act now provides for permanent suspension. I hope members will agree that these increased penalties can be put into operation. It is Parliament's duty to endeavour to reduce the toll of the road, and I submit that if the penalties provided are of no avail, then we should continue to increase them until such time as a reasonable deterrent can be reached.

The Act limits to eight feet the width of any vehicle, including load, licensed or driven on any road, unless by special approval of the Minister. The Crown Solicitor states that it cannot be said with certainty that an agricultural implement of over this width is a vehicle, and if the implement was being towed it could not be considered as being driven. The latter point applies also to caravans, trailers, semi-trailers, etc. which are defined in the Act as vehicles. It is desired, therefore, to provide an amendment applying the width restriction to all vehicles being driven or used on any road, this to include any implement in tow.

In addition, if members look at the notice paper, they will see that I have on it an amendment, requested by agricultural and other interests in areas considerably removed from the metropolis, in connection with over-width vehicles. The Act provides that the Minister may issue, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, authority for vehicles over 8ft. in breadth, to be taken along roadways. It is pointed out by the people in those distant places that it takes a considerable time to send to Perth to get the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police sent to the Minister and the Minister's approval for the towing or taking of the over-width vehicle along public highways. The amendment I have mentioned seeks to delete from the legislation the reference to the Commissioner of Police having to make the recommendation, and to give the Minister power to authorise any person or persons to issue an authority for the purpose of the operation of over-width vehicles along a public highway.

The regulations under the Traffic Act are being consolidated and amended to include recommendations made by the Australian Transport Advisory Council, which is composed of State Ministers. One of these recommendations deals with more efficient lighting for vehicles, particularly motor wagons and long vehicles. The authority in the Act to make regulations for this purpose is not adequate, and the Crown Law Department advises its repeal and the inclusion of a suitable provision.

Power is also asked for in the Bill to make regulations for placing, erecting or installing traffic signs and directions on roads or footpaths for the control of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The Act provides that regulations may be made to limit the loads that may be carried on roads in a prescribed area. It has been found that truck drivers are evading this restriction by licensing their vehicles in another district. The Crown Law Department has recommended that the Act be amended to prevent this occurring and to take action against offenders. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [11.40] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill the purpose of which is to amend Section 122 of the principal Act. As is well known, last session Parliament granted permission to hotels outside a radius from the metropolitan area to be open for certain periods on Sunday. On the Goldfields, hotels are permitted to open, under the authority of the Licensing Court, for a period of five hours; two hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. Prior to the amendment of last year, Goldfields hotels were open for a period of eight hours on Sunday, and people were able to obtain bottled beer until 1 p.m. on that day. During my time on the fields, I have never seen that privilege abused.

Some people might say that if this amendment is agreed to it will permit bottled beer to be purchased at any time on Sundays. But the amendment in the measure provides that a maximum of two bottles shall be allowed to each individual, and those bottles will have to be purchased before 1 p.m., which is in the first session on Sunday morning. Others might say that a person would wander from hotel to hotel purchasing two bottles of beer at each. I cannot see any reason for that contention, because beer is about 3s. a bottle on the Goldfields and I do not think anybody would buy more than two bottles. I think this provision will tend to keep people away from hotels in the afternoon because they will be able to go to a hotel in the morning, have a drink and purchase two bottles of beer to take home.

If a man consumes beer over a bar counter, he will drink and drink while it is available; but if he knows that he can take one or two bottles home, he will do so. I have had experience of rostered hotel hours, and if a person has only two hours in which he can drink, he will consume more liquor than is good for him. Consequently, the proposition in this Bill will be of advantage to everybody, including hotelkeepers. As members know, it is fairly warm at certain times of the year on the Goldfields, and people like to have a drink. Prospectors come in from outback areas on Saturday nights, and return to their camps on Sunday morning. If those individuals want to take a few bottles of beer home with them, they have to be purchased on Saturday evening, placed in the car or truck and left there until Sunday. As members know, a person cannot take beer out of a hotel in any type of container on a Sunday; therefore, if a person wants to purchase beer to take home with him, he must buy it on Saturday night, and by Sunday it has become so warm that it is not palatable.

People might say, "Why do they not buy refrigerators?" Prospectors cannot use refrigerators because they might be here today and 50 miles away next week. They have various means of keeping their food fresh, particularly by the use of coolers. In some cases they cannot get sufficient water to keep their coolers going. Many of these people like to take a couple of bottles with them on Sundays, and I see no reason why they should not be allowed to purchase them.

Strangely enough, on the Trans train that arrives at Kalgoorlie on Sunday morning one can purchase bottled beer. If that is so, why should not a person be able to buy a couple of bottles of beer during the morning session at the hotels? I would remind members, too, that the word "Goldfields" in the Act includes much of the outback country, and the appropriate subsection in the Act reads—

> In this section "Goldfields district" means the area comprised within the Boulder, Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, Coolgardie, Cue, Gascoyne, Hannans, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Kimberley, Mt. Leonora, Menzies, Mt. Magnet, Mt. Margaret, Murchison, Pilbara, Roebourne and Yilgarn electoral districts as constituted at the commencement of this Act, and the town of Westonia, in the Avon electoral district.

So members can see that included in the definition are many places where the climatic conditions are severe.

Mr. Yates: Since when have you been able to purchase bottled beer on the Trans train?

Mr. Moir: At the Kalgoorlie railway station.

Hon. A. F. Watts: But that is not on the train.

Mr. Moir: That is when the Trans train comes in.

Mr. Yates: He said "on the Trans train."

Mr. McCULLOCH: Some people might say, "Why do not the Goldfields people buy their bottled beer on Saturday nights and put it in the cooler or refrigerator?" The community, generally speaking, on the Goldfields is not static, and consequently many people do not go to the trouble of buying refrigerators. I spent about 22 years on the fields before I thought of buying a refrigerator. Many of the residents there, too, have not the money to purchase them, and others say, "We might not be here long enough. The mine might close down next week or next month, and we will be left with a refrigerator on our hands." I would say that for most people refrigerators are too expensive.

I do not think the amendment embodied in the Bill is asking too much. The law on the Goldfields is being strictly adhered to and no hotelkeeper will supply a bottle of beer on a Sunday. The same conditions

may not exist in other country centres, but the Bill does not apply to them. It would be an excellent thing for a worker returning to his home from the mine on Sunday morning to be able to have a drink at the hotel and at the same time purchase a bottle of beer to take home which would do him for the rest of the day.

Hon. L. Thorn: How are you going to regulate it? He could go into another hotel and buy two more bottles.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I think bottled beer is too expensive to buy haphazardly. I think it is about 3s. a bottle on the Goldfields. No one would expect any man to have two bottles of beer under one arm and then go into another hotel and buy two more bottles.

Hon. L. Thorn: No, but he could go home and then come back.

Mr. McCULOCH: That is not the intention of the Bill. If a man had a couple of bottles of beer under one arm he would not ask his mate to go into the hotel to get him another two bottles to place under the other arm.

Hon. L. Thorn: I would. I would have all my mates working for me.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Personally, I would not do it.

The Minister for Lands: If he wanted a dozen bottles he could get them.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Yes, I have done that when I have been working in the country, but I do not want to bring that aspect into the debate. Personally I do not think a man would obtain two bottles of beer at one hotel and then get another two bottles at the next hotel. That contention is altogether wrong.

Mr. Lawrence: If an individual wanted more than two bottles of beer for the Sunday, when he might be holding a party on that day, he could get them on the Saturday.

Mr. McCULLOCH: How would he keep them cool?

Mr. Lawrence: What I am trying to point out is that if he wanted more than two bottles on the Sunday for a party that he might be holding, he could buy them on the Saturday.

Mr. McCULLOCH: Yes, but what sort of a party could one go to in the bush around the Goldfields? One would be burnt to death. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [11.54]: I support the Bill. It is not asking too much to allow the Goldfields people to purchase two bottles of beer on a Sunday before dinner. I know that many of them do not have refrigeration. The men often leave their wives at home in the kitchen cooking the mid-day dinner and it would be very nice if they were able to take two cold bottles home to them before dinner.

Members in another place have agreed to the Bill and it is up to this House to give the people on the Goldfields, many of whom do not posses refrigerators, a further small amenity. The member for Hannans has outlined the position very well and I appeal to members to grant this concession to the Goldfields people. When similar legislation was before the House when a previous amending Bill was introduced, I moved an amendment to have such a provision included in the Act, but unfortunately it was not agreed to. This time I am hoping that members will vote for this Bill which will give the people on the Goldfilds another small amenity. I hope the measure will not be opposed.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [11.56]: I do not propose to support the Bill. I am entirely opposed to any amendments to the licensing law at this stage. I am of the opinion that we should leave the Act as it is and in no circumstances should we encourage in any way further opportunities for the acquisition of liquor. After considerable debate some two years ago on another Bill to amend this Act, we made many concessions with the idea, I understand, of ensuring that we could have a law which we had some prospect of enforcing.

In recent months we have had evidence that the law is being reasonably enforced or, at least, much better than the one which preceded it. It seems to me that if we open this small gate, which the Minister for Justice is so anxious to open, we will place the law in the same position as it was previously because this provision to enable two bottles of beer to be purchased on a Sunday will be extremely hard to police. We might as well strike out the word "two" and just leave it to read, "bottles of beer" and be done with it.

I am of the opinion, and I hope the majority of the House will be of the same opinion, that the existing law is reasonable, and in no circumstances should we simplify the means of acquiring liquor, particularly on a Sunday as the Bill proposes, and we should adhere to the existing law for some time at least. I am firmly convinced that we should not tinker with it because we will not improve it.

A few days ago we heard a discourse from the Minister for Local Government about the terrific penalties he proposed to inflict on those people who drove vehicles under the influence of liquor. He went on to say that if these increased penalties did not act as a deterrent, he would have to think of something else, which would be stronger. It would seem

that the appropriate way to stop drunken driving is to lessen the opportunities for drunken drivers to obtain liquor.

Mr. Moir: Close all the hotels all the time!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: No, I did not say that. When a man does drive a vehicle under the influence of liquor, he is non compos mentis and he is in no condition to reflect upon the penalties that might be imposed on him. The proper way to handle those penalties is to restrict the opportunities to obtain liquor. Instead of that, the Bill goes the other way even although it is only a short way. It is designed, as the Minister for Justice says, to afford some amenity to the Goldfields people. Already some concessions in the licensing laws have been granted to the Goldfields people which no one has queried. The hours of trading on the Goldfields have been extended by the Licensing Court in many directions because it was of the opinion, as the law allowed it, that the needs of the Goldfields people were different from those of people in other areas of the State. I have no quarrel with that. That action has been taken under the existing law which, as I have already said, should be adhered to. I oppose the second reading.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [12.0]: I support the Bill and I hope the amendment contained in it will be carried. When speaking in opposition to the measure, the member for Stirling said that in his opinion the facilities for obtaining liquor should be restricted. I do not know, of course, how far he would contemplate going with those restrictions. I want to point out, however, that it is quite legal for a person at the present time to obtain a barrel of beer on Sunday and take it away from a hotel in a jug or other container in which he desires to carry it. Accordingly, it is a little farcical to quibble about two bottles.

Hon. L. Thorn: Develop that argument; he cannot take a barrel away.

Mr. MOIR: I would point out to the member for Toodyay that at the moment I am giving my views on this matter and he is, of course, perfectly entitled to get up and give his.

Hon. L. Thorn: I will; but you cannot prove it.

Mr. MOIR: What I have said is perfectly true and it is quite legal.

Hon. L. Thorn: The Minister for Justice whispered that to you a moment ago. You do not know anything about it.

Mr. MOIR: I may not be the monument of knowledge that the member for Toodyay professes to be; but that is my opinion, and I think I am entitled to it. I am sure I know as much on this subject as does the hon. member.

Hon. L. Thorn: I grant you that.

Mr. MOIR: For many years the people on the Goldfields did have the privilege of purchasing bottled beer on Sundays. It was a sort of unofficial privilege allowed them. I say without fear of successful contradiction—and there are members other than Goldfields' members sitting in this Chamber who have had experience of the Goldfields and experience of what I am about to assert—that that privilege was not abused. As a matter of fact, the hotels and clubs voluntarily limited their customers to two bottles of beer. Bottles were never sold there after one o'clock on Sundays.

I am sure members who have been on the 'fields will recall the notice that used to be exhibited in the hotels stating "No bottles sold after one o'clock on Sundays." On one occasion I was informed by an employee at the hotel that some years ago a few Eastern States visitors were so struck with these notices that one of them offered an employee of the hotel a pound note for one of those notices to enable him to take it back to the Eastern States where, at that time, it was impossible to procure bottled beer on any day of the week, let alone Sunday. What the member for Hannans has said is perfectly true: Visitors travelling through Kalgoorlie can purchase as much bottled beer as they require at the railway refreshment rooms at Kalgoorlie.

