

However, the main purpose of the Bill is to give the department control over certain substances it has not been able to control up to date. To this extent it will provide a greater protection for the public and, as a consequence, the measure is to be commended. Nevertheless, I do hope that other departments which have the supervision of certain substances will be made aware of their responsibility in regard to taking every precaution to guard against fatal accidents by the inadvertent use of substances under their control.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—Minister for Works) [8.10 p.m.]: The support for this legislation is appreciated. As has been stated, the Bill deals with virtually only two amendments. The first amendment enables the Act to be more flexible in so far as the schedules are concerned. A greater degree of flexibility will now be given to the parent legislation when the amendment is incorporated in it. At the present time only specific drugs are named. The department should be enabled to make modifications to the list of drugs and say how they might be used, how they should be marked, and so on.

The other purpose of the amending legislation is to allow exemptions from the Poisons Act of poisons that are adequately controlled under other legislation. This point was raised by the member for Beeloo and I agree that there must be a great degree of responsibility in this matter. An exemption will be authorised only if there is adequate control under other legislation. A close liaison is maintained between the Health Department and the Department of Agriculture in regard to the large number and great quantity of agricultural poisons used in agriculture. So I think this is a useful Bill, which will improve the Act, and for that reason I commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1967-68

In Committee of Supply

Resumed from the 17th October, the Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Crommelin) in the Chair.

Vote: Legislative Council, \$56,500—

MR. McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [8.16 p.m.]: Mr. Deputy Chairman, this being my maiden speech may I first of all take the opportunity to express my appreciation and my thanks to members on the Government side of the House and to members of the Opposition, and to the

staff of Parliament House for the sincere congratulations and best wishes which I received for my success in winning the by-election for the seat of Mt. Marshall. I also express my appreciation of the wishes extended for my future as a member of this Parliament.

I can assure members and the staff that those sincere good wishes make a new member feel confident when he enters a different and wider field of responsibility, and those wishes are, indeed, greatly appreciated.

I would be remiss if I did not record my regret at the reason—well known to members—for the by-election in the electorate of Mt. Marshall. The late Mr. George Cornell was highly respected throughout his electorate and he gave many years of satisfactory service to the electors. This offers a challenge to me, as I think it would offer a challenge to any successful candidate who followed him.

During the first few weeks of sitting in this Chamber I have found that a great deal of one's time is taken up in listening, and learning the procedures of Parliament. I am told that after a period of time the procedures become automatic, and I hope that this is so. I have also been advised that when a member makes his maiden speech it is traditional not to be too provocative because this speech is the only one he will be allowed to make without interjection. I hope I can honour that tradition.

I am also advised that speaking to the Estimates gives one a wide field in which to discuss matters. I would like to refer to the Estimates and to one feature for which I think the Government deserves commendation. I am speaking of the increased amount allocated for education. I understand there is an overall increase of 12.6 per cent. and I think this illustrates quite clearly that the Government is fully aware of, and realises the importance of, the need to improve all aspects of education in Western Australia. We are all aware of the need for more classrooms, more teacher-housing, and better facilities in the schools throughout the State. This applies particularly in country areas, and the electorate of Mt. Marshall is no exception.

I might also mention water supplies in my electorate, which are a vital necessity. Extensions to the comprehensive scheme are being carried out, and this is answering an urgent need. It is interesting to note in the Estimates that there is an anticipated increase of revenue from country water supplies amounting to \$97,000. In the near future, I hope to be able to have a look at the returns under the new rating system from the comprehensive water scheme for the year ended the 30th June, 1967. I understand that these are available but, as yet, I do not think they have been perused.

I noted with some interest the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition when he was speaking on the Estimates last week, and the suggestion he made that, by taking the right-angled bends out of the pipelines of the country water supply scheme, a marked saving in the cost of pumping water would be made. This is a point about which I thought the engineers perhaps would have done something, and I do consider it is worth giving some thought to.

The Government is also to be commended inasmuch as it has thought better of the stamp duty position and will reduce the rate of stamp duty from 3c to a flat rate of 1c. No doubt this action will be received by many business organisations with delight. This action is due obviously to the fact that the income from stamp duty was more than anticipated.

I would like respectfully to suggest to the Government that some consideration be given to the establishment of an expert committee of economic advisers to make some preliminary research into the economic consequences of proposed taxes and charges in industry. These advisers could assess in detail the revenue likely to be derived and could estimate the impact on costs of production. Had it been in existence this expert committee could have been usefully employed, I consider, before the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act came into being. There is no doubt in my mind that not enough thought was given to that legislation before it became law. I believe that there are anomalies in the Act as it exists which are penalising settlers in outback areas.

I would suggest that some thought be given to a revision of the system of raising revenue to attract the maximum matching money. I appreciate the difficulties that face our Premier when he goes before the Grants Commission. If he does not have sufficient finance to attract the maximum amount of matching money he is in a very unenviable position. However, I suggest that thought be given to an alternative method to raise this revenue, and my own thoughts are that a better method would be for the fuel tax to be increased to cover the amount needed to attract the money.

I realise this would have to be on an Australia-wide basis. However, if this were done, the money would be derived from the people who use the roads the most and we would not be penalising so much those who are situated in such a position that they are forced to use heavy transport as the only means of carting their produce. We have seen that interstate hauliers have not been paying the amount of money at first anticipated and, indeed, a number of prosecutions are pending. I consider that if an increased fuel tax were substituted, this would even it out and make it a fairer method of raising the necessary revenue.

(57)

I would like to refer to a section of the subsidies shown in the Estimates upon which I would like some clarification. Doubtless, this clarification will be forthcoming. I refer to item No. 103, in the Miscellaneous Services Section, "Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust—Recoup of Losses." It shows an estimate recoup of losses for the year of \$774,765, which represents an increase of \$156,765. As a layman, I would like more information on this item. It seems odd to me, because with an increasing population one would assume there would be a greater number of passengers using the transport. Nevertheless, we see that there is to be an estimated recoup of losses of more than \$750,000.

Almost every day I receive letters from people in my electorate asking me if I can do something towards securing more houses for the electorate. I know this is a problem with which all country members are faced, and my own electorate is no exception. I know, too, that the Government is well aware of the necessity for more houses. However, it is a problem which causes quite a number of my electors to be on my back, and it is one which I hope to be able to take more action on in the future.

The State is bursting at the seams and there is tremendous development going on in Western Australia. I mention the expansion into new areas through land being thrown open for selection. Here I would like to make a suggestion that, prior to the allocations of new land being made, from the time the applications are submitted to the time the land board sits, some investigation should be made in respect of the qualifications of the applicants. I am sure this is the time when quite a lot of sorting out could be done in order to make a fairer allocation. In my opinion the land board has a most unenviable job—in fact it is a hopeless job to satisfy the greater majority of those who apply. However, if an investigation were carried out, it would have the effect of reducing the number of applicants and should provide for a fairer allocation of land.

With the tremendous discoveries that are taking place in the State, and the development of iron ore, minerals, and oil, I think this is a most exciting time for us to be in Western Australia and, indeed, an honour—perhaps a greater honour than before—to be a member of the Western Australian Parliament and a supporter of the Government.

I hope that with more experience and knowledge I will be able to take a more active part in, and make some useful contributions in debates to, the government of Western Australia.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [8.29 p.m.]: I would like to take this opportunity, which is the earliest I have had, to extend