

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I would be happy to support any effort made to do away with unfair trading practices, but they are not defined in this Bill. I am sure the Government will be very happy with the effect it has already achieved by the introduction of this legislation, which has increased the cost of living. Any person who has been in business will know that there are some articles on which a high rate of profit cannot be charged, and the margin is very small; but this is made up on other lines by putting on extra.

Immediately this legislation was introduced, the wholesalers in particular, and some manufacturers, straightaway increased the margin on the low-margin lines to what they thought would be the maximum allowed under this measure, but they never reduced the percentage on the other lines. They did not intend to get caught carrying lines with a low margin in the event of this Bill becoming law. Therefore, this action increased the cost of living, and many of these items are foodstuffs. So the Government should feel very pleased with itself, because it has already increased the cost of living to the worker whom it is supposed to represent.

The Minister for Railways: Can you name some of the items?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They are mainly groceries; and if the Minister makes investigations, he will find that I am correct.

The Minister for Railways: Did you say wholesalers?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The manufacturer and those who are indenting to the retailer direct.

The Minister for Railways: They got in early.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There would have been no need for them to get in if this legislation had not been introduced. We cannot expect any firm to carry on with a margin of 3 to 4 per cent. when it knows that by law it will be allowed 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. In business one has to cut certain lines at times and make it up on others, and that is fair trading. Under this legislation a retailer might cut a line today and add a couple of pence on to another line and be caught for unfair trading.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: Are we not looking for overall trading?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Minister has not told us what we are after.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: You are in terrific difficulty.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am trying to legislate, but have not been told enough.

The Minister for Railways: You are not prepared to improve it.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No; I am not prepared to buy a pig in a poke. I want something tangible; and I think it is time we got down to the genuine complaint, which I believe is unfair trading practice in certain places. If the select committee brings in a finding that there is evidence of unfair trading practices, I am prepared to support it. But until such time as we have evidence and can define what unfair trading practices are, I must oppose the measure.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 23rd October, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

COKE SUPPLIES.

(a) Easing Shortage.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

In view of the large number of slow combustion stoves which are now installed throughout the State and which rely entirely on coke for fuel, will he advise the House in view of the extreme shortage of this fuel—

- (1) Is there likely to be any easing of this shortage?
- (2) Is there any possibility of a coking plant being set up at Collie for the coking of Collie coal?

- (3) Is there any suitable substitute fuel which can be used in slow combustion stoves?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Industrial Development) replied:

- (1) Not in the early future.

(2) The object of research work being carried out into the coking of Collie coal is the establishment of a commercial plant to manufacture coke. Progress to date indicates that such a plant will be economically possible.

- (3) Charcoal is a suitable substitute fuel, if available.

(b) Local Production and Imports.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) What was the total amount of coke produced in Western Australia for the year ended the 30th June, 1956?

(2) What amount of coke was imported for the same period—

- (a) from Eastern States; and
- (b) overseas?

- (3) (a) What was the value of the coke produced in Western Australia for the year ended the 30th June, 1956; and

- (b) imported from Eastern States; and
- (c) from overseas?

- (4) What weight of coal is required to produce one ton of coke?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Industrial Development) replied:

- (1) 16,065 tons.
- (2) (a) 3,735 tons.
(b) 541 tons.
- (3) (a) £101,771.
(b) £46,562 landed cost.
(c) £7,892 f.o.b. port of shipment.

- (4) Approximately two tons of average moisture content.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

(a) Cost of Establishing Settlers.

Hon. L. THORN asked the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has he read a Press report of proceedings in the Federal Parliament stating that only 694 settlers had been placed on the land under War Service Land Settlement at a cost of £24,000,000?

- (2) Are these figures correct as at the 1st October, 1956?

- (3) If not, what are the correct figures?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Substantially, but needs amplification to indicate the spread of expenditure and the number of holdings developed. The Press statement refers to the total expenditure on all items up to 30th June, 1956.

(3) Expenditure by Commonwealth to the 30th September, 1956:—

	£	s.	d.
Acquisition and development	15,452,392	1	9
Advances to settlers for stock, plant and structures	7,838,859	18	7
Grants for living allowances	282,166	5	11
Maintenance	13,799	5	0
Rural training—Harvey school, tobacco school and training on farms	231,519	10	1
	<u>£23,818,757</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>

Advances to settlers include the value of structures taken over on lease and already included as a cost of development.

The number of settlers allotted farms over the period has been 954, and expenditure also includes the progress cost of development on approximately 350 farms, which it is anticipated will be completed by 1958.

(b) Attitude of State Government.

Hon. L. THORN (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

In reply to my question he said the number of settlers allotted farms was 954, and he gave the expenditure, but I want to know what action he is going to take in regard to the Commonwealth Government's announcement in its annual report, that only 692 ex-service men were settled at a cost of £24,000,000 odd?

The MINISTER replied:

I have no idea what the Commonwealth had in mind when it made that statement and I have not had time yet to receive a reply from the Commonwealth. That might be the total number of settlers who have received final valuations, or something of that kind. It cannot mean the total number allotted farms as the figure was greater than when the hon. member left office.

There are occasions when men for some reason allow their farms to slip back to such an extent that it is considered better to dispose of them than try to rehabilitate them. There have been such instances, but how many I could not say. I can only give the actual allotments over the years and the figures I gave were correct.