How this comes about I do not know, but I understand it is perfectly correct and I believe that the railway refreshment rooms do not come under the Licensing Act. Whether that is correct or not I am not sure, but that is what I am led to believe from my inquiries. It is quite legal for travellers from the Eastern States to do what I have mentioned. It seems a little ironical, therefore, that while visitors on the Trans train can obtain a considerable amount of bottled beer if they desire, the inhabitants of Kalgoorlie are not able to purchase that beverage.

Hon. L. Thorn: I am sure it is a special privilege.

Mr. MOIR: If the House sees fit to grant this amenity, I am convinced it will not be abused by the people on the Goldfields. They are responsible people, and they do not abuse privileges. Members will recall that prior to the amendments to the Licensing Act that permitted certain hotels in certain areas to be opened on Sunday, for many years it had been the custom on the Goldfields for hotels to serve liquor on Sunday. I am quite sure that had that privilege been abused there would have been an outcry from the people who normally agitate to have these privileges taken away and to have the Licensing Act strictly enforced. But that never has happened because that privilege was not abused. By interjection, the member for Toodyay inferred that a person would go round from hotel to hotel, gathering up his quota of two bottles from each hotel.

Hon. L. Thorn: I said he could.

Mr. MOIR: I say he would not.

Hon. L. Thorn: That is begging the question.

Mr. MOIR: It is correct for the simple reason that most miners—who comprise the bulk of the population on the Goldfields—do not own motorcars and are not as fortunate as other people seem to be; most of them ride the humble bicycle.

Hon. L. Thorn: That is a funny story.

Mr. MOIR: Not half as funny as some the hon. member could tell us, I am sure.

Hon. L. Thorn: Have you ever noticed the number of Goldfields registrations?

Mr. MOIR: Even the member for Toodyay could not paint the picture of a man riding home for lunch on Sunday on his bicycle, loaded down with bottles of beer.

Hon. L. Thorn: You mean driving his car around.

Mr. MOIR: Nor do I think the hon. member would suggest that these men would carry round a bag of beer on their shoulders.

Mr. Lawrence: I am very pleased that the member for Toodyay has a car of his own.

Hon. L. Thorn: It will be mine when I have paid for it.

Mr. MOIR: To a large extent an evil would be cut out on the Goldfields if bottles were obtained on Sundays. Last week-end, when I was in Kalgoorlie, I met a couple I knew. The man asked me what the prospects were of getting the privilege of bottles restored to the Act. I said I did not know. His wife then chimed in and said, "Well, Mr. Moir, whatever you people do down there, do not have our session cut out." I said, "You go along to the session, do you?" She replied, "Yes. Previously we could get bottles of beer, and my husband always brought home one or two bottles for us to have with our lunch on Sunday. But since that has been cut out, I now go down to the session with him and enjoy it very much."

I think it far more desirable for a husband and wife to enjoy a glass or two of ale in their own home than have the woman accompanying her husband to the hotel on Sunday morning to indulge in a session. If only for that reason, it would be preferable to pass the amendment contained in the Bill; it would prevent that sort of thing occurring. On the Goldfields, and more particularly the outer areas, people live under very dry, hot and trying conditions. As was pointed out by the member for Hannans, not every worker or business man owns a refrigerator in the outback areas. I agree that quite a number do possess them.

In the case of single men living in camps or rooms, it would be very unusual for them to own refrigerators. In those areas single men or men living away from their families are often invited out for Sunday lunch, and they were formerly accustomed to take with them a couple of bottles of ale. Under present conditions that is not legally possible. I believe that where people now go to the session on Sunday morning, they will not do so in the afternoon when the session is open again if they are able to purchase one or two bottles of beer before lunch.

When the amending legislation was before the Chamber previously, members expressed concern over drinking on Sundays, and the Goldfields was specially referred to. Since then the Licensing Court visited Kalgoorlie and heard evidence; it granted longer hours, as it is entitled to do under the Act. The court must have been fully convinced that conditions were so trying on the Goldfields that longer hours were warranted to enable people to have drinking facilities at the hotels. That came about because the conditions on the Goldfields are different from those in other parts of the State.

In the summertime the climate is very hot; there are no beauty spots or shaded areas to which residents can go. If one decided to go into the bush one would find the heat unbearable, so people there stay in the vicinity of the town. I believe the privilege contained in the Bill will not be abused. We must recognise the customs prevailing on the Goldfields up to two years ago when bottles were available on Sundays and the hotels were open.

Since then five hours of hotel trading are permitted on a Sunday, two in the morning and three in the afternoon. Some people say that five hours are long enough; I agree, if a person were to remain in the hotel all that time. But they do not do that. Many go to the hotel for half an hour before lunch for a couple of drinks and then go home for lunch. When these privileges were extended to the Goldfields in years gone by, they were not abused and people did not get intoxicated. There was no more intoxication on the Goldfields than anywhere else in the State, despite the fact that the people there had those privileges. So I hope members will see their way to pass this amending legislation and restore to the people on the Goldfields the privilege they have enjoyed for many years. I support the second reading.

On motion by Mr. O'Brien, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [12.16] in moving the second reading said: The reason for introducing this amending Bill is, in my opinion, an important one to members in this House and another place. In the past members who have conducted election campaigns have been faced with

many problems, one of the most important being the distribution of "how to vote" cards. Some electorates are small but others are large. In large electorates with many polling places, a lot or organisation is necessary to man the booths and hand out those cards. What is most important is the assembling of volunteers who hand out "how to vote" cards for candidates at the booths.

There are only six polling places in my electorate, but in Canning there are 22. Using the latter as an example, the member for Canning would have to make arrangements to man 22 polling places by volunteers, or, if he has the finance available, to pay people to hand out cards from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the polling booths.

Mr. Lawrence: You do not have volunteers. Your party pays them.

Mr. YATES: I have never paid any of my volunteers in the electorate. Our party makes no payment for people handing out "how to vote" cards. If a candidate wants to pay, he can; but there is no compulsion. No person has received a single penny from myself or the party at any time during my campaigns.

Mr. Lawrence: Some of your volunteers apparently tell lies.

Mr. YATES: The member for South Fremantle is getting out of hand. I am telling the truth.

Mr. Lawrence: I am saying your volunteers are apparently telling lies.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We have no power to put them on the mat at all.

Mr. YATES: In the case of the member for Canning, to man 22 booths for 12 hours would require a great deal of organisation and would require the services of 300 helpers. That would be quite satisfactory if the system to hand out cards was covered by law, but it is not. The Act provides that a person handing out literature must be at least 50 yards from the polling place. This precludes the handing out of cards to people who arrive at the polling place in motor vehicles. At the last election, the Chief Electoral Officer issued instructions to each district that this section of the Act was to be enforced.

I had had 10,000 "how to vote" cards printed and at the end of the day 5,000 were left because more than one-half of the people who came to vote could not be contacted by the volunteers. They could not be reached when beyond 50 yards of the polling place and so did not receive "how to vote" cards either from me or my opponent. That happened at most polling places; it was most difficult to get the cards to many of the voters. If a volunteer worker happened to encroach, the returning officer would be informed and would order him to move further away.

Is all the expenses thus entailed necessary? "How to vote" cards can be distributed by the candidate in the metropolitan area by having them placed in letter boxes on the night before polling day. Country members adopt a different system; they usually send their cards by post and talk to electors when touring the district; but, the metropolitan area being congested, there is a very large roll in each electorate and it is possible to distribute the literature during the course of the campaign. It would be quite satisfactory for candidates to have these cards printed and distributed one or two days before the election. During an election campaign, the Electoral Department publishes in the Press the names of candidates and conditions relating to the election.

Mr. Heal: I think the proposal would be a bit hard on country members.

Mr. YATES: I do not think so; it was supported by country members in another place. At the polling place, the elector is handed a voting paper which contains the names of all the candidates, and there is a vacant square alongside each name in which the elector records his preferences. After literature has been given out, probably two or three times during the campaign, it is not necessary to hand electors another card on polling day, particularly in view of the expense entailed to the candidate. The printing of these cards represents a fairly heavy expense; the cost of 10,000 is about £30, and on top of that, a candidate has to provide volunteer workers with refreshments and with transport to and from the polling places. Therefore I say this expenditure is entirely unwarranted, particularly as, owing to the restrictions, only about one-half of the voters can be contacted because it is impossible to contact those who arrive by car.

The Bill contains another small amendment. In Section 183 reference is made to "polling booth" and it is proposed to alter that to "polling place". I think this is a mistake made in the first place. The section refers to interfering with any elector in the polling booth, but the booth is the little cubicle to which the elector retires in order to record his vote. The other amendment in the Bill would be consequential if the one I have discussed is approved. I move—

That the Bill be now read a a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th November.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [12.26]: I intend to oppose the second reading. This question was brought before the previous Government. I took the matter to Cabinet and we decided not to introduce an amending Bill on the lines proposed because the public was already sufficiently regimented without having its petrol supplies similarly restricted.

Members must concede that the all-important motive power used in the State is the motor vehicle. These vehicles give a service far and wide throughout the State and are running day and night. If there are people enterprising enough to open their service stations 24 hours a day to facilitate these vehicles being supplied with the requisite fuel to render the service asked of them, they should be permitted to do so. Seemingly quite a number of garage proprietors are prepared to render this service, but a proportion of them do not wish to do so under any conditions.

Mr. Lawrence: How many would there be?

Hon. L. THORN: I should say 50 per cent. They prefer to go to picture shows and other entertainments rather than render this service to the public. However, that is their right; if they do not wish to keep their service stations open, they need not do so. The trouble is that they adopt the attitude, "We do not want to trade during certain hours and we do not want anyone else to do so." Such an attitude on their part is most unfair. When the Minister was moving the second reading of the Bill, I interjected that the next thing he would be doing would be to prevent engine drivers from taking in water on Sunday.

The number of motor vehicle registrations is increasing daily. These vehicles are rendering a valuable service to the State, which is experiencing vast development, and there should be no obstacle placed in the way of people of obtaining fuel requirements. As I have said, various stations are quite prepared to render this service, but there are some discontented and dissatisfied owners who do not want to supply fuel out of certain hours and who do not want anyone else to do so.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Government has agreed that a large number of picture shows may open on Sunday.

Hon. L. THORN: Yes, but the Government takes the view that the service stations should not do so. This has proved a most valuable service to the country people. It is all very fine to say that we can make provision for our petrol on Saturday. We can, if we think of it, and if we are not travelling long distances; but, after all, people do run out of fuel and it should be available to them because the motor vehicle represents the greatest means of transport. I sincerely hope that if the Bill sees the light of day, the motoring public will not forget those service station proprietors who were prepared to render this service.

During the war, the motoring public was greatly inconvenienced in regard to fuel. A motor vehicle—particularly a commercial vehicle—is a most expensive item, and it is necessary that the owner shall not be harassed in any way. I have some correspondence on this subject, and the first letter is from the Chamber of Automotive Industries of Western Australia—

> The introduction of legislation which aims at a curtailing of hours of petrol sales has caused considerable misunderstanding by virtue of the similarity of titles of the Chamber of Automotive Industries of W.A. and the W.A. Automobile Chamber of Commerce.
>
> The Chamber of Automotive Industries of W.A. has been established since 1916, and its membership consists of all motor manufacturing, importing and assembly companies in Western Australia, and as such has always advocated the maximum service for the motorists, and is definitely opposed to any legislation curtailing the hours at which petrol and oil may be obtained.
>
> The proposed legislation was requested by the W.A. Automobile Chamber of Commerce, which functioned for many years as the Service Stations Association, and a few years ago adopted its present title, which so closely resembles ours as to be confusing. Therefore, we take this opportunity of pointing out that our Chamber completely dissociates itself from the proposed restrictions and that we trust you will give your support to the continuance of the principle of unrestricted sale of such a vital commodity as petrol.

The next is from the Royal Automobile Club—

> My club is very perturbed regarding the proposed amendment designed to restrict the hours for the sale of petrol particularly in respect of Sundays on which day apparently it is proposed that no sales shall be permitted except under the emergency provisions of the Act.
>
> The emergency provisions as prescribed are useless to the motorist as in the first place he must find a garage which is willing to serve him and secondly one that is prepared to go to the trouble of completing the formalities laid down with the knowledge that should he overlook any of them he is liable to prosecution.
>
> The club regards this amendment as a most retrograde step and one that is likely to impose great incon-

venience on the travelling motorist and tourists generally particularly during the holiday season.

It is recognised that some compromise may be necessary in this matter, and we suggest that the minimum requirements are—

Week days: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Holidays and Sundays: 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

We sincerely hope that the legislation will be opposed with the utmost vigour and if possible that the onerous provisions under which emergency sales can only be effected be deleted or reduced as far as possible.

The Tivoli Garage writes—

I notice that you have secured the adjournment of the debate on the Bill to alter the trading hours for petrol service stations.

I take it that you are opposed to the amendments and we would like to supply you with some information which we think will assist you in making your case.

The Automotive Chamber of Commerce does not in any way speak on behalf of the majority of petrol resellers.

