

tralia is worse off in that respect than any other State in Australia. The Civil Service housing conditions existing here would not be tolerated in some parts. I intend to give a qualified support to the Bill, but in Committee will move amendments along the line I have indicated.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—"Clause 2, delete paragraph (ii), of the proposed new proviso."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment of the Council is to delete the paragraph which states that any proclamation issued by the Governor under Clause 2 may be revoked by a subsequent proclamation. I have since consulted the Crown Law Department to find out whether the power given under the Act could be exercised so far as the area outside the five-mile radius was concerned. At present, the five-mile radius is sufficiently controlled by the Act. The Bill now before us extends that area by proclamation at the request of the local authority. In the opinion of the Solicitor General, the parent Act deals only with the five-mile radius over which the company has power to operate, and, if a proclamation were issued concerning the additional area it would, in his opinion, be irrelevant. Power to revoke the proclamation is therefore included in the Bill. That has been struck out by the Legislative Council. The rights of the local authority are more important to us than the rights of the company. Therefore it is our business to protect the rights of the municipality or the road board, as the case may be. The Solicitor General states that whereas the Act does make provision for the taking over of the works by the municipality, in his opinion it would not have that effect when dealing with the municipality or road board unless in that territory. Therefore his advice is to keep the proviso in and thus give the Governor-in-Council the right to revoke the proclamation.

The safest thing from our point of view to protect the local authority is to retain the right to revoke the proclamation. Under the original Act the Fremantle municipality is protected, but that is not so in the case of added territory. It is my intention to disagree with the member of the Legislative Council. I move—

That the Council's amendment be not agreed to.

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

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Mr. Doney, the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Works drew up reasons for not agreeing to the amendment made by the Council.

Reason adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 15th December, 1937.

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

QUESTION—CROWN LAW OFFICERS.

Agreements with Crown.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Are there agreements in exist-

ence between the Crown and Messrs. J. L. Walker and A. A. Wolff, officers of the Crown Law Department? 2, If so, will the Chief Secretary lay all papers in connection therewith on the Table of the House?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, As to Mr. Walker—No; except that the Public Service Commissioner when classifying Mr. Walker's office for the first time in March 1930 stipulated that increments of salary should progress over a period of seven years from 1st March, 1930, because regulations made no provision for salary increments above £1,200. As to Mr. Wolff—No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Honorary Minister and read a first time.

BILL—BUSH FIRES.

Third Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [4.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time. In reply to Mr. Thomson who raised a point yesterday regarding the gazettal notices, I have to inform him that the usual procedure will be adopted. The local authority will make application to the department for dates to be gazetted for the burning-off period.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.36]: I would like to ask the Minister if consideration was given to the point I raised with reference to the inclusion in Clause 16 of at least some reference to the proviso that was inserted in Clause 14.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [4.37]: Clause 16 provides a penalty to be imposed upon those who wilfully or carelessly set fire to the bush with deliberate intent to do damage, and therefore the proviso is not necessary at all. It has nothing whatever to do with Clause 16.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Imposition of tax:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This House finds itself in a very unfortunate position. We have little control over the tax Bill, to which we can, of course, request the Assembly to make amendments we desire. We can amend the assessment Bill over which we have some control, for it is there that we can assert our rights. We can do very little regarding the taxing Bill. It is unfortunate that first of all we had the direct challenge from the Premier who threatened this House with what would happen if we did not do this or do that. Then there was the attitude of the Chief Secretary last night who threw out a challenge and dared members to do their duty. He said that if we did not agree to what was proposed, the Government would lose £500,000. That is a responsibility of the Government, not of this House. Our responsibility is to the taxpayers. We have to see that Acts of Parliament, whether they impose taxation or deal with other matters, bear equally on all sections of the community. We can do our duty when considering an assessment Bill, but one is not before us. The Leader of the House told us yesterday that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to amend the assessment Act. The intention of the Government is very clear. It is to put the tax Bill before us as we have very little control over it, and then, when the Bill is passed, introduce a measure to amend the assessment Act, to which we shall have to agree, because of what has been included in the tax Bill. Are members going to submit to that? It will be remembered that last session a compromise was arrived at whereby this House agreed to the exemption, provided that the assessment Act would be amended to agree with the tax Bill. The Government then said that it was not going to amend the assessment Act, but would use the tax Bill with whatever exemption it liked to start at. I warn members that if they pass the Bill before them they will create a precedent, seeing that they will arrive at such a determination without any assessment Bill before

them. If they adopt that course, it will mean that for the future they will entirely lose control over the taxation, because of the precedent established. The position is not right. The Leader of the House will probably be a member of this Chamber for a long time, and the day will come when he will wish to deal with the assessment Bill instead of having the matter taken out of his hands when the tax Bill is being dealt with. So that we do not render this Committee impotent in regard to taxation, I ask the Chief Secretary to report progress until such time as the assessment Bill is brought down and dealt with. Failing that, I do not see why the Committee should give way on that subject. I ask the Chief Secretary to report progress.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I think the Chief Secretary last night gave us an assurance that the assessment Bill would be brought down in order to rectify the difference between the taxing Bill and the assessment Bill. That being so, the point now raised seems to me to be more or less covered by that assurance of the Chief Secretary.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** We are told by Mr. Baxter that this Committee is in a most unfortunate position. If that be so, I accept no responsibility whatever for it, but I place that responsibility mainly on the hon. member himself.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Thank you.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** This Committee had an opportunity to deal with the assessment Bill and it took full advantage of that opportunity. It was very definite indeed in its decisions, and not only in its decisions, but in the statement made by the hon. member and those who supported him. As the result of the attitude of this Committee towards the assessment Bill, the Government decided that it would introduce the tax Bill in a way that would meet with the policy of the Government in exempting the basic wage earners of the metropolitan area and of the South-West Land Division. As pointed out by Mr. Seddon, I told the House last night that when this Bill had been passed, another assessment Bill would be introduced and brought down to this Chamber. As a matter of fact, I expect that that other assessment Bill will be introduced in another place this afternoon. I do not like the idea that any assurance given by me to this House or Committee is in any respect doubted.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I want you to report progress now.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** I am not going to report progress. This is not the first occasion when members have expressed themselves in such a way as to imply that although the Leader of the House has given the House an assurance, there might be some hitch in that assurance. When I give the House an assurance, I mean every word I say. I do not know of any occasion when the House has found that I have not carried out any assurance that I have given. There is in the Bill before the Committee nothing that is different from what was in the Bill last year, except that we propose to commence the tax at £3 17s. per week instead of at £3 15s. per week. When the hon. member suggests that it was on account of the application that this House compromised last year, I think he is stretching the matter a long way. We had the same experience last year and in previous years as we have had this year, the House expressing itself against the exemption of the basic wage earners. It seems to be futile to go once more over the whole of the ground, but that is the position. As for any statement I made last night, I then expressed to the House the policy of the Government on this particular point, namely, that the Government had determined that the exemption this year must cover those people who have been exempt during the last three or four years. That can only be done by starting at a point that will give a reasonable margin over the basic wage.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Notwithstanding the opinion of this House!

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** Notwithstanding the opinion of this House. The House indicated clearly that it was going to endeavour to compel the Government to impose the financial emergency tax on people who have been exempt from it during the last three or four years, and the Government says it is not going to do it. That is the position and, notwithstanding Mr. Miles, the Government is not likely to recede from that position.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I do not know that the Council should recede either.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** There is nothing more to be said on it. The Bill before the Committee makes the tax begin at £3 17s., instead of at £3 15s. When this Bill is disposed of, the assessment Bill will

be introduced to bring the two measures into uniformity.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Bludgeoning us into accepting it!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is a rather strong word.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will withdraw it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Very well, I will withdraw it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I might have introduced similarly strong or even stronger terms as to the attitude of the House on the assessment Bill, but I think I was very moderate in my remarks. However, there is no use spending time in going over the whole of the ground again, repeating arguments for and against. I have tried in a reasonable way to convey the attitude of the Government. Therefore the position, as I have already outlined it, is the position that the Government stands by.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Chief Secretary takes a wrong point when he says the Committee doubted his word. I do not think that Mr. Baxter or any other member of the Committee doubts the Minister's word. But the point is that the Government wants to get the tax Bill through first and let the assessment Bill come along afterwards. I suggest that the Government would do well to bring down the assessment Bill first.

Hon. T. Moore: Would you then agree to it?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not say so. The assessment Bill, we are given to understand, fixes the amount at £3 15s. per week, but if we pass this tax Bill the new assessment Bill will not be worth anything. I suggest that the Chief Secretary report progress until that assessment Bill comes down.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Chief Secretary says the House is to blame for the position that has arisen. My reply to that is that the House or the Committee is quite within its rights in this connection. I do not wish to labour the question, but the Chief Secretary says that when the Bill now before us is decided upon, he will bring down an amendment of the assessment Bill. But what will be the use of the assessment Bill then, for that Bill will be made to coincide with this Bill? This House has some control over the assessment Bill and should retain its control. But this is an attempt, knowingly or unknowingly, to undermine the rights of the Legislative Council by

first bringing down the tax Bill and then telling the Council that they can have the assessment Bill afterwards. I think the Chief Secretary has yet to learn that he can lead me, but cannot drive me a single inch. The assurance he gave the House last night was that he would introduce the new assessment Bill, but as to what that Bill will contain he will tell us after we have passed the Bill now before us. With all due respect to the Chief Secretary, I say we should take up the attitude that we are not going to pass this Bill until we see the assessment Bill. If I say that, it is not intended as a reflection on the Minister, but we should ask that we have a look at the assessment Bill before we pass this tax Bill. I hope the Chief Secretary will report progress on this Bill until we see the assessment Bill, after which of course, in view of the festive season, we shall all be quite satisfied.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I feel sure that notwithstanding what may take place in this House between now and the festive season, I am not at all likely to take umbrage at what members may say on this Bill, because they have already said as much as they can say on the first assessment Bill. There can be no difference about the point to be considered.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is so, but you may have a majority of the House with you on that, although you will not get me.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This House indicated its attitude very clearly on the assessment Bill and now the Government has sent down the tax Bill to provide an exemption for £3 17s. per week. That is the only point not consistent with the assessment Bill, where the amount given is £3 15s. per week. While Mr. Holmes tells me that he is prepared to accept my assurance, he says, "Let us have the assessment Bill and see what is in it." I have already told the Committee that the assessment Bill will be brought down and will make the two amounts conform. There is no more in it, yet the hon. member says, "Let us have the assessment Bill and we will consider it." Members might just as well consider that point now. They have already rejected the original assessment Bill, and a conference also rejected it. The only point is whether there is to be an exemption of £3 15s. or an exemption of £3 17s. This Committee can indicate

whether it is going to agree to the £3 17s. I again tell the Committee that the only point to be determined is that which I have already mentioned, and there is no reason at all why the Committee should not come to a decision now. There is no need to wait until some future time if members are prepared to accept my assurance that the assessment Bill will be in conformity with this one.

Hon. T. Moore: Of what use would it be if it did not conform?

The CHAIRMAN: I point out that the clause is not under consideration. In my opinion the proviso to Clause 3 should not appear in the Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No member of this Committee doubts the assurance of the Chief Secretary. The point before us, however, is whether we are going to give away one of our established rights. If we do, we shall lose our control in the future. That was the main point last year. The Government said it would not amend the Tax Assessment Bill, but we insisted that it should be amended, and it was. The assessment Bill is the one that we deal with in this Chamber, and only then do we deal with the tax Bill.

The Chief Secretary: You have already dealt with that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, we dealt with the basic wage. The important thing to us is that we shall not give away one of our established rights. In the circumstances the Chief Secretary has forced me into a position I have never yet had to occupy whilst in this Chamber. I move—

That the Chairman do now report progress and ask leave to sit again at the next sitting.

The CHAIRMAN: There can be no debate on that motion.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	10
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	7
				—

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. H. V. Piessie
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. J. Mann	(Teller)

NOES.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Sedden
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. Fraser
	(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendment made by the Council for the reason set forth in the schedule.

