

Minister receives the report. However, under the existing provisions of the Act, the board did not have the power, at all times, to make any decision that it liked and because of that its report had to be based on a unanimous decision. As far as I am concerned, the more agreement that can be obtained among men who are doing a certain job, the better. I do not think that the references made to Section 7 carry much weight because the right of appeal is included in the Bill.

Apart from that, the main point I want to stress is that if members do not care for the Bill to such an extent that they vote against it and it is defeated, it would not alter the Act in any way because there is provision in the Act for both the board and the committee to operate. All the Bill seeks to do is to repeal those cumbersome sections relating to a board which are not in the best interests of a tidy Act of Parliament. The only reason the Bill has been introduced now is because of the promise made last year to the member for Stirling. I think members will agree that it is not much use having two bodies operating to do the one job.

What members desire today is to retain some of the features that relate to the operations of the board and apply them to the operations of the committee. By doing that they would make it just as awkward for the committee to operate as it was for the board. In these days we do not want to do that. If we are to have the increased population we envisage, I think that, as far as land settlement is concerned, we should adopt a method whereby we can acquire land as fast as possible.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I would like to insert a provision in the Bill to ensure that all land is paid for as soon as possible after acquisition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that it is nearly 6.15 p.m.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 2nd November, 1954.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Local Courts Act Amendment.
- 2, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

As to Eastern States Bookings from Fremantle.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the Railway Department's proposal to terminate the issuing of tickets from the Fremantle booking office for passengers travelling to the Eastern States?
- (2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will he endeavour to have the present arrangements continued?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

- (1) In the interests of economy, a variation in the existing interstate booking practice at Fremantle station was brought into operation on the 1st November, 1954. In so far as the passenger is concerned, there is no alteration to the previous arrangements and a ticket may be obtained at the time the booking is made.
- (2) Answered by No. (1).

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

As to Resumptions and Prices, Belmont Park.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

What is it considered will be the average price per acre that will be paid to owners for the land resumed by the State Housing Commission in the Belmont Park road district?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

There will be many variable factors and just compensation will be assessed on the merits of each claim in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Public Works Act, 1902-1954.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. R. J. Boylen, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. G. Bennetts (South-East) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—BUSH FIRES.

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: In introducing this Bill, I wish to advise members that each amendment has been discussed with and approved by the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust. The amendments are all designed to facilitate the administration of the parent Act by the trust.

The first proposal is of a minor nature and merely seeks to improve verbiage. Section 3P (2) of the Act states that the Motor Vehicle Insurance Fund shall consist of the contributions, insurance premiums and other moneys which may come into its hands under and for the purposes of the Act. The trust's legal advisers are of the opinion that the phrase "which may come into its hands" is a clumsy one when referring to an impersonal thing such as the fund, and it is therefore proposed to replace that phrase with the words "which the trust receives."

The amendments contained in Clause 2 (b), (c), and (d) are related to one another. When the principal Act first came into operation in 1943, premiums were determined on a similar basis to that operating in the other States of the Commonwealth. This was a loss ratio of 70 per cent., with 20 per cent. allowed for administration costs, 5 per cent. allotted as commission to the companies and a surplus of 5 per cent. However, the trust has succeeded in reducing its administration costs to 6.8 per cent.

It is considered that those insurers participating in and contributing to the fund should receive some encouragement, particularly in view of the fact that in past years they have been carrying very substantial liabilities. The amendments, if agreed to, would allow the trust, from time to time, to invest any of its moneys, either in a manner authorised by the Trustees Act, or in some such other manner approved by the Minister.

It will be appreciated that the trust always has a considerable amount of money on hand. This is due to the lengthy period, sometimes three or more years, that elapses before some claims are finalised. Instead of permitting this money to stand idle the trust, although it has no statutory power to do so, has been investing the money, and receiving interest on it. The proposals in the Bill would validate this procedure, and would empower the trust to allocate the interest towards the liquidation of losses sustained by it in past years. If there were any surplus remaining after these losses were recouped, the trust would be authorised to declare a dividend of not more than 5 per cent. to the insurers participating in the fund. The Bill would also empower the trust to recover previous losses from participating insurers in such amounts and at such times as the trust may consider expedient.

The principal Act deals in Section 7 (3) with "hit and run" cases. It provides that where death or injury has resulted from negligent driving, and the identity of the responsible vehicle cannot be established, then judgment may be obtained by action against the trust instead of against the driver of the vehicle. In such cases the Act specifies that notice and a report must be given to the trust as soon as possible after it is known that the identity of the offending vehicle cannot be ascertained.

This proviso is not considered sufficient protection for the trust, and the Bill seeks to include the requirement that the person taking action has made due search and inquiry to ascertain the identity of the responsible vehicle. This requirement is in the New South Wales Act and is designed to assist in preventing the possibility of claims following accidents in which no vehicle was concerned. The trust has been advised by senior counsel that some doubt exists as to its right of recovery against an insured person who has committed a breach of his policy conditions, such as driving while intoxicated, etc.

Section 7 (1) of the Act gives to the injured claimant the right to recover from the trust any unsatisfied portion of a judgment given against an insured person for death or bodily injury caused by negligence. Furthermore, Section 7 (4) states that the trust cannot deny liability in any case on the ground that the insured person had committed a breach of any term, condition or warranty of his policy. In any event, such a defence could not be submitted in an action against the trust for the unsatisfied balance of a judgment against an insured person.

Section 7 (5) makes provision for the right of recovery by the trust against an insured person, but only where it has paid moneys and then found there had been a breach of the policy, or the policy had been

obtained by mis-statements or non-disclosures. As I have said, the point is a doubtful one; but the trust's legal advisers consider it should be put beyond doubt by including in the Act a clear right for the trust to recover from the insured person that part of a judgment which he has failed to pay, and which the trust has had to meet.

At present the Act gives injured third parties a similar right of recovery against the trust in respect to uninsured vehicles as it does in respect of insured vehicles, where the driver or owner of the responsible vehicle has not satisfied in full, within one month, a judgment given against him. However, while, where an insured vehicle is concerned, the trust must have been notified when the judgment against the insured person came on for hearing, the Act does not provide for the trust to be notified of hearings against the owner or driver of an uninsured vehicle. This is an anomaly which the Bill seeks to correct. If this is agreed to, it will not be necessary for the driver and the owner of any uninsured vehicle to report to the trust the details of any accident causing death or bodily injury. Therefore, the Bill proposes to delete this requirement from the Act.

The proposals in Clause 6 are designed to give the trust substantially the same rights in respect to uninsured vehicles as it has with insured vehicles. At present, considerable differences exist between the rights of the trust in regard to insured and uninsured vehicles, whereas, prior to the creation of the trust, it was natural that such differences should exist. Now, however, the trust is the insurer of all motor-vehicles, whether a policy in respect to them exists or not, because it combines the functions of all insurers and of the nominal defendant under the old Act. The liabilities of the trust arising from the negligent use of an uninsured vehicle are the same as if a current policy was held for that vehicle; and it is, therefore, only reasonable that, if an owner has omitted to take out a policy and so committed a breach of the Act, the trust should have substantially the same rights as it has against an owner who has committed a breach of the warranties or conditions of the policy.

Section 10 of the parent Act sets out the procedure that must be taken by an insured person following an accident which has resulted in death or bodily injury; and also specifies certain action in regard to litigation, settlement or liability that the insured person may not take without the written consent of the trust. Section 11 deals with the power of the trust to conduct negotiations and legal proceedings in connection with any claim against an insured person.

The Bill seeks to extend the provisions of Sections 10 and 11 to cover uninsured as well as insured vehicles. I have already mentioned that the trust has certain rights of recovery in the event of an insured person breaching some term of his policy, such as driving while under the influence of drink. The trust, however, is concerned about the fact that the insured vehicle might be driven by some other person, who, while not a party to the contract of insurance, could breach some term of the contract and be responsible for an accident.

Section 20(1) of the principal Act provides that a policy shall continue in existence notwithstanding any change in the ownership of the vehicle; and any person who drives the vehicle, with or without the consent of the owner, shall be protected by the policy. However, in Section 20(2), while any new owner is bound by the terms, warranties and conditions of the policy, no provision is made for the driver of the vehicle for the time being to be so bound. It appears, therefore, that if a driver for the time being breached a warranty or a condition of the policy while being involved in an accident, the trust would have no right of recovery against him. This is considered to be most unsatisfactory.

If a right of recovery exists against an owner who, while under the influence of liquor, injures another by the negligent use of a motor-vehicle, it is felt that the same right should exist against any driver who causes injury under the same circumstances, whether or not he happens to be the owner of the vehicle concerned. The amendment now proposed would have the effect of ensuring that the driver of a vehicle who receives the benefits of a policy is under the same obligation as the owner-driver.

The Bill proposes to repeal and re-enact Subsection (1) of Section 21 of the principal Act. There are two reasons for this proposal. The subsection at present provides for a period of 15 days after the expiration of a policy during which the vehicle is deemed to be insured, even though the policy has not been renewed or a new policy has not been obtained. This extension was intended for the benefit of a person who renews his policy within a 15-day period, and was not intended to extend the term of all policies to one year and 15 days. To cover this position, the amendment provides that, if a policy is not obtained or renewed within the 15 days, the vehicle is deemed uninsured from the date of expiry of the old policy.

The second and more important object is to meet the position which arises—(a), where a vehicle is involved in an accident after a policy has expired; and (b), the owner then obtains a new policy. On general principles, it is submitted that the owner should not have the benefit of such latter policy to cover the accident, which

occurred before the policy was obtained. It is possible, however, that if the renewal or the new policy is dated back to the expiry of the old policy, the owner could obtain such benefit.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Does that mean that the insurer could, perhaps, with a very good customer, still make the claim valid if he were prepared to back-date it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We amended the Act to provide that when a person renews his policy or his licence for his car, it is back-dated, and there is continuity.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: He has 15 days' grace.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, and it is continuous. As a matter of fact, under the Act, if a person waited for three months and then took out a policy, it would still be back-dated. That amendment was made last year.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: I did not mean that. Suppose I am an insurer and, for some reason, I have not renewed the policy within the specified time. If I am a good customer, the policy could be back-dated, so that my claim would be valid.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so; and this provision is being inserted to provide that in the event of an accident occurring, between the date of expiry and the renewal date, there will be a certain responsibility on the owner or the driver instead of the whole of it being borne by the trust. Some doubt regarding the position arises because of certain provisions of the Traffic Act and the principal Act.

Section 10 (5) of the Traffic Act, which deals with the renewal of licences in the metropolitan area, provides that—

A new licence when issued shall commence and have effect from and after the date of expiry of the expired licence.

The principal Act in Section 4 (8) (a) and (b) provides in effect that no licence shall be issued unless—

(a) Prior to or at the time of the issue of such licence there is paid the appropriate premium "for the class of vehicle being licensed and for the period of the licence".

(b) Such licence incorporates a policy of insurance in respect of "the same period as that for which such licence is issued."

It can be argued that under Section 10 (5) of the Traffic Act, the Police Department has no alternative but to issue a licence which dates back to the date of expiry of the expired licence, and that the period of insurance in order to comply with the above-mentioned provisions of the principal Act must be issued for the same period and must also date back. The amendment would make it quite clear

that if the period between the expiry date of the old policy and the date on which a new policy is obtained exceeds 15 days, the vehicle is for such period uninsured for the purposes of the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £15,000,000.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th October.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [4.53]: I believe that in the past Governments—not only the present Government, but all Governments—have concentrated too much on unproductive work, by which I mean the spending of money in areas where it is not possible for greater production to take place. I am not aware of any large-scale work involving £1,000,000, £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 which has been carried out in the country areas; but it is not difficult to name quite a few projects on which large sums of money have been spent, that have been carried out within the city limits.

We know that with a growing city and State it is necessary to spend money on the various needs of the community; but it seems to me that the city people are looked after at the expense of the country people, and at the expense of creating productive work in country areas. I am hoping that once this huge undertaking—the Kwinana project—and any others that the Government might have in mind or that are in progress, are completed, something on a large scale will be done in the way of supplying water to the country areas.

Members are aware that there is a scheme in progress to take water to the towns along the Great Southern railway, and we know how long that scheme has been under way, and how long it will be before it is completed. The northern areas of the State, part of which I have the honour to represent, have very little in the way of water supplies. Apart from Goomalling, the only water supplies that are reticulated through a scheme are to be found at Geraldton, and even there very little has been done in recent years. When the Government has the money—and we trust it will be able to influence the British Government to make money available—I hope it will go ahead with such projects as I have mentioned, because we are in dire need of water supplies. Every country centre this year is desperately short of water; and the same thing applies year after year, even when we have inches and inches of rain above the average rainfall.

Another matter I wish to bring before Cabinet members in this House concerns the railways; and I couple this question

with the problem of the dry situation that exists today. Over a period I have asked many questions about water supplies and the amount of water that is necessary for the railway requirements in various dry districts, and the answers I have received all point to the fact that the Railway Department is going to spend many thousands of pounds this year on carting water to these dry areas. Yet—at whose instigation, I know not—we read in the paper that diesel engines will haul the passenger coaches from Kalgoorlie to Perth.

To me it is strange that when we have a line completely covered, for the supply of water from Mundaring, so that no cartage is necessary, steam trains should not operate on it until such time as more diesels are available. The outer lines going north to Morawa, Mullewa and out to Mt. Magnet, as well as several of the branch lines going out from the Great Southern, are all desperately short of water, but they are to be supplied with steam trains which use a lot of water and have to haul it as they go.

Even at this late stage, the Government should get down to a basis of leaving steam trains on the Kalgoorlie and South-West services until the diesels can be better spared. While it is necessary for the good name of the State to run a train as speedily as possible from Kalgoorlie to Perth in order to join up with the excellent services provided by the Commonwealth and the other States, we must not overlook the economic side of the question when the position is as bad as it is.

I support Mr. Logan, who has asked many questions in this House, in his protests about the unfair treatment which is meted out to the people of Geraldton over s.p. betting. It would seem that the Government, after seeing the figures that have been supplied, should take a keener interest in what is going on. The Minister for Police should at least make inquiries and find out why this unfair treatment is being meted out to the people in the Geraldton district. Had it not been for the questions asked last year by the hon. member, when it was shown that the Collie people had paid no fines whatever, I imagine that Collie would not have appeared on the list this year; even so, it represents only a negligible figure. I support the Bill.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [5.0]: I would like to take this opportunity of saying a few words about my electorate. Last week-end, through the courtesy of the manager of the MacRobertson-Miller Aviation Co., my colleague, Mr. Willesee, and I were present at the opening of the new airstrip at Shark Bay. This airstrip will be a big help to a community that has been isolated for so many years, and I am sure that the people of the town will

derive considerable benefit from the service it will bring. They will be able to obtain perishables and have an express delivery of parcels and mail; they will also be able to receive at least a weekly paper. That is a big step forward, and this Government is trying to do everything it can for them.