There are 356 petrol stations in the metropolitan area of which less than 75 per cent. are members of the Chamber. In the country, there are 738 stations and of these less than 33 per cent. belong to the Chamber. You will see, therefore, that of the whole of the service stations in the State, less than 50 per cent. belong to the Chamber. Even the members of the Chamber are not unanimously in favour of the proposed alterations in the trading hours.

I know that only too well because, when I was Minister, I was approached by some of them. The letter continues—

The Tivoli Garage must open for business 24 hours a day to facilitate parking and the hiring of drive yourself and taxi cars. They must remain open all the time whether they sell petrol or not. This also applies to several other service stations. We are prepared and anxious to sell petrol to customers at any time.

I have given you our own attitude and you are no doubt already aware of the general motorists' views on the matter. Many motorists come from the country at the weekend and must obtain a refill of petrol on Saturday or on Sunday. No doubt there are many workers who use their cars only at weekends and would like to be able to fill up the petrol tank while they are out motoring.

We shall be grateful for anything you can do to oppose the amendments.

I also have a letter from Mr. A. H. Baldock, proprietor of the Kenwick Service Station, who strongly opposes any restrictions on the selling of petrol.

Mr. Lawrence: You are pretty popular with these garage proprietors!

Hon. L. THORN: No. I think they wrote to most members, and expressed their views. I may not be too popular with regards to the statements I am about to make, but I wish to make them so as to give the Government an opportunity to refute them. The service station owners who are members of the Western Australian Automobile Chamber of Commerce made it quite clear to the McLarty-Watts Government that as that Government would not do what it wanted, it would support and vote for Labour at the next election. That is correct; and the members of that body voted labour.

The Minister for Housing: Very wise men!

Hon. L. THORN: I have no objection to their doing that, and it is their right. I understand that the chamber subscribed to the Labour Party funds, and also provided cars on election day. The Automobile Chamber of Commerce is entitled to do that. Had it offered my party funds, without any strings, I would have had no objection to accepting the offer, but there was a string tied to this, and it was that this Government would introduce this legislation.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. L. THORN: It is freely stated, and I have mentioned it to give the Government an opportunity to refute it.

The Premier: You have my assurance that it is not correct.

Hon. L. THORN: I have no objection to these people voting Labour and subscribing to the party funds, but there should be no string tied to what they do.

The Premier: There was no string.

Hon. L. THORN: Surely to goodness, the public has suffered enough. Surely they have been regimented enough during the war years and since!

Mr. Lawrence: They were, when you were the Government.

Hon. L. THORN: The hon. member is mistaken. I have already informed the House that, after taking this matter to Cabinet, I refused to introduce this legislation.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The member for South Fremantle does not like regimentation!

Mr. Lawrence: That is what you think.

Hon. L. THORN: The question of the restriction of petrol sales is a most important matter for the House to consider and is one of great concern to the public and to the many commercial people who have sufficient business acumen to say we should supply this commodity at all times. But because of the few malcontents that like to take life easy and do not wish to render service, we have this measure before us. If those people had their way, they would make the public beg to them for petrol.

Mr. Andrews: That is too ridiculous.

Hon. L. THORN: That is one of the longest speeches the hon. member has made in this House up to date. I have no objection to the interjection.

The Premier: Some members do not have to make long speeches in order to make good speeches.

Hon. L. THORN: No, and that is why I am not going to be too long today.

Mr. May: You have been too long already.

Hon. L. THORN: I feel that I have convinced a number of members on the Government side of the House that this measure should not be passed. What about the people on the Goldfields who come hundreds of miles from their mining leases and require fuel?

Mr. Lawrence: What sort of fuel?

Mr. McCulloch: Are you referring to the two bottles?

Hon. L. THORN: I would not make criminals of the Goldfields people for the sake of two bottles of beer.

Mr. McCulloch: You would not have the hotels open all day on Sunday, would you?

Hon. L. THORN: I believe the great majority of the service stations are fully prepared to continue rendering service to the public and I am sorry that, on behalf of the disgruntled few, the Government has seen fit to introduce the Bill.

The Premier: You should thank the Government for giving you this opportunity of speaking to the Bill.

Hon. L. THORN: I thank you, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Lawrence: What are the overall figures?

Hon. L. THORN: I have already given them and the hon. member will find them in the next issue of "Hansard." I feel sure there are members on the Government side of the House who cannot agree with this type of legislation. Take the member for Collie and the member for Geraldton—

The Premier: No, you take them.

Hon. L. THORN: —and the member for Gascoyne, and consider the station owners and shearers. I strongly oppose the Bill and feel sure that a majority of members will also oppose it.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th December.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [12.45]: I support the Bill and agree with most of what the Premier said. I, too, think this measure should have been introduced long ago because what the Premier said about members and their expenses is perfectly true. He explained that Government employees, irrespective of what their salaries might be, receive expenses from the Government when they have to travel abroad on government business.

The Premier: I take it that by "abroad", you do not limit it to overseas?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No, I mean that when they have to travel away from their homes they receive reimbursement from the Government. There is also the car allowance of something like 8½d. a mile for civil servants.

The Minister for Housing: That is when travelling in their own vehicles.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. In these days I do not think that amount is excessive. On examining the position we find that most members of Parliament are compelled to live in the city and visit their constituencies at various times. It costs them a lot of money to do that and to travel through their electorates when they get there. In addition to that, they have to pay hotel expenses and the cost of keeping two homes going.

This measure does not give much to members of Parliament and to some it will give nothing at all. If we accept these allowances we lose our £400 taxation deduction and to those members who have income part from their parliamentary salaries, that £400 is a considerable amount. When taxation has to be paid on that sum it will have a considerable effect. The Bill should not be viewed from the personal angle. A member who has to live on his parliamentary salary these days must find it difficult to do so.

Of course, it may be said that members choose this occupation, and that is true; but they are in a position different from that of the ordinary person who is employed. There is no security of tenure for members of Parliament who are, as is well known, sitting shots as regards donations to all sorts of sporting and other bodies. It may be said that they need not

subscribe, but over many years it has been customary for them to do so, and it is a pretty costly business. That has not been taken into consideration with regard to this measure or by the Taxation Department, unless the subscription is made to some charitable organisation approved by that department. So taking this measure all in all, I think it is only just. All other sections of the community, whether they be government employees or people employed by outside firms, receive travelling allowances, and the Bill applies the same principle to members of Parliament. On that account I cannot see that there can be any objection to it.

MR. ACKLAND [12.50]: I listened with a good deal of attention to what the Premier had to say when he introduced this legislation and I am of the opinion that it was a particularly clever speech. He told half the story and told it in a most convincing way; with the half that he told, I entirely agree. But he would have done much better if he had told us all the story. I was also interested to hear what the Leader of the Opposition had to say because, unless my memory is faulty, I think he was approached on more than one occasion during the time he was Premier of the State, to give some consideration to a measure which would increase members' salaries.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I did.

Mr. ACKLAND: To some extent. But I realise that there is a distinction without any difference in what is being done under this measure. I would tell the Premier that if he brought down legislation to increase members' salaries to a sum of £1,500 and increased the proposed expense allowances to £300, £400 and £500 instead of £200, £300 and £400, and made those increases effective after the next election, I would whole-heartedly support him. I spoke in much the same way in 1947. I believe that the public gets what is pays for and at the last election the public elected men who were to represent them at a salary of £1,350 and £1,390 per annum.

I believe that if the people knew before an election that parliamentarians' salaries were to be more in conformity with the duties they ought to carry out, the scope would be widened and we would have a better choice of member than we have in this House at present. I am not being personal but am speaking in a general way in this regard. I would like to take members back a few years because I believe that this Parliament has not played the game—dishonest is not quite the right word—with the electors of Western Australia. I understand that in 1946 there was a meeting either of all members of Parliament or a committee representing all parties, and a decision was reached that when a new Government was formed in 1947, whatever its composition, there would be an increase in parliamentary salaries.

Not one mention of that was made on the hustings and, of course, we know that parliamentary salaries were raised from £600 to £960. At a later date, in 1950, I think, salaries were again slightly increased and were tied to the quarterly adjustments in the basic wage. As a consequence, members' salaries have increased periodically until they are now £1,350 or £1,390 according to the area represented. Quarterly adjustments of the basic wage have temporarily ceased and we cannot get an increase in parliamentary salaries through that medium. So we adopt a different idea and increase our salaries by expenses.

I know quite well that a member of Parliament, unless he exercises the greatest care and economy, cannot adequately represent his constituents on his present salary, and that is the reason why I would be most anxious to support an increase in parliamentarians' salaries so that they could travel beyond the boundaries of their own electorates and thus learn more of what is taking place in the State. But the time to do that is before an election when the people have had an opportunity of knowing what the Government intends to do.

If a Bill increased our salaries something along the lines I suggested it would be in the interests of Western Australia because the position of a member of Parliament would become much more attractive. It would attract a man who possibly had greater qualifications than many of us here. A sum of £1,350 per annum is the salary which is paid to a second-class executive officer of a company.

The Minister for Housing; But second-class executive officers also ask for increases.

Mr. ACKLAND: The position is that we went to the electors and each one of us asked his electors to vote for him, knowing full well the salary of a member of Parliament. All the electors knew that our salaries were tied to basic wage adjustments and now that source of increase has dried up, we intend to give ourselves something else. I say it is absolutely dishonest.

Mr. May: You are a paragon of virtue!

The Minister for Native Welfare: You would not accept it, would you?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am very glad the hon. member asked me that question because I have been expecting it for some time and I have given it consideration. If this Bill becomes law under the present conditions, and knowing that my expenses are greater than a great many in this House because I do my job properly, I would accept it and would be thoroughly justified in doing so. Members can laugh.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Somebody said you would not.

Mr. ACKLAND: Parliament has no right to pass this legislation, but if it is post-dated there would be nothing wrong with it. There is nothing inconsistent in what I am saying.

Mr. Oldfield: Yes. You are refusing it with one hand and taking it with the other.

Mr. ACKLAND: No, I am not. I am telling members what I think is the right thing to do, but if the measure becomes law it will be a matter far beyond my control.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Although it is still dishonest.

Mr. ACKLAND: I certainly oppose the legislation at this stage, but I believe that if the measure were post-dated we might find a very different personnel in this House after the next election. The position would be more attractive and we would encourage more competent people and a more efficient class of man to stand.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: For Moore.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I would like to see a few changes.

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not disassociate myself from any of these remarks.

The Minister for Housing: I thought you were having a shot at the member for Maylands.

Mr. ACKLAND: It would have been much better had this matter been deferred until after the next election.

Mr. Oldfield: And what would my children eat in the meantime.

Mr. ACKLAND: The hon. member knows very well what they would eat. I certainly oppose the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [2.15]: I agree that the Premier made a masterly speech when he introduced this measure in pointing out that there is a need for some reimbursement of expenses to enable members of Parliament to carry on and give service to their electors. In fact, I felt that some members must have wondered how they kept out of the Bankruptcy Court for so long. As one who was in the Civil Service for 20 years, I think there is some need for reimbursement of travelling expenses. When I first joined this Assembly, I left the Civil Service to take on the life of a parliamentarian at about the same salary as I was receiving previously, less travelling allowances.

In those days in the Civil Service I think we were allowed to travel about 5,000 miles and were reimbursed to the extent of about £130 per annum. Therefore it would appear that the allowance for travelling expenses, as suggested, would not be out of order. I agree with the Premier when he says that this should have been done years ago, and I think the whole House does, too. At the same time I do not consider that I can support the measure at present because I am against the principle of this House passing such a Bill when we have supported legislation which has prevented other sections of the community from recovering what they consider are legitimate expenses incurred by them in the course of their businesses.

It was only recently that the ice merchants proposed to increase the price of ice to the consumers to recover what they considered to be their costs. No doubt they felt that they were entitled to that increase in the same manner as members feel that they are entitled to be reimbursed for their travelling costs. However, at that time we found that the Minister in charge of the Prices Control Branch took very active steps to recontrol the price of ice and prevented the ice vendors from increasing the price that was charged to the consumers. Therefore it does seem that we are making flesh of one and fish of another.

The Minister for Native Welfare: The vendors did not seek any increase in the price of ice; the manufacturers cut one another's throats.

Mr. OWEN: They felt that an increase was necessary to enable them to carry on, yet this Parliament, through the measures over which it has control, prevented them from obtaining that increase. Further, when the Arbitration Court suspended the automatic quarterly adjustments in the basic wage, many of us felt that that was a good move which might do something to check the rising cost spiral. On that occasion the Premier appealed to manufacturers and merchants not to pass on any increased costs, but to do their best to absorb them so that prices would not be increased.

In fact, the Premier made rather more than a veiled threat that if they did increase their prices, he would see that steps were taken to offset such an action. Therefore, although I am in favour of the measure on principle, and would have no qualms about accepting any reimbursements if the Bill became law, I am still of the opinion that the House is not entitled to pass it because it is not an opportune time to bring such a measure forward.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [2.21]: I propose to support the Bill. As a result of discussions which took place some six or seven years ago in a period when costs were rapidly increasing, and the value of money was depreciating, an arrangement was entered into that a recommendation as to what should be done with the allowances of members of Parliament could be obtained from a tribunal, comprising the President of the Arbitration Court, the Public Service Commissioner and the Chief Justice

of the State, it being felt that some such determination as that would to a degree, at least, relieve members of Parliament of the difficulty of endeavouring to assess their own rates, and to some extent place them on a par with other sections of the community under the structure which over a long period of years has been built up.

