

Standing Orders that if the Title of a Bill does not encompass an amendment that may be made during the passage of the Bill, the Title may be altered to include such amendment, provided it is within the subject-matter of the Bill and the Order of Leave to introduce the Bill. The subject-matter of this Bill concerns the submission of questions to the people through a referendum dealing solely with the abolition of the Legislative Council and the franchise for the Council. There is nothing whatever in any clause of the measure dealing with the relationship between the two Houses, so that the amendment introduces matter foreign to the subject-matter of the Bill. For that reason I had no option but to rule the amendment out of order.

The member for Mt. Marshall, in his second reading speech, made remarks which support my ruling. He said that he could find nothing whatever in this Bill dealing with the relationship between the two Houses. Those were his own words; and the Leader of the Opposition, by interjection, said, "No, because it is not there." I therefore claim that out of his own mouth the member for Mt. Marshall has upheld my case.

Mr. Speaker: I have no hesitation in upholding the ruling of the Chairman of Committees. The amendment is outside the scope of the Bill.

Committee Resumed.

Amendment ruled out.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.39 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 4th September, 1946.

	PAGE
Questions: Milk—(a) as to re-licensing of Frank Petricevich	619
(b) as to tests and examinations	619
Bills: Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 3a., passed	620
Medical Act Amendment, 2a., Com.	620
Transfer of Land Act Amendment, 2a., Com., report	624
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 2a.	625
Railway (Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe) Discontinuance, 2a., Com., report	626
Milk, 1a.	628
Electoral (War Time) Act Amendment, 2a.	628
Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment (No. 2), 2a., Com., report	628

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

QUESTIONS. MILK.

(a) *As to Re-licensing of Frank Petricevich.*

Hon. J. G. HISLOP asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Has Mr. Frank Petricevich been re-issued with a license to sell milk? If so, will the Minister obtain from the Milk Board all facts relative to the revoking of his license, the prosecution and the subsequent granting of a new license to Mr. Petricevich, and lay them on the Table of the House?

2, If a license has not been re-issued to Mr. Petricevich who is purchasing the milk he is now producing, and for what purpose is it used?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, The Milk Board has been unable to obtain evidence that Mr. Petricevich is selling milk.

(b) *As to Tests and Examinations.*

Hon. J. G. HISLOP asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Will the Minister lay upon the Table of the House copies of the results of all bacteriological and other tests carried out on milk samples during the last 12 months by the Public Health Department, and obtain similar reports from the Perth City Council and lay them also on the Table?

2, What number of examinations of milk involving the use of the phosphatase test

have been carried out during the past 12 months?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

1, Yes. The required information will be laid on the Table of the House as early as possible.

2, None.

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.37]: This Bill, small as it is, raises some large questions. The purport of the measure is, I think, designed to remove any injustice that might have fallen upon one individual medical practitioner. I have said before that I do not like Bills that have the intention of affecting only one person, unless some real injustice has been done to that person. There possibly is a definite injustice here, but if one alters the situation one might create a feeling of injustice in other minds.

I take it there is no doubt that the Bill is aimed to assist Dr. Herz, who is now practising at Derby and was formerly practising at Nannup. Dr. Herz was, I think, at the Shanghai Hospital, where he held a senior post. After many adventures he escaped from there and came to Western Australia, where, for a time, he served with His Majesty's Forces. It was then found that he could not remain in the Forces, and he was appointed under the Emergency Medical Service—which was a medical service introduced by the Commonwealth as a wartime measure under the Wartime Medical Co-ordination Regulations—and he practised at Nannup where he did an excellent job. After his time at Nannup expired—mainly owing to the fact that the man who had previously been practising there was soon to return from the Forces—Dr. Herz decided, after consultation with the Public Health Department, to undertake work at Derby.

The Bill seeks to say that the time Dr. Herz spent with the Emergency Medical Service at Nannup shall count as portion of the years that he would have to spend in

Western Australia under the Regional Registration Act in order that he might, if the Minister so wished, at the end of that time receive his medical registration. It probably would be unfair to say that the time Dr. Herz spent at Nannup should not count towards that period of seven years, but there are certain difficulties. The Regional Registration Act was a wartime measure. It was introduced owing to the fact that so many medical men were joining the Services that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find medical practitioners for outlying country districts, which necessarily had to be protected. The measure antedated by a certain short period the measure that the Commonwealth introduced to meet such contingencies and circumstances and which gave rise to the establishment of the Emergency Medical Service that functioned throughout Australia.