However, as yet there is no medical service at Shark Bay. As the town now has an airstrip, there is no reason why a fully-paid sister should not be stationed at that town. A hospital already exists; but since it has been built, it has never been occupied. If a fully-trained sister were stationed at the town she could, with the aid of a pedal set, be in constant touch with the doctor at Carnarvon; and the people at Shark Bay would have an efficient medical service, or one which a small community such as that is entitled to expect.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They have a telephone service to Shark Bay, have they not?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Then they would not want a wireless set.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: They use a pedal set to keep in communication.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But they could ring up at any hour of the day or night.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Whether the sister would use a pedal set or a telephone is immaterial. The main point is that this small community should be given the services of a trained sister, and I cannot see any reason why a fully-paid sister cannot be stationed at Shark Bay. Costs should not stand in the way of the health of the community, even though, in this case, the town comprises only 100 people. So I hope something will be done in the near future. As a matter of fact, the Minister for Health has promised to visit Shark Bay and look into the matter; and I am hoping that, as a result, something will soon be done for these people.

The Minister for the North-West: You cannot direct them to go there.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Who?

The Minister for the North-West: The nurses.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: No. I am not suggesting that one should be directed to go there; but if the Government is prepared to pay an adequate salary, a sister could be persuaded to go. I think the Minister is implying that it is difficult to obtain a sister.

The Minister for the North-West: You cannot get them for such places.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: If an adequate salary were offered, I think a sister could be obtained, and that the difficulties would

not be so great as are imagined. However, I am hoping that something will be done about it.

I now want to discuss the beef industry. At Wyndham this year 26,756 cattle were killed, with an average weight of 516 lb.; of this number, only 54 per cent. were of export quality. In my opinion, that leaves much room for improvement, because the beef industry is a most important one, especially in view of the world shortage of beef and the good outlook for the future. I think the Government should do something to raise the quality of cattle in the Kimberleys; and in my opinion the best way to tackle it is to provide topping-off farms, or places where pastures could be grown and the cattle topped off, because no fat bullocks come out of the Kimberleys.

The Minister for the North-West: Why cannot the pastoralists do that?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Under present conditions, it would be too big a job for the pastoralists to undertake.

The Minister for the North-West: Then why ask the Government to do it?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The only way is to dam the rivers—that is, the Ord, Margaret, and Fitzroy—provide irrigated pastures along the river frontages, and use these for fattening the cattle. Another way would be to overcome the pest and disease problems that exist among cattle in those areas. It is not that the pastoralists do not breed cattle with decent frames. The trouble is that, under present conditions, it is not possible for them to be topped off.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Is not the feed good enough?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Yes; but it is hard to understand unless one has seen the country. It is held in million-acre lots, and only hard fibrous grasses grow. The legumes have been eaten out and destroyed—I am referring to salt-bush and so on—and the only way to overcome the problem is to dam the rivers and provide irrigated pastures along the river frontages. The cattle could be topped off on these pastures. As I said before, another way to tackle the problem would be to overcome the pests and diseases that exist, and allow the cattle to be brought south to be topped off. There are such pests as pleuro, tick, buffalo fly, and others. I believe that tick and buffalo fly could be eradicated. The tick infestation is mainly along the coastal areas; and if dips could be provided throughout the North, or the pastoralists given assistance to establish them, and dipping made compulsory, many of these pests could be eradicated.

Hon. L. C. Diver: You could not do that with the scrub bulls.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The only way to overcome those pests is with a rifle; they must be destroyed. I think it would

be to the advantage of pastoralists to destroy cattle of that type because they are of no use to any herd. I think pleuro could be eradicated if measures were taken to destroy carriers. However, the position is becoming better, and the carriers are being gradually wiped out. In my opinion the Government should take an interest in these things. When one realises that only 54 per cent. of the cattle killed were of export quality, and the beef at Wyndham is not of a high class, one realises that something has to be done.

Hon. L. C. Diver: You cannot interest a disinterested party.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That may be so, but the dipping of cattle should be compulsory. That would eradicate tick. Dips could be established and dipping made compulsory; that, in my opinion, would eradicate tick.

The Minister for the North-West: Who builds the sheep-dips on stations?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The squatters themselves.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There is no compulsory sheep-dipping.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: They have to comply with compulsory dipping. These people could build the dips themselves; but it is up to the Government to make dipping compulsory. If these pests were eradicated it would help to improve considerably the beef industry in the Kimberleys.

Another point on which I would touch concerns native reserves throughout the North-West. Huge areas of land are held for this purpose, and they are not being used. If one applies for an acre of ground in any of these reserves, the application is usually rejected. A prospector in Port Hedland tried to get a lease to prospect for some rare minerals that are being mined in the district. He was refused because the land is on a native reserve. The department should have a close look at those reserves, because in these days the natives are not using them. They are working on the stations, or are staying at the missions; and in my opinion a lot of land could be handed back to the Lands Department, and thrown open for selection. That would help to open up the North.

I want to congratulate the Government on the running of camp schools, particularly the one at Broome, which has just finished. It has been a great success; and children from Wyndham, Hall's Creek, and some of the outlying places have been able to get together. Mr. Rooke, an inspector of education, has done an excellent job, and both he and the Government are to be congratulated. I am hoping that these schools will be continued.

It is also pleasing to learn that the Government is establishing a technical school at Derby, and providing facilities in this regard at Carnarvon. It is a problem to

keep the young people in the North, but if we can give them these advanced facilities, particularly on the technical side, we will have a chance of keeping them. In the past there has been little hope of finding work for young boys after they have left school; but the position is changing daily, mainly because of the exploration for oil, and the interest that has been shown in mining. The more we can encourage our young people to stay and settle in the area, the better it will be.

During the last couple of years this Government has done a lot in regard to water supplies throughout the North. Better storage facilities have been provided, and in some places bores have been established. I was pleased to learn recently that the Wyndham water supply system is to be rehabilitated, and I am sure the people of that town will be grateful to the Government. But we would like to see an adequate water supply scheme provided for Shark Bay. If an extensive boring programme were undertaken around the town, I think a good water supply could be found. Perhaps catchment areas and a dam could be provided. However, I ask the Government to look into the matter, because this is a district that deserves every facility that can be given to it.

I now wish to discuss main roads in the North. The extra traffic that these roads have to carry because of the search for oil, and the mining and other developments taking place in these areas, is placing a heavy strain on them, particularly on the road from Derby to Fitzroy Crossing. I think it is time some approach was made to the Federal Government about this problem. In the past we have talked of a sealed road to Carnarvon; but it has become talk of a sealed road to Wyndham; and this is a necessity. Members have seen the programme of Wapet; and when we realise that this company, and others like it, will be spending millions of pounds over the next three or four years, surely we can find the facilities required to enable them to carry on efficiently! It is necessary, as soon as possible, to get an all-weather road through the North. People are beginning to wake up to the possibilities of this area along the lines I have been suggesting since I have been a member of this House.

One of the main problems is transport; and instead of having a sealed road to Carnarvon, we require one to Wyndham, and feeder roads could be taken off from that main road. Everywhere in the South, good sealed roads have been built; but I cannot see the chance of any being built in the north. I ask the Government to give this matter its consideration. I know that sealed roads in the North cannot be provided solely by the State Government, even though it will receive much greater revenue from the extra petrol tax. In the interests of the defence of Australia, the Commonwealth Government should do its

share in providing these roads, because it will derive some benefit as that part of the country develops. Everyone must agree that transport is very important to any new country that is being opened up.

The people of the North are appreciative of the job this Government is doing. It has done more for the North than any Government has done in the past. The rehabilitation of harbours and public utilities had been wickedly neglected by previous Governments; but today, on every hand, we can see that developments are being commenced. The Minister and the Government must be congratulated on this. The people of the North know what is going on and are grateful.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [5.16]: It is surprising how some members always see a great deal of good in their own parties, and very little good in others. Mr. Barker, in his final words, said that past Governments had done nothing for the North, but this Government had done everything possible.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: On a point of explanation, when I referred to past Governments, I did not bring party politics into it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member should have waited until I had finished before making his explanation.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I wanted to get in first.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: One of the vital things which concern the people of the North, particularly those connected with the cattle industry, is the removal of the subsidy to Air Beef Pty. Ltd.; but the hon. member did not mention that matter.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: The people do not want it. They are better off without it. Only a handful are getting the subsidy.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am pleased to hear the remark that the people of the North do not want the subsidy. From information which has reached me, those people are very annoyed that the Government has removed it.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Don't you believe it!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member should express the opinion of the people who have benefited from it in the last few years. The subsidy was introduced by the previous Government, with the aid of the air service. I shall, of course, see that the hon. member's remarks by interjection are sent to the people who have asked me to protest in this House against the removal of the subsidy, because they should know the hon. member's opinion.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Mr Blythe knows my opinion.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I agree that not enough has been done for the North. It is much easier to talk about what should and should not be done. My experience of the North may not be as great as that of Mr. Barker. I took a trip up there once, and it influenced me to such an extent that, in my capacity as Minister for Lands, I tried to do something for the people in that locality. What is required today is improvement on the pastoral holdings.

The Minister for the North-West: You should have provided for that in the Act.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: At that time the position was desperate. Although the Government was hard up for cash, it did reduce the rental for holdings in order to give pastoralists some assistance. That was done with the idea that this saving would be put into improvements. The late Mr. M. P. Durack realised the necessity for putting down wells away from the rivers, and this practice should be encouraged. Fencing is another important factor towards improving stations. I know that it is expensive to provide fencing for those areas. Only concrete or steel posts are suitable. Steel posts would be cheaper, although even they require concrete strainers. Furthermore, the cost of wire is very high today. Until these holdings in the North are fenced and divided into smaller paddocks the best results will not be obtained. The stock routes alongside rivers, and the flats facing rivers used for grazing have been eaten out and this has caused erosion. This is accentuated by the stamping of stock over the land in dry periods.

I am sorry to see that the Government has discontinued the subsidy for the air transport of beef. Governments have had to subsidise many industries in this State. I do not contend that some of the industries which have been subsidised have not proved to be of advantage to the State. Nevertheless, some have lost a great deal of money. I refer particularly to the Wundowie steel industry. It is doubtful whether that undertaking is making a profit, even today. I agree that this industry is important to the State; but when we compare its importance with that of air transport of beef in the North, I know which deserves the greater encouragement.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: This subsidy is only maintaining one station.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am told there are four stations. The hon. member seems to know more about that than my advisers.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You should see the number of cattle coming from the others.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not sure that it would not be more profitable to slaughter all the cattle on the stations and convey the carcasses to the coast by

air. There is no doubt that in future air transport will be of greater importance than it is today, so we should not discourage its use at present. I hope the hon. member will be prepared to assist in every way possible its use in the North.

During the debate on this Bill, members can discuss any subject, so I would like to remark on the tendency of people to drift to the city. It was not so long ago when the majority of the population was resident outside the metropolitan area; but today there is an excess of population within the city of no less than 80,000. The only way to encourage people to settle in the country is to provide the necessities of life there. The hon. member has been talking about water supplies for the North; but for years the valuable wheat belt of this State has been clamouring for water. It is most vital for people living in the wheat belt to have adequate water supplies. The only method of doing this is to convey the water from the high country adjoining the city. The Government should allocate more funds than at present to provide water supplies for those districts. I dare say that nothing is more vital to the wheat, the sheep, and the mining industries than an adequate water supply.

We must remember that the exports by those industries provide the overseas exchange to keep this State going. I want the Government to give serious consideration to this matter, and I ask every member in this House to back up my suggestion. The majority of the population seem to be attracted to the city because the money circulates here, but this discourages the country settlers. I am greatly disturbed when I see how the population of the metropolitan area has increased, and how the population of country districts has decreased.

The commencement of important industries along the coast has affected this question to a large extent. The oil company is employing a large number of people; but when the construction side has been completed, a smaller number will be employed. The establishment of the new cement works, the steel mill, and other industries has contributed to building up the metropolitan population. Western Australia is placed in a very unfortunate position because the population is centred around the metropolitan area. The situation here is unlike that in Queensland, where the population is spread along the coast.

We have done our best to build up the population of Albany, Geraldton and Bunbury to try to assist decentralisation. Geraldton has an inadequate water supply, and an improvement must be effected before a larger population will be attracted to that town. An inadequate water supply is the greatest deterrent to people settling in country areas. Utilities like transport can be provided reasonably easy, but the

people themselves cannot provide water by their own efforts. It is said that dams can be built, but my experience has convinced me that water cannot be safely provided by that means. In some wheat belt areas, with a rainfall of 7 to 8 inches this year, the water position will become very serious. Before very long I expect a large number of farmers to dispose of many of their sheep, owing to inadequacy of water supplies.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Did not the Wise Government bring down a Bill for a comprehensive water scheme?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is not much good bringing down a Bill. That is easy to do. The important thing is to get the steel and convert it into piping. I admit that the Government is now doing something, but it is a very small something. I might express my opinion, which is not endorsed by my party, that it is a very hare-brained scheme to have the simultaneous construction of two water supply systems, running from the coastal area. It would have been far better to complete one, and then commence the other in which event, by this time, one section of the country would have been satisfied, and work would have been commenced on the second scheme. That was a grave political mistake.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Am I right in assuming that some people in the farming districts do not want the comprehensive water scheme?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The comprehensive scheme was not intended to serve the southern portion of the State but the north-eastern, which is the area I am pleading for, because the settlers there cannot get their own supplies. They live in an area of light rainfall. I know that the hon. member is well versed in this subject, and I am surprised that he is trying to convey his ignorance. He may be attempting to misinterpret my remarks. The comprehensive supply was intended to serve the north-eastern part of the State, and that is why the Commonwealth Government agreed to finance it in part. Then there was pressure from the south and the result was that the main was started from the Collie water supply to be taken to the Great Southern. I want to see something done so that relief will be afforded as quickly as possible.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I think I can agree with that statement.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The hon. member ought to agree; and now that I have his support, something should be done. The hon. member spoke of the native reserves. I think they were established for the missions to provide their own stock and enable them to earn some income.

The Minister for the North-West: Not all of them.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am aware that there are some camping reserves without missions attached to them. The day when the aborigines went out to get native food supplies seems to be passing. I was told that the natives outside the selected pastoral areas, when any cattle get there, look to have a meal of beef rather than kangaroo. I dare say there is a good deal in the argument that leases of those areas should be granted if they can be utilised for pastoral purposes.

My object in speaking was to ask the Government to give consideration to the disabilities being suffered in the country districts. Of course we shall be told that the Government is doing quite a lot, and no doubt it is; but when the people of the country see the amount of money being spent in the metropolitan area for the resumption of land, which has to be paid for, areas far in excess of requirements for the next 20 years, it is very irritating. They say that if the Government gave them half of that money for water supplies, it would be of great benefit to them.