As a result of that, although it was made a little more difficult by the recommendation made with regard to the Legislative Council, the present allowances were decided upon because the base figure fixed in 1948 had not been departed from but only adjustments made in accordance with the rises in the basic wage. In the net result, the allowances have, as indicated by the Premier in answer to a question by the member for Mt. Marshall, increased by about 90 per cent., while the basic wage has increased by approximately 130 per. cent.

In the face of that, and in the face of the very rapid increase again in costs, it was decided, apparently this year, to refer the matter to a similar tribunal. That body made certain recommendations which would have resulted in increased amounts being payable. This would have meant very substantial increases, more particularly to Ministers of the Crown; lesser increases to members for the North-West and lesser increases again for other members of Parliament. Had the Bill been brought down to carry out the recommendations of that tribunal, in the face of what has since transpired in relation to the Industrial Arbitration Court, I must say I would have been very reluctant to support it, because I would suggest it sought to increase the actual salary or, as it was known, allowances of every person concerned.

As it transpired, however, the Government, perhaps holding the same view, did not seek to introduce that legislation. I think the Government realised, as everybody else must realise, that the expenses of members, mainly involved in transport, have very vastly increased. They suggest that the member of Parliament, if he does his job as it should be done, is in every respect a civil servant, or at least a servant to the people of the State. It is a long time since any civil servant has been asked to transport himself, if he uses his own vehicle, at his own cost. There was a time, or course, when it was possible to make ready use of the railway system of the State, and for a long time efforts were made to ensure wherever practicable that officers of the Public Service used the railway system of the State. Times have changed and the speed at which business is transacted has changed, and today, although it is possible to travel on trains—as this relates to members of Parliament—without the actual necessity of paying a fare, the railway service is of no use. To cite a personal example; if I want to leave for my electoral district after the House has risen at any time during the session at the end of the week, it is impossible for me to do so if I attend the sitting of the House. However, we will assume that I do leave. The function or meeting I have to attend takes place the following evening, we will say, and I cannot return to the city until the Monday night. So I am four days away from home. Let us reverse the position and take the case of the member for Albany. That hon. member spends the greater part of his time in the City of Perth, because he cannot avoid it, and frequently he is obliged to leave the house, or his home, long before he is needed here because the train service would not suit him. Alternatively, both of us travel by road. As everybody knows the cost of doing that is considerable, and that applies not only as it concerns direct transport between the seat of Government and the area of the electorate, but also in the electorate itself. For example the electorate of Roe is 18,000 square miles, the electorate of Greenough is over 15,000 square miles. Obviously anyone who set out to traverse that area from one side to the other would be involved in very considerable transport costs. So, in the net result, not only is the individual member in those circumstances in a worse position than the public servant, but also, by virtue of the fact that there is no differentiation at present in the remuneration received by individual members, the member who has an electorate like that of the member for Roe or the member for Greenough, if he is to deal with the affairs of it and go to the very many centres that are in such vast areas—and there are many much bigger than those I have mentioned—finds himself in an inferior position to those with small districts.

So there is a complete absence, under the present system, of equality of remuneration between the several members of this House. I believe that equality is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain actually and completely; but at least some effort is being made by the Government in this Bill to achieve it, because it has allowed a much lesser sum for the metropolitan electorates; a greater sum for some of the larger country electorates, in which that of the member for Roe is included; and a still larger sum for the North-West, where, not only are there vast areas, but much greater distances from the seat of government and also great difficulty in using, in many instances, even the means of transport which is available to the average person in the southern districts, so that at times air transport has to be used. There is no Government air transport and the full cost of such travelling falls on the member and can be, by air, from £75 to £80 for a journey to the far North-West.

It is quite obvious to me that the Government has given a lot of consideration to this matter. It has endeavoured to

bring down a measure which is as fair and equitable as possible without going into individual cases, and has given the opportunity to the individual member to specify what his expenses are up to a maximum figure; or, if he wishes to, he may continue in the same position as at present, if he feels that the expenses he incurs are not such as to warrant his drawing anything out of the allowance. So on all accounts, so far as I can see, the Government has produced a measure which seeks to bring about a state of equality amongst members, some resemblance to conditions that apply to the other people who seek to serve the State in a public capacity; while at the same time it does not seem to me that anybody can take exception to the acceptance of that principle.

For long it has been a well settled principle that every type of public servant is entitled to a recoup of reasonable expenses incurred. When I refer to reasonable expenses, I do not mean only actual travelling costs, because there is a day-to-day allowance for public servants if they are away from home on Government business, and that allowance covers the cost of staying at hotels, and other expenses. Those costs today are extremely high. The day has long since past when one could acquire board and lodging at any reasonable place for 10s. or 11s. per day. One is extremely lucky to get it now for 30s. per day.

I feel inclined to think that the Government has taken a wise course in this matter. It has done better to recognise the association of transport costs with public service rather than to say, "We will increase the allowance of every member irrespective of what cost he may be put to in regard to his duty." That, in my opinion, would have been a bad principle to adopt at this stage. I have no difficulty in supporting the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [2.35]: Although not one of those who will benefit by this at present, as I come within the ministerial category, I nevertheless propose to support the measure. As one representing a country electorate which is not very extensive in area, but is a long way from the metropolis—so far that I find it very difficult to attend to my parliamentary duties and live within my electorate—I know the expenses involved in representing a country electorate. I have been in the metropolitan area when something important has cropped up in my electorate, necessitating the attendance at Kalgoorlie of one of the heads of the departments and of myself as the local representative in Parliament, and I have often regarded it as an anomaly that the head of the department—a civil servant— was receiving a substantial allowance for out-of-pocket expenses while I received only the bare parliamentary allowance, without any recompense for having been away from my home.

It is true, also, that there are many additional calls upon a private member's income. He is not compelled to accede to the many applications for asisstance made to him from various sporting bodies and charitable organisations; but if he does not do so he is looked upon as a skinflint. While his chance of being returned at an election is not actually jeopardised, he is not looked upon favourably by his electors. So, taken by and large, I believe that the provision for payment of out-of-pocket expenses to private members is quite justified, and I propose to support the measure.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [2.38]: I would like to say a few words in support of this measure, as one of those who is put to considerable expense in attending to parliamentary duties, living, as I do, adjacent to the electors of Boulder. I was going to say in the electorate, but I live a stone's throw from the boundary, in Kalgoorlie. I feel that I best serve my constituents by residing on the Goldfields because I am thus better informed of their problems than I would be if I lived in the metropolitan area.

But I think members can readily understand that I would be put to very considerable expense having to maintain my home there and travel to Perth almost every week to attend to my parliamentary duties. I am affected in this way: I am not in the financial position to travel round the rest of the State, as I believe a member should do because I feel that not only do I represent the people of my electorate, but also those in the rest of the State.

When I say this, I bear in mind that there are matters that come before this Chamber that are of great importance to people in parts of the State outside of the Goldfields areas, and I am expected to sit here and give an intelligent vote on them. If I am unable to travel around the State to see other industries and make myself reasonably well acquainted with the problems of agriculture and other activities, how can I have an intelligent opinion and cast an intelligent vote on the matters that come before us from time to time?

I believe that members should travel in the other States and get first-hand knowledge of the problems that are being grappled with and overcome there. Being a practical miner and a representative of a mining district, I would like to visit Broken Hill, Mt. Isa in Queensland, the coalmines in New South Wales and the electricity undertaking at Yallourn, so that I would be better informed of the methods adopted in those places, as what is done there would possibly be of benefit to many of the people I represent. The same thing would apply in many other industrial matters.

As I am largely an industrial representative here, industrial matters are the principal ones that I am interested in, and I believe I should inform my mind on the industrial legislation of the other States, and obtain first-hand information as to how it works and what effect it has. But as I have pointed out, my financial position, due to the heavy expense I am under in carrying out my duties, is such that it is impossible for me to visit the other States. The proposal before us is long overdue and I think it has the twofold purpose of giving some measure of relief to members, and of being of benefit to the people whom we represent because of the knowledge we would gain that we would not otherwise have.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [2.45]: There have been only two speeches against the Bill, and I want to deal with both of them. The member for Darling Range based his opposition to the Bill upon a number of grounds, the main one of which seemed to be that some other sections in the community, had not, in recent times, at any rate, been allowed to obtain for the goods they had to sell, or the services they provided, a return in money which they themselves thought was reasonable. He also raised the point that no mandate for this proposal had been obtained by any member from the electors within his district.

Quite honestly he then went on to say that if the proposal became law he would feel that he would be justified in claiming the amount made available for his electorate, because he would incur all of the expenses which would be involved in giving to his electors, and to his district generally, the parliamentary service which they would expect, and which they should receive.

I find I am not able to quarrel in any shape or form with the line of approach made by the hon. member to the proposal. I do not agree with his logic in the matter, but at least his approach did not seem to be such that anyone could say it was unreasonable, or that he had put forward contentions with which anyone could quarrel—at least at all violently.

The other speaker was the member for Moore. Accustomed as we are to the speeches of this hon. member, I am sure that everyone of us was at one stage of his speech—the closing stage—amazed. In the first part of his remarks he pursued what appeared to me to be a perfectly legitimate line of reasoning. He pointed out that he had been elected by his people upon the basis of the salary and allowances then existing, and he considered he was not entitled to do anything which would amend in any way—at least, upwards—that salary or those allowances.

He went on to say that he thought a proposal of this kind should not be implemented in a practical way until such time as a general election had been held and all members were thereby enabled to go to their respective electorates and express their attitude either for or against the proposition. That reasoning contained a fair amount of merit. I do not agree with the suggestion that a proposal of this kind should be taken by members, and candidates generally, to the electors at a general election.

One brief reason why that should not be done is simply this, that the member or candidate who expressed himself in favour of a proposal of this kind would immediately be at a very great disadvantage, because obviously all, or most, of the new candidates would make a dead set against any member who, during an election campaign, advocated a proposal of this kind. The new candidate would have nothing to lose and a lot to gain by adopting that attitude.

We know, too, that a proposal of this kind, if it were taken before the electors at a general election, would not be the fundamental issue; it would not be the issue upon which people would decide their votes. There would be before the people other issues of much more importance. There might be hundreds of electors within the district of the member for Moore who might be against any proposal to give members of Parliament reimbursement for their expenses, but who would be with him in regard to a policy of agricultural development, the extension of water supplies and other things.

Mr. Ackland: Do not you realise that if the Bill had been passed, it would have no effect whatever on the election? It would be an established fact.

The PREMIER: I am afraid that the member for Moore is not following what I am saying. I hope his inability to follow is not due to some mental confusion which has developed since he concluded his speech and since he has carefully perused the "Hansard" proof of what he said. Therefore, even if a proposal of this kind were to be submitted to the electors at a general election, no one could say, when the election was over, what the decision upon the issue had been, because such decision would be made upon other and far more important issues. The member for Darling Range stood with us other mortals in this place, upon the same level; he did not try to take up a position of superiority.

Mr. Ackland: You know that is not just.

The PREMIER: It is absolutely just, and it is absolutely true of the member for Darling Range. What is not just about it?

Mr. Ackland: You are inferring that the other one did not take up that stand.

The PREMIER: I will deal with the other one in a moment. I do not intend to indulge in any inferences about the member for Moore; I shall say quite frankly

what I think of his attitude. But I repeat that the member for Darling Range made no attempt to raise himself far above the ordinary mortals in this place. The member for Moore, towards the close of his speech, mounted Everest heights of virtue, and from that height in a maximum burst of moral superiority, looked down upon us.

He was not even content to say that we were doing something that was not justified; something doubtful in consistency or propriety. He looked down upon us and, in that tone of voice for which he has become famous on such occasions, he described the action which the majority of us favour being taken as being not dishonest but absolutely dishonest. In other words, we, as members of this Parliament and as representatives of the public—some of us as Ministers of the Crown—are doing something which is absolutely dishonest. No man can do something which is absolutely dishonest unless he himself is absolutely dishonest. What, in concentrated essence, is the real attitude of the member for Moore towards this proposal?

Let me read what I know he said in the closing sentences of his speech, and what I know to be true, because I have read the "Hansard" proof of what he said, and that proof coincides absolutely with what I knew in my own mind he did say. One member, in the final stage of the speech of the member for Moore, asked, "You would not accept it, would you?" He was referring to the allowances. The member for Moore went on to say that he had been expecting a question of that kind and had given it consideration. He then went on to say that if the Bill became law, under present conditions and knowing that his own expenses in his own electorate were much greater than those of many other members, because he did his job properly—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: A good boy!