BILL—HOUSING TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [5.10] in moving the second reading said: The Bill proposes to amend certain provisions of the existing legislation governing fee simple tenures, and payments by fee simple purchasers under the Housing Trust Act. It is also proposed to perpetuate the name of the donor whose generosity was responsible for the creation of the Trust, by amending the citation of the principal Act to the "McNess Housing Trust Act." The Housing Trust commenced operations in 1930, with an original capital of £5,000 donated by Sir Charles McNess. The Trust was constituted under the principal Act, for the purpose of providing homes for persons such as the aged, indigent, or the permanently incapacitated, who had no reasonable prospect of acquiring houses out of their own resources. To-day, the operations of the Trust are State-wide. Its capital now amounts to £27,449 19s. 6d., and includes an additional gift of £2,000 from Sir Charles McNess. It is made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Gifts from Sir Charles McNess	7,000	0	0
Appropriation by Parliament from Commonwealth Unemployment Grant	15,000	0	0
Grants from Lotteries Commission to 30th June, 1937	5,400	0	0
Donation collected by citizens of Capel	49	19	6
Total	£27,449	19	6

The Trust deals with applications for cottages under two sections, namely, free life tenures, and fee simple tenures. Approved applicants under the free life tenure section have the right to reside rent free in the cottage provided by the Trust, subject to certain obligations, which include payment of fire insurance on the dwelling house, and the observance of proper conduct. Under the fee simple tenure section, an approved applicant purchases a cottage at its capital cost, on an undertaking to pay £1 ls. 8d. monthly in discharge of his obligation. From these payments are appropriated insurance, rates and taxes, and maintenance charges. The balance is then applied towards the reduction of the capital cost. I understand that the type of cottage provided under both sections of the Act is a four-roomed weather-board house, with front and back verandahs (the latter accommodation a combined bathroom and laundry), and an iron roof. The average cost of the cottages is about £340. To date 105 of these homes, providing housing accommodation for 509 persons, have been erected. Of these, 24 were allotted under free life tenure, and the balance under the repayment section. Cottages to the number of 52 have been provided in various metropolitan suburbs, while the balance have been erected in 29 country towns ranging from Northampton to Albany. Members can well understand how the operations of the Housing Trust have relieved the anxiety of many unfortunate and deserving people, and enabled them to be as contented as is possible in their unfortunate lot. While the Act has functioned very satisfactorily, the Trust has under its notice two cases which have revealed anomalies in the existing legislation. The Bill proposes to remedy this condition. The first proposal relates to a certain provision governing fee simple tenures, which stipulates that if a purchaser who has resided in a cottage for not less than five years wishes to retire from his agreement, the board shall repay to him the whole of that portion of his monthly payments which has been applied towards the capital cost of the cottage. In this connection, the Trust has drawn attention to the case of an applicant who received assistance in 1931. At that time the man was unemployed as a result of the depression. Today he is a partner in a contracting firm in the country, and appears to have consoli-

dated his position, having built houses for the Workers' Homes Board, as well as for other private people. This contractor has left the house provided by the Trust, and now demands a refund of his principal which, he states, he will use as a deposit on the purchase of a home privately. The Trust points out, however, that it was never intended that its funds should be utilised by persons whose financial circumstances have improved to the extent of this man, to enable them to purchase more pretentious residences. As matters stand, the Trust has great difficulty in obtaining funds, with the result that there is a large number of deserving applicants on its lists for whom homes cannot be provided. The Trust considers it inequitable that it should have to meet the demand of an applicant who has had the benefit of a home for his wife, children and himself, free of interest, for a rental of some 5s. per week. I think members will agree that there is point in the Trust's contention. Provision has therefore been made in the Bill, which will enable the Trust to exercise a discretionary power when considering applications of this nature. With this power the Trust will be able to consider making refunds to deserving people forced to give up their homes through no fault of their own. The Housing Trust also desires power to demand payment of the whole of the outstanding purchase money in respect of fee simple tenures, where the financial circumstances of purchasers have so improved that they are in a position to acquire a home privately. Further, power is desired to terminate the agreement when the purchase money is not so repaid, in order to enable them to re-allot the cottage to another deserving applicant. This request of the Trust has been prompted by the case of a woman, who as a widow with a family was originally allotted a home under the fee simple purchase plan, and who has now re-married. I understand the husband is in regular employment. Not only does he earn a good wage, but he also owns a freehold home. Since his marriage he has let the freehold home to a tenant, from whom he draws a profitable rental, and now lives with his wife in the Housing Trust cottage, which they occupy for the payment of 5s. per week. Needless to say, the Housing Trust does not desire a repetition of similar cases which might arise as a result of purchasers attaining compara-

tive affluence, either through the fortuitous acquisition of money, or through obtaining lucrative employment. The Trust considers that the outstanding principal should be repaid immediately in order that further building may be proceeded with, or failing that, the house should be re-allotted to one of the deserving applicants on the waiting list. The Bill makes provision accordingly. Further, it vests in the Housing Trust discretionary power to grant a refund to the purchaser. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 14 (c) principal Act repealed and new paragraph substituted:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The clause provides for granting relief to a purchaser in circumstances such as those related by the Minister. I notice it is provided that on granting an application under this paragraph the Trust may, in its discretion, refund to the purchaser so much of the instalment already paid, less the prescribed charges for rates and taxes, maintenance and administration, if any. I am impelled to think that there are more than rates and taxes and maintenance and administration in connection with the property. I perceive the advantage there would be in a case of hardship when one desires to give the Trust some power to meet that hardship so as to refund as much as possible of the amount paid. Without some statutory power, the Trust would not be able to do that. But the property might have been occupied for a long period and there might be considerable depreciation. The applicant has had the advantage of occupancy, and in some cases it might be a fair thing to prescribe or require payment of interest over the period of occupancy. There is no provision for that at all. I realise there are circumstances where one wants to be most liberal and refund the absolute maximum; but on the other hand there are also cases where, whilst relieving the applicant, it might be necessary to make some further charges in the way I have indicated.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The clause meets the position adequately. These houses are kept in remarkably good condition, and sometimes assistance is rendered by charitable organisations to keep them in good order. The place would be maintained up to the standard required by the Workers' Homes Board, and in the course of years a fair amount would have been paid on the property. Then something might happen to compel the occupant to leave the district, or he might die, and, if the case is deserving, and all charges have been met, the amount paid would be refunded.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If a property has been occupied for a number of years, there would naturally be a certain depreciation, and there is no provision in the Bill for that depreciation. Suppose a man had occupied a house for 15 years, then the material of which the house was built would be that many years old, and obviously it must have deteriorated. There is no provision in the Bill to meet that factor. Under the Bill the house would be taken back and let to someone else. Would the new occupier be charged the same price as the original purchaser was charged? If that is done, the new occupier will not be getting a fair deal; but if the house is sold to him for less than the original purchaser paid, then the Trust will make a loss. If we are to make a refund to the purchaser, we are entitled to retain from the refund an amount for depreciation in order to establish a fair deal between the Trust, the original purchaser and the new purchaser.

Hon. A. Thomson: What do you consider would be a fair amount?

Hon. H. SEDDON: It would all depend on the property. I would say 3 per cent. in the case of wooden properties.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I expect this scheme would be governed by the same procedure as is adopted in respect to all the homes under the Workers' Homes Board. If anything happens to a leaseholder under the Workers' Homes Board the property is re-valued. If an equity were established the person entitled to it would get it, but if there were no equity the person would not get anything.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Minister has explained what happens in connection with workers' homes, but I presume that losses on the workers' homes become a charge on the general revenue. If there is a loss in con-

nection with this Trust, through depreciation of value, how is that to be made good? Is the amount originally prescribed to be written down, or how is the position to be made good?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is a self-contained scheme and any losses would be borne by the Trust itself. Up-to-date there have been no losses.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is a remarkable scheme, and I do not think we will find its like in any other part of the Commonwealth. The original object of the donors of the money which forms the nucleus of the fund was to provide that certain deserving persons might occupy a decent, although cheap house, free of any charge. The principal Act provides that all the work necessary in connection with this Trust insofar as the matters mentioned in the Act are concerned, shall be carried out free of charge by the various Government departments. For instance, Section 6 of the principal Act provides that "any services, administrative, technical and clerical, including the preparation of plans and specifications, the calling for tenders, the general supervision of building operations, the preparation and execution of documents, the collection of instalments under agreements made under this Act, and the general inspection and supervision of cottages necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, shall be performed by the several departments of the Public Service free of charge to the Trust." The tenant then occupies the house without being called upon to pay any rent. There is another section which states that any tender accepted for the building of any one of these houses shall not exceed £250 without the express approval in writing of the Trust. Section 11 deals with life tenures, and under that section deserving persons may be granted the right to occupy the premises free of rent and the payment of any kind for life.

Hon. J. Nicholson: This particular clause deals with the purchase of the property.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am coming to that. Section 15 provides that deserving persons may be enabled to purchase a fee simple cottage, which would be one of the cottages of which I have spoken, by making regular payments of instalments of £1 1s. 8d. monthly to the Workers' Homes Board, which is collecting these amounts. That is roughly 5s. per week. It can be understood

that at the end of 10 or 15 years' occupancy by one of these persons, who might then desire for some reason to leave it, the cottage would have suffered a certain amount of depreciation. It would not be worth as much as originally. The Trust now desires on account of one or two cases which have come before it that when a person leaves a cottage, if there is any equity—and it could only be small in any event—as between the payment of rates and taxes and other charges mentioned in the Bill and the amount which that person has paid during his occupancy of the cottage, he should have that amount refunded. To be able to meet cases of this kind the Trust requires the authority contained in the Bill. If the depreciation referred to by Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Seddon is to be taken into account the probability is that there will be no equity whatever based on the selling value of the cottage at that particular time, that is, after 10 or 15 years' occupancy. The cottage would, however, be in good condition, because I know of no other cottages that are kept in as good order as are these. Consequently an incoming tenant would not be disadvantaged by virtue of the fact that the Trust had made a refund to the previous occupant. If hon. members would read the whole of the principal Act they would realise that there are many safeguards. The Trust has to use its discretion in these matters, and this clause gives the Trust the power to do what is set out if it feels such action is warranted. If we are going to give the Trust permission to select tenants to occupy these houses free of charge or to enter into an agreement to purchase them for £1 1s. 8d. a month, surely it is not asking too much for the Trust to be given the power to use its discretion in the matter of refunding to particular individuals the small amount that has been spoken of as an equity, though equity may not be the correct term.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I want to give the Trust this discretion, but I do not want to put it in a false position. A man who is giving up a property may say that he is entitled to £50. The Trust may reply that he is entitled to only £40 because the property has depreciated £10. The man may take the Trust to court asserting that Parliament has allowed only for the deduction of rates and taxes, maintenance and administrative costs, and not depreciation. If the

word "depreciation" were inserted in the clause the Trust would still have the discretion to decide what charges it would make, and it would be protected in the event of a dispute. I move an amendment—

That in line 14 of paragraph (c) after "taxes" the word "depreciation" be inserted.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is no great objection to the amendment, except that a man may get nothing at all as a result of it.

Hon. H. Seddon: That is at the discretion of the Trust.

Hon. T. MOORE: The clause states just the reverse of what Mr. Seddon said. The words used are "so much of the instalments" and not "all the instalments." Nothing will be gained by altering the clause which is perfectly clear if it is read correctly.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. H. SEDDON: The same argument applies to this clause, but I do not think it is worth pressing.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—ELECTRICITY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.49]: I am sorry if I interfered with the Chief Secretary's plans when I moved the adjournment of the debate last night. That was only the second occasion on which the Bill had been before the House and, as it is a highly technical measure and important to the whole of the State, I considered it should receive ample and careful consideration. In my opinion it is a pity that such a Bill

should be introduced so late in the session. It certainly does not give members much opportunity to consider all the proposals contained in the measure. Personally I would like to see it deferred until next session. The Minister said the Bill was necessary to prevent people from buying and erecting obsolete plant from the Eastern States, but a short Bill of one clause would have achieved that object. The Bill deals principally with local authorities, but there are many private concerns generating and supplying current in different parts of the State. Will those people be told by the board or committee how much may be charged for current? Price fixation by such a committee would appear to be a very dangerous practice. In any event, there are many factors of a local nature, as well as matters of finance, etc., that would necessitate prolonged investigation into every proposition under consideration. If the committee is purely technical, it will not be competent to deal with financial matters, and vice versa. Apart from the effect that the proposed powers may have on local authorities, they would place private enterprise in a very difficult position. Some of the towns where private concessions have been granted are Harvey, Greenbushes, Waroona, Pinjarra, Capel, Mandurah, Katanning, Balingup, Bruce Rock, Bridgetown, Narembeen, Wyalcatchem, Carnamah, Three Springs, Mingenew and Mullewa. In addition there are many others, so that private enterprise has invested a considerable sum of money in providing electric current in this State. I do not consider that any change in the machinery of established power plants should be insisted upon until replacements are necessary. Thousands of pounds worth of electrical machinery would have to be discarded by users of current when large generating plants were converted from direct to alternating current. For instance, every motor, whether small or large, would have to be replaced. This is only one item, but it would be a very costly matter. If, for the purpose of economy, the Government intended to set up a large scheme to absorb many small ones, then the Bill would be a different matter. As it is, wide powers are sought and it is proposed to ask the other fellow to pay. If the Bill passes the second reading, I hope the Minister will agree to hold

over the Committee stage until the next sitting of the House. It is a fairly lengthy measure and I feel sure that at this stage many members have not had an opportunity to examine the clauses and propose amendments. I am surprised that there have been so few speeches on the Bill, especially as it will affect the whole of the State. Perhaps that is due to its being somewhat technical and difficult to understand, and probably it is partly attributable to the desire to rush the business through. The Bill will be a very serious matter for the State as a whole and I am strongly of opinion that it should not be rushed through.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.54]: With the preceding speaker, and some previous speakers, I feel that it would undoubtedly be desirable if the Bill could be deferred until next session so that full investigation could be made into a matter that undoubtedly is of a highly technical nature. There is much to be said in support of the suggestion to defer the Bill. When we consider what its passing will mean, we must recognise the need for time being given for its consideration and for consulting those likely to be affected, in order to ensure that the requisite provisions are imported into the Bill so that industry will not be stultified in any way. The Acts at present on the statute-book will be repealed by the passing of this Bill. The first Act in relation to electricity was passed many years ago and has stood the test of time. I recall that that Act gave the power to local authorities to do certain things without the consent of the Minister. For example, the granting of licenses to concessionaires was the duty of the local authority. True, under a later Act, the consent of the Minister was required in certain circumstances, but I am dealing with the ordinary granting of licenses. The Bill proposes the appointment of a board that might become beneficial because of the great advance that is being made in electrical development. The board, consisting as it apparently will, of men possessed of expert knowledge, will doubtless be of great assistance to the Minister, but might not it be desirable for the board to be selected from those whose interests will be affected particularly by the passing of the Bill? I join with other members in the remarks made on certain provisions of the Bill, particularly Clause 11, and the absence from it of any stipulation whatever that an allowance shall

be made, in calculating the cost of current, for interest, depreciation and obsolescence. These are items which I think should be taken into account. On this very subject I recently received a letter from a firm of chartered accountants in Perth, which, if the Bill should happen to pass into Committee, I would take the opportunity to read. I do not want to weary hon. members by reading it now, and having to read it again in Committee. The letter clearly points out that the deduction of these charges should be included in the Bill. That has not been done. I am glad to see by the notice paper that an amendment will be proposed to rectify that. In looking at the old Act I observed that it contains a provision with regard to penalties for various offences. It is provided by the Act that the penalties may be divided between the informer and the department concerned. The relevant section is No. 65, which reads—

Subject to the provisions of this Act one moiety of all penalties imposed by this Act, where the application is not otherwise provided for, shall be paid to the informer, and the other moiety for the use of Her Majesty.