I am satisfied that the Housing Commission, acting under the powers that have been granted to it, is going absolutely land-mad, because it will be many years before it can utilise all the areas it has. The commission is making people very annoyed also by resuming land and then handing it back to the owners. A story is told of a man having gone out in the morning and, on returning at night, having found a house started on his block. When he asked the meaning of it, he was informed that the land had been resumed long ago. I cannot understand why owners should not be advised of contemplated resumptions before the gazettal of the notices.

The Minister for the North-West: How long ago?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The land was resumed and the owner did not know of it.

The Minister for the North-West: I do not think that is right.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That statement is being made. The Government must have the money for which it is asking under this Bill; but I hope that the comments made in this House will be conveyed to the Treasurer, who is the important man of the Ministry, and that he will be prodded by his Ministers to spend more money in the country districts. If that were done, we might be able to retain the population in the country. We are going to suffer disabilities through not having the exportable produce that we have had in previous years, and therefore it is incumbent on the Government to give

the people in the country some encouragement to continue producing. I hope that the Chief Secretary will convey these remarks to the Treasurer.

The Chief Secretary: He will convey all the remarks to the Treasurer.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South) [5.35]: I wish to stress the importance of water supplies in the country areas. If we are going to maintain the population and the primary industries in the country districts, we must face up to a policy of supplying much-needed water to those areas. I do not think that the Government and the people who live in the metropolitan area appreciate the position in the country. At Katanning, after an exceptionally dry year, there is a very small quantity of water in the town dam, and the Government has rationed the quantity to seven gallons per head for people in the town. Narrogin, too, is very short of water. The people are rationed to 12 gallons per head.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Yet the Health Act provides that two gallons of water shall be used for each flushing of a lavatory pan in the city area.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That shows that the Government does not realise the difficulties that people in the country are suffering when they ask for the provision of water supplies.

The Chief Secretary: Is this a new problem that has just cropped up?

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: It is quite evident that the present Government, as well as past Governments, has not seen fit to gear up its plans and provide water from Collie to Narrogin, which represents only a small section of what is required. It seems from the Minister's interjection that the Government is quite content so long as it can say that it is doing something. That is not sufficient.

The Chief Secretary: I am quite happy now that you have qualified your remarks by referring to the present Government as well as past Governments.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: That is correct. The present Government should be fully conscious of the needs in this direction. It has been in office for two years.

The Chief Secretary: Not yet.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Well, not much short of two years; and the people in the country want some evidence that the Government is mindful of what is necessary. It is all very well for the Chief Secretary to interject as he has done, but the Treasurer is quite willing to provide £10,000 for the building of a swimming pool at Merredin. When money is required for water supplies, however, we are told it is not available. There is talk of building a bridge across the Narrows. Doubtless the population of the city does justify additional means of access

to and egress from the city, but the amazing part is that all of a sudden the money can be raised for this purpose, and it cannot be found for the provision of water supplies, which are the lifeblood of the country.

In the towns I have mentioned, a person has to be content with one bath a week. This may not seem to be very important to the people in the metropolitan area, who can turn on their showers in the morning and then have a hot bath at night. It is high time that the Government—the present Government in particular—said, "If we can provide £10,000 for a swimming pool at Merredin, and money for a bridge over the Narrows, we shall provide money for country water supplies." The light rainfall this year and the scarcity of water storage are alarming to farmers. In previous years, they have had to cart water many miles in order to provide for their stock; but there is little water available to be carted this year.

Last week I asked the Chief Secretary a question whether, in view of the extremely low quantity of water held in dams on individual holdings, plus the fact that there appeared to be very little, if any, water available to cart, the Government had considered the supplying of stock with water, and what it proposed to do to meet such a serious position. The reply of the Minister was that the position had not yet received detailed consideration, but that the Government was mindful of the needs and would do its best to meet any emergency, though it could not accept responsibility for the supply of water for stock where such was not available.

Thus the position is very serious indeed because, if we are not able to retain the stock in the country districts, what is to become of the people there? Apparently there is to be no attempt to supply water for stock. Surely the Government could make provision for or give assistance to boring for water in country districts! This might not prove to be a solution of the problem, but the position is precarious. The difficulty was experienced last year; it is happening this year; and it could happen again, if the Government does not ensure that these needs are met and means adopted so that the people in the country, who are responsible for maintaining the population in the metropolitan area, have water available to them for their personal requirements as well as for the needs of their stock.

Following the exceptionally dry season, I should like to know what efforts will be made by the Railway Department to minimise the bush fire menace. I gave notice of a question this afternoon on this subject and will await the answer tomorrow in the hope that some co-operation will be displayed on the part of the Railway Department.

With the abundance of dry grass throughout the country districts, farmers whose land adjoins these railways are very concerned about the fire danger that exists. As a result of past experiences of locomotives burning Collie coal during the summer season, particularly on days when the fire hazard is high, it is earnestly hoped that the Railway Department will use only Newcastle coal in its locomotives, or use oil burning engines or diesels, during the period of high fire hazard.

I call to mind the disastrous fire that swept through the countryside from the Pingrup line south across to Broomehill during February of this year, caused by sparks from Collie coal. I am sure the farming community would appreciate co-operation from the Railway Department. It is felt that time has come when we should be able to look forward to having diesels on these lines, thus removing the fire risk. I support the Bill.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.46]: I trust that when the time comes for the Premier and the officers of the Treasury to approach the Grants Commission, they will lay before it the claims of this State to a medical school. The position we have reached is almost an impasse in regard to the power of the Commonwealth and the ability of the State to meet the cost of such an undertaking. It would appear that the Commonwealth Government feels that it is unable to contribute to the cost of such a facility in one State without having to contribute equally to all the States; and apparently the State Treasury has not sufficient money to meet this need, in the face of so many others which the Treasurer considers to be even more important—requirements such as the extension of country water schemes, to which Mr. Thomson referred. Therefore, it appears that the claim for a medical school in this State must be brought before that commission which has the authority to grant the State the necessary money for this social service, if it can be regarded as such.

I do not intend to repeat what I have said previously on this subject both inside and outside the House, but I do not believe that a State university can be complete without a medical school; because, to a university, a medical school brings fields of learning that are impossible of achievement without such a faculty. I therefore trust that the Treasurer will give consideration to making such a claim on behalf of the State before the Grants Commission. Should he and the officers of the Treasury decide that it is possible for them to make that claim, I am certain that there are a large number of people, including the advisory committee of the Senate, and people like myself, who have spent their lives in medicine, who will be

only too glad to assist in putting the necessary details before the Grants Commission.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [5.48]: I wish to confirm the remarks of Sir Charles Latham in regard to country water supplies, or rather the lack of them. However, we must be fair; and I do not wish to point my finger at the present Government for lack of activity in the matter of country water supplies, because, in the last 20 months, there has been considerable activity displayed in the laying of the larger parallel conduits of the main between Mundaring and Cunderdin. Of course I would have liked to see more of the work done; but I realise that such a job cannot be finished in a day, and I know the Government has been held up by a lack of steel. I understand that the shortage of steel is still one of the chief reasons why more work is not being done at present on that main.

As Sir Charles has pointed out, the north-eastern areas are not blessed with a heavy rainfall, and consequently have not a very big run-off of water in the winter season. I know of a dam close to my own property which, although filled last year, had no intake at all during the recent winter; and by Christmas-time it will be empty, although it is of quite considerable size for a private dam, and holds something in the vicinity of 1,000,000 gallons. I think even the Government's supporters will grant that that is a decent sized hole in the ground; but nevertheless it will be dry by the end of the year.

Fortunately the individual concerned does not rely wholly on that dam for his stock water requirements. He also has bores which will keep him going in that regard; but he will be desperately short of water for household use. At Wyalkatchem drinking water will have to be carted, if available, from the tanks at Yorkrakine, 25 miles away.

In Wyalkatchem the position is such that every member of a family must use the same bath water, and that is hardly conducive to the best conditions of hygiene.

The Minister for the North-West: Is there no underground water available there?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: A supply is available on some of the properties, but it suffices only for the stock in those favoured instances. If the Minister is aware of the topography of the area around Wyalkatchem, he will realise that in the salt lake country no usable underground water is available.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is very hard to get good water in any of that gimlet or salmon gum country.

The Minister for the North-West: Is there no underground water available in the town of Wyalkatchem?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: No; and to my knowledge there is no local authority in Western Australia that has done more in prospecting for water than has the Wyalkatchem Road Board. For over 20 years it has had a boring plant, and has perforated the locality, looking for water to supply the town needs. When the plant has not been in use for that purpose, farmers have been allowed to hire it, together with an operator, for a moderate charge, and many supplies of stock water in the Wyalkatchem district have been developed in that way. I have given this information in order to show that the people of the Wyalkatchem area are not crying out to the Government for a water scheme without having tried to do something for themselves.

I think it behoves every one in the State to endeavour to look out for himself; but if, after every reasonable effort has been made, he still finds himself up against it, I feel it is the duty of the Government to assist. The various Governments of Western Australia over the last few years have recognised the necessity for the development of water supplies in country areas, and the present Government is endeavouring to supply water to Wyalkatchem. However, it is no use putting a conduit across from Cunderdin to Minnievale, and then to Wyalkatchem unless there is a sufficient supply of water at Mundaring. I hope the Government will find ways and means of speeding up this work.

The position in the far north-east is acute, as the rock catchments out there had very little run-off during the winter months. At the end of the winter, the storages were about one-third full of water, which means that by Christmas time they will be empty. The pumping main from the main line out through Nungarin cannot cope with the requirements of the area; and that country is in a position similar to that of the Wyalkatchem district, in that it is waiting for the diameter of the conduit from Mundaring to Kellerberrin to be increased. I ask the Government to do its utmost and to spare no effort to in an endeavour, as steel becomes available, to complete this very important work in the north-eastern areas as quickly as possible. I know that the shortage of steel remains acute; but I believe that if the matter were taken up through the proper channels with B.H.P., that company might increase our allocation of steel.

That brings me to another point, referring to finance and the proposed building of a bridge over the Narrows. I would suggest that a project such as the building of the Narrows bridge should be carried out on the contract system; and that, when completed, it should be brought under the toll system, as is done in New South Wales and Queensland. In both those States some very large undertakings have been paid for by the toll system, under which the people who use the facilities pay for them.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: The Sydney harbour bridge is still a toll bridge.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Yes, and so is the Indooroopilly bridge across the Brisbane River. Many of the major bridges in America are worked on the toll system; and it is high time that we introduced it into Western Australia, together with contract building, in order to get urgent works done. Our present system results in such a loss of time that, with the best intentions in the world, succeeding Governments embark on projects only to find that through financial difficulties, the outbreak of a war, shortage of materials, or some other cause, completion is delayed.

In other parts of the world, similar projects would be finished within a reasonable time, and the people using the facilities would then pay for them by means of a toll. If that practice were adopted here, it would release for use elsewhere funds that are at present required for a number of works in the metropolitan area. The freed funds could then be spent in the country in the many districts which have, over a long period of years, paid substantial sums in taxation, but which still have nothing in the way of public facilities provided for them. I hope the Government will give these points favourable consideration so that the suggestions I have made may be given effect. I support the Bill.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [6.01]: There are one or two observations I would like to make. One, in particular, follows a number of questions that I asked in regard to s.p. betting. One wonders how long one will have to put up with the answers that are received from responsible Ministers of the Crown in reply to questions asked in this House. From the two answers that I received to my questions, one realises how stupid such answers can be. How any responsible Minister of the Crown can submit such replies to a member and expect him to swallow them is something that is beyond my comprehension. I asked why Geraldton was singled out for different treatment from that given to other centres in regard to fines inflicted for s.p. betting. In reply, the Minister said—

The law with respect to starting price betting is administered impartially throughout the entire State, and no discrimination is shown in any manner whatsoever by the police in its administration.

Hon. C. H. Henning: Which eye did he have shot out?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That answer was given by a responsible Minister. He then went on to give the figures in respect to the number of convictions, and the total amount collected in fines; and when one studies them, one realises how stupid the Minister's answer was. There are six towns which can be compared with Geraldton—namely, Albany, Boulder, Bunbury, Collie,

Northam, and Carnarvon. The total amount of fines collected from all of those six centres was £3,919; and the total fines collected from Geraldton amounted to £3,894, a difference of only £25. Yet the Minister had the impudence to tell this House that the law was being administered impartially.

In addition to that information, he stated that 365 convictions were made in the six centres, compared with Geraldton's 274, which is something like 90-odd more convictions for a difference of £25 in fines. Yet we are still told that the law is being administered impartially! It is about time the Minister of the Crown gave a reasonable explanation in regard to this matter. What makes the position worse is that I presume that no action has been taken by the Minister to effect a remedy. I have no objection to these men being fined for s.p. betting if they are fined for that offence alone. But the Commissioner of Police himself has stated that the law is just a farce, and yet nothing is done about it.

The Minister for the North-West: What kind of action would you suggest that the Minister should take?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He should take action along the lines suggested by the Commissioner of Police in his report.

The Chief Secretary: Would you suggest that the Minister should instruct the police not to take action?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would suggest that the Minister should get to the root of the problem and find the cause. I have asked enough questions already in an endeavour to find a solution, but I cannot get any satisfaction.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: You want to be careful! The Chief Secretary will abuse you over the air.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He can abuse me as much as he likes. I am used to abuse.

The Minister for the North-West: Would you suggest that there should be an increase in the fines imposed on s.p. bettors at Geraldton, or an increase in fines on those operating in Collie?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Surely the Minister is capable of finding out why the law is not being administered impartially.

The Chief Secretary: He may have found out.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Well, why has he not done something about it?

The Chief Secretary: What power has he to enforce it?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I think he has plenty of power.

The Chief Secretary: You only think.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He has plenty.

The Chief Secretary: I suppose he could instruct the police not to take action?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He could instruct the police to administer the Act impartially. Surely it is not too much to ask the Commissioner of Police to administer the law impartially! Surely the Minister has that right!

The Chief Secretary: That does not carry you very far.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not care if these men are fined for s.p. betting, provided that all s.p. bettors are treated uniformly throughout the State. What is happening today is that all that money is going out of Geraldton into Consolidated Revenue.

The Chief Secretary: What do you want? Do you want them to lay off?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Well, yes; or at least down to the same figure as is being collected from other centres.

Hon. H. Hearn: Or bring the others up.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes, whatever is considered the more advisable. I do not hold any brief for the s.p. bettor, but when one studies the question, one realises that the law in regard to this offence is purely a farce. What happens is that if a man is standing round the corner with a book in his hand, and without being in anybody's way, he is charged for obstructing the traffic.

The Minister for the North-West: It might be easier to catch him that way.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That might be so. But what is happening in Geraldton is that four s.p. bookmakers are being charged every Saturday; whereas in other centres they go up only about once every six months.

The Chief Secretary: You are complaining about the police enforcing the law?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They are not enforcing the law. If they were, I would have no objection.