Hon. L. Thorn: To clarify the position; the Minister mentioned 954 settlers at a cost of less than £24,000,000 and the Commonwealth announced that 692 settlers had been placed on the land at a cost of £24,000,000 odd.

The MINISTER: The figure is only a few pounds above that which I gave and included in it there may be money allocated by the Commonwealth but not yet expended.

CRAYFISHING.

(a) Anchorages, Fremantle-Lancelin Island.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) Is it a fact that between Fremantle and Lancelin Island the only suitable anchorages for crayfishermen are at Whitfords Beach, Eglington Rocks, Yanchep, Wreck Point and Ledge Point?

(2) Is he aware that only five boats can anchor with safety at Yanchep and that this number have already paid the landing fee required, thus ruling this anchorage out as a base for other boats?

(3) Is he aware that at Whitfords Beach, Eglington Rocks, Wreck Point and Ledge Point crayfishermen are denied by private owners of land in the vicinity of these points, access by land to the anchorages and that this renders the anchorages useless for the fishermen?

(4) Will he investigate this difficulty which confronts the fishermen and by resuming land or by other means obtain for the fishermen right of access to the anchorages?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Minister for Fisheries) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The National Parks Board, which controls the anchorage at Yanchep, has given permission for only five fishing boats to anchor there.

(3) I am advised that private owners have refused fishermen access to the anchorages through their holdings.

(4) Investigations will be made.

(b) Non-availability of Land.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) Is he aware that between a point south of Yanchep and a point north of Wreck Point, although land is for sale, the owners have taken steps to ensure that no fishermen can purchase blocks?

(2) In view of the importance of this area of land to the crayfishing industry, does he consider this a desirable state of affairs?

(3) If the answer to the above question is "No," does he intend taking any action to remedy the matter?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Minister for Fisheries) replied:

(1) I am advised that this land is not for sale.

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

(3) I shall have inquiries made and communicate with the hon. member at a later date.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Diesel Engines, Repairs, Faulty Mechanism, etc.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Will he state the average weekly number of loco diesel engines taken off the road for adjustments and repairs for 1954-55 and 1955-56?

(2) What are the nature of such repairs and adjustments?

(3) Are they due to faulty mechanism or to the fact that the drivers have not received sufficient instruction?

(4) What number of locomotives are still using oil and which could be fuelled with coal?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) 1954-55, 3.4 locomotives.
1955-56, 11.3 locomotives.

(2) Mainly troubles with diesel engine piston failures. Replacement parts were supplied by the makers as the locomotives are still under warranty.

(3) The failures were mostly due to piston troubles.

(4) Thirteen.

(b) Availability of Sheep Trucks.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Recently South-West buyers of sheep from eastern and north-eastern wheat belt areas have experienced difficulties in obtaining supplies of rollingstock from the W.A.G.R., to transport such sheep to various South-West centres. Will he advise—

(1) The reason for railway sheep trucks not being supplied recently on request to centres in the areas mentioned above?

(2) The length of time occasioned between receipt of truck order by the W.A.G.R. and the supply of the truck to centres such as Nungarin, Merredin, Bruce Rock, Muntadgin, Mukinbudin, Naremben and Kondinin for the transporting of livestock during the last three weeks to various South-West centres?

(3) Can railway trucks for the carriage of sheep from the above-mentioned wheat belt centres be supplied today on request?

(4) If not, what is the present delay and what action is being taken to alleviate the position?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Record orders for Midland Junction sales, together with exceptionally heavy demand over a short period covering off-shears sales and movement of sheep due to failure of pastures.

(2)

Date of Sale.	Orders lodged by Agents.	Station.	Number actually required.	Cleared.
3-10-56	8 CXA	Nungarin	3	11-10-56
3-10-56	30 CXA	Merredin	4	8-10-56
2-10-56	35 CXA	Bruce Rock	16	6-10-56 and 8-10-56
1-10-56	15 CXA	Muntadgin	24	2-10-56 4-10-56 and 8-10-56
25-9-56	12 CXA	Mukinbudin	8	5-10-56
1-10-56	20 CXA	Naremben	14	8-10-56
1-10-56	20 CXA	Kondinin	12	2-10-56

(3) Yes, provided the requisite notice is given.

(4) Every effort is taken to meet demands, even to the extent of running special trains of empty stock wagons to supply centres concerned and the use of open high-side wagons for short-distance travel in cases of emergency. It would help the department if country sales could be staggered, but repeated efforts to bring this desirable position about have met with little success.

(c) Removal of Line, Sandstone-Mt. Magnet.

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What was the actual cost of the pulling up of the Sandstone-Mt. Magnet railway line?

(2) How much money was paid to the contractors who pulled up the line and transported the material to Mt. Magnet?

(3) How many tons of sleepers were suitable for further use, or for any other purpose?

(4) How many tons of rails were considered to be in good condition and fit for further use by the department?

(5) How much is paid by way of subsidy to the road hauliers now on the same route?

(6) How much have the road hauliers received from the State Government since the closure of the line?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) £15,068.

(2) £13,377.

(3) 1,200 tons.

(4) 6,200 tons.

(5) In 1956, £3,927 17s. 6d. was paid as subsidy on this route.

(6) £19,433 17s. 6d.

(d) Raising of Interest on Capital.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Treasurer:

Will he justify the raising of interest rate for the current year on the whole of the railways' capital debt as indicated in answer to my question on Thursday, the 18th October, when only that portion of the amount borrowed in recent times is actually subject to higher rates?