We are aware that that section has been affected by the Fines and Penalties Appropriation Act of 1909, under which in certain cases the whole of the fines pass over to the Crown. However, exceptions are made in the case of fines and penalties incurred and recovered under any law in force for the time being relating to the sale of fermented or spirituous liquor, or incurred under the provisions of any Act or by-law relating to local government, or incurred under any Act administered by a local authority, or fines and penalties which shall be paid to the local authority within whose district the offences are proved to have been committed. As this is a matter in which local authorities are largely interested, it might be desirable to consider the preservation of the power, which is not carried into the Bill. I merely refer to the matter, not being particularly desirous of moving in that direction. I favour something being done to provide an allowance for depreciation and so forth. Certain other provisions of the Bill, if it should go into Committee, will require further consideration. At this stage, if the Minister is still desirous of proceeding with the Bill, I shall offer no objection to the second reading, though I certainly think it would have been better, in all the circumstances, to give the opportunity that should be afforded

to persons whose interests will be affected by the passage of the Bill to study it a little longer, and also an opportunity for members to ascertain whether or not those interests will be adversely affected.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [6.5]: I support the second reading, and in doing so desire to congratulate those responsible for the drafting of the measure. It is an excellent Bill, well put together, and one that should prove beneficial throughout the State. Unlike Mr. Tuckey, I am not at all afraid of the advisory committee which is to be set up having the right to decide. In fact, I am pleased that the Bill contains such a provision, because I believe it will afford protection to large numbers of local authorities which do not generate their own current but purchase it from other local governing bodies. It will be a safeguard for those people to know that they cannot be overcharged because of some advantage enjoyed by an adjoining district. The point exercising my mind, and one which I hope the Minister will deal with in his reply, is the position of local bodies which to-day have contracts for the supply of current. Will the passing of the Bill and the establishment of the advisory committee give power to override existing contracts? I do not expect that will be the case, but it is just as well that the point should be decided before the measure is enacted. Another somewhat similar point is that quite a number of local authorities to-day have contracts for electric current which will run out in the course of 12 months or two years. Will the advisory committee then have power to step in and regulate the price, or to do anything that may influence the contract? I have in mind a particular local body which has a contract with a certain distributing body for a number of years. That contract will terminate in the course of the next two years, and a further contract will have to be negotiated. Would the advisory committee have power to step in then and make it necessary for the local body purchasing current to enter into a contract with some new authority? Those are the chief points about which I am concerned. I have no doubt the Minister will deal satisfactorily with them when replying.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [6.9]: The Chief Secretary in introducing the Bill informed members that it was a highly important measure, one

that should be given close study over the week-end. Those who have examined the Bill will agree that it is important; in fact, so important that it should not be rushed through as will happen if it is further proceeded with at this stage. During the week-end I endeavoured to get into touch with road boards and municipal councils within the Metropolitan-Suburban Province on the subject of the Bill. To my astonishment, I discovered that they were quite ignorant of its provisions. Only one road board had knowledge of the Bill, and was in possession of a copy. That road board was somewhat disturbed about some of the clauses, and is disturbed to-day. As regards the Metropolitan-Suburban Province suppliers and users of electric current have less to be concerned about than have country suppliers and users. The Government generates all the current that is distributed in the metropolitan area. The State's largest customer is the Perth City Council, which started off with a contract of 50 years' duration, about half that term having now elapsed. I am concerned in the same way as Mr. Fraser, as to just how far existing contracts will be affected by the passing of the Bill. Local bodies have contracts over varying terms, and if any disagreement arose on that aspect regrettable difficulties would be created because of the Bill not having been given greater publicity, and also because of more time not being devoted to its consideration. I am sure the Minister has the same feeling, in view of the serious manner in which he introduced the Bill. I should like the hon. gentleman to make a gesture in the direction of meeting the wishes which have been expressed that the Bill should be held over to another session, or alternatively that this session should not close on this side of the festive season but should be extended into January. In that case there would be opportunity to give adequate consideration to the Bill and to other measures which are being hastened through.

The Chief Secretary: There is no necessity for that.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: To judge by the number of Bills on the Notice Paper here and in another place, it looks very much as if there were necessity. We have only five or six days available. Perusing the Bill one realises that it affects country lighting plants and country consumers more than those in the metropolitan area. Existing contracts, I presume, will not be overridden. I presume,

further, that they will be honoured until the date of their expiration. Other members have doubts as to whether we should pass the Bill with the haste which must ensue if the second reading is carried to-day. The local authorities with which I have been able to get in touch are concerned mainly about the technical committee which is to assist the Government in the administration of the measure. I wonder why suppliers and consumers of current are not given some representation on the committee. An expert with whom I recently had a chat said, "There is no occasion for it." To some extent I agree with that expert, because for a long time I was a member of the Perth City Council, which body had an electricity committee. The committee was set up to deal with electricity supply as managed to-day by the City Council. The late Mr. Crocker was then general manager of the department. He was a technician, and placed matters before the committee of business men, who either agreed or disagreed to his proposals. The committee had more knowledge of business than Mr. Crocker had. The committee deferred to Mr. Crocker on the technical aspect, and he deferred to the committee's business knowledge.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I was pointing out before the tea adjournment that for many years the Perth City Council has been operating by means of a committee which has controlled practically the whole of the consumers within a radius of five miles from the centre of Perth. That committee has acted very successfully. The technicians of the Electricity Department of the municipality are skilled men, but they have not had the business training that other members of the electricity committee possess. The system of control has proved most satisfactory from the point of view of both the council and the consumers, and road boards and municipal councils in other parts of the metropolitan area have adopted practically the same method. I think the proposed board of control could be improved if representatives of the road boards and municipalities, who would be selected by the representative organisations to which those local governing authorities belong, were appointed to act with the technicians in assisting the Minister to control electricity sup-

ply matters under the Bill when it becomes an Act. Ever since the inception, I have been a member of the Food Standards Advisory Board, on which highly skilled experts as well as commercial men sit to advise the Government on food standards both from the standpoint of uniformity and standards in general. That board consists of the Commissioner of Public Health (Dr. Atkinson), the Government Analyst (Dr. Simpson), the Government Bacteriologist and Pathologist (Dr. McGillivray), together with myself and another commercial representative. The last-named has just been appointed, and I do not know his name. The commercial representatives are recommended for appointment by the wholesale grocers and the dairy products sections, and are appointed without any fuss at all. I think the same principle could be applied to the board to be appointed to control electricity supplies. Mr. Edmondson told me that he worked on the Bill for over 12 months, and every member will agree that it is a good Bill, and will achieve its object in the direction of securing co-ordination respecting electricity plants throughout the State, both as regards materials and current. It is well known that chaos existed in Great Britain and elsewhere in regard to these matters, and it took years before conditions could be improved to the benefit of the public. I am sure the legislation will prove of advantage in this State, but its application may give rise to a lot of trouble. I am satisfied that if we pass the Bill straight away, we, as representatives of the people, will be taken to task because greater publicity had not been given to the purpose of the Bill, so that those concerned were in a position to know what was going on and to proffer suggestions indicating where the shoe would pinch them. Members cannot possibly know how it will affect local authorities in some directions, and if the Bill were placed at the bottom of the notice paper, and even though it became one of the slaughtered innocents, it would be better, in all the circumstances, so that the Bill could be again discussed next session, that is presupposing that the Government intend to close the session before the festive season. The Bill contains a proviso that the board can co-opt other technicians, if desired, to deal with various phases. After all, it must be recognised that a limited number of skilled men only can be appointed to the board, and therefore power to co-opt the

services of other technicians is a wise provision. There is also the privilege to be accorded to persons who wish to generate electricity for their own purposes, and make current available to others at a small cost. In that respect, there is one point not provided for in the Bill, and I do not know how it can be overcome. Consumers live in premises where rooms are let to other people, and subsidiary meters are installed to keep a check on the current used by the tenants. The Perth City Council does not issue accounts in respect of the subsidiary meters, but deals only with the master meter, and renders an account accordingly to the householder, who in turn charges the tenants in accordance with the readings taken from the subsidiary meters. When the Act is enforced, some difficulty will be experienced in that regard because householders in that position will be sellers of electricity, and yet that phase is not provided for. That is a small point, but I am afraid it will be the minor points that will create most difficulty in giving effect to the Act. Members representing metropolitan provinces have less cause for anxiety than those who represent country provinces. In the metropolitan area, the Perth City Council obtains current from the Government, and for a long period has been supervising the distribution and has made use of the best material by which the current is supplied to consumers. The Perth City Council purchases current in bulk under an agreement, and is able to pass on the knowledge of its technicians to other bodies who are under agreement to the Perth Municipality. One road board has communicated with me regarding the effect of Clause 41 under which the advisory committee will have power to advise the Minister with regard to extensions from the main lines. A position may arise in which consumers will desire the supply of current, but the advisory committee may tell the Minister that the extension should be undertaken by the local authority, and the local authority may argue that it is work that the Government should undertake. In the meantime, the would-be consumers have to wait until the argument is concluded. There is not the slightest doubt that the Bill, if passed, will be of great benefit to the people because the householders will be safeguarded against the installing of material and plant that is unsuitable. No doubt some trouble will arise in the future

in consequence of the power to be vested in inspectors to examine generating plants, lines and all manner of things. They will be able to deal with concessionaires and sub-lessees in such a way that I can easily visualise trouble arising in connection with the electricity committees of the various road boards and municipal councils. There are a number of details that can be reviewed, and I notice Mr. Piesse has an amendment that will deal with the advisory committee position. I hope that some way will be found out of the difficulties to which I have referred. I would not like to suggest that we defeat the Bill, but I trust the Minister will take some action that will enable us either to give adequate consideration to the matter next session or else when the session is continued after the Christmas holidays, should that course be decided upon. If the latter course were adopted, we could deal not only with the Bill under discussion but other important measures, and give them more adequate consideration. I support the second reading of the Bill, but I trust it will not be pushed through in a hurry.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [7.48]: The Bill is one of the most far-reaching we have had before us this session, and it seems to me a pity that such a Bill, which has been framed after long consultation between three experts, should be brought down so late in the year. The custom followed in the past with regard to Bills to amend the Road Districts Act or the Municipal Corporations Act has been for those measures to be submitted to the associations to which the boards or councils belong in order that expressions of opinion from them might be received. If the Electricity Bill had been submitted to those bodies—if it has been, I have no knowledge of the fact—it would have been of advantage. I regard the Bill as of considerable importance, so much so that I think we should hasten slowly. I am a firm believer in co-ordination with regard to all work of the type dealt with under the Bill, but I can quite understand that the local governing authorities in country districts will advance the contention that there are many varying interests to be considered, and for that reason I counsel caution before we finally pass the Bill. At the same time I should be very loth to vote against the Bill. I trust the Minister will not force us to vote against it. I

think that would be the course I should have to follow if it were taken to a division to-night. I would much prefer that the Minister postpone the Bill for a while in order that we might gain the viewpoints of the concessionaires and the local authorities who will be supplying electric current. I have a good deal of appreciation of the ability of the gentlemen who have been mentioned as likely to compose the advisory committee, but I cannot help feeling that this is a very highly centralised measure, and that there may possibly be some difficulty in regard to the country districts. I do not think it would materially affect the position if the Bill were postponed until next session.