The Chief Secretary: Well, what are they doing?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: One could not call what the s.p. bettors are doing obstructing the traffic when one sees the long bus queues stretched along the Terrace which are really obstructing the traffic; much more so than these s.p. bettors. The Chief Secretary has no answer to that; but he himself knows that it is the truth. Therefore I must emphatically protest against the action that is being taken against s.p. bettors in Geraldton.

Hon. H. K. Watson: In the absence of any reply from the Chief Secretary, would you suggest that the Commissioner of Police be called to the bar of the House and asked why he is not administering the Act?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is not my duty. I have asked questions in this House of the Chief Secretary in an endeavour to

find out what is going on, and to ensure that fair play is meted out. I cannot do more than that. I have even been asked in Geraldton: "What do we do now?" But I have told them, "It is up to you."

The Chief Secretary: You asked if the shops were getting fined.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No; I asked about the ordinary men in the street. They are some of the men with whom I have a beer occasionally, and who are good friends of mine. So the business goes on!

The Chief Secretary: How are they affected?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I think many of them would be quite happy if some sort of control were enforced, such as the licensing of all betting shops.

Hon. J. D. Teahan: Do you support control?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: At least, if there were control, everyone would get a fair crack of the whip. Why should we not have control? Would not control be better than the administration that exists today? I would be in favour of control if s.p. betting were controlled properly. I have no hesitation in saying that.

The Chief Secretary: We might test you out on that.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I hope the Minister will do something about the matters I have raised. I also suggest that the Government should take some action in regard to a comprehensive water scheme for the Midland district. This matter has been raised on many occasions, particularly by Mr. Jones, who has taken a big part in the development of such a scheme. During a dry season such as the present many of the farmers realise what a comprehensive water scheme would mean to their districts.

I am pleased to say that, whereas a few years ago the farmers in this area were reluctant even to consider such a scheme, today they are beginning to clamour for it. I trust that, instead of waiting until all the other water supply schemes are completed before a start is made with the Geraldton scheme, the Government will have facts and figures collated and plans drawn in order that they may be placed before the residents of the district for consideration. The people of the Midland area would be very grateful to the Government if it took steps in that direction.

Apart from the comprehensive scheme, recently I approached the Government to make available a supply of bore water in the light lands between Mullewa and Mingenew. When I interviewed the Minister for Agriculture about this matter, I was surprised to receive a letter from him informing me that it did not come

under his department, and that he had referred the matter to the Minister for Works and Water Supplies. I almost took the Minister to task by telling him that the matter was just as much his problem as it was that of the Minister for Water Supplies, in that it was his duty to see that water was provided for that area. It certainly was not his duty to pass the buck. Surely it is the duty of the Minister for Agriculture to ascertain whether water can be found in these areas and not just to say, "It is not my department, it is somebody else's."

The reason the Government was approached is that it is beyond the capabilities, financially and otherwise, of the individual farmer to find water. I know some farmers who have spent £1,000 boring for water, but have not found any. The last bore hole one farmer put down reached 350ft., but he still did not get water. If water is not made available to that area, the land will go back to nature; and if that happens, the opportunity for developing it will be lost, because goodness knows when that opportunity will present itself again.

The Minister for the North-West: Which area is that?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The land between Mullewa and Mingenew. Water has been found in places on the other side of the line, but no success has been achieved in the area to which I refer. At one stage the residents were promised that Mr. Frizzell would visit the district in an endeavour to locate suitable sites for water, but that promise was never fulfilled. In that district crops can be grown without a fence, but stock cannot be raised unless fences are provided. This land will never be developed to the full unless it can be used for both cropping and grazing. It would be uneconomical to produce one without the other. I therefore trust that this matter will receive every consideration.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Have there been any resumptions in your area?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would like to discuss the question of resumptions, but time will not permit me. Unfortunately, I will not be present in the House after the tea suspension.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Did you say, "unfortunately?"

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I did.

The Chief Secretary: We will make a limit. I think you had better have a shot at it now.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I suppose I could. I could really take the Government to task properly if I desired; but as I am not feeling in the right frame of mind at the moment, I think I had better leave it till, say, tomorrow night.

The Chief Secretary: You can have a couple of minutes.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If the Government will give me an opportunity on some other occasion, I will be only too delighted to take it to task.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—LOAN, £14,808,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th October.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [7.33]: It was of very great interest to me to hear Mr. Hearn suggest that this Bill should be submitted to a select committee. Although I did not think of it, I am sure the idea is an excellent one. It has been causing me considerable concern as to how this measure could be prevented from coming to this House year after year and being faced with a political bias that was not warranted. If I had thought of a select committee inquiring into the Bill, I would have brought it forward on the basis that some percentage arrangement could be made for the permanent establishment of the compensation given to individuals who have suffered injury at work.

It is rather interesting that in the Second Schedule of this Bill—the percentage schedule which I brought before this House last year—the amount proposed was £2,800 for total loss of sight of both eyes, etc., down to No. 7 on the list concerning serious injuries—exactly the amount now being claimed, and the amount which, in general, is paid throughout Australia. I maintain that if real thought is given to the Second Schedule, based on this type of percentage, it is quite possible that the man who was seriously injured could receive very much more than this amount. A large sum of money is being given each year for small injuries, and in some cases it is my opinion that the amount given is not warranted on the basis of economic loss suffered by the man.

Let me put it this way: I believe that the man who is very seriously injured, or the woman who is left without a husband and with children who are fatherless, deserve a very much larger sum than has been paid in the past. Yet there is only one common pool from which this could come. If this whole schedule were looked at on an economic basis and compensation paid only for loss of earning capacity after an accident, then a good deal less would be paid, in my opinion, for minor injuries, leaving a very much larger sum for the serious cases.

It should be quite possible to arrange a schedule of payments that could be accepted by both Houses of Parliament as a permanent basis for compensation. Let us go into the question of what we consider is a fair compensation to pay to a totally disabled man—a man, for instance, who is unable to care for himself and is a burden upon his family; a man who has lost limbs, or the sight of both eyes. Let us consider what would be a fair basis of compensation for that man. Suppose we make it an amount totalling seven years of the basic wage, which would roughly be £4,000. That may be higher than one would adjudge in going into the matter more seriously; but it seems possible to arrange for total incapacity a sum totalling six or seven years of the basic wage. We could bring the scheme further down the line, and say that in the case of death, where the man himself has no longer to be cared for, and the widow has children to maintain, the fair compensation to that woman might be an amount totalling five years of the basic wage, and a percentage of the basic wage for each child.

We could take that principle right down the whole schedule. As we came to the injuries which a man received and for which he was cared for and treated whilst ill, we could fix the basis of payment on the economic loss suffered by that man. I have believed for many years that this is a true method of compensation for the worker. I have always felt that a much larger sum could be paid to the men with serious injuries were it not for the considerable amounts paid out for the minor ones which are not regarded, so far as I can see, as a reward for the loss of earning capacity, but rather as a compensation for the claimant's suffering.

Everyone of us must take the risk of meeting with an accident even if we cross the road. But the real aspect to consider is the loss of earning capacity as the result of the accident. I believe that this is a matter which a select committee could well look into. When the Bill was first introduced, there was no real idea in anyone's mind as to the value of any of the injuries received by the worker in relation to the monetary compensation. We have now had a number of years to consider this matter; and there must be a large volume of evidence in the hands of the insurance companies which could help in advising whether the plan I have suggested is feasible or not. But simply to continue on the basis that the original procedure was correct, and merely to add on a debatable sum each year, is to me not a correct method of approach.

Accordingly, I must naturally applaud the suggestion that this matter should be investigated in the light of experience. The suggestion would negative the question of whether these injured men should receive compensation at a rate of payment existing before a new Act, or whether they

should receive their compensation under the new Act and its financial relationships; because as the basic wage rose or fell, so this percentage would also rise and fall. If portion of the payment had not been made at a certain time, then as that basic wage rose, the amounts to be paid would also rise. I think this would be a much more equitable way of handling the matter than exists at the moment. We have seen Bill after Bill contain this retrospective clause; and on all occasions in the past we have seen that clause deleted from such Bills. And now it appears once more.

If there is any reason for compensation to the worker for accidents suffered on the journey to and from work, there could be an investigation into what injuries are reasonable, and what should not be added to the industrial section of our community as a further burden. It is an insurance over which there can be no control; and it is one which, from the figures which were supplied from New South Wales, can reach alarming proportions.

In the past there has always been a tendency to extend the workers' compensation clauses to deaths occurring during work, or to any periods closely related to the hours of work. In my opinion, it is hardly reasonable to go to the point of saying that, when a man leaves his front doorstep and falls dead of heart failure at his front gate, industry should meet the cost as an accident or an untoward event occurring in the course of daily work. It is matters of this nature which I think could be examined closely; and when a conclusion is reached, certain injuries could be policed under this "to-and-from" clause, and could be allowed for in the Bill.

One other matter I would like to see examined closely is the relationship of secondary illness to silicosis. In fact, I believe all the clauses in regard to silicosis could well come under examination. Silicosis seems to be a condition which is lessening in the community; but there are still from time to time men who present themselves for examination, in whom silicosis or pneumoconiosis is present. In making out a claim for compensation for these men, the medical profession must always add on the claim form secondary illnesses or other illnesses from which the man is suffering, or his disabilities, and assess those as portion of his total disability; and in the same way his proportion of silicosis must always be added up as a percentage disability.

I believe that when silicosis is far advanced, the metabolic changes that occur in the man's body are sufficient to induce other changes. There might be considerable evidence from places like South Africa, where mining has been in existence for so long, and silicosis has been a prominent factor which would allow us to know what secondary diseases occur most frequently in the silicotic patient. I have

been interested, in those that I have seen—and I have seen quite a number—in the number of occasions on which one finds a raised blood pressure in the man suffering from silicosis. If that pressure is raised to any extent, naturally the man's heart will enlarge; and that raised blood pressure and enlarged heart will become a secondary illness for which a percentage has to be allowed as opposed to the percentage granted for his silicosis.

I may be quite wrong; but I believe it is more than likely that the silicosis, by limiting the man's intake of oxygen and increasing his oxygen disabilities, has played a part in causing the secondary illness. If that is so, it is grossly unfair to the silicotic patient to say that any disability which can be attributed to his secondary illness must be deducted from his total disability in relation to silicosis. There are any number of factors that can be examined closely in relation to our knowledge gained in past years, and I think it would be rendering a very great service to both industry and the workers to have these matters brought to light by means of an examination such as a select committee could make.

One thing I have always criticised in regard to the Workers' Compensation Act is the complete manner in which the board has considered itself as a purely judicial body, deciding disputes between workers and employers as to the amount of compensation to be awarded to a man, and the board's total neglect of the sections of the Act relating to the work it is entitled to do in investigating means for the prevention of accidents and conducting other research associated with workers' compensation. This Chamber, some six or seven years ago, if I remember rightly, added a section to the Act which gave the board power to set aside moneys for research into the causes and prevention of accidents. The amendment gave the board the right to appoint medical officers and other staff to carry out that research; and, although I have not asked any questions in this House on that matter within the last two years, when I did so previously, it is obvious from the answer I was given that not one single piece of investigation or research had been undertaken.

There is quite a lot that can be done, and quite a lot can be given to industry as a result of that research that would not only save workers from injury, but would also reduce the cost to industry of workers' compensation; and, possibly, do what I set out to explain to the House—make it possible for a seriously injured man to receive his full due and not only a portion, as has been the case in the past. I have never been able to understand how a totally disabled man could live on the amount awarded. I suppose when that is used up he has to look for a pension.

I believe there is a method of investigation into these matters; and that the Second Schedule could be altered in such a way as to provide for a compensation payment that would be fair, and one to which industry would not object, because it would regard the arrangement as being fair, not only to itself but to the workers. I support the second reading.

HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [7.51]: In rising to support the Bill, I would like, in my preamble, to quote from the Atlantic Charter, an historical document, in which appear these words—

For improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security for all.

To do all within our power as a community of intelligent people to take steps to abolish poverty, wherever and in whatever group of society we may find its ugly head raised, is surely one of our first duties. Workers who are injured, or, if they are killed, their dependants, constitute a group that often endure undeserved want and suffering through lack of finance. Speaking with this in mind, I claim that the Workers' Compensation Act in this State lags sadly in respect of giving workers necessary safeguards and covering them with insurance against injury in going to and coming from work.

The clause which seeks to raise the amount of compensation for injury or death while a man is at work still aims at only the minimum of fairness, because £2,800 compensation to a family whose breadwinner has been killed does not go far these days. I agree with much of what Dr. Hislop has said on that clause. The amount would scarcely provide the most modest home if the family did not have one; and it would not enable a mother with a growing family to provide education for the children in a fair measure. These are the people we have in mind in providing legislation of this kind.

Before going into facts and figures of workers' compensation and insurance companies, I want to refer to an accident which occurred a year or two ago in which a man was killed at Albany just near the place of his employment, and while he was on his way to work. At a Labour council meeting at Collie, which I was attending, a collection was taken up to help his wife and six children, who are left penniless. I remembered that over 40 years ago, my father, at Day Dawn, on the Murchison goldfields, did the self-same thing. He took up a collection for the family of a miner who had been killed. The thought came swiftly to my mind that, after all our boasted advances in the social security field, we have not advanced very far in the direction of adequate workers' compensation.

Risks have increased a hundredfold through modern transport and road hazards; and although the Commonwealth workers are protected while going to and coming from work, and such compensation has been established in New South Wales and Victoria, we lag behind those States where such legislation is in force. I therefore call upon members, in the name of humanity and fair play, to study the figures I propose to give, and to see that the need for justice to the worker in this fast-growing State is recognised.

This Legislative Council is the place where that duty now lies, for it is here that the Bill will be passed, or thrown out, or mutilated until it has no value. Over the years, privilege has given way slowly indeed. In my opinion, this Bill is a must that can no longer be denied to the workers of this State. In the past, too many measures of benefit to industrial workers and others have been treated in this Chamber with a measure of subtlety which has thinly veiled a contemptuous attitude of privilege and prejudice. This has been the attitude for so long that members think it is immune from change. Let me again remind members opposite—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the hon. member not to cast a reflection on members of this House.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I was not casting a reflection on members.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Who else?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I was referring to the growing awareness of people in this State as to what it means to have a House representing just a fraction of the people elected on a narrow franchise, who can say just what will and what will not happen to the masses generally. That is what I am objecting to, and I was not casting a reflection on any person.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: This House has never rejected a workers' compensation Bill.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No; but it has made Bills so innocuous that they did not matter very much; and it has never risen to its real duties. The arguments of members do nothing to convince me that we are doing our duty with regard to workers' compensation. People of this generation are not prepared to leave their destinies in the hands of a few who are determined not to move on towards progress from such antiquated attitudes. The tempo of the times, as I have stated before, is towards the alleviation, through social legislation, of distress suffered by the masses of the people.