The TREASURER replied:

Interest rate in the total public debt of the State is averaged each year.

Old loans at lower interest rates are maturing each year and the portion not redeemed has to be converted to the present-day interest rate of 5 per cent.

(e) Application for 35-hour Week.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) In view of existing railway deficit and the fact that a 35-hour week, if granted, as shown in answers to questions on Thursday, the 18th October, would add over £1,000,000 to railway expenditure, is the Government taking steps actively to oppose the application to the court for this departure from the now normally accepted 40-hour week?

(2) If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The Railways Commission will oppose any reduction in the 40-hour week.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

EDUCATION.

(a) Medical Attention at Schools.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What number of school doctors are in this State?

(2) Which districts have been visited by a school doctor this year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Four.

(2) Metropolitan:

West Perth	Fremantle
Subiaco	White Gum Valley
Leederville	Hilton Park
Mt. Hawthorn	Richmond
Wembley	Bicton
Osborne Park	Palmyra
Tuart Hill	Applecross
Innaloo	Collier
North Perth	Riverton
Highgate	Carlisle
Mt. Lawley	Cannington
Coolbinia	Kelmscott
Nollamara	Queens Park
Bayswater	Orange Grove
Midland	Forrestfield
	Wattle Grove

Country:

New Norcia

Bindoon migrant school

Bullfinch and small schools out from Kalgoorlie which were unable to be finished last year.

The South-West will be completed within a few weeks.

Other schools around the schools named have also been examined.

(b) Dental Attention at Schools.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What number of school dentists are in this State?

(2) Does each dentist cover a special district?

(3) What districts have been visited by a school dentist this year?

(4) What types of dental treatment does a school dentist perform?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Fourteen.

(2) A few cover special districts; others are sent anywhere as required.

(3) Lower North-West and Murchison districts.

Laverton to Broadarrow.

Trans-Australian railway line.

Kalgoorlie.

Widgiemooltha to Esperance.

Meckering to Southern Cross.

Bruce Rock-Narembeen district.

Kojonup and district.

District bounded by Margaret River-Busselton-Donnybrook and Bunbury.

Part of the Great Southern line to Albany.

The Lakes district (Lake Grace, etc.)

Mt. Helena to Northam.

Point Peron camp schools.

Beach schools, Wembley to Marmion, and a few metropolitan schools.

(4) Examinations and then the necessary fillings and extractions after the consent of the parents has been obtained.

(c) Additional Classroom, Kellerberrin School.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education:

Has a decision been reached regarding the provision of further classrooms accommodation at the Kellerberrin School?

The MINISTER replied:

Extra accommodation has been included in the school building programme. Provided the requisite funds are available, it is expected the work will be undertaken during this financial year.

(d) Wiring of Roleystone School.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Premier:

Late last month I wrote to the Premier asking for £20 in order that the Roleystone school might be connected with the electricity supply. In view of the fact that that school is to be opened on Saturday, can I expect from him a reply before the House adjourns on Thursday?

The PREMIER replied:

I suggest that the hon. member could, after the House rises, consider taking up a collection from all members on both sides of the House. As I remember the question, it was as to whether the Education Department would provide £20 with which to enable the school to be connected to the S.E.C. main. I cannot recollect having received the hon. member's letter. However, I am sure it would have come in and would have been sent forward to the appropriate officer or the Minister. I will have inquiries made and certainly hope to be able to give a reply to the hon. member before Saturday, the vital day.

HOUSING.

(a) Homes Built in Bunbury, etc.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many brick and timber-framed houses

(a) have been built since the 1st July, 1956, to date;

(b) are being built at present;

(c) are to be built for the year ending the 30th June, 1957.

within the Municipality of Bunbury under the following:—

(i) Commonwealth-State rental housing scheme;

(ii) War Service Homes Act;

(iii) State Housing Act?

(2) How many applications for houses in Bunbury are outstanding under each of the aforementioned schemes, and in what years were such applications submitted to the State Housing Commission?

(3) In view of the recent retrenchments and the difficulty at present being experienced by management of brickyards in near proximity to Bunbury to retain present employees owing to the lack of orders for bricks, will the commission assist such brickyards by placing with them orders for bricks so that more brick homes i.e., additional to the brick and/or timber-framed homes mentioned in No. (1) of these questions, can be built in, or in close proximity to, Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

		Brick Veneer.	Timber Framed.	Total
(1) (a)	(i) Commonwealth - State housing agreement	....	....	....
	(ii) War Service Homes Act	....	2	2
	(iii) State Housing Act	12	7	19
		12	9	21
(b)	(i) Commonwealth - State housing agreement	....	55	55
	(ii) War Service Homes Act	....	12	12
	(iii) State Housing Act	3	9	12
		3	76	79
(c)	(i) Commonwealth - State housing agreement	....	57	57
	(ii) War Service Homes Act	....	13	13
	(iii) State Housing Act	13	....	13
		13	70	83

(2) Commonwealth-State housing agreement :

1948	....	....	1
1949	....	....	2
1950	....	....	2
1951	....	....	....
1952	....	....	1
1953	....	....	2
1954	....	....	10
1955	....	....	56
1956	....	....	84
			155

War Service Homes Act :

1954	....	....	5
1955	....	....	17
1956	....	....	11
			33

State Housing Act :

1953	....	....	1
1954	....	....	3
1955	....	....	5
1956	....	....	43
			52

(3) War service homes individual applicants choose the type of construction required.