Hon. G. Fraser interjected.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Perhaps the hon. member when speaking will tell me all about the cost to the State in the South-West. However, if the Bill were postponed until some of these points were cleared up, the position of the Government would be strengthened and the people generally would be satisfied. The measure is a highly technical one and one upon which it is too late this session to give an opinion. For one thing it has not been before the public a sufficient length of time for its most vital points to be considered. So far I have been able only to submit it to one local authority, which I did during the week-end. I showed it to the mayor, who at once saw in it a lot of frightful things. I think I was able to convince him that that was not so, but he begged for time in order to refer it to his council, and promised to advise me of its viewpoint at a later date. Up to the present I have not received that information from him. I urge the Minister to postpone further consideration of the Bill so that the people may know that it is desired to improve the existing position, and that the delay if any will have occurred at the request of members of this House. I do not think it would prejudicially affect the position to any great extent. I hope I shall not be forced to vote against the Bill.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [7.50]: I hope the second reading will not be forced to a division this evening. In the Central Province, as in other provinces, many concessions have been granted to persons who are large consumers of electricity. In view

of that I say without hesitation that we have not yet had time fully to consider this Bill. I am perfectly ready to accept the assurances that even-handed justice has been meted out, not only to the metropolitan area but also to country districts, but before we agree to a Bill granting such very wide powers we can in fairness suggest that we be given time to get into touch with the people concerned and find out their viewpoint on the matter. If it should come to a division on the second reading to-night I shall be reluctantly compelled to vote against it.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [7.51]: I wish it to be understood that I am desirous of making some progress with this measure. My reply is not in defiance of the requests of certain members, but because I feel that they are under a misapprehension which I am sure can be easily dispelled. When I introduced this measure I emphasised its importance from the point of view of the State as a whole, and said the Bill had been drawn up only after exhaustive inquiries by those persons most competent to deal with the subject, and that the Government was anxious that a measure of this kind should be put into operation without delay, because every year that goes by without such a measure means additional trouble for somebody.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I understand that the measure was drafted three months ago.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know when the Bill was first drafted, but there were many drafts before the final draft was approved of.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is the final draft I speak of.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: And of course the measure was introduced in another place a little while ago. When I hear members saying that they would like a chance to consult the local authorities and get the viewpoint of private concessionaires and that kind of thing, it seems to me to be somewhat of a reflection, if I may put it that way, on the members of another place. What other construction can one put on those requests for delay? We are sent here to deal with legislation affecting the whole of the State, including measures that are introduced in another place and which we can assume are there subjected to all manner of scrutiny by people who are just as interested in the districts we represent as we

are ourselves. They agree to a measure of this kind going through the Assembly after that scrutiny, notwithstanding which some of the members here say that they have not had time to examine the Bill and wish to submit it to those people who might be interested. When I hear members expressing fears in regard to this or that point and saying that they are disappointed at not having opportunity to consider what is included in the Bill, it seems to me that they are adopting an entirely wrong attitude.

Hon. W. J. Mann: But those people are vitally interested.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, up to a point. I know that this subject is a highly technical one, as I said when I introduced the Bill; I did not say the Bill itself was highly technical, but that the subject with which the Bill deals was a highly technical one.

Hon. J. Cornell: I should think that the men on the Lake View and Star could draft it as well as those who did draft it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is not a Bill comes before the House but some member has something to say about its drafting.

Hon. J. Cornell: I mean that the men on the Lake View and Star are as highly qualified to draft the Bill as are the men who did draft it. The point I wish to make is that those people have to be considered.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understand that in a general way members desire to consult all people who have a technical knowledge of the subject we are dealing with, but I cannot follow members when they say they are not prepared to go on with the Bill. More than one member has referred to the question of existing contracts. The Bill does not affect existing contracts, nor existing generating plants. We require to remember that. The Bill deals with the supply of bulk electricity, and affects only future plants that might be erected. The Bill also provides that where it is desired to extend an existing plant and its operations by increasing its units, the advisory committee shall be supplied with a copy of the plans and specifications of the extension in order that recommendations might be made to the Minister. There is nothing very difficult in that. After all is said and done, the desire behind the Bill is to obtain at

some time in the future uniformity in the supply of current throughout the State. It is also desired by means of the Bill to effect those changes in regard to future generating plants which will lead to a more economical service than we have at present. There is nothing wrong in that. In regard to the other points mentioned, Mr. Nicholson and other members referred to the question of obsolescence and depreciation and so on in arriving at a price which shall be fixed for the supply of current. But the second-reading debate is not the stage at which to go into details of that kind. The capital charge provided for in the Bill would include all those minor charges mentioned by the hon. member.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I do not know that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You made a special point that it should be included in the Bill. After all, it is only a minor matter. The advisory committee is only a body to give advice, and at least will understand the subject with which it is dealing. Mr. Seddon raised many points, all of which can be dealt with in Committee. He suggested that the Bill went too far, that it could be construed as covering the Post and Telegraphs Department. It does nothing of the kind. He read into the Bill, as did other members, many things that are not there. These are all matters upon which members can be satisfied in Committee. We have nothing to hide, and there is nothing in the Bill about which we need be afraid. What I do fear is that if the Bill is not dealt with this session a further 12 months will elapse before it can be passed, and during that time much damage may be done for which many people may be sorry. The measure is only technical as to the subject matter with which it deals. Mr. Fraser referred to contracts that might expire in two or three years' time. The Bill does not affect the rights of the parties concerned to secure an extension of their contracts on the same terms.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A contract may be affected when it comes to the time for renewing it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill does not affect existing contracts. They will not even be referred to the committee. I am also advised that it does not affect renewals. Members are under a misapprehension concerning the Bill.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What if a plant became out of date and obsolete? Would the Advisory Committee step in then?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The extension of any plant would have to be referred to the Committee.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I am really talking about concessions.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No existing concession would be affected.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Or the renewal of a concession?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Or the renewal of a concession. If a concessionaire desired to increase the size of the unit, the plans and specifications, etc., would have to be referred to the Advisory Committee.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That is reasonable.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Every satisfaction can be given to members concerning every point they have raised. It would not be in the best interests of the State to defer this measure for 12 months. I assure the House that existing contracts will not be affected. Members will be supplied with all the information they desire, and I feel sure I can satisfy them in every case. I cannot accede to the request that we should not go on with the Bill. The Government desires that it should be passed, so that early in the new year its provisions may be put into operation. The Advisory Committee has been working on the measure for many months and has gone to a lot of trouble concerning it. It has conducted numerous inquiries into all its aspects. I do not think anyone can question the competence of the gentlemen comprising the committee. The Advisory Committee referred to in the Bill will have no power.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And it will be honorary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. It will be established to make recommendations to the Minister, who no doubt will take a lot of notice of such recommendations. It is necessary that the power conferred by the Bill upon the Minister should be conferred. I cannot agree to postpone the Bill until next session. I hope it will pass the second reading tonight. An opportunity may be afforded to-morrow to deal with it in Committee. I have no desire to rush it through, but it is an important measure and the Government desires to see it on the statute-book. There is nothing in the Bill

to which any member can take reasonable exception.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LAKE AVENUE RESUBDIVISION OF LAND.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.10] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to enable the Subiaco Council to effect a resubdivision of lands at Shenton Park, Subiaco, abutting on Lake Avenue. This resubdivision has been sought because the frontages of the existing blocks are too small for building purposes, and because it is desirable to have a public street along the north boundary of the reserve. At the first, it was intended to bring about the resubdivision as a town planning scheme under the Town Planning Act. It was found, however, that there was no power to effect such a scheme under the Act. It is therefore necessary to deal with the matter by Act of Parliament. Under the existing subdivision, made in 1897, there was provision for 26 lots on Lake Avenue, with frontages of 50 links (33ft.). The remaining lots comprise a corner Lot No. 28, with a frontage of 57 links (38ft.), and three lots facing Herbert Road—one with a frontage of 73 links (48ft.), and the others with frontages of 55 links (36ft.). A right-of-way 15 links (10ft.) wide bordering on Shenton Park Reserve, and a road (Lake Avenue) 50 links (33ft.) wide bounding the north side of the subdivision, was also provided. The Bill proposes to authorise a subdivision which provides for two lots facing Herbert Road (instead of the existing three lots)—one with a frontage of 108 links (71ft.) and the other 71 links (47ft.), and for 16 lots facing Lake Avenue (instead of 26 lots). The frontages of these will be as follows:—

1 lot	50 links (33 ft.)
1 lot	57 links (38 ft.)
3 lots	67 links (44 ft.)
5 lots	75 links (49½ ft.)
5 lots	100 links (66 ft.)
1 lot	125 links (82½ ft.)

In place of the existing Lake Avenue, there will be a 15 links (10ft.) right-of-way. A new road (Lake Avenue) varying in width

from 31.7 links (21ft.) to 39.6 (26ft.) will border the reserve.

Hon. J. Cornell: All the land involved is the property of the municipality.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: So far as I know. A right-of-way will replace the present Lake Avenue, and a new road will replace the existing right-of-way bordering the reserve. I am informed that in every way the new subdivision is a much more attractive one than the original, which took no cognisance of the contour of the terrain. For example, the ground slopes downward to the reserve from the existing Lake Avenue, north of the subdivision. Thus, if houses were erected facing the present road, they would look directly into the backyards of the houses across the road. Similarly their own backyards would face the reserve. Already seven houses of a good type have been erected on the new subdivision facing the reserve. These were built on the understanding that effect would be given to resubdivision. I can assure the House that the proposals set forth in this measure will not only benefit the owners of the land, but will be of distinct advantage to the district, for, besides increasing the frontages of the building lots to reasonable dimensions, they will improve the aspect viewed from the reserve. Set out in clause 18 is a direction to the Town Planning Board to approve the scheme of resubdivision embodied in the Bill for the purposes of section 20 of the Town Planning and Development Act, 1928. The Board has already approved of a similar plan. That plan differs somewhat from the present scheme, in that provision was made for a 100 link road taking in a strip of land from the adjoining Class "A" reserve 8630. The Government, however, was not prepared to agree to any portion of the reserve being used for this purpose. Moreover, it was considered that as the original Lake Avenue was only 50 links wide, and as through traffic on the new road will be negligible, there can be no great objection to the slightly narrow width of the proposed new road which varies from 31.7 links (21ft.) to 39.6 links (26ft.). I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.20]: I am grateful to the Minister for saying that he will defer the Committee stage of the Bill until to-morrow, if the House agrees to pass the second reading to-night. This Bill is important to that

section of the province I represent. I know the area very well and it has been mooted for a long time that the municipal council desired to give effect to a scheme for improving the locality. The Chief Secretary a little while ago expressed regret that we hesitated to pass the second reading stage of Bills that were sent on to us from another place. It is not the practice for me to adopt that attitude, and when I was speaking earlier in the evening I felt as I feel now, that proper ventilation should be given to proposals that are submitted to us. In this case I am prepared to accept the position, knowing that what is proposed has been carefully scrutinised by the member for the district, Mrs. Cardell-Oliver.

Hon. J. Cornell: No, it is in the Nedlands electorate, represented by Mr. Keenan.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Well, either Mrs. Cardell-Oliver or Mr. Keenan would, I know, give the matter close scrutiny, and if they were not satisfied with the proposals I feel sure we would have heard about it. We can take it for granted, therefore, that the matter is all right and I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.22]: I am rather surprised that the hon. member does not know in which electorate that part of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province actually is. The boundary line between Subiaco and Nedlands is the centre of Nicholson-road. The submission of this Bill to the House brings back to me a flood of memories. Forty years ago I carted wood off that land.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Now we know where all the wood went.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think Mr. Holmes will bear me out when I say that the nearest habitation outside the most southern part of Subiaco at that time was Jones's dairy. I can understand the lay-out of that piece of land which the Minister says dates back to 1897. It was then forest and there was no semblance of a swamp there at all. The land in question, or rather the centre of it, was then a cricket pitch, and now that pitch is about 15 feet below water. At one time also there was an 8ft. picket fence surrounding the whole of the ground, which was used by the Subiaco Football Club. The position today is that, for some unknown reason, the water level has risen.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is because you took all the trees away.

Hon. J. CORNELL: After many years of agitation, provision was made to drain the lake and keep the water at a certain level. Members who know Hyde Park in North Perth will point with pride to this locality in 20 or 30 years' time. Hyde Park will then be not a circumstance in comparison with this locality.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It will be no good to us if we have to wait 30 years.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have resided for the last 24 years within a hundred yards of this very piece of land, which has now become a sanctuary for wild duck and pelicans. The scheme it is proposed to carry out is long overdue. The only object the municipal council has in view is to make a beauty spot of the place and see that a proper type of buildings are erected around it. There are already five houses built there, and from what I understand no buildings are to be erected on the east or west side. Moreover, the improvements to be made will have the effect of benefiting the surrounding property; in other words, enhancing its value. In years to come it will be one of the beauty spots in the metropolitan district. At the present time it has 12 feet of water on it, and, as I have already mentioned, it is a sanctuary for wild fowl. I support the second reading.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [8.26]: I support the second reading because the general lay-out of the scheme means that there will be increases in the frontages of the blocks. Where previously the blocks were 33 feet, the extension will be up to 66 feet and more in some cases. At the same time I regret that the Bill will still permit subdivisions on the 33ft. basis, and in some instances 39 and 40 feet. I thought we had gone past the stage of subdivisions of that description. It seems strange to me, on looking at the plan, why in one instance permission is given to extend a frontage to 82 feet. I intend to take Mr. Cornell's word that this will be a big improvement on the existing subdivision, and so I shall vote for the second reading. I hope that in future subdivisions we will not be called upon to give permission to subdivide blocks with frontages as narrow as 33 or 39 feet.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.31] in moving the second reading said: This is the Bill hon. members have been making such a big noise about. I do not propose to go over the arguments that have been used so many times in the last week or two in connection with the Bill. It sets out to do what I advised this House it would set out to do; that is, to provide exemption up to £3 17s. per week. That is the sum total of the Bill. There are subclauses dealing with weekly wages or income, and with persons who are assessed for the financial emergency tax, and will be taxed to the end of the year, but who will be exempt as from the end of the year to the end of the financial year; that is, those persons receiving between £195 and £200 per annum. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4 of the principal Act:

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

That in line 4 of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (d) "two hundred pounds" be struck out, and the words "one hundred and ninety-five pounds" inserted in lieu.

What I cannot understand is why the Government keeps on extending the exemption from taxation under this legislation. The Government says it must have the amount of the tax, but continues to exempt a section of the community which is the largest body of taxpayers. The Government can afford to do that. I notice a variation in the Bill before us. There is a rebate stated in the tax Bill, but no mention is made of it in the assessment Bill. I still hold that people enjoying services provided by the State should contribute in some small way to the cost of those services from which

they derive benefit. The tax should commence at a lower amount, say, 2d. in the pound; 4d. in the pound is rather high on the lower incomes. My amendment leaves the figure as it is in the present assessment Act. I do not mind if the tax is reduced to the figure in the tax Bill, but I consider that these people should contribute something.