The age of valuing machines or any other means of making large profits as against human life and suffering has gone; and members know that all forward and progressive countries are embracing more humane ideas. Power and privilege as

such, are being broken down in older countries; and it is our misfortune in Western Australia that we still have the remnants of an outdated age here in this very Chamber, which is elected on a narrow property franchise, and still has the last say in matters of legislation that affect the masses of the people so intimately.

I propose to read from two financial reports which appeared in "The West Australian" dated the 1st November, 1954, and which indicate a situation in direct opposition to the word picture drawn by one member in his speech on the second reading of this Bill. The first is headed, "Felt and Textiles has Record Trading." The hon. member stated that industry could not carry the burden of increased workers' compensation.

Hon. H. Hearn: On a point of order, can the hon. member say where, in any part of the second reading speech made by any member, it was stated that industry had said it could not afford to pay?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I thought that was what the hon. member implied. If I made a mistake, and he did not make that statement, I withdraw it. I have not seen his speech; but that is what I thought he implied—that industry could not afford to pay. This report in "The West Australian" on Felt and Textiles reads as follows:—

Felt and Textiles of Aust. Ltd., Australia's biggest textile company, had a turnover rise to just under £32,000,000, an increase of £5,000,000, in the year to June.

The consolidated profit reached a new peak of £817,958 or £300,000 more than a year ago.

The consolidated profit of £817,958 was after £410,369 tax and £405,350 depreciation.

It is a big jump from the previous profit of £506,054 on smaller provisions of £217,979 for tax and £366,107 for depreciation.

Then we find a report concerning a zinc firm under the heading "Zinc Firm Raises Its Profit"—

Electrolytic Zinc Co. of Australasia Ltd. reports a big lift in profit.

For the year ended June 30, 1954, the net profit was £2,186,840 against £1,682,889 the previous year.

The latest profit is struck after providing £750,000 for amortisation and depreciation and £1,340,000 for taxation against £1,682,889 the previous year.

Dividends took £1,425,000 and expenditure on new plant and development on the West Coast mines, £91,408.

To reserve for new plant and development, £500,000 has been placed, double the previous year's appropriation.

Hon. H. Hearn: Do you know what wages that firm pays?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Would members opposite say that these reports tended in any way to show that these industries could not pay substantially more to protect and compensate those workers that fall by the wayside of industry through accident and sickness? After all, these are the people who actually earn the huge profits, and without whom no profit would be possible. This is the human material that, in the economic competitive system as we know it, is classed on the cheapest standard, and is not by any stretch of imagination equal to expensive machinery in respect of which we find no money is begrudged to keep it shining and turning over to produce. Yet, without the worker, the machinery could not be conceived, assembled, or animated. So surely the human being is entitled to a just share of industry and not always to lag behind the very minimum of what is fair and decent!

I think that, even on these figures, members opposite will say that there is something more to the Bill than its being just the "hardy annual" that they have referred to rather facetiously. I would say it is one of first principles, and is on a high plane of ethical thinking. If it is passed in its present form it will be an expression by industry of faith in the future of human relations. I would challenge members opposite to present a case of real truth and facts, and then vote with a clear conscience against this humanitarian effort on behalf of the workers of this State.

Some members of the Premium Rates Committee have in past years advocated reduced premiums on workers' compensation. This has been opposed, and only reluctantly agreed to by the members of that committee who represent the tariff companies, because of the obvious fact that the only reason for their existence is the making of profits. To my way of thinking it is an indictment of business institutions that they exist to cash in on human suffering.

A perusal of the 1953 "Pocket Year Book" reveals that my statements are correct, for the year 1951-52 shows that the general insurance companies' revenue for workers' compensation amounted to £740,928, and the expenditure on claims to a paltry £350,284, leaving an excess of premiums over claims of £390,644. This would include the administrative costs; but we can see also that they would not be a substantial proportion of this amount when we note that for the same year the State Insurance Office had a premium revenue from workers' compensation of

£461,906, and it expended on claims £157,127, leaving an excess of revenue of £304,779; and, with administrative costs of £42,270, providing a net profit for this type of insurance of £262,509.

Thus the injured workers received £157,127, and the State Insurance Office made a profit of £262,509; so we can see that the general insurance companies made a considerably higher profit, as they take only the better class of insurance risks.

I would like to refer to silicosis. I agree with some of Dr. Hislop's remarks. I find that the reserve fund at the State Insurance Office at the 30th June, 1953, amounted to £956,519.

Hon. H. Hearn: So the Goldfields companies have paid in something.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Despite the fact that the Premium Rates Committee had reduced the rates payable on this type of risk from 80s. per cent. to 60s. per cent., and then finally to 30s. per cent.—

Hon. H. Hearn: It shows it was over-charging, does it not?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: —the fund during the year ended June, 1954, not only met all its liabilities, but was further increased by the substantial sum of £189,043, as revealed by the Auditor General's report on the State Insurance Office.

Hon. H. Hearn: Who are the profiteers?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I will tell the hon. member in a minute. I maintain that it would be more just if, instead of reducing the rates to the employer and thus saving him large sums of money, the compensation rates were increased to ensure a greater measure of social security to the unfortunate injured worker. For at no time does a man or woman feel the stress and strain of economic conditions more than during incapacitation through injury or sickness. I point out that the State Insurance Office came into being because other insurance offices would not insure miners. That type of insurance was run for years like s.p. bookmaking—under the lap—but no one was game to stop it. As is the case with all good social legislation that the Labour Party succeeds in placing on the statute book, once it was there, the anti-Labour parties were not game to revoke it.

As shown by a Labour speaker in another place, the combined revenue for all insurance companies for workers' compensation for 1951-52, was £1,202,834. It was estimated that the existing increase and the proposed increase under this Bill would amount to approximately 40 per cent. which, when we recall the figure of £507,431—which is the total amount paid for claims; and assuming the accident rate will be the same—would mean that a further £202,970 would be paid out in excess of the 1951-52 figure. That, of course, is

as could be expected considering past history. The 40 per cent. would be added to the revenue figures, and the added burden to industry would then be £481,120. Under that assumption, the injured worker would receive an added £202,972, and the insurance companies would receive an added £278,150, thus, of course, carrying out the established tradition that the insurance companies get the lion's share of the premium revenue for workers' compensation.

The Bill should pass through the House as it is. Dr. Hislop said he would like some research done. I have no objection to that, as I think it would be a good move; but to fix the amount of compensation, statically, just would not work. How would we get on in years of rising costs and prices? If life itself were static we could, perhaps, work out a permanent figure for workers' compensation; but the workers live in a contemporary age, and they have to take living costs into consideration.

As a woman from the Goldfields, I have seen many injured workers, and I know what workers' compensation means to them in general. While we think we have been advancing along certain lines of social legislation, we have, in regard to workers' compensation, been left behind lamentably. I ask the House not to whittle down the amount of £2,800. The clause covering a man travelling to and from work is a just one. I would say it applies to more than half the workers in the State now; so why should we deny it to the rest of industry?

Hon. A. R. Jones: Most of them pay it themselves.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The Commonwealth pays it; and it is paid in New South Wales, where there is no limit, and also in Victoria and Tasmania.

Hon. H. Hearn: No; they have not the complete clause in Tasmania.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I know it operates in Victoria and New South Wales because I have been there. Dr. Hislop referred to silicosis, and I am always ready to listen to a medical man because I know the ethics of the medical profession. It is possible that research could do nothing but good. I can see no reason why in this year of grace, 1954, we cannot afford £2,800 for the family of a worker who is killed in the course of his employment. This amount of money would not even buy a modest house today. The remaining schedule in the Bill is only fair and just. As a matter of fact, it does not provide sufficient when we know what profits are being made. I have been in business for a long time.

Hon. H. Hearn: Do you make the profits?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: No; but I would not have minded if I had; and I would not have begrudged any one working for me a good part of them, especially during times of sickness or injury. I hope the Bill will be passed as it is. I do not want any

committees on it, but just to see it go through in its present form. I support the measure.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [8.14]: I support the Bill. I believe it has been brought down for the purpose of providing adequate security for workers when injured. There may be differences of opinion as to the amount that should be paid, but I think each and everyone of us agrees that adequate security for injured workers is something that industry should be called upon to provide.

The Bill provides for increased benefits for workers receiving or entitled to receive weekly payments at the time the amendments were agreed to. That would be only fair and equitable. Those who have been injured and are receiving compensation when amendments to the Act are made and increases are granted, are suffering a disadvantage if they are not granted those extra payments. Therefore I believe that the clause in the Bill is one that should be supported.

There is also another clause dealing with the payments of benefits to dependants living overseas. I know that payments are made, with certain qualifications. Looking at it from a humanitarian point of view, irrespective of whether the dependants live here or not, they are dependent upon the worker in this State to provide them with a means of livelihood. I venture to suggest that if the worker who is providing the necessary means of sustenance for his family remained in this State for any length of time, his dependants would eventually migrate here.

Hon. H. Hearn: It is paid up to five years now, you know.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I said, "with certain qualifications."

Hon. H. Hearn: That is the only qualification.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I believe the benefits could be extended. There is also a provision in the Bill to provide compensation for workers who are injured while travelling to or from work. This provision has been debated in this Chamber on many occasions; and it has been pointed out that if the provision were agreed to, there would be a greater call on industry to provide the necessary finance. Having in mind that in a great majority of the States this provision is in operation, I believe it could be adopted here because industry in the Eastern States appears to be thriving while, at the same time, making provision for this extra cover.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Industries are well established over there. We are just beginning here.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I do not think that has any bearing on the point. The idea of dividing Australia by imaginary boundaries is ridiculous. There is no reason

why a worker who is injured while travelling to or from his work in Western Australia should not be paid compensation if the same thing applies in other States of the Commonwealth.

Hon. H. Hearn: Or a booking office for the trans-Australia line at Fremantle and Perth.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I think the hon. member is starting to split hairs; and when he does that, he loses the trend of his argument. That is something of a local nature, and of no magnitude when compared with workers' compensation legislation. Nevertheless, if the hon. member is referring to the questions I asked in this House, I would advise him that I am trying to elicit information for the benefit of people who live in Fremantle.

To get back to the Bill, I believe that industry, whether it be established in Western Australia or in the Eastern States, should endeavour to make proper provision for those who are injured in the course of their association with industry. Many members have said that it will have a considerable effect upon industry. If we cast our minds back, we will find that those arguments have been used right down through the years from the time workers' compensation legislation was first placed on the statute book of this State. Throughout the years members have been told that if this, that, and the other thing were granted, it would be the end of industry. I say to members—and I hope they will accept it in the spirit in which it is said—that industry has profited as a result of mechanisation.

In addition, the mechanisation of industry has meant that workers have enjoyed more leisure time. The mechanisation of industry has meant the use of different production methods over the years; and I repeat, workers too have received some benefits as a result. But industrialists have benefited in addition to mankind, and those workers who are injured in the course of their employment should be adequately catered for. I believe that the time has arrived when we should review the amounts that are paid to injured workers under the various schedules to the Act. I say that because the £ has depreciated considerably over past years, and the same spending power that was available to dependants of injured workers in past years is not now available to them.

During his speech, Mr. Hearn made use of a word; and, by doing so, I believe he has done himself a great injustice. If I remember correctly, he referred to the fact that the "honeymoon" was over. I request members to analyse that word, and ask themselves whether there has been any honeymoon as far as people injured in industry are concerned. Down through the years there has been a fight to try to provide adequate finance for the families of

those injured in industry, and I think the hon. member used a wrong phrase when he said "the honeymoon is over."

Hon. H. Hearn: I was speaking of conditions and not of the worker when I said that.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I do not know what the hon. member meant, but I know that he used the words.

Hon. H. Hearn: I was speaking of conditions.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The hon. member did himself an injustice. I know the hon. member personally, and I know that he would be prepared to do his best for anybody injured in his employ. By using that word he placed himself at a disadvantage, because people who read his speech would not know what he meant by it.

Hon. A. R. Jones: I think you misunderstood him.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: He went on to say that industry should not be called upon to pay compensation for all people injured in industry, because in some instances it boiled down to a social service.

Hon. H. Hearn: I think you are misquoting me.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If I am, I will apologise to the hon. member.

Hon. H. Hearn: You could not have read it.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If I remember correctly—

Hon. H. Hearn: You are remembering incorrectly, because I never said that.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: —the hon. member used the words "social service."

Hon. H. Hearn: I did state that people were confusing social service with workers' compensation, which is a different thing entirely.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I think the hon. member, during his speech on this Bill, made a remark concerning social services. Therefore, to my mind, the hon. member felt there was some relation between the two, because he was dealing with the workers' compensation Bill. If I have misquoted the hon. member—

Hon. H. Hearn: I think you have.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: —I am sorry. From his having used the words "social service," one could only draw a conclusion that the hon. member meant that people who were injured in industry should, at some time or other, be regarded as a charge on social services.

Hon. H. Hearn: Surely it is unfair to take two words out of the context and quote them. Why not obtain the speech and get the meaning of it?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: As a matter of fact, I never read "Hansard."

Hon. H. Hearn: Then you should not quote it.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am not quoting it.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are endeavouring to, very imperfectly.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am quoting the words the hon. member used in this House.

Hon. H. Hearn: You have not got the meaning.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I have not looked at "Hansard".

Hon. H. Hearn: I think it is unfair that you should quote me in that way.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: During his speech the hon. member used the words "social service".

Hon. H. Hearn: That does not mean that I used them in the way you are saying.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If I am quoting the hon. member wrongly, I will apologise.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If, as the hon. member states, what I am insinuating is not what he meant, I should like to know why he used the words "social service" in dealing with a Bill on workers' compensation.

Hon. H. Hearn: Read the speech.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: If the hon. member meant what I have said he meant, I think he did himself a further injustice. The fact that he used the words "social service" indicates that what I had in mind was true. However, he says that that is not so.

Hon. H. Hearn: You read the speech.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: What he said was that they were two different things, and he explained in what way they differed.

Hon. H. Hearn: Let him read the speech.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: It would be too late to read it now. The economy of the country has been mentioned; and if one believed the speeches that have been delivered, one would be led to believe that the economy of the country was dependent on the amount of workers' compensation that was paid to workers injured in this State. I cannot understand how the hon. member who used that argument can substantiate it with facts when in other States of the Commonwealth amounts much larger than are being paid here are awarded to injured workers.

If the economy of this country is to be affected in that way, why have not the amounts paid in the Eastern States affected the economy of the Commonwealth? I hope members will give some consideration to that aspect. I believe that the time has arrived when extra benefits should be given to those who are injured

in industry, and I believe that the majority of people recognise that fact. We have heard, over the years, that industry cannot pay any extra benefits. But, as I have already stated, the mechanisation of industry has improved their output; and, through the years, increased benefits have been given to those who are unfortunately injured during the course of their employment. The same arguments have been advanced repeatedly over many years that if mechanisation were introduced, industry would deteriorate and eventually cease to exist. But with an increased standard of living, industry, as well as the people, derives some benefit. Where people have a higher standard of living, industry gains as well.