The PREMIER: Still up on the Everest height of virtue, and looking down upon us, poor and frail mortals! He continued by saying that he would accept it and would be thoroughly justified in doing so. I hope that you, Mr. Speaker, will ensure that the "Hansard" report of the hon. member's speech is not altered.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have my assurance on that point.

The PREMIER: What, in essence, is the real attitude of the member for Moore? His speech was a reflection of his thinking. My ministerial colleagues and I, and all members on both sides of the House who support this proposal, are supporting something which is absolutely dishonest and, inferentially at any rate, all of us are therefore dishonest and, in fact, absolutely dishonest. But if enough of us are prepared to be dishonest, and absolutely dishonest, and if enough members in another place are prepared to be absolutely dishonest enough to put this proposal into law, the member for Moore will demand his full share of the loot.

The Minister for Mines: And be dishonest, too!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Time and manner of making reimbursement:

Mr. ACKLAND: I want to move an amendment to insert after the word "shall" in line 1 the words "after the next general election." I do this because I believe that will be the correct time for us to increase parliamentary salaries.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Premier has an amendment on the notice paper which will come before that of the hon. member.

The PREMIER: I propose to add a further paragraph to this clause, which would become paragraph (b). Therefore, it will be necessary to make what is now clause (3) read as paragraph (a). I move an amendment—

> That in line 1, after the clause designation, "3", the paragraph designation "(a)" be added.

Mr. Ackland: Does not this come after my amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ACKLAND: Am I justified in moving the amendment now?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know about being justified but the hon. member can move it if he desires.

Mr. ACKLAND: I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 after the word "shall" in new paragraph (a) the words "after the next general election" be inserted.

I take this opportunity of speaking to the clause in order to reply to the Premier and the unjustified attack he made upon me. I do not consider myself above any other member in this Chamber. I perused the "Hansard" report of my speech and the word "justify" does appear in a place where I did not mean it to appear. We all make mistakes. I did not say I had no intention of accepting that £300, but I tried to inform the Committee that I would have been thoroughly justified in doing so if it became law because of the expenses incurred in my parliamentary duties.

The Minister for Native Welfare: You said you would accept it. You are now trying to somersault.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am trying to inform the Committee what I meant to say. It is something which should not be done until after the next general election. I have not altered my opinion in any way, irrespective of the bitter and sarcastic speech made by the Premier.

The PREMIER: I oppose the amendment on the grounds I mentioned when introducing the Bill and those given in my reply to the debate. This does not follow the line the member for Moore advocated. This will not give the electors any voice at all. It would become the law of the State as soon as the general election was held no matter what the people thought.

Mr. Ackland: You introduce legislation after the next general election and I will support it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has not explained himself clearly. He has said things which since lunch he feels he did not say or should not have said.

Mr. Ackland: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: The Government has introduced the Bill because it feels it is long overdue and we do not think members should be penalised for another two years.

Mr. BRADY: The member for Moore has taken up an extraordinary attitude on this matter. A few months ago, when a wheat Bill was introduced which, in effect, gave the farmers of the community, including the member for Moore, an opportunity of getting an increased price for wheat, thus increasing the cost of flour and the price of bread to the community, the member for Moore supported it wholeheartedly. He did not suggest that it should be submitted to the electors of Western Australia.

I take it he will accept any increase that the price of wheat might bring. He will apparently reserve the right to accept an increase for his wheat and at the same time take an allowance as a member of Parliament for a job he is doing, at the best, part-time. Other members are doing it as a full-time job. There should be differentiation between the people with rural interests, financial intersts, and professional interests, and those who are doing a fulltime job on what is a meagre salary.

Hon. D. Brand: You might be surprised whom it will affect.

Mr. BRADY: I oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I move an amendment—

> That in line six of paragraph (a) the word "Governor" be struck out and the word "Treasurer" inserted in lieu.

This is a little cumbersome and it is surely a matter that can be dealt with by the Treasurer.

The PREMIER: I agree with that contention and accept the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

> That a paragraph be inserted as follows:—
>
> > (b) If a person does not, while he is a member of Parliament, make claim in writing to the Treasurer during any year, commencing on the first day of January and ending on the next following thirty-first day of December, for the reimbursement for that year, he is regarded as having renounced the claim for, and is not entitled to, the reimbursement for that year.

If any member during the period of any full calendar year does not apply for the allowance available to him he cannot subsequently apply for it and obtain that allowance. In other words, there cannot be any accumulation from year to year of the allowances due; the amount due has to be claimed during the currency of that year.

Mr. JOHNSON: Would the Premier let me know what the position would be if a person ceased to be a member of Parliament and then made a claim? Would he be precluded from succeeding? Perhaps the wording could be changed to enable a person who is entitled to claim to succeed.

The PREMIER: I think the position is well covered. No person would be able to make a claim after he ceased to be a member of Parliament. If he did, it would not be allowed.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What if it were in the calendar year?

The PREMIER: A person who was a member, say, in the election year and an election was to be held at the end of March would make his claim at the beginning of the year before the election was held. He would be paid monthly if that were the period determined for progressive payments and it would naturally be paid up until the date when he might lose his seat.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. COURT: Before Clause 3 is passed, I would like to ask the Premier whether he is prepared to approach the Commonwealth Treasurer to ensure that members who forgo their claims under this section for reimbursement of their expenses, are not penalised under the Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act. My opinion is that if members do forgo these reimbursements, they will lose the present taxation allowance which they get in respect of their salaries. There are parallel cases where this has happened and the Taxation Department, on its present atti-

tude to similar matters, will adopt the stand that a member did not spend the money because he did not apply for reimbursement. The position could be quickly adjusted by the Federal Treasurer. It was because of this clause making reimbursement optional that I did not have to oppose the Bill. I do not want to go into the details of my own particular case. At present anyone can act according to his own conscience or particular circumstances. If he were to forgo the reimbursements, it would be unfair for the Taxation Department to penalise him and compel him to pay taxation on his basic salary without deduction.

The PREMIER: I shall take that matter up on the lines suggested by the member for Nedlands. I shall get a copy of the remarks just made, and will consider them at a later stage.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, Local Authorities, Royal Visit Expenditure Authorisation.
2, Matrimonial Causes and Personal Status Code Amendment.
3, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Royal Powers.
Without amendment.
2, Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment.
With amendments.

BILL—PENSIONS SUPPLEMENTATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th December.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [3.20]: This Bill proposes to give increased pensions to retired civil servants. As the Premier has explained they come under three different Acts. Under the Act of 1871 some became eligible for pensions without having made contributions. There is that large number of civil servants who came under the 1938 Superannuation and Family Benefits Act. Then there are those who became eligible under what is known as the 1948 Act. On at least two occasions when I was Treasurer, I introduced similar Bills giving substantial increases in pensions in the cases referred to.

I support the Bill because I realise that over the years there has been an increase in the cost of living, and, in justice, something should be done for this class of pensioners. On the last occasion when I introduced a similar measure the Premier, in a short speech, supported the proposals contained therein, which were subsequently agreed to by Parliament. He said the pensions should be linked to the cost of living. I explained at that time that this was not done in the other States and it was necessary to reach an understanding with the various States before such a principle could be adopted. Here again the Grants Commission would be interested in what we are doing.

May I make this suggestion to the Premier? I think he should raise the matter at a Premiers' Conference because the question of increased pensions is constantly recurring. When one State does something about it, representations are immediately made to other State Governments calling their attention to the new step taken by that State. This would be a worth-while matter to raise at a Premiers' Conference with a view to getting uniform action regarding future pensions. I agree with what he said when I last introduced this Bill, namely, that if pensions could be tied to the cost of living, it would be a step in the right direction.

No doubt the pensioners who are now covered by this particular Bill have suffered as a result of the increased cost of living. We have heard a good deal in recent years about people who are on fixed incomes and how they have been, or could be, classed as the unfortunate section of the community as regards cost of living rises. If something like this can be done, it would prove very satisfactory. It is not satisfactory to bring this measure before Parliament from time to time; it is not a matter from which political advantage should be obtained.

We have to face up to the pensions position in a realistic manner. This Bill provides for increased pensions under the Acts I have mentioned, except to those who are now receiving £500 or over. Under the Act of 1871 and 1948 there are 574 pensioners, and the annual cost of their pensions is £191,500. Under the 1938 Act, which covers civil servants, there are 3,639 pensioners and the total cost is £530,600 per annum. The Treasurer explained that only £54,400 has been met from contributions. The total amount of all pensions is £722,100 per annum of which contributions by those benefiting amount to £54,500.

So these figures do indicate to members what a responsibility the State accepts in regard to payment of pensions. The Treasurer tells us that he expects this figure to ultimately iron out at about £800,000 a year. That will be the cost of pensions to this State. As I said, a very great percentage of this will be the responsibility of the Government. While I support the Bill, might I ask the Premier to give this matter some consideration.

There are only 102 pensioners who receive more than £500 per year. I agree with the Premier when he says that first consideration should be given to those who are on the lower range of salary, but under the circumstances some consideration could be given to those on £500 and over a year. Over the years this class of pensioner has had to face up to certain obligations; they have been accustomed to a certain standard of living; they have come down from a salary to their pensions, which is a steep drop. In view of those factors, the Premier might agree to give them an increase of £1 a week. I would point out that the total additional cost for the payment of another £1 a week to the 102 pensioners would amount to only £5,300 a year.

Under the 1948 Act, an increase of 10s. per week on all pensions up to £156 was provided, and the amount could be supplemented through Commonwealth Social Services if the recipient were eligible for such payments. The widening of the provision for pensions in the last budget would enable a considerable number of recipients to augment their income from that source. Under the 1938 Act, it is proposed to increase by 10s. per week all pensions of eight units and less which include pensions up to £312 per annum and £156 per annum in the case of widows. Pensions exceeding £312 and not exceeding £444 will be increased by 5s. per week, and this will apply to widows with incomes of £156 and £221.

I only wish that more money could be made available for the purpose, but one has to take a realistic view of the matter. The cost to the State is now more than £700,000 per annum and shortly will reach £800,000, of which the Government has to find by far the larger proportion. While we fully realise the obligation and know that it is a just one, the fact remains that this is a heavy responsibility for the Government to bear. This being so, I have no alternative to supporting the proposals in the Bill. I ask the Premier to give some consideration to the £500 a year man with a view to increasing his pension to some extent at least.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [3.32]: There are two matters that I should like to bring to the notice of the Premier. The first is whether he can tell us the date from which these payments will be made.

The Premier: From the 31st October.

Mr. BRADY: That will be very satisfactory for people who are looking forward to receiving some increase for Christmas. There were some people in the service in 1900 who did not come under the Act of 1871. The Leader of the Opposition, when in office, agreed that such people who were in the service before 1905, and when the Government Employees Pensions Act came into operation in 1938, should receive some recompense. A few of them were still in the service in 1938 and joined the superannuation scheme inaugurated in that year. They had actually paid for the superannuation they are receiving, but they feel at a slight disadvantage because, had they left the service a year or two earlier, they would have received their present superannuation payments for nothing. Because they remained in the service for a few years after 1938, they are not entitled to the benefits under the Government Employees Pensions Act.

When the measure was introduced, it was realised that there would be only a limited number who would be entitled to the advantage. It might have been 50 or 100, but a number of them have since passed on and consequently the cost to the Government now would not be as great as it would have been when the measure was passed. I suggest that the Premier should give consideration to the question of handing to the few surviving employees I have indicated some benefit under the 1948 Act, seeing that a considerable saving has been effected on account of the number who have passed on.

Let me give an instance. Two lads joined the service at the same time, one serving on the salaried staff and the other on the wages staff. The salaried man on retirement received quite a substantial pension whereas the man on the wages staff has had to draw superannuation under the 1938 scheme, and he was not in a position to take out a large number of units. Consequently he is receiving a very small amount by way of superannuation and feels that he is entitled to some benefit under the 1948 Act. I hope the Premier will give consideration to these matters.

MR. HEAL (West Perth) [3.35]: I support the second reading. There are some recipients of pensions who were originally under the 1871 Act and who come under the Commonwealth, and before they will be entitled to receive this increase, legislation must be passed by the Federal Parliament.

It is a fact that payments will be made as from the 31st October, but it is unfortunate that the committee that inquired into these increases could not have brought down its findings earlier so that this Bill could have been passed in time to allow the Federal Parliament to get its measure through—action that I understand would automatically be taken following our passing of this Bill.

I mention this matter for the information of the Premier because a small number of such members are entitled to the increase. I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition regarding pensioners on the mark of £500 or more. The

point he raised should receive consideration by the Government. If they can be given some additional assistance, I am sure it will be greatly appreciated.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [3.37]: The Government considered the question of introducing into the Act through this Bill a provision to tie the pension payments to the basic wage figures. However, the Arbitration Court has suspended the granting of the cost of living adjustment and so it seemed that in the not distant future the basic wage might possibly move downwards. We thought it would be unfair to fasten on to these pensioners the basic wage adjustment at this stage when it might mean that their pensions would go down with a decrease in the basic wage, especially as they had not been tied to that principle in all the years when the basic wage was rising.