The programme for Commonwealth-State and State Housing Act homes depends upon the amount of loan funds made available and the above programme is the maximum which can be built with present available funds.

Towards the end of last year the commission included a number of brick veneer homes in its programme and the commission has provided in its current programme for a number of homes of this type. This type of construction provides employment for both carpenters and bricklayers, uses both types of materials and yet keeps costs down to a figure within the means of applicants.

(b) Sale of Houses by Commission.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Housing:

With reference to the Under Secretary for Housing's evidence before the Grants Commission, as reported in "The West Australian," on the 17th October, 1956,

that the commission hopes to sell about 50 per cent. of the homes it is building this year in the metropolitan area—

- (a) How many homes will be involved?
- (b) At what prices and on what conditions is it proposed to sell these homes?
- (c) What selling agency is proposed?

The MINISTER replied:

- (a) 450 (approximately).
- (b) Sales will be at cost plus valuation of the land. Maximum loan £2,750 repayable over not more than 45 years at 5½ per cent. interest.
- (c) Homes will be sold through the State Housing Commission.

TOWN PLANNING.

(a) *Abandonment of Advisory Committee.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the Government's previously unannounced decision to abandon the All Party Town Planning Advisory Committee, does this foreshadow reorganisation of the Departments of Works, Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage and Town Planning with a view to the establishment of an authority such as the Melbourne Board of Works?

The MINISTER replied:
Not necessarily.

(b) *Setting up of Board of Works.*

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

I wish to congratulate the Minister on the reply he gave me in answer to my question, but is the Government considering any change in the Departments of Works, and of Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage, with a view to setting up a statutory body such as the Melbourne Board of Works?

The MINISTER replied:
Not at present.

BRIDGES.

New Construction, Canning River.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What progress can he report on the construction of a second bridge on the Canning and the highway required between it and the Narrows?

(2) Will he give to the House the schedule of works and any timetable anticipated in regard to the above projects?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Preparation of plans is in progress for an additional bridge to be sited immediately upstream from the existing bridge over the Canning River on Canning Highway.

Preliminary work on the access road from the south of the Narrows bridge has comprised engineering surveys of hydrographic and topographical character. Planning of road geometrics is in progress.

(2) No schedule has yet been prepared. It is anticipated that the construction of the bridge will commence in September, 1957, and be completed early in 1959.

PETROL TAX.

Expenditure on Northampton-Carnarvon and Buntine-Mullewa-rds.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What petrol tax money is to be expended on the Northampton-Carnarvon-rd. this financial year?

(2) What mileage of bitumen is included in such programme?

(3) How many miles remain to be sealed on the main road between Buntine and Mullewa, and at what points?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Funds allocated to the Northampton-Carnarvon section of the Geraldton-Carnarvon-rd. total £209,200 for construction and surfacing works. Proportional allocation of maintenance funds to the section approximates an additional £13,100.

(2) It is proposed to prime and seal 24.2 miles and prime an additional four miles.

(3) The length of road not treated with bituminous material between Buntine and Mullewa is approximately 63 miles. The untreated sections are:—

- (a) Buntine northwards for 38 miles;
- (b) 25 miles commencing five miles north of Pintharuka towards Tardun.

PARLIAMENTARY PENSIONS AND SUPERANNUATION.

(a) *Action on Nicholas Report.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Treasurer:

(1) When is it anticipated that consideration of the Nicholas report on pensions and superannuation will be complete?

(2) Is it anticipated that amending legislation to the relative Acts will be introduced this session?

The TREASURER replied:

- (1) Almost immediately.
- (2) Yes.

(b) *Tabling of Nicholas Report.*

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Treasurer:

(1) Is it the intention to table the report of Mr. W. R. Nicholas relating to the commission of inquiry into 1871 Pensions and Superannuation?

(2) If so, when?

The TREASURER replied:

Yes, when amending legislation is introduced.

WATER SUPPLIES.*(a) Result of Test Boring, Donnybrook.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

What evaluations have been made and conclusions reached as a result of the bore testing and additional boring carried out in Donnybrook earlier this year?

The MINISTER replied:

Sufficient water was located to supply the town's present needs.

(b) Standpipes on Pipeline, Kellerberrin.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Will it be possible to provide standpipes along the completed section of the Kellerberrin-northward pipeline?

(2) If so, at what distance from Kellerberrin could the last standpipe be erected at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, as a temporary measure.

(2) 20 miles.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS.*Installation at Dalkeith-rd.-Stirling Highway Intersection.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

When is it anticipated that traffic lights will be installed at the Dalkeith-rd.-Stirling Highway, Nedlands, intersection?

The MINISTER replied:

Supply of equipment is expected in January, 1957, and the installation will be completed as soon as practicable thereafter.

"ONE-ARMED BANDITS."*Legality of Machines.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has the Crown Law Department given an opinion as to the legality or otherwise of "one-armed bandits"?

(2) If so, what was that opinion?

(3) If not, will he obtain one?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Should circumstances necessitate.

S.P. BOOKMAKERS.*(a) Turnover Exceeding £300,000.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Treasurer:

In view of the apparent misunderstanding that apparently arose in his reply to the question asked by me without notice on the 17th October, will he now advise the total holdings of the five bookmakers whose holdings, last year, each exceeded £300,000?

The TREASURER replied:

To give the information requested would enable a close approximation of the turnover of each bookmaker.

If the hon. member desires to pursue this matter further, it is suggested he try to delete from the Act the provisions which provide for the keeping of the appropriate information on a confidential basis.