The terms of employment in these two sections were very different. A man appointed under regional registration would receive a guarantee from the Public Health Department that his total gross income would reach £600 per annum. I think this is one of the blots on our wartime measures, because it is impossible for any medical man to conduct his practice on a total income of £600 gross and at the same time to live decently. When one realises that such men would have to run their motor cars over long distances in areas declared as regional zones, to maintain their surgeries and live as medical men should, on a totalled guaranteed subsidy of £600 per annum, one will appreciate what it meant. Later, after considerable protest, the amount was raised to £750—still grossly inadequate. I doubt whether men in the country districts on a gross income of £750 per year would earn the basic wage or maybe but a little more.

What were the conditions applying to men who were employed under the Emergency Medical Service? They were remunerated at rates varying with the time of service but, in round figures, it may be said that the payment was in the neighbourhood of £900 to £950 per annum as salary, while all expenses were met by the Commonwealth in connection with the conduct of the practice. That was a very different position. The difference between the two systems was that under regional registration

there was hung out a promise that at the end of seven years the medical practitioner might, at the discretion of the Minister, receive his registration in Western Australia. The man under the Emergency Medical Service was given no guarantee whatever with regard to his registration. We are asked, under the Bill before the House, to say that the time Dr. Herz spent under the improved conditions of the Emergency Medical Service should count in his seven-year period.

I can say emphatically that there were occasions when, acting as executive officer of the Medical Co-ordination Committee, I recommended that men who were being paid these inadequate subsidies should be transferred to the Emergency Medical Service, but this request on my part was always refused by the department. There were, I admit, certain difficulties in that these men would have had to pass the examination of the Commonwealth National Aliens Registration Board. If they had passed that examination—I think most of the men we were employing would have done so—they would have enjoyed very much better conditions of employment with the Commonwealth in the Emergency Medical Service. They were deprived of that right by having had hung before them the promise of registration. If we desire to be fair to one, we must be fair to all.

If we wish to accord Dr. Herz the right to have the time he spent in his better employment included in his seven-year period, are we being completely fair and honest to the others? I very much doubt it. I would not like to see anything withdrawn from Dr. Herz that this measure seeks to provide for him, because I think he has earned it, but I believe we are getting into considerable difficulty with regard to the whole question of the employment of alien doctors. I have protested time after time that we are employing alien doctors at salaries less than we could employ our own Australian men, simply because those medical practitioners are aliens.

There was a time at the Royal Perth Hospital when we appointed Dr. Rosenstein. His original salary for the radiological work he did was about £600 per annum. That amount was increased later, but I forget to what exact figure. At present, we have another alien doctor on the

staff of the Royal Perth Hospital—Dr. Lubbe. He is held in the highest respect by the whole profession, and just recently he gave me personally considerable evidence of his knowledge and worth in the field in which he practises. We pay him about £700 or £750 per annum. We could not employ any Australian medical man with similar qualifications under double that salary.

Hon. A. Thomson: Shame!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: We are just playing with this problem, and we are employing these people at the salaries paid to them simply because they are aliens.

Hon. A. Thomson: In plain English—sweating.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The whole question calls for review. I would ask the Minister to hold this Bill up while an inquiry is held concerning the position of alien doctors in Western Australia. Let me give members some indications of the absurdity of the present situation. At Fremantle there is Dr. Giacone, who formerly practised in St. George's-terrace prior to the war. Dr. Giacone was apprehended on the very first day Italy joined in the hostilities, and he spent the whole of the war years in confinement under military supervision. At the present moment he is perfectly free to continue his practice in Fremantle. At the same time, other men holding Italian degrees were able to continue in practice simply because there was nothing actually against them.