Cabinet also considered seriously whether the pensioners on £500 or more should receive an increase. We thought they should not. However, the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that the number affected would be small.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There are only 102 of them.

The PREMIER: Yes. I wish to take this Bill through all stages today. There will be a Cabinet meeting on Monday or Tuesday and, if we can see our way clear to grant an increase in those cases, we shall have an amendment moved in another place. I shall consider also the points raised by the member for Guildford-Midland.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Sitting suspended from 3.40 to 4.8 p.m.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Works (for the Premier) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Proclamation of coming into operation:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I intend to move that Clause 3 be struck out and another clause substituted. This is desirable and its purpose is readily seen because it will then conform to the Parliamentary Superannuation Act.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister will have to vote against the clause, which will go out if the Committee agrees and the new clause can be added at the end of the Bill.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 4 to 16—agreed to.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

> That a new clause be added to read as follows:—"3. The time prescribed for the coming into operation of this Act is the thirty-first day of October one thousand nine hundred and fifty-three."

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—ABORIGINES WELFARE.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.11]: I move—

> That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [4.12]: I cannot let the third reading vote be put without saying a few words describing my feelings on this matter. At the outset, I had better make myself clear because I propose to oppose the third reading as a consequence of the attitude adopted by the Minister when he was making his concluding remarks in reply to the second reading debate. I voted for the second reading believing that alterations to the existing law were extremely necessary, although I was in conflict with the Minister on the alterations which he proposed. I then suggested the appointment of a select committee, although I realised that the mover for such appointment of necessity imposes upon himself at least membership of the committee and the very considerable responsibility that that membership would entail.

However, I felt that if I could do anything—as I said in my speech when asking for the appointment of a select committee—to bring about reforms which would be unanimously acceptable to the great bulk of our community, it would be well worth the effort. The Minister saw fit not to agree to that proposal nor to accept any worthwhile amendment of the several that were proposed in the Committee stage of this measure. In consequence, for practical purposes, the Bill remains as it was. While I still hold that there is much to be done, I continue to differ on the way it should be done at this stage.

In conclusion, I might say that some people, who are better qualified than I am, perhaps, to make such a statement, agree with me because I find that in an article appearing in "The West Australian" dated the 27th April, 1953, contributed by Mr. A. O. Neville, a former Commissioner of Native Affairs in Western Australia, in

referring to the provisions with regard to citizenship rights such are now to be included in this Bill, the following appears:—

> If you suddenly admit into society the remainder of the substandard people who have suffered abuse in many forms over more than a century down to our time, can you expect them at once to rise above their former environment?
>
> Isn't it almost sure that their sense of inferiority will be increased? Isn't it certain too that the community, with some exceptions, will be little inclined to help them to rise above their former state?
>
> Again are you not going to make the lot of these people harder than ever due to their having to compete with the more advanced, and bear as well the insults and slights hurled at them by the unsympathetic? All this has happened and exists today in Australia.
>
> As one of the proponents of the assimilation policy I believe that caution is advisable in approaching so great a change. We never believed that it could be introduced in a day; it was recognised as a long-range objective. Like many others I am with the coloured people in desiring to ensure their progress, but let it be orderly and not such as will bring them into further disrepute. It must raise the standard of all, not just a few of the most promising, though none judged worthy by the highest standards of good conduct and efficiency should be denied the fruits of his ability.
>
> The tempo of this progress can be speeded up in proportion to our desire to have it so. Social discrimination will continue as long as the native people remain far below the accepted standards in education, way of life and conduct. Eliminate these bars and colour distinctions will count but little. To declare every native a citizen now will be of no positive help; it will simply bring about a position such as exists in the Union of South Africa and elsewhere, and be the antithesis of true assimiliation.

That, I think, epitomises the arguments I have been endeavouring to weave into the debates in this House. I have suggested that much should be done in the course of the next decade to ensure the education and improvement of and opportunities for the coloured people so that there might be a greater assimiliation of them into our social order. This Bill does the very opposite to that steady progress of improvement. It seeks in one hit to accomplish something which the possessor of a trained and expert mind such as that of Mr. Neville, who has dealt with native problems for many years, says quite categorically cannot be done. In those circumstances, and having made reference to the early debates in order that I might demonstrate, I hope, my reasonableness in this matter, I have no alternative but to oppose the third reading.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [4.18]: I have already indicated that I will oppose the third reading of this Bill. When introducing the measure, the Minister referred to it as a native welfare Bill. Views were expressed from this side of the House by various members, quite a number of whom represent rural areas, where there is a large coloured population. I feel that scant consideration was given to those views. Every member who spoke said he wanted to do something to uplift the native people, but that he did not agree with the provisions of the Bill, which he honestly believed were not in the best interests of the natives. I can only reiterate that I agree with those views.

It seems that the Minister was determined not to accept one amendment to this important Bill. How he expects to get legislation through this Parliament when he adopts that attitude is beyond my understanding. Is that going to be his attitude right through with this Bill? Does he expect another place, with only a few days of the session left, to give consideration to a measure which has taken us weeks to debate? It is showing contempt for the Legislative Council to expect its members to give consideration, in a very short time, to what many members have described as one of the most important Bills brought into Parliament this session.

I would say that even at this stage it would be wise for the Government to leave the Bill until next year, because it cannot expect the measure to be passed in its present form, if it is passed at all. The Minister has clearly indicated he is not prepared to accept any amendments, so what is the use of members in another place making any suggestions or proposing any amendments? Because of the Minister's attitude, it is almost certain that such suggestions and amendments would not even be considered. This Bill has been introduced in a wrong atmosphere; and scant consideration, if any, has been given to the views of members on this side.

The Leader of the Country Party made the practical suggestion that a select committee should be appointed to investigate the whole position in regard to native affairs. Nothing but good could have resulted from such an inquiry. People in the rural areas, who are most concerned, should have had an opportunity to present their views to the Government and to Parliament. They would have been practical views gained over many years of experience. That opportunity has been denied them.

In the circumstances I feel that this measure cannot receive my support, and I must vote against the third reading. I voted for the second reading because of certain provisions that I approved; but I indicated to the Minister that unless he was prepared to accept some of the amendments from this side, I was not prepared to support the third reading. I repeat that I am quite certain that the native population will not lose anything if this Bill is not proceeded with.

It is still open to them to obtain citizenship rights. We shall continue to care for their children and we propose to house them. Additional money is being made available for native welfare. So how can they suffer in the slightest degree? Is the granting of full citizenship rights so important that it will make a difference to the lives of these people immediately? Of course it is not! I think it will be detrimental to them. I have said that several times, and I am not going to give again the reasons I think that is so.

Taking all the facts into consideration, and realising that there are only a few days left for the Legislative Council to consider this important Bill, I think it is not fair to pass it, and I shall vote against the third reading.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [4.24]: I voted against the second reading, and I desire to oppose the third reading. My electorate is one with a large coloured population; and if I felt the Bill would help them, I would agree to it. No one can say that those who have opposed this measure are not sincere, and I appeal to the Minister not to proceed with it. To my mind it has been engendered by a small section of the people through the Press. What does the Government know of the country areas, apart from the North-West? There is not one member on the Government side who resides in an area where natives live, except the one representing the North-West. And the coloured people there are entirely different from those in the south.

The idea that those of us who opposed the Bill are antagonistic to these unfortunate people is quite wrong. We would help them if we could, but this Bill will not do it. I lived with the natives as a schoolboy, and I grew up amongst them. The Bill will result in a great tragedy. Their own women have appealed to me against the citizenship rights being granted. Unfortunately the Government will not give way one iota in regard to this Bill, which has been agreed to on a party basis. I was sorry to see any members on this side vote for the second reading, because I thought there would be a solid front against the legislation which, to my mind, is a complete imposition.

The Minister for Native Welfare: You are making it political, are you not?

Mr. MANN: No. I know as much about the coloured people as does the Minister, and a bit more. He may pose as a good Samaritan desiring to help these people, but we on this side are just as anxious to assist. I appeal to the Minister to withdraw the Bill. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I cannot see how it can be dealt with in another place. If it is, it is bound to go to a conference, and I do not see how anything but a more abortive Bill could result. I suggest that measure be left over until next session. A delay of six months is not likely to affect the lives of these people. I oppose the third reading.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [4.27]: In view of the fact that I voted for the second reading, I do not want to oppose the third reading without offering some explanation. There is hardly a member who has not felt that there needs to be some readjustment of the native problem. I think that the necessity is an economic one. It is necessary for us to give the coloured people an opportunity to advance economically. I believe that to be really essential. A great many of us have not an intimate knowledge of native problems, and we have to rely on information that we gain from other sources.

I feel that the Minister and the Govment have been influenced too much perhaps by the Commissioner of Native Affairs. No one can gainsay the tremendous sympathy the commissioner has for those members of society for whom it is his duty to care, but he may be a little too close to the mirror. I may be wrong in saying so, but I believe that all his life he has been interested in the advancement of natives and he feels that they have not received from society what they are entitled to.

One can become a little too much imbued with one's own point of view when one is tremendously interested in forwarding a particular project. When I saw that section after section was to come out of the Act, I tried to consider the merits of the measure, and debate them. The section dealing with native courts was specially placed in the Act in 1936 so that the native who was influenced by the traditions peculiar to his tribe and people, should receive consideration. This, and many other provisions in the Act, have been removed.

Like the local government Bill, which was to make major changes, this is a major Bill. The Act is now to be called a welfare Act. In my opinion, it was always intended to be a welfare Act. There should have been time for the community to understand the provisions of the Bill. How many members of the general public know what is meant by the contents of

the measure? It is impossible for people, unless they are extraordinarily interested in the Bill and have copies of it, to be aware of what is intended.

A good many people, particularly those in the outback areas of the State, do not, I am sure, know of the alterations that are being made. They do not know that the need to have a permit to employ a native is being done away with. I do not know whether this is a wise provision or not. Certainly it previously gave the commissioner and his protectors some right to ensure that a native was not employed by the wrong person. I feel that the Minister has attempted to carry out the policy of the Government, and I know that he is absolutely sincere in believing that what he is trying to do is the right thing, but he may have been influenced by being too close to one point of view.

Does he know the feelings of the many people who will be living in close contact with the natives? That is what I doubt. It is that side of public opinion that I would have liked him to understand before finally determining what he considered to be the best form of remedial action to benefit these people. In the circumstances I propose to vote against the third reading.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [4.33]: I have listened—

Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order! As far as my recollection goes, the right of reply on the third reading of a Bill has always been given to the sponsor of the Bill, but I draw the attention of members to Standing Order No. 122 which seems to be clear enough. It states—

> A reply shall be allowed to a member who has made a substantive motion to the House or moved the second reading of a Bill, but not to any member who has moved an order of the day (not being the second reading of a Bill), an amendment or instruction to a committee.

The Bill under consideration is an Order of the Day, and not the second reading of a Bill, so it would appear from the Standing Order that there is no right of reply; that the sponsor of a Bill, when the third reading is the objective, has no right of reply. Seeing it has been the practice of this House to allow a reply in these circumstances, I am prepared to permit the Minister to reply on this occasion because I fail to see the reason behind the Standing Order. I propose to have it thoroughly investigated during the recess to see if we can clear up the point. It seems to me that if the Minister, or any sponsor of a Bill, is refused the right of reply when he is attacked on the third reading, he is left in a rather defenceless position. So, for the present, I shall allow the Minister to reply, but I draw members' attention to the Standing Order, and if anyone can think of a good reason why we should adhere to it, I would like him to let me know of it.

Debate Continued.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: I was a bit doubtful of the position myself, but I was going to comment on some of the remarks that have been made. The Bill has been debated exhaustively for a considerable time, and I must say that I am amazed at the remarks made by the member for Stirling and the Leader of the Opposition when they indicated that I, as the responsible Minister, was not prepared to accept any amendments. The Bill was introduced at least three weeks ago, if not a month or more.

Apart from one amendment, which I placed on the notice paper, the only other amendments on the notice paper were put there by the member for Narrogin, who saw fit to oppose the Bill. He put two amendments on the notice paper, the second of which was accepted. I explained the reasons why I, as Minister in charge of the Bill, was not prepared to accept the first. Apart from that, the member for Stirling moved last night to delete Clause 49, I think. Those were the only amendments that were submitted.

What help have we received from members who have opposed the measure? What concentration on the Bill and what amendments have they drafted to try and improve it? Anyone can adopt a negative attitude and say, "I will oppose this and that." Some members are surprised at the number of sections that it is proposed to repeal, but I suggest it is reasonable to ask any responsible member to place his amendments on the notice paper. The only amendments put on the notice paper were those of the member for Narrogin, and the first one dealt with a question of principle.

On such a question, I am prepared to stand by my principles. The Leader of the Opposition, and the member for Stirling, as Leader of the Country Party, said that this was an important Bill and it needed further attention. Well, they have had the opportunity for some weeks now to assist with their views and to place their amendments on the notice paper, but they did not do so.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Was it not a question of voting against the clauses?