(b) Quarterly Payment of Licence Fees.

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

(1) Does he consider that the issuing of a licence to a bookmaker for a whole year, on payment of licence fees for one-quarter of that time, is a proper practice?

(2) Should not an annual licence only be issued on payment of the annual fee?

(3) Is it not a fact that the quarter payment was accepted on the basis that it was understood that it was intended to reduce the licence fees to flat rates of £50 and £100, respectively, as now proposed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The betting control regulations provide otherwise.

(3) No.

(c) Withdrawal from Unequal Struggle.

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

Adverting to my question on today's notice paper and two previous questions on two previous notice papers, in which I endeavoured to ascertain the holdings of some bookmakers, is he aware that I am now withdrawing from this unequal struggle?

The PREMIER replied:

Now, yes.

EX-SERVICEMEN'S RE-ESTABLISHMENT SCHEME.*Advances to Farmers.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What is the total amount advanced to date to ex-servicemen farmers under Commonwealth re-establishment conditions?

(2) What amount has been repaid?

(3) Can an ex-serviceman who has received a Commonwealth re-establishment loan and repaid it wholly or in part, be re-advanced moneys (up to the permitted maximum) for the purpose of further development?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £1,953,223.

(2) £1,384,090.

(3) No.

BORE CASINGS.*Price and Supply of 5in. Size.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) What is the reason for the existing acute shortage of 5in. bore casing?

(2) When will further supplies of this bore casing be available locally, and will it be of Australian or overseas manufacture?

(3) What are the comparative prices of 5in. bore casing of Australian and overseas manufacture?

(4) What amount of import duty is included in the price of the overseas article?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied:

(1) The Minister is advised that high tensile steel supplies were not available to make the casing.

(2) Supplies will be available from overseas on the "Karama" arriving on the 14th November.

(3) 11s. 7½d. per foot Australian; 12s. 5½d. per foot imported.

(4) Nil.

COMMONWEALTH UNEMPLOYMENT GRANT, £2,000,000.*Expenditure on Bunbury Works.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

On the 18th October, 1956, he indicated that next week it was expected that an allocation of the special grant of £2,000,000 recently received by the State Government from the Commonwealth Government would be made. In view of this will he—

(a) keep in mind the requirements of various works in the electorate of Bunbury;

(b) on the allocation being made, give details of the proposed expenditure of part of this special grant within the electorate of Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Yes.

(b) If it is decided to undertake special work in Bunbury as a result of the special grant, details will be given.

HOSPITALS.*Extensions and New Construction for 1956-57.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Health:

(1) How many hospitals or extensions to existing hospitals does the Government intend to build or commence building this financial year?

(2) What towns, or districts in the State, are to have the above facilities?

(3) Of the above towns or districts, how many have been asked to contribute portion of the estimated cost?

(4) What is the sum that each of the above towns or districts have been asked to contribute?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) The hospital building and extension programme for the current financial year cannot be finally determined until the extent of available finance is known.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Voluntary financial contributions are available from the following towns or districts:—

Northampton.
Pingelly.
Boddington.
Bridgetown.
Kojonup.
Moora.
Katanning.
Donnybrook.

(4) Local contributions vary. When the estimated cost of proposed work is known, district residents are advised. The amounts to be contributed are left to local decision and, in regard to the above, are as follows:—

	£
Northampton	1,566
Pingelly	5,000
Boddington	5,000
Bridgetown	5,000
Kojonup	10,000
Moora	6,000
Katanning	10,000
Donnybrook	1,000

INTERSTATE RACING BROADCASTS.*Further Details of A.B.C. Policy.*

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

Further to my question of the 16th October, 1956—

(1) Has a reply been received from the A.B.C. giving information on interstate racing broadcasts?

(2) If so, what is the position in the several States?

(3) Is the Government still seeking A.B.C. interstate race broadcasts to Western Australia?

(4) Will not regular A.B.C. broadcasts to Western Australia of interstate race broadcasts give further impetus to s.p. betting?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) This matter is still under negotiation.

(4) Regular A.B.C. broadcasts to Western Australia will provide a service for those people in Western Australia who are interested in Melbourne and Sydney races, especially those held in Melbourne.

ROCK-N-ROLL.*Action to Prevent Recurrence of Incidents.*

Mr. NALDER (without notice) asked the Premier:

Does he intend to take any action to see that there is no recurrence of what could only be termed regrettable incidents which occurred in Hay and Murray-sts. on Saturday last, involving a number of teenagers?

The PREMIER replied:

As members know, this situation developed, and I think it was effectively handled by the police. Whether it would be possible always to know where demonstrations of this kind were likely to develop, I would not like to say. I think the police could not know from hour to hour where a silly demonstration of this kind might take place, but I feel that if the newspapers had treated this subject of rock-n-roll with the discretion and space which it really deserves, none of this silly business would have developed.

SECONDARY INDUSTRY.*Establishment at Bunbury.*

Mr. ROBERTS (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of my introduction to him of a certain overseas company representative and our subsequent discussions in regard to the establishment of secondary industry in Bunbury, is the announcement he made on page two of tonight's "Daily News" in connection with that particular industry?