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

Ayes	6
Noes	17

Majority against	11
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AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. Angelo
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. O. G. Elliott
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. W. H. Kitson

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. H. V. Piesse
(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [8.45] in moving the second reading said: I regret that the Bill should be introduced so late in the session, but there have been several unavoidable delays, and it has not been possible to present the measure earlier. This Bill is not similar to those which have been introduced in the past. Many of the contentious clauses have been cut out, and the measure has been condensed to three or four main principles that are easily understood and should prove acceptable to members. The Bill could be aptly described as a bread industry rehabilitation measure. The bread industry to-day is in a chaotic condition brought about by fierce, unprincipled competition by persons

who, at present, are immune from Arbitration Court award conditions. One-man bakeries and questionable partnership organisations have successfully dragged the industry to the gutter. It is imperative that immediate action should be taken to remedy, as far as possible, the present evils. Members of the Select Committee on the Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill will be acquainted with the present condition of affairs, and the chairman, Mr. Nicholson, in the course of debate in this Chamber, stated that legislation was necessary to cope with the present parlous condition of the bread industry. In the course of evidence before the Select Committee, Mr. T. Nielsen, Secretary of the Bakers' Union, stated that there were at present—

110 full-time operative bakers within the 25-mile radius of the Perth Town Hall,
25 half-time workers,
30 apprentices,
47 casual bakers,
43 working away from the trade,
57 working in the country,
2 half-time workers in the country,
14 apprentices in the country,
Total 328 persons.

In 1927 there were 51 bakeries employing 138 operatives. In 1933 there were 40 bakeries employing 91 full-time operatives, and in 1937 47 bakeries employing 110 full-time operatives. All other trades have recovered from the depression. There is a definite shortage of skilled men in the metropolitan area, and our knowledge to-day shows that it would have paid had we strained every nerve to keep apprentices in every industry up to their full quota. Had we done that during the years of depression the present condition of affairs would have been obviated. It is impossible to fill positions. There is a definite shortage of apprentices finishing their time, and so work is being found for skilled men from the other States. That is the position in practically all the skilled trades operating in the State. But the position in the baking industry is quite different. Baking is one of the oldest industries. It is a highly skilled trade, and the State provides funds in order that men should receive the special technical training required. Yet, when they have finished their time, most of them are thrown on the unemployed market, and some of them are compelled to take sustenance work. This is undesirable and renders imperative a change in conditions. In 1933 there were 63 bakeries not covered by the award, and in 1937 the

number was 68, an increase of 41 bakeries in 10 years. Those bakeries could work as they liked, and were not subject to the discipline of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And not subject to the Trades Hall.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is not a party Bill; it is an industry Bill affecting employers and employees. In 1936 a total of 37 apprentices were examined in the metropolitan area. Of these 13 finished their apprenticeship, six remained working in the trade, and seven were put off. In 1937 37 apprentices were examined, of whom four came out of their time and two are already out of work. At present there are 47 apprentices in the metropolitan area, and 28 in the country. There are 16 known partnerships not covered by the award. The partnership firms, which are mostly alien, seriously menace the industry. Some are illicit partnerships, but whatever they are, the partners can do as they like.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: A free country.

Hon. J. Cornell: Too free very often.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Some cases were mentioned to the select committee, one in which a man at Kalgoorlie received £3 10s. a week and keep, and another case in which two men received £3 per week and keep. They worked 69½ hours weekly, and slept in the bakehouse. How is it possible for master bakers in Kalgoorlie, who have to pay award rates of £6 1s. a week and grant a working week of 44 hours, to compete with such people? It is stated that there are carts delivering bread at 3 o'clock in the morning. I do not propose to dwell upon this aspect of the business, but evidence was tendered to the select committee to prove the extent of this unfair competition. As far back as 1916, Mr. President Brown, of the South Australian Court of Industrial Arbitration, in the course of a judgment, stated—

The whole of the facts appear to me to call definitely for an Act of Parliament which will bring about conditions which will reasonably safeguard the interests of the public, will ensure proper conditions for the workmen, and fair conditions of competition for every master baker. In the meanwhile, however, I cannot shirk the responsibility of giving my award.

I believe that the industry in South Australia has since been straightened out and that conditions now are not so bad. The President of the Court of Arbitration of

Western Australia, when handing the minutes of the proposed Bakers' Award to the parties on the 11th September, 1933, stated—

With regard to the starting and finishing hours fixed in this award, the existing practice has been retained, but if suitable legislation is carried, it may be that more suitable working times may be arranged, and in order to afford an opportunity to review the position provision is made that on the passing of legislation, the parties may again approach the Court.

It will be noticed that provision is made for the maintenance of the old award so far as districts outside the metropolitan area are concerned. This should also be provided for in my opinion in any legislation. Under the award towns outside the metropolitan area may arrange their hours to suit the circumstances of each place, as in some cases night-baking might be necessary and in others hours different to those in the metropolitan area may be more suitable to all parties.

Dealing with the financial position of the industry, he said:—

In connection with an application under the Financial Emergency Act, the court in the early part of last year had an opportunity of perusing the balance sheets of practically every bakery of any importance in the metropolitan area. The information supplied to the court in connection with this is necessarily to be treated as confidential, but I do not think I am committing any breach of confidence in stating that the financial position is anything but satisfactory. The question is, to what is this due? The employers attribute it to a great extent to the unfair competition from the non-employers of labour, who can by supplying hot bread wean away some of the customers of those who are more strictly restricted as regards their hours of work.

Then again the non-employer has no hard and fast wages bill to meet and his overhead expenses are in the nature of things much lower than those of the employer of labour, and as a consequence of this the latter is being continually undercut in price. All this is, of course, no doubt true but it is not by any means the whole story. It seems to me, on a careful examination, that a great deal of trouble in the bread baking industry is largely due to the price at which bread is sold generally and the fierce and unregulated competition amongst all the bakers themselves. It would be quite unreasonable to expect any business man to continue the conduct of his business at a loss, but this is what is happening in many instances here.

In view of the fact that the Arbitration Act in this State has no binding force on those who are not workers, I would strongly urge the consideration of legislation on this subject. This is urged by me both for the sake of the employers and workers, and in order to bring about conditions of equal competition in the industry by those engaged in

it. Such legislation need not prevent any individual from entering the baking industry or carrying on that business, but it would require that he would be subject, so far at least as the hours of baking bread are concerned, to the same conditions as employers of labour. In any such legislation the following points would claim consideration:—

- (1) The hours within the metropolitan area (to be therein defined) within which bread for sale may be baked, with exceptions on double days and treble days and holidays; the Arbitration Court to have the power to fix hours within those laid down. Baking outside the hours fixed should be prohibited.

This provision is included in this Bill.

- (2) The hours of delivery of bread for sale, and prohibiting delivery or sales outside such hours.
- (3) The registration of all persons dealing in bread for sale with power to cancel registration in certain circumstances; no bread to be sold except from registered bakery.
- (4) Powers of entry and inspection.

Points Nos. 3 and 4 are not included in this Bill.

- (5) The fixing by a special board to be constituted and established of a price of bread for sale at shop or upon delivery to customers, such price to vary with price for flour and to be subject to revision from time to time. Board should have plenary powers of inspection of balance sheets, etc. An exception might be made in the case of large contracts.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is point No. 5 in this Bill?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Then it must be some Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is not that in the old Act?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was included in a Bill on a previous occasion, and was turned down. Supporting evidence by master bakers before the select committee, the evidence of Mr. Nielsen, and the statement of President Dwyer in the Arbitration Court, make an overwhelming case for legislation to control this industry. Years ago there were strong representations to improve working conditions in the industry. To-day, as presented in this Bill, there is concerted effort, both by employer and employee, to save the industry. I must stress the special claims of the apprentices who have a right to be placed in an industry for which they have been spe-

cially trained, but are prevented through present conditions from working and are forced out to swell the unemployed army. The Bill provides for a radical alteration in the method of inspection of the weight of bread by substituting the weighing of dough weights. The present Act provides for each delivery cart to carry a pair of scales for the purpose of weighing bread when required. This section has not been enforced for some years, owing to its impracticability caused by scales getting out of order through vibration. At present the inspector has the power to pull up any bread cart and weigh the bread in the street. This is done very often by placing a bag on the road or pavement and piling up the bread on the road. The practice is obviously objectionable from a hygienic point of view, and exposes the bread to all kinds of contamination. It is unclean, and is recognised by all authorities to be inefficient and, in every sense of the words, out of step with modern ideas. It is inefficient, because, under the Food and Drugs Act, 45 per cent. of moisture is allowed in bread, and on a hot day with an easterly wind, moisture rapidly evaporates, although the food content remains. From a health point of view the present method is harmful because the baker is tempted, in order to be well within the stipulated weight, to draw the bread from the oven before it is properly baked. This gives rise to all kinds of digestive troubles. Sir Herbert Gepp, Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Flour and Bread Industry, in his report, after exhaustive inquiry, recommended an alteration in the checking of the weights of bread, and suggested two methods: 1, Fixing a standard of dry matter in the loaf; 2, On the weight of the dough. "Further research work on this subject is required," he said. Since this report was issued—and the inquiry was commenced in 1934—extensive inquiries and discussions have taken place in this State. It is considered that fixing a definite standard of dry matter for a loaf of bread would be difficult to police and costly in its application, as it would entail analysis which would be a lengthy process. It is considered that checking of dough weights is the best, fairest, and most effective method of inspection; and it is therefore incorporated in the Bill. The public, under this method, will have an increased standard of value, both in quality and weight. Under the old method, as the

loaf increased in size from 1 lb. to 2 lb. and 4 lb., the scale weights decreased, because there would not be the evaporation of moisture in the larger size. Hence, in order to obtain a 4 lb. loaf, 4 lb. 6 oz. or less of dough would be sufficient, when, in order to ensure a 1 lb. baked loaf, 1 lb. 2 oz. of dough would be necessary. In the method incorporated in the Bill, loaves would be standardised in three varieties, and the same proportionate dough weight would be used for each variety:—

- 1 lb. 2 oz. for a 1 lb. loaf.
- 2 lb. 4 oz. for a 2 lb. loaf.
- 4 lb. 8 oz. for a 4 lb. loaf.

These weights will ensure that a correct weight of bread will be achieved in all possible contingencies. The public will receive far better baked bread than formerly, and also a definite increase in weight. I must stress the vast importance of this change, and its beneficial effect on household economy and public health. The starting and finishing times for the baking and delivery of bread are set out in the Bill. These have been carefully checked and agreed to by the employers and the union concerned. They are in conformity with the agreement registered in the Arbitration Court. The monthly bakers' holiday has been abolished, and in its place provision has been made for an annual holiday of six days, both for bakers and carters. When Christmas Day or Boxing Day falls on a Sunday, provision is made for an extra day's holiday to be added to the annual leave. When New Year's Day falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. It is considered that to keep the public from obtaining fresh bread for so long a period as from Saturday to Wednesday is undesirable, and the extra day's holiday is granted instead. The present practice is for the carters to receive double pay for this day. The operation of this provision is confined to a radius of 50 miles from Perth, and includes a radius of eight miles from the Post Office, Kalgoorlie. The holidays are set out in the Bill and conform to the bakers and carters' awards, respectively. Provision is made for a poll of bakers to be taken in any municipality or road board district to determine on which day—either Saturday or Sunday—bread shall not be baked in the country. Provision is made to prohibit the exchange of stale bread for fresh; also for the Minister to intervene in special circumstances,

for example, race days, special functions, trains, etc., and grant permission to bake bread outside prohibited hours.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the country districts?

The HONORARY MINISTER: As regards the country districts, there is provision for a poll to be taken of the master bakers to meet their special requirements. There has been a great deal of imposition practised on the public by the sale of imitation Vienna. Analysis has proved that this spurious product contains nothing but ordinary bread, to which fat or dripping of inferior quality has been added. There are no specified weights for Vienna bread in the present Act, and the public have been, and are being unscrupulously exploited. True Vienna bread is manufactured with the best grade of flour, to which is added lard, margarine, or butter, and milk. This is baked in a special oven to which superheated steam is injected during the process of baking. The Bill provides for the prohibition of imitation Vienna, and contains the formula and the method of baking. Provision is also made for the manufacture of two types of Vienna bread:—

- 1 nine-ounce dough.
- 1 eighteen-ounce dough.

Starting times for baking and delivery of this bread are provided in the Bill. The manufacture of Vienna bread is a special process entailing the erection of costly patent Vienna ovens. The time is long overdue for this industry to be protected from unscrupulous competition. I confidently appeal to hon. members to pass the measure, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: When do you expect the measure to pass?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Very speedily. Probably to-morrow.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday next.

The Honorary Minister: Oh!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No doubt the Honorary Minister has had the subject-matter of the Bill at his finger tips for the last two years.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That "Tuesday next" be struck out, and "to-morrow" inserted in lieu.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I hope hon. members will give close consideration to the Bill. Any amendments they desire should be moved in the Committee stage. I rise especially to commend the measure to the careful consideration of the House.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You are out of order!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Who is the President of this Chamber?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You are not.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: When the President calls me to order, I shall sit down.

The PRESIDENT: A motion that the debate be adjourned cannot be debated.