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: I indicated, when the member for Stirling said he was not happy about the abolition of the court of native affairs, that that was not a vital principle in the Bill, and I would have no hesitation, if he thought the court should be retained, to

allow the necessary provision to remain in the Act for another 12 months or two years. But that is not a fundamental principle of the Bill.

For my part, I suggest to the various speakers who opposed the measure that if, between now and the next session of Parliament, a select committee were set up to inquire into the problem, there would still be that difference on fundamental principles. I do not think anyone will gainsay that point. I regret the tone of the remarks of the member for Avon Valley when he chided members on his side of the House for voting for the second reading. I indicated earlier that I hoped the measure would be regarded from the humanitarian and Christian point of view rather than that members should seek to make political capital out of it. That was the inference to be drawn from the remarks made by the hon. member.

Mr. Mann: You cannot say that.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: That is the inference I drew.

Mr. Mann: That is unjust.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: My remark is made with no intention of saying anything of an unjust character about the member for Avon Valley. The member for Stirling made reference to an article by Mr. A. O. Neville who was a member of the department for many years. He has been retired for a considerable time now, and he is an official of some society concerned with aborigines, with headquarters in the Eastern States. Mr. Neville has his ideas, and so have many other responsible people. Mr. Neville may be out of touch with the problem in this State. A man who has been mildly criticised by the member for Mt. Lawley is the Commissioner of Native Affairs, who was appointed about five years ago, after the closest investigation of a number of applications by the Government of which the present Leader of the Opposition was the distinguished leader.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think any better man could have been appointed.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: I am glad to hear that. The hon. member said it was possible that the Government had been influenced too much by the views and sentiments of the present Commissioner of Native Affairs. That is not so. The closest association has been maintained between the commissioner and myself, and the Bill represents the considered opinion of the Government after long and close investigation in the course of which, the commissioner was most helpful, as was the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman. Mr. Middleton is undoubtedly very sympathetic towards the native, and he is the chief commissioner and the legal guardian of those under 21 years of age who are regarded as natives, so he cannot be thought to be acting unfairly—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No one can suggest that.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: —if he tries to look after the welfare and interests of this underprivileged section of the community. The basic principle of the Bill is to extend the rights of citizenship to a number of people who are now denied them. Whether Mr. Neville or the member for Avon Valley has the idea that the measure will do no good, suffice to say that over the years many of the people to whom we are referring have been educated in the State schools.

They have a soul to be saved the same as we have. They are human beings and are entitled to be treated in the same way as any other member of the community. It has been said that these people will not appreciate their responsibilities, but I repeat that there are many men and women who, by virtue of their birth, have rights and responsibilities but they do not accept or appreciate them. The Bill is simply an attempt to start somewhere. It may have its weaknesses and faults, but it is worth a trial.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Has not a start been made?

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: It may have been that a start was made with the Native Administration Act, but of course, many of its provisions are outmoded. With that contention everyone will agree, and if a member sits down and takes the Bill and the Act and compares the sections and clauses one with the other, he will find that he will agree with 95 per cent. of those clauses in this measure which will repeal sections of the Act.

Hon. V. Doney: Was the commissioner in agreement with everything in it?

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: The commissioner was in agreement with many provisions in the Bill. He was not 100 per cent. in favour of it, but he agreed with many of its proposals. As the member for Narrogin knows, in the first place the Minister takes the responsibility and finally Cabinet accepts the proposal, and that procedure was adopted in this case.

This Bill is simply an attempt to extend certain basic rights to a number of people who do not now enjoy them. If the matter went to a select committee, there would be a majority report or a minority report in accordance with the sentiments expressed by various members, and the same problem would be before us in another 12 months' time.

Hon. D. Brand: That is a possibility with all select committees.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: But we would have to face up to the question, in 12 months' time, of what the Government thought was right and what members on the other side thought should be done.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Members would be more informed on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: Members have had an opportunity of informing their minds on the problem.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They have not.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: I will not go into detail on that aspect, but when another important Bill was introduced into this Chamber—it dealt with the same problems, but concerned citizenship rights—was it referred to a select committee? Where was evidence taken? From where did the member for Narrogin, who was then Minister for Native Affairs, take his cue? Did he agree to the appointment of a select committee or did he suggest that a select committee would be able to discover the attitude of the natives and the white people in rural and other districts? No. That measure was introduced and carried by the Government of the day.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It dealt with one matter only.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: A vital matter.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It was introduced as a result of experience gained.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: That is a matter of opinion. The old provision stated that a magistrate should make certain determinations, but it was altered to enable a member of the local authority, either road board or municipality, to sit with the magistrate to decide on applications; their decision had to be unanimous.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	16
Majority for	4

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Moir
Mr. Brady	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Manning
Mr. Ackland	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Yates
Mr. Johnson	Dame F. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Heal	Mr. Perkins

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (RESUMPTION OF LAND) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MARINE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th December.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [4.55]: I support this Bill because it makes provision for certain increases which I think are fully justified. As members know they pay £52 per annum into the superannuation fund and the maximum pension that a member can receive, if he is a member for 14 years and pays into the fund for the full time, is £6 a week. Under the proposal contained in the Bill that sum will be increased to £7 a week, but few members would qualify for that payment.

Then, of course, there is the other set of members who have been in Parliament for 14 years and have paid into the fund for seven years; they are eligible for a payment of £5 a week and under this Bill that payment will be increased to £6 a week. As the Premier pointed out, these amounts are payable only for a period of 10 years and then, in each case, the payment is reduced by half. There are also provisions which cover widows of members and their payments are on a proportionate basis; in such cases there will be a slight increase under this Bill.

The principal Act, since it was first introduced, has never given satisfaction. Even today the maximum sum that a member could draw is not as much as that received by a couple on the old age pension. Under the proposal in the Bill the increased amount which a member could draw would be equal only to what a married couple on the old age pension would receive—£7 a week. Yet in order

to qualify for that payment members have to pay £52 per annum into the fund and serve for the qualifying period.

In addition, under this unsatisfactory set-up, there is no certainty that a member will draw his pension unless he loses his seat or attains the age of 70 years. A member could be in Parliament for 20 years or more and if he decided to retire would have to satisfy the committee that he had good and valid reasons for doing so before he could draw a pension from the fund.

A member who has paid into the fund for a certain period should be entitled, by right, to draw his pension. The Premier mentioned that there would be a complete overhaul of this Act before next session and that overhaul is well and truly due. This is a matter that can be approached from a non-party angle and I hope that that is how members will approach it.

The Premier: It will depend, to a large extent upon the attitude of the contributors.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is so, The Premier also pointed out that this fund, up to date, has not cost the taxpayers anything. Members' contributions have been sufficient although there is a certain allowance from the Treasury and I do not think any exception could be taken to that. There is nothing more I wish to add except to say that I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th December.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.3]: It would be possible to make a long speech in respect to this Bill, but I would be ill-advised to do so at this stage of the session. I can find nothing to quarrel with in it, nor can I find anything to query seriously. I prefer to support the second reading and leave it at that.

The Premier: Hear, hear! The best speech in years!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 3 amended:

Mr. BRADY: On behalf of the member for Leederville, who is unavoidably absent, I move an amendment—

> That in line 4 of paragraph (a) after the word "Board" the words "W.A. Transport Board" be added.

I understand that Mr. Meadows has indicated some doubt as to whether the clause includes the W.A. Transport Board, and that is the reason for the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not propose to accept the amendment. If the Transport Board desired inclusion, it had ample opportunity to approach its own Minister who could have put the matter to Cabinet. I do not approve of this method of doing business. The hon. member could at least have consulted me about the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—LICENSING.

As to Temporary Facilities, Kwinana.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 1st December of the debate on the following motion by the Minister for Education:—

> That this House approves—
>
> (a) of the provision in the Kwinana district facing Harley Way in Medina shopping and business centre of temporary facilities for the purchase and consumption of liquor and other liquid refreshments as set out in the form of agreement tabled in this House on the 26th day of November, 1953, and made pursuant to clause 5 (o) of the agreement defined in section two of the Oil Refinery Industry (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Limited) Act, 1952, between the State and the Company therein mentioned and Australasian Petroleum Refinery Limited; and
>
> (b) of the completion of the form of agreement and the carrying out of its provisions.

Point of Order.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I desire to ask your guidance on a point of order before this motion is debated, Mr. Speaker. It appears that the motion should have a Message from the Governor during the proceedings at least, and, as far as I know, no such Message has been introduced up to date. I suggest it also raises the question of the position in another place, because I understand that there a similar motion has already been carried. If my point is correct, then it is questionable whether the procedure adopted could have been adopted properly.

The point I want to make is that the motion provides approval of an agreement which has been tabled. The agreement provides that if there is a loss, the company will make good £7,000, but if the loss is greater than that sum it will be made good by the Crown. In those circumstances, and under the procedure we follow, surely there should be a Message from the Governor appropriating funds which might be necessary. Section 46, Subsection (8) of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1899 reads as follows:—

> A vote, resolution, or Bill for the appropriation of revenue or moneys shall not be passed unless the purpose of the appropriation has in the same session been recommended by Message of the Governor to the Legislative Assembly.

This, of course, is not a Bill but a resolution, and there is a distinct reason under the terms of the agreement that it seeks to approve, why there should be a Message from the Governor authorising the appropriation that may be necessary. A Message is not only necessary where there is an appropriation in the measure itself, but also where its passage may result in the expenditure of Government money. So I ask for your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I find myself in agreement with the point of order raised by the Leader of the Country Party, but I will allow the debate to proceed. It will be all right so long as the debate is adjourned and the motion is not finally passed before a Message is brought to the House. If no Message is brought, I will obviously have to move the motion out of order. I would advise the Minister to consult his officers in this matter.

The Minister for Education: May I make a comment with regard to your ruling, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member dissenting from it?

The Minister for Education: I think you are wrong, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to make a few statements which, after they have been considered by you, may subsequently result in your permitting the debate to proceed, and altering your opinion. I would not desire to move to disagree with your ruling, but rather that, after you have heard what I have to say, you would give the matter further consideration.

Mr. Speaker: There is really no motion before the Chair. If the Minister for Education desires to make a point, he should move to disagree with my ruling or else have a talk to me personally at some time convenient to him. In the meantime, I think the debate might go on. If a Message does not arrive before a decision is finally taken, then the motion will be out of order. The question is: That the motion be agreed to.

Debate Resumed.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [5.13]: What will be the outcome of this particular motion if it is carried? Does it automatically give the Government or the people at Kwinana the right to have a licence to serve liquid refreshments at Medina without referring the matter to the Licensing Court? If that is so, I do not agree with the idea of bringing a motion of this description to the House.

It seems that the Licensing Court has been supplanted by Parliament in matters with which it was specifically appointed to deal. The court would be better able to deal with licences than would Parliament because of the information of changes available to it in particular areas. Liquor licences are such that we should not play around with them and this court should have an opportunity of considering whether a license should be granted. The court should consider the matter rather than Parliament.

There are many and varied views in relation to the licensing of liquor generally, and the people who are entitled to protest against licences because they do not believe in liquor should be here. This is a most undemocratic way of granting a licence to people; the churches, schools, the temperance organisations, the Police Department and everybody else is short-circuited if Parliament can direct matters of this kind by a motion of this nature.

This House has been used too often to deal with the liquor question, when the Licensing Court should be the proper authority to do so. On behalf of people not represented here today, I wish to state that I do not approve of this type of motion coming before the House when it should go before the Licensing Court.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRADE DESCRIPTIONS AND FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd December.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.16]: This Bill was first introduced in another place.

I have examined the Trades Description and False Advertisements Act and the provisions of this Bill. I also read the details of the court case which prompted the introduction of this measure. I am quite satisfied that, in the interests of manufacturers and consumers, the Bill should be passed. The amendment appearing on the notice paper in my name goes a little further and protects the manufacturers and consumers to a greater extent.

Mr. Court: It improves the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If that is so, without further remarks I support the second reading, and in Committee I shall move the amendment.

Question put and passed.
Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; Mr. Court in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 8 amended:

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move an amendment—

> That at the end of new paragraph (f) the following words be added:—"or any other reference to quality or make indicated by a label or stamp."

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Council with an amendment.

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 17th November of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—New sections 27A-27F added:

Mr. COURT: I anticipated that this debate would have been the subject of some discussion relating to proposed Section 27B and that a point would have been cleared up by the Minister. The query raised was as to whether proposed Section 27B does not create a monopoly of barley and oats for Co-operative Bulk Handling. The Minister might wish to deal with this point, or with queries from another quarter. In view of the overall provisions of this Bill, there is a suggestion that they would create a monopoly of barley and oats.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There was a previous attempt to make an absolute monopoly of the marketing of oats. Legislation was introduced accordingly, but it was rejected because it was on a compulsory basis. Although I am inclined to agree with the member for Nedlands that under the present measure there might be a monopoly, it will be a monopoly on a voluntary basis. There is no compulsion on any grower to dispose of his barley or oats through this concern. Growers are completely free to market their produce in whatever manner they desire, but if they market it through Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., which most of them will do, it will have the effect of creating a monopoly, but only on a voluntary basis.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I move an amendment—

> That in line 2 of proposed new Section 27B (1) the words "and oats" be struck out.