The PREMIER replied:

In the interests of accuracy, I am bound to say that the hon. member made only a very secondary introduction of this person to me. I had met him officially at my office some considerable time before, together with one of his co-directors.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.*Third Reading.—Amendment "Three Months."*

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [4.49]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [5.0]: I have voiced my objection to this Bill right from the time it was introduced. I now find it much more objectionable than I did originally, especially in regard to one particular part of the Bill which, to my mind, is contrary to the principles of British justice, which aspect has often been referred to in this House. As it is a standard which has always been adhered to right throughout the English-speaking world, we should not depart from this

principle. One particular phrase is indefinable and it would make people liable to fall foul of this legislation if it were passed. Therefore, I wish to protest again most vigorously against this Bill.

Members will probably recall that I endeavoured to get the Minister for Justice to obtain a definition of the phrase "purporting to have". However, I was unsuccessful in my endeavours and although I complained the other evening to the member handling this Bill and requested that he again consult his advisers, he was loth to do so and I thought that as he was getting a fair amount of ministerial support for his measure, apparently he was not prepared to investigate this phrase any further.

In an endeavour to investigate the definition of the phrase for myself, I spent some time in the legal library yesterday afternoon and I also discussed the matter with several people. Despite this, I find that I am no further forward than I was when I started. In fact, the definition of the phrase in the legal library is as wide as the definition of the word "purport" in Webster's dictionary. It has a very wide meaning, but no definite meaning. In effect, it means —

To convey, imply, or profess outwardly, as one's meaning, intention, or true character; to have the appearance, often the specious appearance of being, intending, claiming, etc.

That definition of the word "purport" is as clear as mud, and as the member for Moore was not prepared to accept advice to have this particular matter given further consideration, I felt it my duty to object to this measure right through and especially at this stage after having made further investigation into it.

Further, the definition that I discovered in the legal library suggests that the word means "to pretend". Why should a person wish to pretend to have charge of a child? Such a person could have control of a child in a park for a few moments while the parent or parents were shopping or doing something of a similar nature. Also, a person would be liable under this legislation if he inadvertently provided a missile to a child who used it to break a car window, for instance, because such person would be assisting in the child's neglect and would be liable for damages as a result of the misdemeanours of the child.

As I doubt whether the Bill will be altered in another place, my protest must be made again on this occasion because this is a measure which is quite undesirable although the Minister for Child Welfare apparently had some degree of respect for it. However, I think that if he had been here the other evening and heard the argument on this particular

phrase, he would have given the matter further thought or would have suggested to the member who introduced it that it required a little more clarification.

All in all, I think that to proceed with this legislation at this juncture would prove to be detrimental to some people in the community. Therefore, I move an amendment—

That the word "now" be struck out and the words "this day three months" added.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie—on amendment) [5.6]: Up to this stage I have opposed this Bill most strongly, and I agree with the amendment moved by the member for Beeloo. During the week-end I sought legal advice from a solicitor and also from two resident magistrates. The magistrates have been in the practice of hearing cases involving children and are men of considerable experience in this field. I sought their advice in relation to the words I endeavoured to have deleted the last time the Bill was before this Chamber. The words in question are—

The person in control or purporting to be in control of the child . . .

The three legal men I interviewed were unanimous in their decision that those words should never have been inserted in the Bill. One of the resident magistrates suggested that the only way that the clause could be remedied was to add the words "subject to the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1936". He said that even with the addition of those words, it would still be a bad piece of legislation but would be an improvement on the Bill as it stands now.

I can see the greatest of dangers if this Bill is passed. I believe that the member who introduced it is sincere in his objective; but if we include those words, I think we would be throwing discretion to the winds, because the whole Bill is riddled with pitfalls and any person could be accused of being in control of a child. In Committee the member for Moore said that the words in question were included in the Bill to cover the case of a de facto wife. The hon. member admitted that the words presented some difficulty and, as the member for Beeloo has said, he was advised to seek further advice. Apparently, however, he accepted the opinion that was given to him that the words should be left in the Bill.

Furthermore, I have obtained expert legal opinion to the effect that other words could be included in the Bill to cover a de facto wife which would also give a clear and explicit meaning. The words in the Bill now have two different meanings and are as far apart as the north and south poles. It has been proposed that an

amendment to the Bill be made in another place. I do not intend to propose; I intend to oppose. The Bill, as it stands now, is merely a step forward to loosen the sheet anchor of common justice and commonsense, and I therefore support the amendment moved by the member for Beeloo.

The **SPEAKER**: I might point out to the House that the member for Beeloo has moved to strike out the word "now" with a view to adding the words "this day three months." There was a lot of noise going on in the Chamber at the time the hon. member moved his amendment, but I understand that that was the amendment he put forward.

MR. LAPHAM (North Perth—on amendment) [5.10]: I support the amendment because I feel that this measure, which is now before the House for the third reading, is extremely dangerous. In fact, I am satisfied that most members have not considered the Bill or they would not be supporting it. It is all very well to read Press articles and to get from them the general impression that there are a certain number of boddies and widdies in the community and that there are a certain number of juvenile delinquents who steal motorcars, and therefore we must do something about it.

However, as responsible people, we must do the right thing when dealing with the problem. I am not at variance with the underlying principle of this measure which, I feel sure, is to induce parents to supervise more strictly the upbringing of their children. In fact, I am in total agreement with that principle. However, to my mind this measure is purely a legal document dealing only with fact. It takes no cognisance whatsoever of the circumstances surrounding any particular case. It is a piece of legislation which could be called an act of retribution because it makes provision for reward or for punishment. I do not like the Bill at all. When the member for Moore introduced it, I feel that he had in mind the necessity to compel parents to accept their responsibilities. I concur in that intention and I regret that the member for Moore is not present tonight.