Amendment put and passed; the debate adjourned till the next sitting.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Dairy Products Marketing Regulation Act Amendment.
2. Meat Industry (Treatment Works) Licensing.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—RESERVES.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.20] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual type of Bill brought down each session for the purpose of dealing with adjustments and alterations to reserves and lands held under public trusts. The first proposal relates to Lot 41, which is held under a 999 years' lease issued in 1901 to trustees for the Murchison Amalgamated Workers' Association. The Association is now incorporated with the Australian Workers' Union. That body, I understand, desires to mortgage the land. However, it will be unable to do so until it obtains the necessary deed. Provision has, therefore, been made to revest the land in His Majesty, in order that a similar lease may be issued to the Australian Workers' Union (Western Branch). The proposals set out in Clause 3 refer to Lot 63, Mount Magnet, which was purchased in 1908 by the local branch of the Amalgamated Workers' Association. It is now desired to issue the title of the land to the Australian Workers' Union (Western Branch). However, as the trustees of the Association are now all deceased, it is necessary to revest the land in His Majesty in order that a fresh grant may be issued to the Australian Workers' Union.

The third proposal of this measure concerns Lot 105, which was excised from Class "A" Reserve 2994 under the Reserves Act of 1928. Provision was then made for this lot to be set aside as a hall site. A hall was subsequently erected in another position, and this land is accordingly no longer required for its original purpose. The Bill, therefore, proposes to remove the restriction I have mentioned in order that the lot may be dealt with under the Land Act. I understand that it will be set apart as "park lands" vested in the road board. Under Clause 5, provision has been made to provide better access to Balingup Pool for persons who resort there for recreation and bathing. To this end it is proposed to exchange portion of Class "A" Reserve 20503 for portion of Location 8117. This will enable the existing reserve to be connected with a further area fronting the pool, which is about to be resumed free of compensation. There can be no objection to the proposal to excise the land concerned from the park lands reserve, as it is approximately equal in value to the land about to be acquired in exchange. Members will obtain a clearer conception of the proposals involved if they consult the plan, which I propose to place on the Table of the House. The fifth proposal involves Kalgoorlie Lot 2767, which, with an area of a little over four acres, is at present part of a Class "A" Reserve for water supply purposes. Parliamentary sanction is now required to enable it to be utilised for the purpose of a site for collecting tanks in connection with the Kalgoorlie sewerage scheme. Clauses 7 and 8 relate to the Toodyay and Katanning racecourse reserves, respectively. The former is held under a 99 years' lease by trustees, all of whom have been deceased for many years. The Toodyay Road Board wishes to be granted the fee simple of the land for the purpose of utilising it as a racecourse, showground, and general sports ground. The race club is quite agreeable to this proposal. Provision has therefore been made to revest the land in His Majesty, in order that a grant in fee simple may be issued accordingly. As regards the Katanning racecourse reserve, this is held under a 99 years' lease by three trustees, two of whom are deceased. To-day, the remaining trustee has no connection with the Katanning Turf Club. The club has not operated for a number of years, and interest in the turf has declined to such an extent that it

is now desired to vest the reserve in the Katanning Road Board for the purpose of an amateur sports ground. The Bill makes the necessary provision to give effect to this proposal. Clause 9 deals with Geraldton Lots 809 and 810, which are Class "A" Reserves for recreation. The northern portion of these lots is required for inclusion in the railway reserve in connection with the Geraldton harbour works scheme, and has, in fact, been included in the resumption under the Public Works Act. However, as the land is portion of a Class "A" reserve, parliamentary approval of the resumption is necessary. On the lithograph to be laid on the table of the House in connection with Clause 10 of this measure, there is marked in blue a portion of the endowment lands of the Fremantle City Council, comprising about 26 acres. The council wishes to exchange this land for a lot coloured red on the same plan, which was vested in the East Fremantle municipality for commonage purposes some years ago. It is the desire of the Fremantle Council to devote the commonage to recreational purposes. Both parties are agreeable to the exchange. In order to give effect to the proposal, it is now necessary to grant the Fremantle Council power to dispose of the endowment lands referred to. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Cue Lot 41:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is customary for local authorities to be consulted regarding the transfer of reserves. I presume the local authorities have been consulted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have no objection to reporting progress.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I did not ask for progress to be reported.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Information is desired and I can say that in all instances the authorities concerned have agreed to the transfers.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: So long as the authorities are agreed, I am quite satisfied.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In deference to members who desire some information, I shall not object to progress being reported.

Progress reported.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [9.30] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill to close certain roads and rights-of-way. The first proposal relates to the closure of a right-of-way between Egan and Macdonald Streets in Kalgoorlie, which originally separated a school site reserve from the adjoining lots. That reserve has been cancelled and subdivided, and a new right-of-way provided which renders the existing one unnecessary. It is therefore proposed to close the latter, and include it in the adjoining lots. The Kalgoorlie Council has agreed to the proposal. Clause 3 deals with the closure of portion of Loftie Street at Albany. The portion concerned crosses the golf links reserve, which is vested in the Albany municipality with power to lease. This part of the road has never been used, and could not be used without costly construction, which is not justified, as other access to Middleton Beach is provided both for pedestrians and vehicles. The Council therefore desires its closure in order that it may be included in the links before they are leased to the Golf Club. There is no departmental objection to the proposal. The third proposal concerns the closure of portions of two streets at Bunbury. These form the northern and southern boundaries of Leschenault Square. They have never been used for traffic, but have for some time formed unauthorised rubbish dumps. It is the desire of the Bunbury Municipal Council to create two building blocks of the northern portion, and to convert the southern portion into a children's playground which will be developed from the proceeds of the sale of the new lots. These proposals are acceptable both to the Town Planning Board and the department. Last year provision was made under the Road Closure Act, 1936, for the closure of Short Street, Subiaco. The Act, however, did not provide for the disposal of the land. This remained in the title of the holders who subdivided and sold the adjoining lots. Of these holders one is deceased, and the other cannot be traced. It

is now proposed to revest this land in the Crown, and issue a title to the Council with power to dispose of the land to the adjoining holders. The final proposal of this measure relates to the closure of a small, awkwardly shaped part of Gregory Street, Northam. If members will refer to the plans which I have caused to be laid on the table of the House, they will see that the part concerned gives the street its appearance of the "hind leg of a dog." The street has been straightened by taking in part of a block opposite, thereby rendering this portion unnecessary. Clause 6, therefore, provides that it shall be closed and granted to the Council who will have power to dispose of it to the owners of the abutting land. As is customary with road closure Bills, I will not proceed with the Committee stage until the next sitting. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [9.34] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to provide for inquiries into maternal deaths, and to effect a number of minor amendments to the principal Act. The first amendment relates to the definition of the term "boarding house." It is now proposed to restore the definition to the form in which it originally appeared in the consolidating measure of 1931. The Perth City Council has been administering the Act in relationship to boarding houses as though the definition had not been altered by an amendment made in 1932. Recently, its attention was drawn to the alteration, with the result that it has made a request to the Government to have the original definition re-inserted. This amendment is necessary, in that it will empower the local authorities to inspect houses where more than six people are either lodged or boarded. I am informed by the Minister that he has been unable to ascertain why the amendment of 1932 was ever made, as it simply has the effect of exempting houses where rooms are let to individuals from the control exercised over boarding houses. The next proposal deals with the borrowing powers of local authori-

ties for the purposes of the Health Act. At present the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council desires to sewer the main portion of the city of Kalgoorlie. Under the provisions of the existing legislation, only resident owners of property have the right to vote on the poll that would be taken in connection with the proposal. It is possible that so far as Hannan-street is concerned, less than 30 property owners would have the right I have mentioned. The municipality cannot carry on under those conditions. The proposal set forth in this measure will have the effect of enabling the Minister to declare, by notice published in the "Government Gazette," that owners of property in Kalgoorlie—or any other municipality—shall have the right to claim a poll or to vote for or against the raising of a loan for the purposes of the Health Act, where their land is situated within the portion of the district which is to be served by the proposed undertaking. The proposed amendment to Section 81 has been brought forward at the request of the Perth City Council. Some little time ago the Council appointed representatives from each ward to inspect various houses. Reporting after their inspection, the councillors stated that several homes were unfit for human habitation, owing, principally, to the lack of bathroom and laundry accommodation. Under its by-laws the Council has no power to compel the landlords to provide bathroom or laundry accommodation without first absolutely condemning the property. The Council now desires power to serve notices on owners stipulating that they shall provide bathroom and laundry accommodation where these facilities are lacking, failing which their properties will be condemned. Similarly, the Council desires power to require owners to clean or repair their houses. During the course of the inspection to which I have just referred, the Council representatives discovered some houses that were in a disgracefully filthy condition. At present, there is no power to serve a notice on the landlord requiring him to clean his premises within a given period. The Bill, therefore, proposes to remedy this condition. An amendment to Section 86 has been requested by local authorities in the country districts who have either established sewerage schemes or are about to do so. It is proposed that in lieu of levying a rate to provide a return on the money expended on these schemes, the local auth-

orities shall have the right to make an annual charge of so much per pedestal. The local authorities consider that under these conditions they could establish and maintain sewerage schemes at half the charges for the present pan systems, while at the same time there would be a fair return on the money expended. The most important provisions of this measure are those relating to the holding of inquiries into deaths caused by pregnancy or child birth. As members are aware, the Minister for Health has for some time advocated that it should be compulsory to hold an inquiry into every maternal death. He has urged that this would ensure the exercise of greater care by those people who attend maternity cases, and thus tend to reduce the number of deaths. The Minister has conferred with the executive of the British Medical Association on the matter, with the result that mutual agreement has been reached on the proposals set forth in the Bill. During the course of discussions, the British Medical Association furnished the Minister with details of a scheme for the purpose of reducing maternal mortality. I have caused copies of the memorandum embodying that scheme to be made available to hon. members, and I recommend the document as an exceedingly illuminating and valuable approach to this most important subject. In this regard I have been for many years connected with a movement one of the objects of which is to reduce maternal mortality. As members are aware, the Commonwealth Health Department authorised the making of a drive throughout the Commonwealth in order to raise funds for this purpose. In this State we have for some years concentrated on this movement. However, it has been very difficult both for the nurses and for the members of the B.M.A. to arouse any enthusiasm amongst the people as to what could be achieved with the co-operation of the B.M.A. and the nurses. I hope to see the day when members of the B.M.A. will take it as a matter of course that they have at their disposal all the skilled nurses available, who will be stationed at big centres all over Western Australia. To-day there is a tendency amongst some medical men to discount this movement. They are not ready to go into a private hospital and demand and receive the assistance of a nurse. It has been difficult to get some medical men to recognise that these nurses are at their disposal. The trouble to-day is to find expectant mothers and per-

sue those who are not in a position to pay for attention to use our organisation for their personal benefit. Yet it is a free service available to all expectant mothers in the State. Our movement has not yet been used to the full extent, but it will be a very valuable step forward when the movement is fully used. To summarise briefly, the British Medical Association considers the relationship of every possible factor entering into the various clinical causes of maternal deaths. It finds that sepsis, toxæmia, hæmorrhage, and difficult labour cause 82 per cent. of total deaths, the balance being for the most part unforeseeable. It points out that these causes may arise from the following factors:—the doctor; the nurse; environment; the patient, her relatives and friends, and miscellaneous factors, such as the abortionist and intercurrent diseases, and others. Methods are suggested whereby the causes of death arising from these agencies can be reduced to a minimum. Referring to puerperal sepsis, the Association states:—

All deaths due from puerperal sepsis should be reported to a Board, the personnel of which shall consist of three members, being a police magistrate, a nominee of the B.M.A., and a nominee of the A.T.N.A. The Board shall hold an enquiry in camera into such report, and if they deem that further action is necessary, then an inquiry along the lines suggested by the Minister of Public Health should be made.

The proposals embodied in this measure are substantially in accord with the recommendations of the British Medical Association. It is provided that whenever a woman dies as a result of pregnancy or childbirth, or complications arising from these causes, the nearest magistrate shall be immediately notified of the fact by the medical practitioner and any nurse attending the deceased. The magistrate, acting in conjunction with a nominee of the British Medical Association, and another person nominated by the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, shall then proceed to hold an inquiry into the cause of the death. Where it is considered necessary the inquiry will be held in private. It is further proposed that whenever such an inquiry is held, the magistrate concerned shall furnish a report to the Minister, stating whether there has been any negligence in relation to the death. The report shall also contain any recommendations which the magistrate and his colleagues on the inquiry deem warranted. Where a coronial inquest is held, or is to be held,

these provisions will not apply. I think it will be agreed that these proposals will have a very salutary effect in checking the activities of the professional abortionist. Moreover, the reports furnished to the Minister should, in some measure, point the way to the solution of the many difficulties associated with this most important problem of maternal mortality. It has not been possible at this juncture to include in the Bill all the proposals suggested in the memorandum of the British Medical Association for minimising maternal deaths. However, the Minister has undertaken to confer with the executive of the British Medical Association during the recess, and it is hoped to formulate the regulations and amendments to the Health Act necessary to give effect to the scheme outlined by the executive. This Bill is a step forward in the campaign against maternal mortality. I think it will stimulate the movement. With the co-operation of the persons and organisations to which I have referred, it should be possible materially to minimise this great tragedy in social life which takes the mother away from the child and from her family. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [9.46]: This Bill has been considered very carefully by various women's organisations. I understand that amongst the letters received by members was one from the Women's Service Guild. The committee of that guild has been very active, particularly in connection with the last matter referred to by the Honorary Minister. The clause in question was presented in a different form in another place, but has since undergone material alterations. Despite these alterations it has been pointed out by the guild that it would be desirable to make a further amendment, and instead of "when any woman shall die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth," to say, "shall die during," etc. Although the alteration seems a small one it has an important bearing on the matter, and I think it would be desirable to make it. I hope this matter will be considered in Committee. Another suggestion is made that in place of a member of the A.T.N.A., a member of one of the women's organisations should be appointed to the committee referred to in the Bill. We are also asked to consider certain matters in connection with Subclause 2 of Clause 9. Meanwhile I support the second reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [9.49]: I support the second reading. There are two or three features of the Bill which commend themselves to me. One of these is a provision to take a referendum concerning the installation of sewerage in certain towns. We know what an absurd position was set up in connection with the poll that was taken on the question in Kalgoorlie. The people who are going to be taxed and who have to pay should be consulted as to whether sewerage should be installed or not. In regard to the proposed new section, I disagree with Mr. Nicholson and my lady friends. I know they are well-intentioned, but I cannot see what purpose their amendments would serve. Mr. Parker might be able to work out something. A woman might die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: She might be killed in a motor accident. You would not want an inquiry then.