Let us look at the men who are at present employed under regional registration conditions. We have the case of Dr. Greer, who was for a considerable time at Meekatharra. He found that the climate of Meekatharra did not suit either himself or his wife—both had come from the cold climate of Austria—and so eventually he asked to be transferred. He is now on the staff of the Wooroloo Sanatorium, that hospital having been classed as a regional area in order that Dr. Greer might be employed there. But Dr. Greer is a specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology. He holds the degree—if I remember rightly—of M.D., Vienna, year 1923. He cannot practice except in a declared regional area. But we have the example of Dr. Einihovič who, if I remember rightly is M.D., Pavia, year 1924. He is able to practise in St. George's-

terrace as an ear, nose and throat specialist because he came to the State a year or so before Dr. Greer arrived.

The curious anomaly of all this is that the only two countries with which the Medical Board had reciprocity prior to the war were Italy and Japan, two of our enemies. If a man had an Italian or a Japanese degree and came to Australia prior to the war, and presuming that the Military Authorities had no evidence of his involvement in Fascist tendencies, he could continue to practise. While one man with the degree of M.D., Vienna, could not practise, another man in an outer suburb with the degree of M.D., Rome, 1930, could look after the practice of a returned soldier and eventually buy it from him. The whole thing is getting more and more ludicrous every day. I can assure members that while these doctors are on registration, we have a man holding a Tokyo degree practising in the State and we could not stop him from practising, because the Medical Board had reciprocity in registrations, pre-war, with both Japan and Italy. Dr. Ross, who holds the Tokyo degree, is practising now at Waroona.

The Chief Secretary: Is there anything wrong with that degree?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Nothing whatever, but I am pointing out that in my opinion we are getting in a big muddle over the whole matter. Dr. Ross can practise here. If it is good for one man to practise, then it is good for the other to practise, if it is only a matter that one man got here a year or so before the other. What is the reason why one shall not practise and the other shall? The whole thing comes back to the way in which the degrees are recognised. Personally, I would like to see—I do not know whether the whole of my profession would—some of these men, who have done a very good job during the war, registered here. Dr. Herz, now at Derby, Dr. Lubbe, at the Royal Perth Hospital, Dr. Greer at Wooroloo, Dr. Schlafrig at Kondinin, and Dr. Samuel at Kununoppin, all deserve our sympathy. I suggest to the Minister that he might at this stage hold up the Bill with the idea of seeing whether we cannot be fair all round, and whether it is not possible to give these men registration within the State.

I admit certain difficulties may arise. If we give these men registration, we might find that other States may grant registration to alien doctors, and there have been aliens in the Eastern States who have not met with approval. There is no reason why Queensland cannot tomorrow register its aliens; the moment it does so, those aliens could leave Queensland and settle in Western Australia, because we have reciprocity with Queensland. That is exactly how the man with the Tokyo degree came to Western Australia. He came from Queensland, where he was registered, and his Queensland registration had to be accepted here. The difficulty will increase. There should be, in my opinion, a Commonwealth-wide proposal in regard to these alien doctors. Nevertheless, I think we could meet the men who have come here and given excellent service during the war period. They should have the right to practise here. I do not think we would be doing any grave injustice to anybody; certainly we would be doing justice where some injustice has existed in the past.

My suggestion, therefore, is that this Bill, which will meet one small difficulty, should be reviewed in the light of the whole situation of alien doctors in Western Australia. At the moment I understand there are only about 30 of our men to be demobilised. The majority of these are men who have stayed in the Army of their own choice, or young men who have not previously been in practice. An increased number of men will be wanted, and there should be no difficulty in absorbing these five men. Any Bill that might be introduced, however, would have to make perfectly certain that we did not throw this State wide open to all alien doctors who have worked in Australia or elsewhere, to come and settle here.