I think the Bill is a genuine attempt to make adequate security for workers when injured, and I trust that members will give it their support.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [8.32]: I rise to support the Bill in its present form. Not many years ago no compensation at all was payable to injured workers, and as Mrs. Hutchison said, in our own lifetime, if a person was injured seriously, or even killed, it was a matter for his friends or relatives immediately to "whip round the hat" or organise some entertainment so that the injured person or his dependants could receive some compensation.

We have heard only too often that in order that an injured person might get his fare from Leonora or Mt. Morgan to Perth to see a specialist, the rail fare had first to be found. I have met women whose organisations have sponsored entertainments in order that injured workers might raise the necessary money to obtain medical treatment for their injuries. We advanced from that stage to a time when it was said that Western Australia led other States in workers' compensation benefits, and in the measure of justice meted out to injured workers or to the dependants of those fatally injured.

Similar Bills have been debated in this Chamber on many occasions. The point which strikes me is: Why should Western Australia lag so far behind other States? Do the workers of Western Australia eat less than the workers in other States? Do they dress poorer, and are their obligations any less? One answer given was that benefits in Queensland and New South Wales were better because those States had Labour Governments. That cannot be the only answer, because South Australia, which has not had a Labour Government for many years, has a far better schedule of compensation benefits than has this State.

I am reminded of one argument used in this House a few months ago, during the debate on the rents and tenancies legislation. When it was claimed that hardship would be imposed on certain tenants if

a rise were granted, the answer was that the owner should not carry the burden. To use that parallel here and ask if industry can stand up to this extra cost, is just an attempt to deny an increase to workers. Is it to be said that industry cannot stand it for one year? Or will it have to go on for years; and if so, for how long? Mr. Hearn spoke about the honeymoon being over.

I have no doubt he meant the honeymoon conditions of employment. Perhaps if we were to review his speech, we would find him in favour of giving the honeymoon schedule. As the schedule was not passed in the form in which it was received from another place, I take it he is not prepared to pay honeymoon rates. If we compare the compensation paid in cases of road and other accidents, we will find that it is much higher than the compensation paid under the Workers' Compensation Act. If the rates awarded by judges of the Supreme Court in accidents are correct, then the workers' compensation benefits are sadly lagging behind.

The "travelling-to-and-from" clause has been resisted in this House many times, and great injustice must have been done to workers. Only tonight I heard over the air of the death of a miner who, five days ago, was injured within 200 yards of his place of work. He was riding his bicycle from work and within 200 yards he slipped and received injuries to the head, from which he died. If that accident had occurred half an hour before it did, his widow would have been entitled to workers' compensation; but as it is, she will not be entitled to any for herself or her children. Unless she happens to be in a friendly society, the task ahead of the widow is unpleasant. For this reason the clause should be given greater consideration. I suggest that it should be placed on the statute book the same as has been done in other States. For the reasons advanced, I hope that this House will pass the Bill in its present form and agree to the schedules. I support the second reading.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [8.37]: First of all I wish to state that I agree to the second reading. It is as well for members to consider the reason for workers' compensation. The main purpose is not just to provide a sum of money to an injured worker, but the wherewithal to restore him to health so that he may return as quickly as possible to his job. It is not in any way a reward, or a sum of money to be stored away. It is meant to get the worker back to his job as quickly as possible, for the sake of the worker, the community, and the employer.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What about total disablement?

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is a different question. I am referring to the purpose of compensation to restore workers to their normal conditions.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: It is not mainly to compensate workers for not being able to work?

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is to compensate them for any out-of-pocket expenses during the period of incapacity. It is also desired that payment should not be excessive and thus create an incentive for a worker to stay away from his employment. It is most important that the urge should be to return to work; therefore the payments must not be so high as to encourage workers to stay away. That is a very important aspect of workers' compensation.

Another question before us is the definition of worker. It seems that our outlook in that regard has changed considerably. To define a worker as a person earning £2,000 a year is to stretch the point too far. That is a very high salary; and to my mind anyone earning £2,000 a year owes an obligation to the community to provide some form of insurance for himself. A person on such a high salary should insure himself against accidents in the street. This measure seeks to compel industry to pay everyone for accidents which may occur in the street or away from employment. It does seem to me that there is an obligation for a man to insure himself against accidents in his everyday life. I believe that the abuse of the "to-and-from-work" clause is very great.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: We have never had that provision.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not in this State. I am referring to other States. I agree that the sum payable for compensation should be increased. I contend that the compensation payable to an injured worker should keep pace with the depreciation in the value of money. That is not unreasonable.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: That is the whole point.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If a certain sum was necessary to rehabilitate a man two years ago, then a similar sum calculated on the present-day value of money would be required to rehabilitate an injured worker today. Profits of companies and industries have been quoted; but I might say that they have not kept pace with the altered value of money, as salaries and wages have. Members will recall that prewar the standard rate of dividend from major companies which have been quoted was hardly ever less than 7 per cent. to 8 per cent. That was not an abnormal return, and bonds were returning 5 and 6 per cent. If an attempt were made now to increase dividends in accordance with the depreciated value of money there would be a terrific outcry about the exorbitant dividends being paid.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: There is an outcry against marginal increases.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Some of the workers on margins have a good case. Skilled workers are so scarce today that they should be adequately paid, but that is another subject. I can speak for a long while on the case of the skilled workers. There are insufficient of them, and the relationship between the manual skilled worker and the clerk is out of all proportion. I consider that the manual skilled worker is grossly underpaid as compared with the clerk in an office who has to devote his time mostly to book work. I think that the skilled worker is a much more useful citizen.

It is proposed to increase the compensation from 66½ per cent. to 75 per cent. of the earnings. That brings us back to the question of increasing the compensation to such an amount as to discourage a return to work. While I in no way desire to deprive an injured worker of any money, we have had considerable evidence that some workers—I am glad to say not a great many—resist a return to work.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Why accuse workers of being malingerers?

Hon. L. CRAIG: If the hon. member will allow me to continue my speech I shall be pleased. I allowed her to make her speech, bad as it was, without interjecting; and I would like the same privilege. To increase the compensation to a sum nearer to the total earnings of a worker would induce in a number of men a desire not to return to work, and that would be very undesirable. Unless evidence can be produced to the contrary, I shall oppose that clause.

There is one more question with which I wish to deal and that is the provision for cover for a worker travelling to and from his employment. In spite of what is done in some of the other States—I see no reason why we should follow their lead—I cannot understand why industry should be compelled to protect a worker from his home to his job and back again. Never mind about the cost to industry; I am not concerned with that at the moment. What I am concerned about is the ethics of the proposal and whether it is a just or an unjust imposition to place on the employer.

Some men live at Fremantle and travel to their work at Midland Junction. A worker might have to traverse dangerous routes to get to his work. He might have a car and be a bad driver or he might be suffering from bad eyesight. In all those cases, the poor old employer is to be asked to protect the worker to and from his job. It is an unjust imposition with which I do not agree.

I have tried to consider this matter from every point of view, but I cannot see anything just to the employer about it. Why not put the obligation on the worker to protect himself? The premium would not be high, and everyone in industry cannot expect to be nursed or nurtured from the time he is born until he dies. Every man has an obligation to look after his family and make provision for his own protection, just as he should for his death. I support the second reading.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [8.47]: While listening to the Minister in introducing the Bill, I thought I would not say anything but would vote for the second reading. However, when I heard Mr. Hearn's suggestion that an inquiry should be made by a select committee, I decided that I must agree with him.

What has caused me to rise was a speech made by a member opposite. It seems to me that this particular legislation has been brought before the House year after year and has created discussions which could possibly be avoided in future. I believe that if we have an inquiry by select committee to go into the pros and cons and consider Dr. Hislop's suggestion that compensation should rise and fall with the basic wage, we should be working on sound lines.

I suppose that the members who support the Government are in duty bound to work as hard as they can and to say as much as they possibly can to secure the passage of the Bill, but they seem to lose sight of the fact, as has been pointed out by previous speakers, that this compensation is something which has grown from nothing over a comparatively few years. I believe that industry, which has been struggling for a number of years against competition from the Eastern States and overseas, has been very generous to the workers.

While the provision made in other States may be high, we in Western Australia have to be a little patient and so have the workers. We must look after ourselves, and I believe that the management and the workers in industry have to share in the building up of industries here. Consequently, we should not be bound by what might be done in highly industrialised States like New South Wales and Victoria. We have to frame legislation that will be in the best interests of the State; otherwise, if we were guided by the statement that industry could afford to pay, there would be no end to it at all. Even if we granted 100 per cent. of the benefits proposed in this Bill, next year there would be a request for more.

I hope that members will take a sane view of the position. We do not want to allow an injured worker to suffer, but those who employ men and women to work for them have been very fair in their

treatment in the case of sickness or accident. Anyone who ever worked for me always received the difference between his compensation and his full wages.

Hon. J. McI. Thomson: That applies to many employers.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Yes, I believe it applies to many. We take a realistic view of the position; but the way some members opposite fling innuendoes at this side of the House would lead one to believe that there was no sympathy on our part with injured workers. To assume such an attitude is not in the best interests of all concerned.

Regarding the clause in which it is proposed to cover the worker from his home to his employment and home again, I wish to point out where abuse could creep in. I know well that, in some instances, workers' compensation is abused at the present time. I can cite a case which cost an insurance company £1,000, and the man was on holidays at the time the accident actually happened. Because the employer was not particularly honest and the doctor who attended the worker was not strictly honest, the company had to pay £1,000.

The Chief Secretary: You would not often get a combination like that.

Hon. A. R. JONES: No, but it is an illustration of what happens. Those people felt sympathetic towards the injured worker and decided that, rather than see him and his family suffer, they would try to get him the benefit of compensation. That sort of thing actually happens in lots of cases.

When moving the second reading, the Minister said that this proposal to insure men from home to work and work to home would not cost industry a great deal. I should like him to inform us just what it will cost so that we shall have a full realisation of the amount.

Hon. H. Hearn: The cost in New South Wales is 7 per cent. on the premium.

The Chief Secretary: It is anticipated that the cost here will be 5 per cent.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I think we can reasonably expect the worker to pay for that cover himself. I agree that he should be covered from home to work and work to home, but he should make provision for that himself. Nothing in the world will move me from my belief on that point.

I hope that members will consider this matter very closely, not only in relation to the benefits that are proposed, but also the amounts in the schedule. It has been pointed out by Dr. Hislop that when a worker has lost a finger, after having received hospital treatment and been paid for the time he was off work, he has received £100. That is something which is not at all fair. On the other hand, we are asked to increase the amount for total incapacity to £2,800. If a man were not

able to work again, or if his working capacity were impaired to such a degree that it was not possible for him to keep his wife and children, I would be quite prepared to support the payment of £4,000 compensation, provided it was not going to have an effect on the overall premiums. I believe that the money could be saved on the cover for the smaller benefits. I shall vote for the second reading, and I hope the House will support Mr. Hearn's proposal for the appointment of a select committee.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [9.0]: I listened closely to Mr. Hearn's able speech on this measure, but I cannot entirely agree with what he said. He warned members that the honeymoon was over, and in that respect I believe he gave us all food for thought. He clearly meant that the prices of wool and wheat were coming down and that in the comparatively near future conditions might be considerably different from those of the present. He also said that there was a limit to what industry could stand, but I do not think that limit has yet been reached in regard to workers' compensation. If industry in Victoria can afford to pay up to £2,800 and that of South Australia £2,250, surely Western Australian industry is efficient enough to come up to that standard.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: We offered £2,800 last year, and you refused it.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: For what reason did we refuse it? That is what counts. I do not think the limit of what industry in this State can stand has yet been reached. Mr. Hearn also said that this measure was a hardy annual. Perhaps it is, and it may continue to be so, because, if the cost of living continues to rise, the legislation will have to be brought before the House from time to time for adjustment. I know there would be a squeal from industry if the cost of living went down and the legislation were not brought before the House for an adjustment downwards in the compensation figures. The Government is merely trying, by means of this Bill, to give workers in industry justice. I do not think it would be denied that it is the responsibility of industry to provide for the injured worker.

Hon. H. Hearn: I admitted that.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The hon. member realises as well as I do that we should bring the compensation paid here up to the standard obtaining in other States, and he also knows that our industry can afford it. I would not like it to be said that industry in this State is so much less efficient than that of other States that it cannot carry this extra burden.

During the war, when I was convalescing in England, I took a course in labour relations, and this sort of thing was embraced in that study. We found that where workers had security and were happy, they gave 100 per cent. efficiency; but where they lacked security, they were not efficient. I say it is not a question of whether industry can afford to pay these increases, but whether it can afford not to. If industry wants the worker to be happy, contented and fully efficient, it must give him security in relation to any accident that may occur during his work. It is only reasonable that where a man is injured and off work, and cannot provide for his wife and family, he should receive sufficient money to keep them in the same standard of comfort as they were accustomed to enjoy while he was working. I can see nothing wrong with that.

It was said by Mr. Craig that if workers' compensation in this State were made comparable with the wages paid to the worker, it would give him an incentive, in effect, to poll on it, and stop away from work. That might be so in rare cases; but they would be so few that I do not think we need take them into account. I think the hon. member will admit that the average worker in this country does not like being off work. The Australian worker is proud, and does not want anything that he does not earn.

Hon. L. C. Diver: It is not necessarily the Australian worker.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: Surely the injured worker is entitled to a fair thing in the way of compensation! He does not look on this legislation as something out of which to get money for nothing. We have also heard a lot about the "to-and-from" clause, but the other night we placed that provision in the Bush Fires Act without debate.

Hon. L. C. Diver: That was in relation to voluntary labour.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: That does not matter. If it is meat for one, surely it is flesh for the other! If we could pass that provision the other night in the bush fires legislation, without debate, why can we not pass it now? When a man sells his time and labour to an employer, he receives payment for it.

Hon. L. Craig: But that was in relation to the volunteers.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: The same principle of "to and from" is involved. From when a man leaves his home until he reaches work and then returns to his home at night, he is giving his time to his employer, and he should be covered by compensation. The provision applies in other States and there has been no complaint about it, so why should it not be made to apply here?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It will be done here.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I hope so. This measure contains nothing injurious to anyone, but simply seeks to give the worker in Western Australia justice. No one would suggest that industry cannot afford to pay these increases. That would be a terrible confession for the captains of Western Australian industry to make when in New South Wales there is no limit; and the limit in Victoria is £2,800; and that in South Australia, £2,250, as against our £2,100. The measure does not ask for too much. Who knows? The position next year may be as Mr. Hearn suggested. The honeymoon may be over; and if prices are down, no doubt we shall be dealing with a measure to reduce compensation—

Hon. H. Hearn: Is that tonight's funny story?