HON. J. CORNELL: It would be better to leave that alone.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: I agree.

HON. J. CORNELL: I will resent any attempt to tinker with the Act by means of the proposed new section. It would be an innovation. It is something over which I did not expect the British Medical Association and the Minister would ever be reconciled. Apparently, the British Medical Association, the Chief Medical Officer, and the Minister are now reconciled, and we should leave it at that.

HON. E. H. H. HALL: Because it is new it is not so say there is no good in it.

HON. J. CORNELL: There are times when I will support the women, but other times when I cannot do so. In this case I cannot follow their logic. Neither can I agree with the suggestion that a member of a women's organisation should replace a trained nurse. If there is a woman qualified to go on the board it is the woman who has been properly trained; not the person who engages in backyard gossip, but the woman who has gone through a proper course in midwifery and all its departments. If such a woman is not fit to go on the board I do not know what woman is, unless it be a fully qualified woman medical practitioner.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [9.54]: I support the second reading. Many doctors during the last six months have come to me concerning this Bill. Through a misunder-

standing they were in the first place rather perturbed about it. I am glad to say they are now in agreement, and are quite happy concerning the measure. Mr. Nicholson has suggested that a member of a women's organisation should take the place of a trained nurse on the board.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I merely called attention to this being the desire of one of the women's organisations.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I hope that will not be agreed to. The medical man and a nurse and a magistrate should be sufficient members to constitute the board. All the doctors to whom I have spoken are now in general agreement on this subject. Now that they are in agreement with the Minister, we should let the matter go.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [9.56]: I have wondered why the provisions of Section 2 were taken out of the Act in 1932, but I have never been able to find out.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That was quite right.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The effect in some places has been disastrous. I could take members to places where people have advertised accommodation in houses that are anything but suitable for the purpose. I am glad these provisions are now being restored to the Act. I am also pleased that power is being given to the health authorities to insist upon the cleaning up of insanitary premises. That is long overdue. This sort of thing should be closely scrutinised. There was a time when in parts of the State where summer visitors were numerous the owners of properties took a keen interest in the hygienic conditions appertaining thereto. I am afraid that now, as a result of laxity on the part of some authority, and the fact that there has been no inspection of boarding houses, the conditions have not been so good. The only other matter I wish to comment on is the reference to maternal provisions. I consider they too are necessary, and we should be careful not to interfere with them because I presume they have been drafted by experts. I support the second reading.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [10.1]: I support the second reading and commend the Government on having brought down the Bill. With regard to Clause 9, I am not referring to it with any idea of reflecting on the skill of the medical profession, but I discussed the subject with one

doctor who told me that in his private capacity he was wholly in support of the provisions in the clause. He seemed to be under the impression that the Bill would be welcomed by the medical profession generally. We have heard sometimes of the death of a woman and I have heard the work of the medical man criticised when perhaps he did not deserve that criticism. With regard to boarding houses, I agree that they should be carefully inspected.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [10.2]: Mr. Cornell struck the right note when he said that every precaution should be taken before we accept any amendment to the Bill. This is a big and a difficult problem and seeing that the Bill has been framed by experts, it would be wise to leave well alone.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—New section:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of proposed Subsection 291A the words "or as the result of" be struck out and "during" inserted in lieu.

The clause would then read—"Whenever any woman shall die as the result of pregnancy or of childbirth or during any complications arising from," etc. The letter to which I referred in the course of my second reading remarks sets out that the amendment is desirable. The clause will operate only where a woman dies as a result of pregnancy instead of during pregnancy or childbirth. There have been sufficient cases to cause one to see the necessity for such an amendment and there is a good deal to support it. Having regard to what has taken place and what is likely to take place, the amendment is well worthy of consideration.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The hon. member apparently did not read far enough down the proposed new section. Continuing from where he left off it says, "... arising from or following upon pregnancy or childbirth." If a woman died of typhoid there would not be any need for the

board to sit. The object of the clause is to inquire into the cause of death through or arising out of pregnancy and I consider the clause is well drafted and should not be amended.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is quite possible that a woman in a state of pregnancy may have something else wrong with her and it may be certified that she died from some other cause.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Quite frequently on a death certificate two or three causes of death will be found. It may happen that one of the causes was "during" pregnancy. There may have been septic poisoning and that is why there should be an inquiry. The doctor may say that death was due to another cause to conceal the important factor. I support the amendment.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If a woman dies as a result of complications arising from or following on pregnancy, a doctor if he so desired could give a false certificate. He could do so quite easily by not certifying that she was pregnant. Many women appear to be pregnant when they really are not. A doctor can give a false certificate that a woman did not die as a result of complications and he may not refer at all to pregnancy. I do not think the putting in of this word will help to prevent false certificates being issued.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	13
Majority against	4

AYES.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Hall	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I move an amendment—

That in lines 5 and 6 of Subsection 2 of proposed new Section 29A the words "if they consider same necessary" be struck out.

Too much power is left in the hands of these people.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There may be something in the amendment, but this committee must be given some discretionary power as to whether to hold an inquiry or not.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 10, 11—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—MONEY LENDERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 14th December.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [10.23]: The Bill, as was explained by the Minister, is an outcome of the inquiry made some time ago by Mr. Moseley, whose report, I am sure, was read not only by every member but by the general public with a great deal of interest. Moneylending is one of those subjects which has been the cause of much legislation and which has been productive of much litigation. That is all by the way, but it is the duty of Governments to give a measure of protection to those who are often not capable of protecting themselves. The Bill will afford that extra measure of protection which was recommended by Mr. Moseley in his report as Royal Commissioner. I do not intend to go into detail in connection with the Bill but will content myself by expressing my support of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Suspension or cancellation of registration of money lender; restriction on money lending advertisements:

Hon. W. J. MANN: I should like an explanation from the Minister concerning proposed new Section 15 (2).

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is not considered desirable that encouragement should be given to money lenders to advertise, either over the air or in newspapers.

This provision is based on a recommendation by the Royal Commissioner.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Minister's explanation is very weak. Some moneylenders might be unscrupulous, but many are estimable and meet a public want, and to prohibit advertising except to the extent of showing the registered name and address and stating that money would be lent with or without security is not right. A moneylender should be permitted to advertise in the ordinary way. If he has any special conditions to offer, he should be permitted to make them known. To advertise anything untrue or actionable would lay him open to proceedings by anybody who was misled. The circumscribing of a man's business in this way would be quite unjustified. I move an amendment—

That Subsections 1, 2, and 3 of the proposed new Section 15 be struck out.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We want to discourage advertising of this kind. So long as people know who is a moneylender and where his place of business is, it should be sufficient.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Very alluring advertisements have been inserted in newspapers and circulars have been distributed indiscriminately by moneylenders, whose blandishments have resulted in many people falling into their clutches. The proposal does not prohibit advertising entirely.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It is almost a prohibition.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill has been based on the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner, and this clause particularly should be accepted.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Advertising is permitted in other walks of life.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We should have regard to the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. There is no need to grant more authority than is proposed in the clause.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I have a great regard for the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Moseley, but he is only one person. The Bill contains a series of safeguards for people who wish to borrow money, but to adopt the principle in the proposed new section would be dangerous. Many estimable people are moneylenders.

The Chief Secretary: They would not object to the provision.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I repeat that they should be permitted to advertise any special offer they are able to make.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Advertising within limits would still be permitted, but I protest against weakening the Bill as proposed by Mr. Mann. The clause is essential to the satisfactory working of the law.

Hon. T. MOORE: The object of Subsection 1 is to prevent soliciting people to borrow money. The Royal Commissioner would not have recommended the provision without good reason. If that sort of thing has happened, it should be stopped.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [10.47]: The Bill proposes to enable the Workers' Homes Board to erect wooden houses for letting. The record of the board is a very good one. The board has carried out its work well. Undoubtedly it has been the means of enabling a good many people to own homes who otherwise would never have been able to do so. Even under those conditions, however, the board has had a certain number of properties reverted; and the experience of letting those properties has not proved encouraging. I really do not understand why, if the Government's object was to assist people in hard circumstances to obtain homes, it did not provide for that in the housing trust measure which we dealt with recently. This Bill seeks to accomplish what is already to be accomplished under that measure. On the other hand, I am inclined to think the present shortage of houses for letting purposes is largely due to the restrictive legislation which has been on our statute book for so many years. I refer to the Tenants' Relief Act, the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act, to reduction of rents and reduction of interest. All of these

things have had their effect on people who in the past have been responsible for the providing of homes to be let. These things place responsibilities on the shoulders of such persons which should have been borne by the whole State. The people in question are no longer investing in the building of houses, and the effect is felt in the shortage of houses. Unless the Government show more appreciation of the efforts of those people, we shall find the shortage intensified. There are two classes of people who have been responsible for providing houses for letting purposes. First of all there is the man who builds a small home for himself, and then finds that his circumstances enable him to get into a better home. He usually arranges to mortgage the first home, and with the mortgage money and his savings he builds a second home, letting the first to a tenant. Quite a number of people to-day own property through that means, and thus have sought to provide for their old age by receipt of rents. Then there is the speculative builder who has built houses for letting purposes. I may also mention the ordinary investor operating in the same direction. My opinion is that the Government is looking for trouble if it goes in for the scheme outlined in the Bill. I agree with the idea of assisting people to get their own homes. However, the conditions under the Workers' Homes Act are such that any man able to find £5 can have a home of his own. Again, the man who can find 1s. per week can obtain a share in a building society and can approach that society for a loan towards building his own home. Assist a man by all means to get his own home, and assist him by every means to be thrifty. If he is engaged in casual work, make the terms such that if he is unable to meet his payments he will receive a certain amount of relief by deferring the payment of the instalments. We want to encourage the best type of citizen. Let us help him to own a home, instead of living in a rented house. With such activities I am entirely in sympathy; and I am prepared to assist the Government to provide further capital for the Workers' Homes Board, but not for houses for letting purposes. I am entirely opposed to any attempt of the Government to enter the dubious field of providing houses to rent. The Government is looking for trouble if it does that. The class of tenant who will rent those houses will give

the Government all the trouble it wants. I must oppose the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [10.53]: It is amazing to me that the Government should attempt anything in the nature of the proposal in the Bill. We have had all sorts of experiments in trading concerns, and they have been bad enough; but the principle of this Bill tends towards disaster from every aspect. As Mr. Seddon has said, at present there is provision for any person to secure a home of his own. The class of person who secures a home under the Workers' Homes Act will take care of it. Everyone who has had houses to let knows from sad experience what an unsatisfactory business it is, more especially when dealing with the class of person who will rent houses from the Government. The Bill sets out that the tenant must pay the rent reserved. What is going to be done if he does not pay it? The class of person for whom the Bill proposes to cater will not pay rent. That is perfectly well known. The Bill goes on to provide that the house is to be used for certain purposes, that there are to be no structural alterations or things of that nature. Those are excellent provisions, and highly necessary, but they cannot be policed. The Bill means raising money not for a doubtful proposition but for a proposition which we know perfectly well will involve heavy loss. Even a brick house deteriorates soon enough; but wooden houses have to be taken care of, kept in repair, and periodically oiled or painted. Is the class of person who would rent a house of this kind the class that will keep it in repair and in good condition? The proposal is simply madness. People who do not want to go to the Workers' Homes Board are people who will never look after a place. We have had sufficient experience of Government attempts to invade the commercial field without this proposal. I would regard it as most foolish to place the Bill on the statute-book. The Bill destroys the principle of a man securing his own home. However, I may say that the restriction on the building of wooden homes in the metropolitan area has gone too far. Metropolitan local governing bodies have gone too far in their declaration of brick areas. Yet our timbers are used in other parts of the world for wooden houses. Some of the timber houses in New Zealand cost

a fair amount of money, and are beautiful homes. Here, however, local authorities insist on brick homes. The trouble is that the standard set is too high for the people. Local governing bodies are never content unless they confine various areas to brick houses. That is absolutely wrong. Indeed, it is not easy to find in the metropolitan districts an area where a wooden building can be erected. Every attempt is made to force people to build brick houses, though these are beyond their means. But the Government, entering into the field of renting homes, is foredoomed to failure. The policy of workers' homes I agree with, and would agree with it even at cheaper rates for the occupants and with a longer period in which to complete the purchase, and with a lower deposit and lower interest: The Government would not invest their own money in the scheme outlined in the Bill: I guarantee that much. Any proposition of building wooden houses to let is irrational. I wonder what next the Government will propose? I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [10.58]: I shall be very brief. We had a full-dress rehearsal of this subject while on the Loan Bill, and I do not propose to traverse the same ground again. Surely we are wasting time on this Bill, seeing that the House has already decided by a majority that it will not allow money to be raised for this purpose. In connection with the item in the Loan Bill providing £10,000 for building houses to rent, we struck out the words "to rent." If we pass this Bill the Government will not have money to build houses to rent. With other important legislation to be dealt with this side of Christmas, I respectfully suggest that we waste no time on this Bill.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [10.59]: I support the Bill, and congratulate the Government on its introduction. During this debate we have heard many reasons advanced for the shortage in this type of house, and why people are not investing money in this type of house. I think Mr. Baxter gave one of the reasons just now. It is because of the attitude of local governing bodies in the metropolitan area, who declare brick areas. By reason of that fact people are prevented from building this type of house. As a result of the restriction, which has operated during the last 10 or 15 years,

a stage has been reached when there is an extra acute shortage of small homes for renting. Both the Government and this House will have to provide authority in the near future to enable someone to make up the leeway in houses. In many industrial districts it is a big problem to get a decent house at a reasonable rental. The object of the Bill is to make up for that shortage in houses. There is a demand for this type of house. Notwithstanding what some members say, those who desire to secure these houses are a very good type and should be encouraged. I am convinced that some such move will have to be launched. In different parts of the world housing schemes have had to be embarked upon, and this House will have to recognise that fact. I think Mr. Baxter was confused between the object of this Bill and the Housing Trust Act Amendment Bill, when he spoke about rentals of 5s. a week. The Housing Trust was established to provide dwellings for indigent people, whereas those who will be catered for under the Bill before members will be able to pay ordinary rentals.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What would you say was an ordinary rental?