We must protect our own men at the same time as we talk about dispensing justice. If, after due inquiry, it is felt that it would be against the interests of our young men to register these aliens, then we should reconsider our entire attitude to the matter. Simply to extend this privilege to one man is wrong, and therefore I hope the Minister will accept my plea on the ground that I desire to extend the privilege to those who deserve it, if we can possibly do so, while at the same time doing justice to the men practising in the

State and to our students who are still to come.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [4.57]: It would be a very great injustice to Dr. Herz if we postponed this Bill until an inquiry was held with a view to doing justice to other alien members of the profession. A Commonwealth inquiry might take many months. I congratulate Dr. Hislop on the views he has expressed, which practically coincide with my own. No-one knows better than I the injustice done to aliens in this State during the war. I should imagine that the B.M.A. could exercise a tremendous influence on anything proposed to be done in this matter. If the association would lend its assistance, we could rapidly overcome the difficulties and allow these good men to practise freely here.

Every alien doctor whom Dr. Hislop has mentioned has rendered good service. In my opinion, every person who has rendered good service to the State, no matter where he comes from, should be given every opportunity to enable the people of the State to have the benefit of his knowledge and experience. Nevertheless, I would ask the House to disregard Dr. Hislop's request, as I think that if we postpone this measure, a considerable time would elapse—some months—before we could do anything at all in the matter. I ask the House to pass the Bill and so recognise the splendid service that the doctor concerned in the measure has rendered.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 11:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No-one apparently knows anything but the Honorary Minister.

The Honorary Minister: I did not say I knew everything.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That has been the attitude for so long that I am getting tired of it. I have been put off before by statements such as those just made by the Honorary Minister, and I am not taking it. This

is a Bill that concerns only one man. We should tackle the problem as a whole and not fiddle with it. It is time all this fiddling ceased. My experience is that even if I receive a promise that something will be investigated, that is usually as far as it gets. This time I ask for a promise that the whole problem will be looked into, and for an assurance from the Honorary Minister that before the end of the session this matter will be dealt with by an inquiry the result of which will be brought before members. On that assurance I will raise no further objections to the measure.

If the Honorary Minister cannot give me that assurance I will vote against the third reading. This sort of thing should not be allowed to go on. There are other men besides Dr. Herz who have given good service in this State. If certain privileges are to be extended to that man they should also be extended to others who have given just as good service. This particular doctor has lived in comfort compared with the conditions under which others have had to exist in the back country. In one instance a doctor in the backblocks became ill but had not sufficient money in the bank to provide a locum to look after his practice. He had to appeal to the Health Department to finance him. If the assurance I have asked for is not forthcoming I hope the Committee will hold up the Bill.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I could not give an assurance of the character asked by Dr. Hislop, but I will refer the matter to the department. I am of opinion that the B.M.A., which has representation on the Medical Board, should also make representations on the subject. So far as I am concerned, the matter will receive every possible consideration. I know of distinguished men who were in the Army in this State peeling potatoes when they could well have been rendering valuable service to the community in their own way of life. It would be doing an injustice to the doctor in question if the Bill were not passed. If the B.M.A. will render assistance we can readily rectify the situation so far as other alien doctors are concerned. The necessary action would not take long, whereas if an effort were made to secure Commonwealth-wide action in this matter, several months would elapse before anything could be done.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What is the urgency about this?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I suppose the doctor in question is waiting to know his fate.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: This particular doctor is in a most unfortunate position.

The Honorary Minister: Why not help him out?

Hon J. G. HISLOP: There is no reason why we should not do that, but not at this moment. He still has to wait another two or three years before he can apply for registration. Dr. Herz went to China under what is known as the quota system. As he was not actually registered in China as a medical practitioner, he cannot be registered in Australia; furthermore, there is no reciprocity between China and the Commonwealth. Similarly, he cannot go back to China because he was not included in the official registrations when he was there. He is virtually homeless except for the registration area in which he works at Derby, and he cannot secure local registration under a matter of two years. I object to this concentration on one man when others are also entitled to consideration and have also done good service. The Bill should be held up until the entire problem of aliens in this State has been settled. The best way to deal with this matter is to call for an inquiry. It would not take long for the B.M.A. to make up its mind what could be done in this matter.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: How long would it take?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It could be done at one or two meetings. The legislation could then be extended to meet the whole position as it was found to exist. Whilst the present situation endures we are using a man at the Royal Perth Hospital at half the pay that another man would feel he was entitled to. Doctors are now coming out of the Army and there is an increased number of students from the University. If men are going to outback areas they should be going there only because the conditions appeal to them and not because they are obliged to go.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to note that the matter before the Committee is an amendment to Section 11. He cannot make another second reading speech.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am advised that there is only one doctor left in Western Australia coming under this particular scheme, and there is some difficulty in regard to reciprocity with respect to that man. Originally there seemed to have been eight doctors concerned, and now there are only four, and of these only one is an alien, I understand, namely, Dr. Herz. The National Security Regulations expire at the end of December. If this Bill is not put through before then the doctor in question would not be able to practise.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: If Dr. Herz is practising under the regional registration Act then he is practising under our own Act and not under the National Security Regulations. The question of the 31st December being the last day on which the National Security Regulations can be applied does not enter into this case. There are four other men to whom I referred in my second reading speech. They are all equally affected by this legislation.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will report progress so that the matter may be cleared up.