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: —and I am sure there will be no objection raised to that by those who are opposing this Bill. Yet now they are making a great howl. When the captains of industry learn to work hand in hand with the worker, we shall get along much better. Surely they do not wish to deprive him of a living when he is injured while making huge profits for them! I do not begrudge industry its high profits, because I know that before the worker can attain a high standard of living, the boss must have the wherewithal to pay him; but I do say that the worker, and particularly the injured worker, must receive justice. I support the second reading.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [9.8]: I have always prided myself on being an optimist of the first order and have never resorted to a pessimistic outlook in relation to any job on which I was engaged, or to what happened around me. I have always looked upon Western Australia—the State in which I was born—as a place which—despite the fact that in years gone by it was known as the Cinderella State—is part and parcel of this great Commonwealth and of the British Empire. In the debate on the various Bills that come before this House, I have been distressed to hear so many speakers, in dealing with all sorts of measures, warn us of what will happen tomorrow, and tell us that the place is going to the dogs. Admittedly, the prices of wool and wheat are going down, but are we not simply getting a little closer to world parity in that regard than when wool brought 508d. per lb.?

Hon. L. C. Diver: When was wool at that price?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Five or six bales were sold at that price, and the Press of the Commonwealth featured it.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Just two or three bales.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: That is what I said. Just because the prices of a couple of our products have fallen a little, do not let us say that is the end of everything; rather let us put our feet on the ground and try to balance the different factors out in a workmanlike manner. As Mr. Hearn said the other evening, this is essentially a Committee Bill; and it is at that stage of its passage through this Chamber that the measure will receive the judgment of members. While I do not always agree with the judgment of this House, I know I must abide by the ruling of the majority; and if that ruling, in relation to certain of the clauses of this measure, is not what I would like it to be, I will nevertheless accept the verdict.

One of the comments which brought me to my feet tonight was made by Mr. Craig, and, while I respect his intention when he said that if the rate of workers' compensation was such that it was just as good for a man to be off work as at work, the result would be that more workers would be absent from industry, I do not agree with him. I do agree that there are certain types in the community who would take advantage of such a position; but I believe that the medical fraternity, in whose care the injured worker is, would see that no worker remained away from his employment without justification.

A man may have injured his hand at work, and after some treatment, feel that he is well enough to return to his employment. Yet the doctor tells him that he should have another fortnight off. In such an instance, I am certain that the doctor is not just being good to the employee and giving the man a couple of weeks' holiday, but wants him to be quite sound before returning to work, so that he will not have any further trouble from the injury, such as might perhaps cause him to be off work for an even longer period at a later stage. I am sure Dr. Hislop would agree with what I have said in that respect.

I know that in the timber industry some years ago there were certain workers—not of the same race as ourselves—who, in order to receive compensation, would run the axe across their toes; but I suggest to Mr. Craig that those days are gone. The control of our social services is now so stringent that such people would not be able to get away with it. There would not be one half per cent. that would get away with it.

Hon. H. Hearn: They would not be eligible for social services.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: When their workers' compensation payments stop, these men apply for social service benefits.

Hon. H. Hearn: Yes; but if they suffer injuries for which the employer has to pay, they do not receive such benefits. There have been thousands of pounds paid out for self-inflicted injuries.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Yes, but not now. They have gone by the board like the good old days. The honeymoon is over. The other point I want to make is in regard to what happens to the injured worker when he returns to work. I remember interjecting in this House a couple of years ago, again in reply to Mr. Hearn, that the fault did not lie with the worker in regard to workers' compensation payments, but with the insurance companies. I feel today as I did then. The question is not, as has been suggested, that industry cannot afford to pay. It is a question of whether the insurance companies can afford to pay.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are not disputing that the cost ultimately goes back to industry?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: A few moments ago it was suggested that a return of 5 per cent. or 8 per cent. was reasonable on capital invested in industry. I will not deny that, but it is not considered by an insurance company that 8 per cent. is a reasonable return. One can read in any newspaper—

Hon. H. Hearn: Workers' compensation premiums are assessed by the Premium Rates Committee, and you know it.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: But what is provided—

Hon. H. Hearn: You are talking about the position overall, but the costs that are incurred in industry must be paid by industry.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The profits that were made by insurance companies last year amounted to £9,000,000.

Hon. H. Hearn: £9,000,000?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Yes. The suggestion that industry has to carry the burden all the time is, in my opinion, drawing a red herring across the trail. The insurance companies are the ones that are at fault. For instance, if a man is injured at his employment at Kwinana, on his return, he is permitted to work only sufficiently long for the management to give him notice to quit. That is what is happening there, and it is happening in many industries. For example, a man may contract a hernia. After his recovery, he will return to his place of employment; but his employer will say, "You cannot carry out your job properly any longer, and we will have to sack you." The worker is the man who is suffering. When a man goes back to work after having been cured of his injury—

[Hon. W. R. Hall took the Chair.]

Hon. H. Hearn: He would be like your bad worker; he would be sacked for inefficiency.

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I admit that that is what happens in the oil industry in this State, which is a big industry; and such undertakings generally carry their own insurance. I have always been optimistic and there is no doubt that the prosperity of Australia today has never been greater, irrespective of the fact that the prices for wheat and wool have returned to normal. I appreciate that although the farmers in Australia have enjoyed high prices for their wool, they have also had to face increases in the costs of their commodities. For instance, when wool was 8s. 6d. per lb., a ton of iron cost them £50 to £55; but when it was 440 pence per lb., a ton of iron cost them £200.

Hon. H. L. Roche: How many bales of wool fetched 440 pence a lb.?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The same thing applies in the metropolitan area. Often at the metropolitan markets one will see a bag of beans fetch 39d. per lb. However, that is only one bag. Six other bags may bring only 1s. 2d. or 1s. 3d. per lb. Despite this variation in the price received, one has only to go into any city green-grocery shop and see beans priced at 3s. 6d. or 3s. 9d. per lb.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Does that apply to wool, too?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: How much per lb. did you say for beans?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am referring to peak prices. I said they fetched 3d. 6d. a lb. and those prices were reached only recently.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: What about going back to the Bill?

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I will go back to the Bill. It is very nice to hear such interjections. It is not a question of industry not being able to afford to pay increased workers' compensation premiums; the fight is not between employer and employee, but between employer and the insurance companies.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [9.22]: I did not intend to speak on the second reading of the Bill, until I heard Mr. Barker's ballyhoo. The hon. member stated that members on this side of the House were—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Come on, take your gruelling!

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: Mr. President, I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark. I have just been called from the Chamber.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It did not apply to the hon. member.

Hon. H. Hearn: The hon. member is sensitive.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I am not sensitive. I was walking out of the Chamber and the hon. member stated, "Come back and take your gruelling."

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Diver has the floor.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I was about to reply to the accusations that had been made about members on this side of the House complaining of the new schedule in the workers' compensation Bill. So far I have heard no opposition from members on this side of the Chamber to a worker getting a fair deal in the payment of workers' compensation. Every member on this side agrees that it is only right and proper that a worker should receive justice. In fact, Mr. Hearn has gone so far as to suggest that he will move for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into workers' compensation.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You are camouflaging again.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: If the hon. member is destitute of any remark apart from that one, I am sorry for her. There is not one member on this side of the House who wishes to escape his responsibility as far as this legislation is concerned.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: I did not dispute that. We are only considering it from different points of view.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The hon. member has made statements which will be recorded in "Hansard," and he tried to make out that there was opposition by those on this side of the House. I am going to vote for a select committee.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I do not see that there is any necessity for a select committee.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Has the hon. member something to fear from the appointment of a select committee?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: No; but I know the way this House acts.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: If this House has such a bad name, I wonder at the hon. member stopping here.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I will not stop here any longer than I can help.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: During the debate on the Bill, it was stated that workers did not abuse the privilege of workers' compensation payments. However, only recently the Kellerberrin flour mill had to sack all the Italians it employed because they were making a racket of workers' compensation.

Hon. H. Hearn: That was only done in the good old days, Mr. Lavery said.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Certain members have told us that it is the insurance company that has to carry the burden, but that

is not so. If an employee advises his employer that he cannot attend the night shift, it means that in an establishment such as a flour mill an extra hand has to be put on at overtime rates of time-and-a-half. That is a charge against industry. Nevertheless, we are told that that sort of thing does not go on. I have been informed that all the Italians that were employed at that flour mill have been told that their services are no longer required. Would Mrs. Hutchison say that that mill did wrong in putting those men off?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I do not; but I would like to hear the whole story.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Of course the hon. member would; but everyone does not have such a suspicious mind as the hon. member has. Objection has been raised to the provision to cover an employee travelling to and from work. If the select committee is appointed, I hope it will make a suitable recommendation in regard to this provision that will meet with the approval of the Government. In my opinion, the community today is over-insured. The Government would be well advised to consider the fact that a large section of the people today are double and treble-insured. If we agree to the proposal in the Bill that a worker shall be covered travelling to and from work, we will soon reach the position when we will have to ask: What form of insurance is responsible for the payment of compensation to an injured worker?

For example, if a man strained his ankle by slipping on a footpath, and it was proved that his injury had resulted from negligence on the part of the local authority, who would be responsible for the payment of his compensation? As members know, we have third party insurance, and if a man is injured in a car accident, is his compensation paid from the funds collected from premiums for third party insurance, or under workers' compensation legislation? Who would be responsible? We also have comprehensive insurance cover for motor-vehicles. If a man is injured whilst travelling in a vehicle, either going to or from work, would he be covered under that insurance?

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Hon. H. Hearn: And if he is not, he can sue the driver of the vehicle.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Yes; that is at common law; but I am talking about insurance cover. Further, there are a great many people who are covered by accident insurance, hospital benefits insurance, and the like.

The Minister for the North-West: For which they pay the premiums themselves.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Not necessarily. The whole community is covered under a mass insurance scheme.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Is not that a good thing?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The question is: Who is responsible? That is where we will finish up. I think the sooner we get compulsory insurance for everybody, and one company covers the lot, the better. However, that is really a side issue to the Bill, and with those few remarks, I propose to support the second reading, and also the motion that a select committee be appointed.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [9.31]: I see no reason for any sort of resistance to this measure, passive or—

Hon. H. Hearn: Token resistance.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: —even token resistance. The time for it is well overdue, although it is only 12 months since the schedules were increased. In my opinion it is more important than ever, now that the basic wage has been pegged for 12 months, that the worker should be given an increase in any compensation benefits to which, after all, he is surely entitled.

I very much support the view of, and I was interested in the remarks made by, Dr. Hislop, concerning the "to-and-from" clause, as it is termed. I feel certain it will be possible for the Government and for all parties to get together and find a workable proposition which would cover the worker travelling to and from his work, under conditions which will ensure that he was going to and from his work. After listening to Mr. Diver, it strikes me that the insurance companies would not be up for very much; and that the premiums should not be very high, because every person is at present evidently covered in so many ways in his travels, and the chance of the employer being responsible for any injury or accident that might occur seems very remote. Accordingly, the premium required should not be a very heavy one to fit in the gap, wherever it was, if he were not insured.

Hon. L. C. Diver: The trouble is: Who is responsible?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It is a matter of where the injury occurs. If it occurs in a tram or the train, then the Government or the Railway Department pays compensation.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: There were 200 cases in New South Wales last year, and not one claimed against the Government.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The hon. member means under the "to-and-from" clause.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That could be so; but even that is not a high percentage when one considers that there would be over 2,000,000 workers who would come within the scope of this type of clause in New South Wales.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Two million out of a population of 3,000,000. What about the women and children? They must be considered.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I will compromise and say that possibly more than a million people would come within the scope of this clause.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: It is easier to claim under workers' compensation than to make a claim against the Government.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That may be so, but the insurance companies are not going to pay in one direction if the person is covered in another.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That has not been the experience of New South Wales.

Hon. H. Hearn: You cannot get away from what it has cost; it was 6.9 per cent. last year.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We have had no experience here. We only have Mr. Diver's opinion which says that the gap is very small.

Hon. L. C. Diver: It would be very confusing.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There would be no confusion; the insurance companies would soon say who is responsible. Another point in which I was very interested was the remark made by Mr. Hearn when he referred to the honeymoon.

Hon. H. Hearn: You did not want to accompany me!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: At the time I did say this had been said for the past five years; in fact, it has been said for much longer than five years. I can remember Sir Arthur Fadden and the present Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, telling Australia four or five years ago that the golden age was passed, and that the honeymoon was over.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: That was Mr. Chifley.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No, the members of the Opposition at the time declared that the golden age was over. The Chifley Government was budgetting for something it could not implement. But how wrong were they in their charges; and how wrong was the hon. member? There is no doubt that he is wrong, and he knows it. But still he makes a statement like that.

Hon. H. Hearn: I quoted figures; why do you not do the same?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: For what purpose does he make a statement like that? Whom is he trying to mislead? Surely he is trying to mislead somebody, and I am convinced it is not himself. The purpose, of course, is to

show that a rise in workers' compensation payments cannot be justified because he said industry was fighting with its back to the wall and would not be able to stand the extra charge. But, of course, that is not so. Mr. Hearn challenged me to look up some figures, and he said I would find that is so. I have looked up those figures, and I find that is not the case.

Members will recall that "The West Australian" issued a supplement in its edition of the 19th October entitled, "The Business and Financial Review." In that we found that every section of industry is enjoying a most prosperous period. They are expanding, and the turnovers have climbed high; and in nearly every instance, they say it is not due to increased costs, but to increased turnover. That was the statement contained in the Press. It covered every type of industry—soft drink manufacturers, spirit distributors, beer, newspapers. Indeed, all classes of industry were represented, and in every case the turnover has increased, and the profit margin has increased. Accordingly it is futile to say that industry has its back to the wall and cannot stand any increase.

Hon. H. Hearn: I did not say it could not stand any increase. Have a look at my speech. You are trying to tell me I am opposing an increase.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The hon. member is quoted in "The West Australian" of last Friday.

Hon. H. Hearn: You cannot take that as accurate.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The hon. member did not contradict the statements made, and I cannot for the life of me believe that "The West Australian" would misquote him.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Is the Minister in order in quoting newspaper reports of current debates.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I think it is common practice, even if I am not in order.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister can quote from "Hansard" without actually using the exact words.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Surely I am allowed to quote what the hon. member has said!

The Chief Secretary: As long as you do not read from "Hansard."

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I am prepared to read what "The West Australian" said.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister would be out of order. Standing Order 390 precludes him from doing so.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is most unfortunate; and I trust the Standing Order will be enforced

most rigidly in future. If I remember rightly, during the second reading debate on the Workers' Compensation Bill the hon. member said—

Hon. H. Hearn: Are you remembering or are you reading?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: —that the Bill proposed to levy excess charges on industry, which was fighting with its back to the wall. I have looked through the newspapers; and I find that out of the 16 industrial companies mentioned in "The West Australian" of the 19th October in its financial review, only six had not changed their dividends. Not one had reduced; but nine had increased their dividends. The ones that did not change their dividend rate are, of course, already paying very high dividends.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Oh, no!