Hon. G. FRASER: From 10s. to 15s. a week.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Then, as that is the ordinary rental demanded by the Workers' Homes Board, why do not those people avail themselves of that institution?

Hon. G. FRASER: Not everyone can afford to secure a workers' home from the board, and even so the board cannot provide for the requirements of all who lodge applications. The Government can do something to alleviate the shortage of houses and the Bill represents one method. It must be remembered that not everyone is in a position to secure a workers' home. In most instances casual workers could not contemplate any such thing because of the nature of their occupation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And not many of them would be in a position to pay rent.

Hon. G. FRASER: Quite a large percentage of them have always paid rent. The casual worker has to move from place to place in order to secure work and it is impossible in those circumstances for him to contemplate purchasing a home. Because of the nature of his employment, he finds it extremely difficult to secure a home for which he can afford to pay the rent. I have

always maintained that it is not possible for a working man to afford more than one day's pay as rent. If a home were built for about £450 it would be possible for the Government to make the house available at a rental of about 12s. a week, which would be reasonable. I hope this Chamber will agree to the Bill and give the Government an opportunity to do something to overcome the housing shortage in the metropolitan area and elsewhere.

HON. A. M. CLYDESDALE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [11.5]: I cannot understand the objection to the Bill. Its introduction has been recommended by the Workers' Homes Board and surely the members of that board have had sufficient experience to know whether such a move would be successful. It seems to be a crime to be poor.

Hon. J. Cornell: The late John Scaddan said that 25 years ago when he introduced the original legislation.

Hon. A. M. CLYDESDALE: And there is no harm in repeating it now. There are plenty of workers who are on the bread line. There are many people who cannot pay more than 12s. 6d. a week as rent and if they did so, what chance would they have of obtaining an equity in their homes?

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not let them start off scratch?

Hon. A. M. CLYDESDALE: Because they cannot afford to pay 15s. a week, which is what the Workers' Homes Board require.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: They have to pay up to £1 a week.

Hon. A. M. CLYDESDALE: The Government has proposed a scheme that will enable it to provide homes for people at cheap rentals and there are many people who cannot pay more than will be required for these homes. This House should assist such a move instead of talking about throwing the Bill out. References have been made to the expenditure of £10,000, but what would that mean? It would represent the erection of 20 to 25 houses. Do members suggest that we cannot get 25 decent people who would look after those houses if permitted to rent them? It is an insult to the poorer people. If members reject the Bill, it will mean that they will deprive some women and children of having a few more shillings to spend each week.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [11.7]: I support the Bill. It is a fact that there are many instances in the city of two families finding accommodation in one house, and in some three families are living in six-roomed houses. That is a very undesirable state of affairs. If it were known in other parts of the world that such conditions existed here, they would regard us as barely civilised. That sort of thing is more a relic of bygone ages. The Bill will give some people a chance to get out of rooms in which they live to-day. It is not desirable that families should be crammed together. It is a shocking state of affairs. Here we have people battling with each other for the use of the small conveniences that one house must contain. That is not very nice. There are people, with families too, who are huddled together. Workers' homes are quite all right, but they are a bit too elaborate for some people. Each one of us likes to own a good house, such as people will admire when they pass. We reached the stage at which we built workers' homes that were beyond the capacity of the people to pay for, and so we must get back to a better basis.

Hon. J. Cornell: The trouble is that we pandered to them.

Hon. T. MOORE: If members throw the Bill out and leave matters as they are to-day, then there is something radically wrong with their reasoning.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why not build cheaper homes?

Hon. T. MOORE: That is the object of the Bill. Here is a proposal to have a trial with 25 houses. What harm can be done? Should not the scheme be given a trial? If it is, I believe it will have to be extended. If members want people to huddle together as they are to-day, let them reject the Bill. I hope that the argument that because we amended the Loan Bill the Government will not be able to do anything, will not prevail. I do not think it will affect the Government. At any rate, it is a poor argument. The fact that we amended the Loan Bill will not prevent the Government, should this Bill become an Act, from finding the necessary money.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then the Government intends to defy Parliament.

Hon. T. MOORE: Not at all.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is what you indicated.

Hon. T. MOORE: Perhaps the Workers' Homes Board will be able to raise the money necessary. I appeal to hon. members who are better off than those who will be affected by this legislation, to give those people a chance to live in homes for which they can pay the rent demanded.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [11.12]: When the Loan Bill was under consideration I voted for the retention of the item relating to £10,000 for the purpose of building cheap homes, because we had a definite promise from the Chief Secretary that this Bill would be introduced. I was anxious to see it, but now that I have perused it I am disappointed in its provisions. I expected to see an amendment to the Workers' Homes Act that would have permitted the board to build cheaper houses.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Then what is the Bill before us for?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I realise that it is the duty of the Government to provide houses for poor people, but I had hoped to see provision made for houses at about half the cost of the present workers' homes, with correspondingly reduced rentals. I agree with Mr. Baxter that more wooden houses should be built. When I was in New Zealand I was astounded at the great number of beautiful homes that were constructed of wood. They were just as comfortable as brick houses. I had hoped that the Bill would make provision for the Workers' Homes Board to set aside out of the rentals a small sum, say, about 2s. a week, for the purpose of creating equities in the houses, on the same principle as adopted by the board regarding the ordinary homes that are constructed.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: They can do that today.

Hon. J. Cornell: Under the existing Act they can build houses for £10 if they like.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Then why the necessity for this Bill? I am quite in accord with the policy of cheaper houses, but not for letting purposes. Let the people have homes at about half the rent they would have to pay for the usual workers' homes, but a portion of that should be set aside to create an equity. I know what the letting of houses means, for even the best of tenants sometimes neglect their houses and others sometimes get away without paying their rent. I am not concerned about creating another

trading concern, because this certainly is not a trading concern.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What about the North-West steamers?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: They are a developmental utility and an absolute necessity. I agree it is necessary to provide cheap houses, but if we can avoid the letting proposal let us do so. If a man cannot afford to build a house for himself, let us supply him with a house at a cheap rate, but do not let us go in for letting houses. If we give the prospective owner a small equity in the house, it will be an incentive to him to keep the property in good order.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [11.17]: I voted against that item in the Loan Bill because I wanted to see what the Housing Bill would be like. I believe it to be part of a Government's duty to house those people who cannot afford to have their own houses. In various debates in this Chamber it has been pointed out that no member would advise a friend to build houses for letting. Still I believe it to be part of the duty of a Government to see that the people are well housed. It may mean a certain loss, but why should the private landlord have to house the unfortunate honest man who cannot get work? Yet he must have somewhere to live.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The taxpayer has to keep him.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: During the depression many unfortunate landlords had to permit tenants to remain in possession without paying any rent. The clauses in the Bill are just as stringent as any to be found in a lease. With this provision the Government has taken every precaution to see that its property will be well looked after. Of course an Act of Parliament will not prevent tenants from neglecting the houses they are in, but it is better for the general taxpayer to pay for the damage done by the bad tenant than that the private landlord should have to pay. I say again it is the duty of the Government to provide homes for those who cannot afford homes of their own. It is not for the Government to provide homes for, say, members of Parliament to rent, but to provide homes for the less fortunate. There is in the Bill due provision setting that out. There is a declaration here that will only permit of one on the

lower wages scale to have one of those houses.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member knows what a declaration amounts to.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: There are honest people as well as dishonest people, and I see no reason why the man who wants a house from the Government will be any more honest or dishonest than one who wants a house from a private landlord. I will support the Bill.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [11.21]: The Government proposes to build houses at a cost of £400 each, let the house at 12s. 6d. per week and then make provision that on the application of the tenant to pay £5 he can become a leaseholder and eventually the owner of the property.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But those people cannot afford a £5 deposit.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I am inclined to support the Bill because it will encourage the men who cannot afford to build houses for themselves. Also it will permit the Workers' Homes Board to build cheaper houses than have been built. I know of many instances where workers' homes have been granted and the tenants have produced the whole of their liquid assets, amounting perhaps to £200, and other assets which they had so as to make those homes of very much better quality than they would otherwise be.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is under the leasehold.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. I have seen many instances of that and so I will support the Bill. We are also told that the board has power to decide whether it is going to erect these homes. If a district can show that it wants these homes, it will be within the power of the board to have these homes erected in that district. Many of the cheap McNess homes in Katanning have proved very helpful to those living in them. Throughout the world to-day Governments are making provision for housing schemes. In the debate on the Loan Bill several members said they were voting against the £10,000 item because the scheme would be brought up before the House. The scheme is now here and I will support it.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [11.25]: I, too, will support the Bill. If there is a shortage of houses, the burden should not be thrown on the private owner but should be

the responsibility of the Government. I hold to that view.

Hon. J. Cornell: But the Country Party is not in favour of it.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: No member of the Country Party need vote except as he thinks desirable on all but questions of party policy and platform. This proposal is an experiment in this State. I know that in England there are housing schemes on a very large scale. But there is only £10,000 provided for this scheme so I should like to see it given a trial. If in a few years it should prove unsatisfactory, I will not agree to having it extended. I will support the second reading.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [11.26]: The inconsistency of some members is astounding. On the £10,000 item in the Loan Bill, the words were struck out "to give the Government power to build houses for letting purposes." We struck out those words and we inserted "for additional working capital for the Workers' Homes Board." The members who voted for that are now voting that the Government shall build houses for letting purposes. I agree that the Workers' Homes Board should build cheaper homes under the Workers' Homes Act, but not for letting purposes. On a rent-purchase basis, yes, so that the tenant shall have some equity in the property. It should be made as cheap as possible. If they are going to pay 12s. 6d. per week rent, it will not be difficult for them to add an extra 2s. per week so as to have some equity in the property, which will mean that the asset will be looked after.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: What about the floating population?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The hon. member who interjected voted the other night that the Government should not have power to build houses for letting purposes. Now he has somersaulted on the question.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you believe in private ownership?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do. I am not surprised at the hon. member who interjected, because he has no convictions of his own.

The PRESIDENT: Order, order!

Hon. G. W. MILES: I will withdraw that, but I have noted that hon. member watching to see which way the vote was going before he voted. I hope the House will not agree to the principle of the Government building

homes for letting purposes. I will oppose the Bill.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [11.30]: I commend the Government for bringing down this Bill. I am surprised to hear Mr. Baxter's wholesale condemnation of the class of people it is thought the building of these homes will benefit. I do not know what justification he had for suggesting that they would not look after these homes, and would not pay the rent. The Premier says that a 4-roomed house can be built and let for 12s. 6d. a week. This is a means of providing a cheap house containing more accommodation than people would get from private owners. Members should give this small effort a chance to function. The Government is deserving of censure for not rising to the occasion in the matter of providing decent houses for a great many of its employees who are scattered throughout the State. I refer to the railway men who work in all weathers. The houses these men have to live in, with their families, are a disgrace to the Government, more especially to a Government that has been in office as long as this one has. When I say they are not houses at all, I am stating a fact. The Government should provide a type of home for these workers that could not be subject to criticism.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Have you seen the plans?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am advocating that the Government should bring down a Bill to provide decent houses for railway workers. These men draw their wages from the State. Stationmasters and officers of the department have deductions made from their salaries for housing accommodation, so that the Government would not stand any risk of loss if it provided decent homes for other railway workers on the same basis. A lot of the discussion to-night has been wide of the mark. Many of the remarks made have been mere conjecture, and there has been no warrant for them. If this scheme is tried out in a small way and found satisfactory, it may be enlarged upon.

On motion by Hon. H. Tuckey, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 15th December, 1937.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received a letter from the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) requesting permission to move a motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 47 to discuss a matter of urgency in regard to the question of the consideration of private members' business. I regret that I am unable to accept the matter referred to by the hon. member as a subject of urgency and suggest that he ask the Premier a question without notice, and in that way obtain all the necessary information he desires and would be likely to get by moving for the adjournment of the House.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1. Special Tax Assessment Acts Revision.
2. Special Tax Acts Revision.
3. Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment (No. 2).

Introduced by the Premier.