Progress reported.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.14]: I offer no objection to the passing of this Bill but would like to draw attention to a matter that was brought under my notice last week. I should like to be informed whether the Torrens Act was supposed to amend the Transfer of Land Act. I find that two of my constituents have to pay considerable sums of money, very much more than they would under the ordinary Transfer of Land Act in connection with certain properties in which they are interested. Apparently there were some old blocks held by a family, but owing to deaths in that family the blocks had to be transferred to those who were entitled to them. When it came to arranging the transfer, those concerned found the method employed was most expensive. While offering no objection to this particular measure, I

would like the Minister to say whether it is possible to bring the whole of the land in Western Australia under the Torrens Act, instead of having to go back to the old conveyance system which was in existence, and which was most costly to those who had to get land transferred to them.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [5.15]: I will have that matter inquired into and will notify the hon. member of the result.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

**BILL—STATE TRANSPORT
CO-ORDINATION ACT
AMENDMENT.**

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [5.17] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill which I think will receive the enthusiastic support of members representing the North-West. The Bill, as its Title indicates, seeks to amend the State Transport Co-Ordination Act, 1933-1940, by extending the jurisdiction of the Act; by exempting aircraft from the necessity of being licensed when used for the purpose of medical transport; by providing the Transport Board with discretion to exempt certain other vehicles from being licensed; by repealing and incorporating in the Act the provisions of the Road Transport Subsidy Act, 1937; and for other relative purposes.

The Bill is another step forward in the Government's aim to provide Western Australia with modern and adequate transport services, without which we must inevitably lag behind our more closely populated and prosperous neighbours. The Government holds the opinion that citizens living in the more isolated areas of the State are equally entitled to access to modern methods of transport as are those dwelling in urban surroundings. There is no doubt that the person whose livelihood has required him to live in outback districts has had to suffer numerous difficulties caused by inadequate transport facilities.

The vastness and lack of development of these areas and their sparse population have in the past rendered the transport problem one of exceptional difficulty. But the future in this regard has now a brighter outlook. The gradual progress in mechanical matters that has been manifested for many years received considerable acceleration in the war years when scientists on both sides were required to solve many pressing problems connected with transport. The fruit of their labours is now benefiting the cause of peace and has helped in the Government's decision that the time is now opportune for the alterations contained in the Bill.

The first of the amendments provides for the repealing of the Road Transport Subsidy Act, 1937, which authorises the Transport Board to grant subsidies for road transport and for the provision of landing grounds for aircraft, these subsidies to be paid out of the Transport Co-Ordination Fund which is constituted under Section 59 of the State Transport Co-Ordination Act. The incorporation of the repealed Act in the principal Act is done per medium of Clause 8. It is considered that as the provisions of the Road Transport Subsidy Act are administered by the Transport Board, and all payments are met from a fund authorised by the State Transport Co-Ordination Act, those provisions should properly be included in the latter Act and should not be the subject of a separate Act.

Clauses 3 and 4 provide by far the most important amendment in the Bill, and one which should have far-reaching beneficial effects. The proposal is that the jurisdiction of the Transport Board shall extend throughout the whole State and not, as now, cease at the 26th parallel of latitude. When the Act was brought into operation in 1933 its main function was deemed to be the preservation of the railways from competition by privately owned transport services. Therefore, in view of there being only one railway in the north, it was not considered necessary for the board's authority to reach beyond the 26th parallel. It might appear that the Act would have restrictive influence on transport, but this was more than neutralised by its giving the board power for the introduction of new services where needed, and for the

organisation in the most practicable manner of road and air transport.