Hon. H. Hearn: Not necessarily.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Of the unchanged dividends, the average seems to be 12½ per cent. I would like to quote some figures, but I do not know whether I would be in order.

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry if the Minister misunderstood me. I meant to imply that he could not read an extract from a member's speech as reported in the newspaper.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I remember what I have stated.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister did very well.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It is also contained in "Hansard"; it is in the notes of the hon. member's speech. We find that the dividends of the unchanged companies are 12½ per cent., 12½ per cent., 12½ per cent., 20 per cent., 12½ per cent.; there is one at 7½ per cent., and two more at 15 per cent.

Hon. H. Hearn: The company paying 7½ per cent. should be ashamed of itself.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Evidently it is satisfied with its profits.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Show us how many are getting 3 per cent., 4 per cent. and 6 per cent.!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: None here. One did change from nil to 6 per cent. That is a new clothing company, of which all members know, which has got into production, and is paying a dividend for the first time.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: How did Hearn Industries go?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There is a furniture manufacturing firm which increased its dividend from 8 per cent. to 10 per cent.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Some druggists do very well, too.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Others increased from 8 per cent. to 10 per cent., 6 per cent. to 9 per cent., 12½ per cent. to 15 per cent., 9 per cent. to 10 per cent., and 8 per cent. to 9 per cent. That covers the industrial group. In the motor and transport group, seven balance sheets were submitted. Four dividends were unchanged; and one was changed from nil to 3 per cent., which is very low; and I wish the firm better luck. The others were unchanged. One was 7½ per cent., and that would be governed by other circumstances. In other transport businesses there were increases of 8½ per cent. to 10 per cent., and 6 per cent. to 9 per cent. Another was unchanged at 30 per cent.; one at 10 per cent.; and one at 25 per cent.

Only three businesses were listed under the financial group. Two increased their dividends from 5 per cent. to 6 per cent. and from 7 per cent. to 8 per cent. respectively; and one remained at 7½ per cent. In connection with the wholesale and retail firms, 13 balance sheets were submitted; and in respect of nine the dividends were unchanged, the figures being 15 per cent., 10 per cent., 12½ per cent., 15 per cent., 10 per cent., 15 per cent., 13½ per cent., 10 per cent., and 20 per cent. There was a change in respect of four—one from 8 per cent. to 10 per cent., and another from 9 per cent. to 10 per cent., another from 5½ per cent. to 6½ per cent., and the fourth from 17½ per cent. to 20 per cent.

With respect to the mining industry, seven companies were listed. The dividends of two remain unchanged, one being 40 per cent.; and the other, 20 per cent. One moved from 10 per cent. to 12½ per cent., another from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent., and another from 12½ per cent. to 15 per cent. One dividend was reduced from 62½ per cent. to 56½ per cent.

Hon. C. H. Henning: Are they Western Australian mining companies?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Every one of them.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It would be a very poor outlook for Kalgoorlie if the profits were reduced.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We know the value of the mining industry. That point is not being argued. What is being contested is Mr. Hearn's intimation that industry has its back to the wall, and it would be difficult for it to stand the extra charge that would be imposed by this Bill.

Hon. H. Hearn: I never said that. You are misquoting me again.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That was the intimation.

Hon. H. Hearn: I never said that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is the interpretation of the hon. member's remarks as far as I understood them; and that was the interpretation the newspaper put on them.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Was Big Bell listed?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No. There was one unchanged dividend which I did not mention. For some time no dividend has been paid in respect of that mine. I refer to Sons of Gwalia. We know the conditions of that mine and of Big Bell. The figures I have quoted indicate that industry can afford to stand an increase in premiums such as it might be required to pay as a result of this Bill. I sincerely hope the House will support the measure.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [9.50]: I support the second reading. Some of the amendments are well founded and necessary. The first in which I am interested is Clause 2, which seeks to allow only one licence to a commercial vehicle for a farm or holding. The clause reads—

2. Section eleven of the principal Act is amended by adding after the word, "siding" being the last word in paragraph (i) of the fourth proviso to subsection (1) the words, "but the provision that one-half of the licensing fee shall be payable is restricted to one vehicle so used in connection with each farm or holding of other land;"

I would direct the Minister's attention to the phrase "each farm or holding of other land". I can see that the Bill protects the small land-owner very well, inasmuch as usually the small owner has one commercial vehicle on his farm, and possibly a car. He pays a full licence fee for the car, but only half rate for the vehicle used on the farm. But when it comes to a larger farm, comprising many holdings or many portions of land, is it the intention to restrict the owner to only one licence? If that is so, I shall oppose the clause, and hope that members will take the same view as I do.

One could cite many instances of farmers or orchardists having many properties calling for a number of vehicles in excess of one—possibly as many as 12. A man might license one fully and cart produce between the siding and the farm, and make many trips to Perth or the

super works with it. The other vehicles could be licensed at the half rate and do 90 per cent. of the running on the farm property.

I will cite my own case. The property is run by share farmers, and there are four commercial vehicles on the farm. They are all licensed at the half rate. One leaves the farm only when there is a fire on land adjoining the property and we have to go down the road; otherwise it is used on small jobs around the farm. There is third party insurance on the vehicle, and it is licensed at the half rate. Another vehicle is licensed and insured in the same way. It does far more work than the others. It is used to cart produce between farm and siding, and does one trip a year to Perth. But even though it goes off the farm a good deal, it still does 80 per cent. of its running on the farm. Of the other two vehicles, one is a utility, and is used quite a lot in trips to and from Perth, and between farm and siding. The other vehicle is used on the farm attending to stock.

In respect of the four commercial vehicles, all of which are licensed, the road board receives a half fee for each vehicle. If the Bill is passed it will mean that people operating under similar circumstances will say, "This vehicle does not go off the farm at all; neither does this one. We will not license them, but will take out a third party insurance cover and let that suffice." One vehicle would be licensed at the half rate, and another at the full rate; so the local authority would be the loser by one licence fee.

May I instance another case—that of Mr. Eric Smart, who has properties at Mingenew and other places. At Mingenew he has 40,000 acres, divided by a main road. I do not know what number of vehicles he would use, but he would probably have 20 commercial vehicles. One, a big semi-trailer, is licensed at the usual rate, because Mr. Smart uses the road often in travelling to Geraldton to cart super, and brings the vehicle to Perth, to secure various requisites to be used on the farm for the production of primary produce; and the licence fee would be at the half rate.

Some of the vehicles he would use on the road for the carting of grain from farm to siding, and the distance covered in so doing on each journey would be about two miles. During the other 11 months of the year the vehicles would cross the road to get from one part of the property to another. If this Bill is passed in its present form, and this clause is agreed to, Mr. Smart could work out what vehicles never went off the farm, or just crossed the road; and he would be allowed to operate those vehicles without licensing them, thus depriving the local authority of probably half the fees he pays at the present time. I feel that no local

authority will welcome that sort of thing, though I believe that it was as the result of a road board conference that this particular amendment was inserted in the Bill.

The Chief Secretary: That is correct.

Hon. A. R. JONES: On the other hand, on a farm of moderate size, there might be two commercial vehicles, both of which did most of their running on the farm property—probably 70 or 80 per cent. on the farm, and the balance on the road. For one of those vehicles the owner would be asked to pay a full licence fee. He would thus be hard done by, because he would be paying a particularly high road rate on his land. For the benefit of members who have not had experience of this I quote my own case. My rates have risen from something like £26 in 1940 to £226 now. That indicates how rates have increased in country areas. While the farmer may be quite content to pay a high road rate, he will also be asked to pay a full licence fee on one of his two commercial vehicles, and that will occasion him hardship. I feel that the present situation would be best left well alone, and I would ask members not to agree to this clause.

The Chief Secretary: The amendment to which you are referring particularly states that the fee shall relate "to one vehicle so used in connection with each farm or holding."

Hon. A. R. JONES: I will be glad if the Minister will define what that means. Does it mean that a farmer's 40,000 acres comprises one farm or not? That position should be clarified. If a farm is in one district and is merely divided by a road, would the property be regarded as one farm? Even though it is 40,000 acres, would it be the one property, holding, or farm?

The Chief Secretary: I will get some clarification of that.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I hope so; because this will mean that Mr. Smart, who has 40,000 acres, will be allowed one vehicle; while another man with only 40 or 1,000 acres will have the same concession. Mr. Smart would have to consider the economics of this provision. He would probably say, "I will license only one of my trucks, and will not take the others off the farm." That would be a big loss to the local authority.

The provision in Clause 4 for the payment of 2s. 6d. is quite reasonable. The amendment of Section 46A deals to a certain extent with the Bill which I introduced in the early part of the year. While this clause goes some distance, it does not go far enough to meet the needs of farmers and others who follow agricultural industries. They will have to apply to a local authority which would be authorised by the Minister to give permits and issue licences. What is set out there can well be supported.

The Second Schedule proposes to define a motor tractor and a tractor of prime mover type. What is set out in the Bill in that regard is necessary. We are concerned to see that the tractor which is normally used in the production of primary produce does not suffer a high licence fee when it is used only to tow machinery or other vehicles along the road. The new definition sets out that it is—

That class of motor-vehicle, which not being designed for use primarily for the carriage on roads of passengers or goods, is designed for use primarily in industry

A tractor can now be defined under the heading of "motor vehicle." I am concerned with the Third Schedule where it sets out that for a tractor not exceeding 10cwt. in weight, the fee shall be £2, and so on, until the amount rises to a maximum of £50. I take it this provision contemplates that the tractor tows a trailer. As near as I can gather, a trailer which would carry five tons and would be pulled by a tractor, would cost £23 to license and the tractor licence would be £8. I feel that the fee is excessive because a tractor is a slow-moving vehicle as compared with a truck. The total fee would be £31. The licence for a truck to carry the same load is less. The licence fee for a tractor large enough to haul a trailer with a 10-ton load would be £16, and the trailer licence fee is £48. So we are getting into real money when we get to the amount of £64. The Minister might enlighten us further as to how the old system compares with what is set out here. The fee mentioned in the Bill is excessive when we have to pay a licence for the tractor and the trailer as well.

The Bill I introduced sought to amend Section 46A of the Act. If I place the provision that is included in that measure as an amendment to the present Bill, and I include the amendments that appear on the notice paper in my name, as well as the one appearing under Mr. Baxter's name, this measure will adequately deal with the question with which I am concerned; and my Bill can then be discharged from the notice paper. If this were done it would ensure two things, one, that the matter would be dealt with promptly; and, two, we would be saved the necessity of having to deal with another Bill.

In his proposed amendment, the Minister provides that a local authority can issue a licence to a farmer to use a tractor for towing machinery on a road. So far as I can follow what he has said, the farmer will have to apply for a licence for each piece of machinery that he wants to move. If, during the course of the year, he shifts 10 pieces of machinery, he will have to apply for 10 licences.

The Chief Secretary: There would be some elasticity about that sort of thing.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The Minister, when making his second reading speech, said—

The amendment now sought will result in the Minister being able to authorise local authorities to issue permits for overwidth loads on conditions that would be specified. It would empower the Minister to authorise a local authority to issue permanent permits for farm implements provided the usual safeguards were complied with such as daylight travel, red flags at extremities of implements being towed and any other general precautions thought desirable.

I have been through the Act, but I cannot find where the Minister has the power to give this right to the local authority. I ask the Minister to check that point. This makes it imperative that in order to overcome the matter I go on with my amendment, which is as follows:—

Section Forty-six A of the principal Act is amended by adding after the word "implement" in the last line of the first paragraph the words "except an implement used or to be used in agricultural or horticultural pursuits while such implement is being driven, used or towed on any road in a district or sub-district outside the metropolitan area".

The idea is to prevent him from having an unrestricted passage from one end of the State to the other. He would be restricted to shifting his machinery in his own district, or if he happened to have property in adjoining road districts, he would be able to move his machinery from one to the other. It is further intended by the amendments placed on the notice paper, that he shall be restricted to the hours between sunrise and sunset. This is a wise precaution. Dr. Hislop pointed out that there were dangerous times at night for these implements to be on the road. The second amendment is to add after the word "area", in line 9, page 2, the words—

from a place in such district or sub-district to another place in the same or an adjoining district or sub-district.

This means that they will be able to move from one place to another in their own district, or adjoining district. Mr. Baxter has an amendment on the notice paper as follows:—

Provided that the implement while being so driven used or towed carries bears or has attached thereto such signs notices or markings as are or may from time to time be prescribed in respect of over-width vehicles permitted under this section to be licensed driven used or towed on any road.

This is necessary. I draw the Minister's attention to Section 11, and I ask him if he will have the matter clarified. The section states—

Fees shall be paid to local authorities for licences as set out in the Third Schedule to this Act:

Provided that any vehicle licence required for any vehicle belonging to the Crown or to any local authority, or belonging to any fire brigades board or used exclusively for purposes connected with protection against fire or ambulance work, or for any vehicle used solely on a farm or pastoral holding and not on any road otherwise than in passing from one portion of the farm holding to another portion thereof, such portions being separated only by a road

That could be taken as meaning a road that divides the property. It could also mean that a person having one property at one end of a district, and another at the end of a straight road leading through the district would be deemed to have a property divided by a road even though it be some miles away. So, while I interpret this provision as meaning that it is from one side of the road to the other, it could mean that the road might be six miles long; and that whilst the farmer was travelling on that road, he would constitute a danger if the vehicle was not licensed and there was no third party cover. So I ask the Minister to have a look at that provision and give us an interpretation of it. If it restricts the person to moving across the road when travelling from one section of his property to the other, my amendment will be all the more necessary

The Chief Secretary: Did you say it will be all the more necessary?

Hon. A. R. JONES: Yes. I feel I have dealt with this subject fully on a previous occasion and with the explanations I have given tonight. But I would like to remind members of the fact that while a farmer can be issued with a free licence when he applies, he must take out a third-party insurance cover, and any tractor for which he had a licence to tow any overwidth vehicles along a road would be insured against third-party risk. He would not be running any undue risks because both he and his employee and the travelling public would be protected against any accident which might occur. I would like members to bear that in mind and, while the licence fee may be nil, there would be an insurance cover because he had applied for a licence. A farmer would be foolish if he ran the risk of not licensing his tractor if he wished to move along the road for any reason.

When the Bill is passed, we should advise all local authorities of the amendments that have been made and they, in turn,

can place small slips of paper, setting out what is and is not allowed, with rate notices or any other notices that may be sent to ratepayers. Few people bother to read the Act, and it would be impossible for them to follow the amendments made from year to year or to read the regulations that are gazetted. I have spent several days going through the Act and, in addition, hundreds of regulations have been gazetted. Also, if the Minister has not already considered the point, the Act should be consolidated in the near future. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Henning, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 2nd November, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Depth of Berths.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What depths are berths at the Victoria Quay and North Wharf supposed to be?