As I see it, the Bill presupposes that the circumstances surrounding every family are similar. That is a false basis right from the inception because family circumstances are not all equal. There are wide discrepancies between the circumstances surrounding the activities of one family and those surrounding another. This Bill makes use of these words: "The court on being satisfied that any parent or guardian of the child has condoned to the commission of the offence by neglect to exercise due care or control of the child may order . . ." Then it goes on to set out the penalty.

The Bill makes no mention of any wilful neglect. Only the word "neglect" is used. Apparently there is no consideration to be taken of what type of neglect it is. The wording makes no attempt to modify and it is too rigid. In effect, if the Bill became law the question would be asked. "Did you neglect?" There would be no modification whatsoever or no consideration would be given as to whether the neglect was intentional, unintentional or whether the circumstances surrounding the neglect had any bearing on the case. The mere fact that neglect had taken place would be sufficient proof of guilt.

Let us have a look at what could happen in a case that might go before the court. It is not usual for the children of normal families to appear before the Children's Court; it is usually some abnormal circumstances that send them there. As an example, we could cite an instance of a woman who, due to the death of her husband, was forced to go out to work to provide for her dependent children. In effect, this woman would be in receipt of the pittance allowed her as a widow's pension which, of course, is insufficient to keep anyone. This being so, she has to augment that pension by going out to work to provide for her children.

By providing for her children she is refusing to neglect them physically, and, as a consequence of going out to work and refusing to neglect them physically, from the time those kiddies arrive home from school until the time the parent returns after the day's work, the children are neglected. They are left to the good graces of neighbours and Providence. If anything went wrong with the children, and they were delinquent in any respect, it would mean that the woman—the mother—would be guilty, because she would have neglected to carry out the duty of controlling her children during that period.

Mr. Moir: What would be the position of a relative looking after the children while the mother was away?

Mr. LAPHAM: In that case the relative would be responsible because it is the relative who would have, or who would purport to have, control of the children. The woman concerned might be the best of parents; she might have proved herself to be a good mother—and indeed she had done so by endeavouring to provide for the children, and refusing to neglect their physical needs. But during the hours that she was away the children could get into mischief, and, of course, we know that all good children get into mischief. The other night I listened in this Chamber to a few true confessions during the course of which even the Premier, who is the Minister for Child Welfare, admitted that he had tried out his skill on the insulators attached to the electric light

poles. Any normal child is likely to get into difficulties, and if this woman's child were to get into trouble, it would mean that no discretionary power would be exercised by the court and she would definitely be convicted.

Another aspect of this type of conviction which I do not like is that the mother is not even charged. The child is charged with the offence. The mother goes to the court and without a charge having been lodged against her a penalty is imposed upon her as the parent. If the parent does not pay the amount of the fine, she could be sent to gaol. It is quite possible that she would not be able to pay the fine. What is more, she has no right of appeal from the Children's Court.

I think this is the greatest mess of a Bill that has ever reached the third reading stage. I cannot understand any responsible individual ever supporting it. We must admit that the measure was brought before the House with good intentions; there is no doubt about that. But it has got out of control and the entire principle is wrong. The definition of "parent" is a classic piece of legalism, and the draftsman has gone out of his way to provide a dragnet clause so as to take in everything possible excepting, of course, Government institutions. He uses the words "having or purporting to have control of the child." That embraces any person who goes out of his way to assist in straightening out some of the mental tangles into which children get themselves.

It would also embrace an organisation such as Legacy. The definition of "parent" provides that children's institutions shall not be classified as parents. Legacy is far from being an institution, and I hope it will always remain so. It works on a different principle entirely. It helps children, but it is not an institution and therefore it does not come under the definition of "parent." Legacy operates in a manner where it provides for the appointment of voluntary workers who are termed legatees. Each legatee is responsible for three families and it is his duty to look after them and take the place of the parent within certain allowable limits.

The Minister for Transport: Keep it clean!

Mr. LAPHAM: It is his duty to do everything he can for the children.

Mr. Court: He has not got control of the children.

Mr. LAPHAM: In many instances he has.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think you are now putting out a fairly far-fetched story.

Mr. LAPHAM: No, I am not.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Yes, you are.

Mr. LAPHAM: It is quite possible that the mother may have to go into hospital, and the legatee would arrange for those children to be taken into his own home or looked after in somebody else's home.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Until you came on to Legacy, you might have been worth listening to.

Mr. LAPHAM: Personally, I disagree with the Leader of the Country Party but I would go so far as to say that under the provisions of the Bill it is hardly likely that a legatee would ever be accused of purporting to have control of the child; but the fact remains that under the wording of the measure I am satisfied that a legatee could be charged.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I am satisfied that he could not.

Mr. LAPHAM: It is always convenient to disagree; that is one way out of it. If the hon. member would look at this matter impartially, he would realise that a legatee could be charged because he does at times have control of the child.

Mr. Roberts: I think you are wrong there.

Mr. LAPHAM: Quite a lot has been said about bodgies and widgeys. I agree, however, with what I read in last night's "Daily News." It is a comment made by Kirwan Ward which reads as follows:—

Frankly, friends, I just don't believe that any crooner, shrieker, or piano player can really induce a genuine swoon.