As members will be aware, the board has been responsible for the commencement of new services where organised transport facilities did not exist, and, where necessary, it has subsidised services in order that reasonable freight rates might be charged. The experience acquired in connection with the establishment and co-ordination of new services should be of the utmost value to the board when, if it is given the authority to do so by Parliament's approval of this Bill, it tackles the problem of transport facilities for the north. The Government is fully aware that there are far greater difficulties to be overcome in the north than have been encountered in the south in respect of transport, and it therefore intends that the board, if the Bill be passed, shall completely investigate the position in order that the most suitable methods of transport can be put into operation.

I need hardly stress the fact that any scheme having as its object the development of the north must include the provision of adequate and reliable transport facilities, co-ordinated in such a manner as to give the greatest possible service to residents. I mentioned that the conditions appertaining to the north differ from those experienced in southern areas, and the fact that these would require to be taken into consideration. The Government had this in mind when framing the next amendment, which provides that the board may, by proclamation in the "Government Gazette," exempt any vehicle or class of vehicle from the licensing provisions of the Act. To lay down a hard and fast rule of this nature for the north is not intended, and the necessity to obtain licenses will be confined to those cases where it is considered in the interests of the public to do so.

As the Bill extends the authority of the Act beyond the 26th parallel it is necessary to repeal Section 45 of the Act which deals with the licensing of aircraft whose operations are confined to the area south of the 26th parallel. In its place is inserted a new section providing for the licensing of all intrastate aircraft with the exception of those used for purposes of medical transport. This proviso differs from that included in the repealed section, inasmuch as it specifically exempts medical transport from the need to

be licensed, whereas the section to be repealed covers aircraft operating in cases of special emergency, a description which is so indefinite as to cause considerable confusion.

The next amendment exempts vehicle operators north of the 26th parallel from compliance with Section 48 of the Act, which limits the hours of driving to eleven daily, or 5½ hours continuously. In the north where driving hours are governed by local conditions, such as the long distances between settlements, a stringent rule of this nature cannot be applied.

The last amendment repeals Subsection (2) of Section 60 which governs disbursements from the Transport Co-ordination Fund, and inserts two new subsections in the Act. No material alteration of existing provisions is involved, and with the exception that the section, as amended, is tabulated for the sake of simplicity, the only effect of the amendment will be to embody in the principal Act those provisions in the Road Transport Subsidy Act, which is repealed by the Bill, at the same time repairing what appears to have been a previous omission by including the power to subsidise air, as well as road, services. Knowing the interest that members of this Chamber have evinced in the development of the north, and their desire to make conditions there attractive enough to retain and increase the population, I feel sure that this Bill will have the support of members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—RAILWAY (HOPETOUN- RAVENSTHORPE) DISCONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [5.26] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill that has been found essential in view of existing circumstances and the necessity of using elsewhere the material contained in this line. The intention of the Bill is to bring to a close a project that had as its aim the development of the Ravensthorpe district. This scheme, which through unforeseen circumstances did not meet with the success anticipated, entailed the construction in 1909 of a railway from Ravensthorpe to the port of Hopetoun, a distance

of approximately 34 miles. The line, of course, could not be connected to the main railway system of the State, which in those days was too far distant for such a connection to be economically sound. Although in later years the main system was extended eastwards, the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe line remained a separate entity, as, in view of its lack of success, the expense of connection was not warranted.

At the time of the opening of the line in 1909 it seemed apparent that Ravensthorpe's future as an important mining centre was assured. The ore in the district, apart from its gold content, was found to contain other minerals, and smelting works operated extensively for some years. Unfortunately, however, through the presence in the ore of these other minerals and also base metals, a pretty scientific test was set as to how the gold content could be extracted. This was a problem that proved almost insuperable and has been the main factor in the decline of mining activities at Ravensthorpe. A certain amount of agricultural activity has also taken place in the district, but the railway traffic returns from this source were at all times unsatisfactory.