The way Bulk Handling Ltd. is handling oats and barley does not entitle it to patronage. The Minister knows what goes on at the stores in Fremantle, and unless some steps are taken to prevent the haphazard method of handling oats and barley in the store, I shall object to the inclusion of the words "and oats" wherever they appear in the Bill. A man by the name of Braine is in charge of this concern, and he has been able to "put it over" all the Governments for many years, and he has also done so on this occasion.

When approached a few months ago, he told the Minister that he was erecting a store, but it is a pretty big one, being 880 feet long. The conditions created by the store are a torture to nearby residents. The nuisance it creates makes the situation impossible for the people living in adjacent houses. This organisation should not be allowed to handle the oats until it has completed the store. At present, it is half completed and the produce is stacked everywhere. I suggest that the Minister should order this firm to cease its business in oats and barley until the store is completed and until it is passed by the Health Department.

I am receiving complaints daily from residents asking that measures be taken to prevent this nuisance from continuing. The Minister has power to do so, because he gave the firm authority to start, and leased the land to it, before the land belonged to the State. One can imagine the conditions created in a store 880 feet long, half completed, and produce flowing everywhere. If the firm is reasonable, it will not attempt to use the place until it is finished.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not wish to be precipitated into an argument on this matter at this stage, in view of the fact that this afternoon the member for South Fremantle gave notice of a motion which is to be debated at the next sitting. By then I should be able to get all the facts and to ascertain the extent of my powers with regard to the store at Fremantle. I do not know what they are at the moment. The member for South Fremantle feels that I, as Minister, have power to order a cessation of work down there.

Hon. L. Thorn: You might be liable for damages.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And the company might be liable, too.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Frankly, I should not care to live in any of the houses adjacent to that building. I do not know whether the conditions are unhealthy, but they are certainly uncomfortable, and I do not blame the hon. member for taking all steps to bring the matter under notice. On Monday I shall ascertain the extent of my powers. The amendment, however, will have no effect on the menace at Fremantle, but will merely prevent the growers of oats from engaging in voluntary marketing under the provisions of the Bill. I think it is a little ridiculous for the hon. member to express himself as he has done on this measure.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Fremantle has given notice of a motion having reference to this matter. His remarks anticipate discussion on his motion.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Are you ruling that I may not discuss the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: No, but the hon. member is anticipating discussion on a motion of which he has given notice and he is not in order in following that line of argument.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Then I shall have to move to dissent from your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: I have merely ruled that your argument in favour of the deletion of the words is anticipating a motion of which you have given notice. Any other arguments may be submitted and the hon. member is at liberty to discuss the Bill.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I claim that I have the right to discuss any matter mentioned in the Bill. Because I have mentioned oats somewhere else, am I not permitted to mention oats here? I shall soon have oats on the brain.

The Premier: Or Braine on the oats.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Braine has certainly got the oats in the silo at Fremantle.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no reference in the Bill to a silo, but there is in the motion of which the hon. member has given notice.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am not talking of silos; I am talking of oats. I want the reference to oats cut out of the Bill. If there is no other way of dealing with the matter, progress should be reported until my motion has been discussed.

Hon. D. Brand: If barley is put there, it will be just as dusty.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Well, we can deal with barley when we come to it. It might be worse than oats, but if so, all I can say is God help the people down there!

Amendment put and declared negatived.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Divide!

The CHAIRMAN: As there was only one voice for the Ayes, there cannot be a division.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The clause proceeds to deal with oats in bulk. When in bags, the danger is not so great. It is all very well for the Premier to laugh, but how would he feel if oats were flowing into his home through windows and doors? The health of the people at North Fremantle is being affected and the Minister has known of this for a week. I have been told that everything will be all right by Christmas, but the building will not be completed by then. Emergency doors facing the backyards of the adjacent houses are being put in.

The Minister for Agriculture: Leave the matter until next Tuesday.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I have left it since last week and we are now no nearer a solution.

The Minister for Agriculture: I shall be in a better position to discuss the matter next week.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Will the Minister give me an assurance that something will be done? Why not tell Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to cease operations until the building is completed?

The Minister for Agriculture: I must be sure of my ground before doing anything like that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am not asking too much in requesting that operations be stopped until the building is completed. If it is to be completed by Christmas, what harm can be done? I am satisfied that it will not be finished by Christmas. If the Minister will give me an assurance—

The Minister for Agriculture: Next time I give you anything, it will be on paper.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Last March we were told that the company was going to build, not a silo but a shed, and I thought

it would be a shed for tools. Would anyone have expected a silo 880ft. long? Now the Minister says he will give me information on paper in future. If he does, I shall have something definite. The Minister told two members of another place that Mr. Braine had said the structure was to be only a shed. Yet my people down there are gradually being tortured to death. Unless the Minister gives an assurance that something will be done on Tuesday, I shall have to move the adjournment of the House.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th November.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [5.45]: I support the measure but do so with certain reservations as there are some features of it I wish to criticise. As regards the first provision, I can only agree that it is necessary to have some authority empowered to decide on bus stops and enforce its decision. I appreciate the necessity for the measure from the road safety angle and, as the Minister said when speaking on the second reading, some people believe that it is better for a bus to stop after crossing an intersection than immediately before crossing it. I agree that that is sensible from the safety angle.

Another aspect is the necessity to facilitate the flow of traffic. There again I think it would be better for the bus to stop after having crossed the intersection. One can see every day buses stopping right up on the corner of an intersection and in those circumstances one can only make a left-hand turn with some trepidation because, when turning in front of a stationary bus, one knows it is likely to pull out at any time.

I do not think it is advisable to leave the decision relating to bus stops entirely with the Transport Board, or with an officer of that board who would be empowered to make recommendations or decide on bus stops. It is all very well to say that officers of the Transport Board are reasonable people who will do their duty without prejudice, but we know that when dictatorial powers are given to any individual, it is possible that no one will be happy except the officer concerned.

If the measure is agreed to in its present form, the board—virtually an officer of the board—will have power to decide on bus stops throughout the metropolitan area. I do not argue against an authority being set up for that purpose, but the method set out in the Bill does not meet with my approval. The Minister said that bus stops are at present fixed amicably by an arrangement reached through a committee consisting of representatives of the Transport Board, the Police Traffic Branch, the local authority and the bus operator concerned, and he added that the system had been operating reasonably satisfactorily.

The Minister said the alteration proposed in the Bill was due to the fact that the committee had not the power to enforce its decisions and I appreciate that point. But, if the present arrangement has been satisfactory to all parties concerned, why should the composition of the committee be altered?

The Minister for Transport: I did not say a committee had been set up.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Minister said the bus stops were decided by an amicable arrangement between those interested.

The Minister for Transport: That is different from setting up a committee.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I am sorry if I have not made myself clear, but I understood the Minister to say there had been set up this unofficial committee.

The Minister for Transport: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Minister referred to representatives of the bus operator, the traffic branch, the Transport Board and the local authority concerned.

The Minister for Transport: I did not say that at all.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Minister said that was how bus stops were decided on at present. I remember that quite well.

The Minister for Transport: You cannot remember that I said there was a committee set up, because there is no committee.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I called it a committee for want of a better word. I was not aware of the arrangement until the Minister mentioned it in this House, and I interjected during his speech and he told me that if I had been listening earlier I would have heard how the system worked, and then he explained it again for my benefit. Twice in his speech he said how it was worked out now, and if that method has been satisfactory, why is it necessary to alter the system and give the Transport Board the sole responsibility?

I believe that in the City of London the method of selecting bus stops is virtually the same as that which has obtained here. I am told that a representative of Scotland Yard, which is responsible for traffic control in London, a representative of the equivalent of our Transport Board and

one of the local governing body concerned, meet, together with a representative of the bus operator, and arrive at a decision.

When the Bill is dealt with in Committee, I intend to move the amendment which appears on the notice paper in my name and which seeks to set up a committee with powers that the Bill would give the Transport Board. That committee is to be comprised of a representative of the Transport Board, a representative of the Commissioner of Police and a representative of the bus operator concerned. The Police Traffic Branch is responsible for administering our traffic laws and is regarded as the authority on the handling of traffic, so surely officers of that department are the most competent people to decide where buses should stop in order to ensure the maximum of safety for bus passengers and the other traffic on the road.

The bus operator should also be represented and given a voice on the committee even if he has no vote because he operates the service, is familiar with the background of the district and knows the preferences of passengers as regards alighting from or boarding the bus at various points. I do not think it is necessary to explain why a representative of the Transport Board should be a member of the committee as that body is responsible for road transport throughout the State. I do not know why the board wants sole authority in regard to this question because I do not think it is any more qualified than is the Police Department to handle traffic or decide questions relating to traffic control and safety.

During his speech the Minister said, "The board did not wish to be dictatorial. Its desire is to work in with the Traffic Advisory Committee as well as the Police Department." If the Minister's advisers on the board were sincere in that regard, I can see no reason for any objection to a committee such as I have outlined. In Committee I hope members will agree to the amendment I have on the notice paper because some authority should be constituted to decide where these stops shall be. I do not think the board should have the sole power. It should be in the position of having to act as a result of a recommendation made to it from other interested parties. That is the set-up in England and it has operated very well up to now. Therefore, I trust the Minister will see fit to accept that amendment.

The other amendment which I propose to move is the one which will make it mandatory for the board to grant a licence to any road haulier who wishes to transport goods over any distance within a 35-mile radius of the G.P.O., Perth. At present a road haulier is permitted to operate over distances within a radius of 25 miles from the G.P.O. If he wishes to transport his goods over a distance of 35 miles, it is mandatory on the board to grant the licence. The Minister, in commenting on this amendment, suggested that, if agreed to, it would result in a loss to the railways of £20,000. I cannot agree with that. I assume his figures are correct, but the Minister probably meant that it would mean a loss of £20,000 in revenue.

The Minister for Railways: I told you that outside the House; that is where you got your information from.

Mr. OLDFIELD: In my opinion, if a road haulier were permitted to operate over a distance of 35 miles from the G.P.O., it would probably mean a saving to the Treasury, especially when we consider that the railways have to stop at many small sidings over that distance from Perth, such as Mundaring and Werribee. Operating over that distance the other way, that is, towards the South-West, the trains would have to stop at such sidings as Keysbrook. Therefore the type of country that is to be embraced within that radius is, to a great extent, undeveloped and the class of goods transported to and from those areas could be handled more expeditiously and carried more cheaply by road than by rail. Therefore, I think that the amendment I propose will be a good provision. It is a step in the right direction.

The transport of goods by road is reaching such proportions that inevitably, sooner or later, we must bow to it and allow road transport to make further inroads into the transport system of the State. I also trust that the Minister may, in the Committee stage, see fit to agree to the amendments which are on the notice paper in the name of the member for Stirling. Those amendments propose to permit a road operator not only to haul goods within a radius of 35 miles from the G.P.O., but also over the same distance from the outports. I cannot see any reasonable objection being raised to that proposition.

It would be rather unreasonable to permit a road haulier to operate over distances within a 35 mile radius of the G.P.O., Perth, which would enable him to pick up goods from a ship at the Fremantle wharf and carry them to their destination, and then refuse him a licence to operate over a similar distance from the ports of Albany, Geraldton, Bunbury and so on. At those centres a road haulier could pick up goods from the ship and deliver them to their ultimate destination in the outlying parts.

Even now it is left to the discretion of the board to grant a licence to permit a road haulier to transport goods over a distance of 35 miles from the port if he makes application accordingly. If the goods are to be transported only 35 miles from the port, I do not think the board would insist that they should be hauled

by rail instead of by road transport to some small siding where they would be loaded on to motor lorries in order to carry them on to their ultimate destination. Therefore, I consider that the amendment proposed to be moved by the member for Stirling is quite reasonable. Nevertheless, I would like to see the amendment widened to embrace all outports because at Carnarvon and other North-West ports members are fully aware of the volume of goods that have to be transported from those centres.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The Act does not go beyond the 26th parallel in respect of this restriction.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I was under the impression the Act covered the whole State. Perhaps my information is wrong. Licences are needed by operators operating from Carnarvon, Wyndham or Albany if they travel more than 25 miles from their locality. An operator working from Carnarvon is allowed 25 miles free of permit, but after that he has to take out a licence. It could happen when there are two operators in a district up North that both apply for a permit to travel 25 miles, and one operator may be granted it but not the other.

Mr. Norton: The only licences I know of are those covering the journey from Carnarvon to Geraldton.

Mr. OLDFIELD: My information may be incorrect. If so, I apologise. I hope the Minister will see fit, during the Committee stages, to accept the amendments of the member for Stirling. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 15th December, 1953.

CONTENTS.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

BILL—TRADE DESCRIPTIONS AND FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; Hon. H. Hearn in charge of the Bill.