From the commencement of operations on the line until activities completely ceased in 1935, a loss of £166,925 was sustained. Over the last 10 years of its life, that is, from 1925-26 to 1934-35, the average annual earnings of the line were only £1,412, whilst working expenses averaged £3,610 and interest £4,906, resulting in an average annual loss of £7,104. These figures also take into account the earnings and working expenses of the Hopetoun Jetty, which was under the control of the Railway Department until its transfer in 1935 to the Harbour and Light Department. The loss incurred on the line is undoubtedly high, but, in addition to the factors I have already mentioned, experience has taught that the cost of operating a small detached line of this description is far greater than that of working an equivalent section of the main system.

In 1930, following a personal inspection of the district by the then Commissioner of Railways, it was decided to close the line except during a period of three months annually when superphosphate and wheat would be carried. This action, which was taken as from the 1st April, 1931, met with no objection from any section of the people of the district, who were apparently well

aware of the necessity to stem the increasing loss of public money. In subsequent years the quantity of wheat and superphosphate for transport steadily decreased until, in 1935, it was necessary to keep the line open for this purpose for only seven weeks.

On the 1st July, 1934, the State Transport Co-ordination Act came into force and, following a thorough investigation, the Transport Board, as empowered by the Act, recommended the complete closure of the line. This was done, and in its place the board put into operation a road service, which has evidently proved satisfactory, as no complaint against its adequacy has been received. Since 1938, when shipping ceased to call at Hopetoun, the road service has catered for all the transport requirements of the district.

All rollingstock and equipment of the railway line have been removed and utilised on the main system, but rails, fishplates and telephone poles remain of an estimated value of £22,820. It is believed that this material can be recovered at a cost of £8,945 and made use of on the main system. This would be of the utmost value in view of the present shortage of materials. In order that this may be done, parliamentary sanction is required and is sought by this Bill, which authorises the discontinuance of the operation of the railway and the removal of all recoverable material. One effect of the passing of the Bill will be the relief that will accrue to the Railway Capital Account of the total indebtedness of this line, which at present amounts to £79,026.

I feel sure members will offer no objection to the Bill. Should it again be necessary in the future to provide this district with a railroad service, it would be far preferable and little more expensive to construct a new railway from the nearest siding on the main system than to repair and use the existing facilities. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—MILK.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—ELECTORAL (WAR TIME) ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.38] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to continue the Electoral (War Time) Act, 1943, for a further period of 12 months, which will expire on the 31st December, 1947. It also seeks to amend the Act so that its provisions will apply to Western Australian electors serving with the Armed Forces in Japan and Borneo, and to make other amendments now considered necessary.

The Act provides for the exercise of the franchise for Legislative Assembly elections by qualified members of the Forces not resident in their electorates, the duration of the Act being 12 months. Continuance Bills have been passed each session and thus the authority of the Act has been extended until the 31st December, 1946. Under the present wording of the Act, members of the Forces serving in Japan and Borneo cannot register votes for the forthcoming State elections, and the first amendment is designed to give them this privilege. The Act defines a qualified member of the Forces thus—

A member of the Forces who is not under the age of twenty-one years and who is serving with any unit within Australia or outside Australia but within that portion of the South-West Pacific Zone as may be proclaimed from time to time under the provisions of section four of the Commonwealth Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Act, 1943.

That would preclude a man serving in Japan or Borneo from exercising a vote, and therefore it is necessary to bring those two countries within the scope of this legislation. It is expected that, when the elections are held, there will be approximately 1,000 Western Australians stationed in Japan, and a substantial number in Borneo.

The second amendment will bring the Act into line with the Legislative Council (War Time) Electoral Act, 1943, under which votes may be recorded before commissioned and non-commissioned officers appointed by the Commanding Officer. At present the Electoral (War Time) Act provides for the recording of votes before commissioned officers

only and the Chief Electoral Officer is strongly in favour of the amendment.

The Chief Electoral Officer has advised that, at the last elections, no votes were recorded under the authority of Sections 17 and 18 of the Act, which enabled a discharged soldier not resident in Western Australia to exercise his vote provided he was not enrolled for an electoral district in any other State. The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that these sections be repealed, together with Section 20 which refers to the same matter. The repeal of these sections will not affect the right to vote of a discharged member of the Forces who is resident in Western Australia and who is not enrolled as an elector but is qualified to vote by virtue of Section 5 (c) of the Act.

The Allied Works Council and the Civil Construction Corps have been disbanded, and consequently the provisions of Sections 23 and 24, which relate to voting by persons employed by those organisations, need not be re-enacted. The Bill, therefore, provides for the repeal of those two sections. We propose to repeal also Section 25 which relates to objections to claims for enrolment. The Chief Electoral Officer and the Solicitor General report that this section is redundant, as its subject matter is fully covered by Sections 47 and 48 of the Electoral Act. This explanation of the proposals contained in the Bill, I trust, will prove satisfactory to members. —

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.45] in moving the second reading said: The necessity for the introduction of this small Bill has been brought about by the discovery of an error which occurred when the Act was amended in 1940. That amendment, which repealed Section 5 and provided a new section in its place, makes it necessary for every manufacturer or importer of any manufactured food for stock and any by-product, to apply annually to the Department of Agriculture

for registration of the food and by-product and, inter alia, to detail the minimum percentages of crude protein and crude fat and the maximum percentage of crude fibre contained in the article.

When the necessity for the 1940 amendment was being studied by officers of the Department of Agriculture it was obvious that so far as meatmeals were concerned the maximum percentage of crude fat and not the minimum percentage should be stated when registration was applied for. A knowledge of the maximum percentage is essential, as with a concentrate rich in protein such as mealmeal, a high percentage of fat will adversely affect the digestibility and biological value of the crude protein. Therefore it is vital that the maximum percentage of crude fat in meatmeals should be subject to control, and not the minimum content. However, owing to an oversight, the 1940 amendment provided that the minimum percentage of crude fat in all stock foods, including meatmeals, should be shown. This Bill seeks to rectify that error by an amendment to the Act, which provides that where meatmeals are concerned the maximum percentage of crude fat shall be stated when applications for registration are lodged.

The necessity for this amendment has been emphasised of late owing to a controversy that has arisen regarding the value of certain stock foods, concerning which buyers have requested knowledge of the chemical analyses. It is therefore imperative that, with meatmeals, a check be kept on the maximum content of crude fat, in order that the protein content is not affected, and as this Bill, if approved by Parliament, will ensure that such a check is available, I feel that no opposition will be expressed in this House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 5.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 4th September, 1946.

	PAGE
Questions: New Causeway, as to preparatory work, design and cost	629
Soldier land settlement, as to properties purchased and options	630
Galvanised iron, as to shipment to Eastern States	630
Water supplies, as to Mt. Barker scheme	630
North-West residents, as to relief from taxation	630
Bills: Nurses' Registration Act Amendment, 1B.	631
Milk, 3A.	631
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, returned	638
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 2A.	640
Road Districts Act, 1919-1942, Amendment, 2A., Com., report	642
Business Names Act Amendment, 2A., Com., report	652
Legislative Council Referendum, Com.	655
Motions: Sewerage, as to pans and septic tanks in sewer areas	639
State hotels, as to use as community hotels	643
Public Works standing committee, as to legislation for appointing	648

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

QUESTIONS.

NEW CAUSEWAY.

As to Preparatory Work, Design and Cost.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Works:

1, What stage has been reached with the reclamation work preparatory to the construction of the new Causeway over the Swan River?

2, When is it anticipated that this work will have progressed sufficiently to enable a commencement to be made on the construction of the Causeway itself?

3, When is it expected that the new structure will be completed?

4, What is the anticipated total cost?

5, Will he give some details of the design and general features of the completed work?

The MINISTER replied:

1, A Priestman Grab is excavating a passage way and constructing a bank as a necessary preparation work for operation of the suction dredge. When river conditions are suitable, possibly in October, the suction dredge will be taken underneath the navigation span of the Causeway and dredging operations commenced.

2, Not less than six months after the suction dredge commences operations.