Not Presley, nor Sinatra, nor Ray, nor Liber-blooming-race. But if you keep on plugging swooning until it becomes the fashionable thing, then the kids are going to simulate swoons if it kills them.

Same way with this rock-n-roll business. The beat of it, though strong and insistent, and likely to cause young blood streams to overheat a little, is not enough to start mass waves of juvenile delinquency among striplings whose worst previous offence was to sneak off and get a crew cut without parental consent.

But if their elders are dopey enough to stand around in gaping bunches outside the cinema where the rockin' and the rollin' is on, obviously waiting eagerly for a bit of tax-free entertainment, you can bet your desert boots that the kids will oblige.

All adolescents are exhibitionists. You were, I was, and the rhesus monkeys over at the zoo are. Show offs, all of us, ready to stack on a turn the moment we think we've captured the spotlight.

In fact, when you come to think of it, we all show off all our lives whenever we're given the slightest encouragement. In childhood and youth our

showing off is as crude as that of the young myall bucks strutting round a camp fire; or a rock-n-roll kid coming out of a movie show.

As we get older we get shrewder, we show off with greater guile, we underplay it; but, just let us imagine that all eyes are on us, and away we go, giving our ego a sunbath.

The only thing that can make us stop is the humiliating discovery that nobody's looking.

The last few words in that column contain the secret of all delinquency. If the Press stopped playing up this matter of delinquency, I am satisfied we would not have half the trouble that exists today. I do not want to enter into competition with other members in relation to true confessions, but I would point out that I was no angel myself.

The Minister for Child Welfare: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAPHAM: I came from the fields where detonators and gelignite were used and I have often used them myself. As a teenager, I can remember the fashions of the day ran to stovepipe trousers—we called them snake-proofs. When I reached 20 or 21 years of age, Oxford bags were the vogue, as were moontype pockets. The charleston was danced then, whereas today we have jive, and the fashion in hairstyles appears to be crew cuts. We all know the outfit that the bodgie wears. It is a sign of the times and we are inclined to play it up as delinquency. There is no need to worry about it because even the bodgies and widgeys of today will grow up to be the decent citizens of tomorrow.

There is no necessity for the Bill. The problem has been tackled from a wrong angle. If we want to do any good and have some success in controlling delinquency, we will have to move away altogether from the idea of trying to legislate for it. I think this problem can be rectified by different types of education and by the Press being more restrained and refusing to continue the form of exhibitionism that has been its paramount feature for far too long. I support the amendment and oppose the third reading of the Bill.

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

BILL—GERALDTON SAILORS AND SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL INSTITUTE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

- 1, Police Act Amendment (No. 1).
 - 2, Betting Control Act Amendment.
- Adopted.

BILL—BOOKMAKERS BETTING TAX ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [5.30]: When dealing with this subject the other evening, I was quoting from the report of the Betting Control Board of South Australia to give the actual experience in South Australia of bookmakers' operations. Fortunately, we do not have to do any guessing about this or any conjecture at all because facts are readily available, and anyone who takes the trouble to examine them must come to the conclusion that the Government's proposals are sound and reasonable.

Mr. Court: The facts are not available in relation to this State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are. I obtained them in this State myself.

Mr. Court: You are taking South Australia as your Bible for these exercises. There is a lot of difference.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ask the hon. member to indicate why the experience in South Australia with regard to the struggle between punter and bookmaker ought to be any different from what it is in any other State.

Mr. Court: There are many reasons.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Give me one?

Mr. Court: If you read the whole of the South Australian report, they are different in every State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Give me one?

Mr. Court: I do not have to answer you!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course the hon. member does not! It is always generalities. I tell the hon. member there is not a single reason why the experience ought to be any different. For example, take the interstate races; races which are not run in South Australia. The bettors in South Australia endeavour to pick winners in Victoria. Why should they be any more successful or any less successful in South Australia than in Western Australia or Tasmania?

Mr. Court: When you check the South Australian Betting Board's report, they are more successful on the course in South Australia than interstate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is an obvious reason. The hon. member shows his ignorance of the subject.

Mr. Court: That is not so. I have completely refuted what you said.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has not.

Mr. Court: Your own argument was that success would be the same in every State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So it would be on the same basis; that is, betting in South Australia on races in Victoria would show approximately the same result as between bookmaker and bettor as it would in Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia. But betting on local races would be different from what it would be on interstate races, and a third difference would be that the bookmakers betting on the course on local races would win less than bookmakers betting away from the course—

Mr. Court: That is a vital point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —for the obvious reason that the more information one has of the betting trends and the support being given to runners by stable connections, the more likely it is a bettor will be successful. But these conditions will be general and there will be no difference in the situation in Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria or Western Australia. This is not an exact science and there are circumstances which might arise one year which might not occur in a subsequent year and so one cannot say because the bookmakers made an average of 7 per cent. profit in one year, they will continue to make 7 per cent. profit every year.

They may make 11 per cent. the following year and fall to 2 per cent. the next year because of some special circumstances, but it is idle to say that the experience in one State cannot be taken as a guide to what may occur in another. I would ask the hon. member if he discounts completely the experience in other States, upon what will he base his judgment in this State? What will he use as a guide if he will not take the experience elsewhere?

Mr. Court: You have told us you have got the information in this State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have the information that the legislation in South Australia provides that there must be a winning bets tax as well as a turnover tax. We can be sure of this that bettors will not pay a winning bets tax on money they do not win, and therefore whatever figure is shown here as the amount of winnings would not be overstated, and furthermore, we can say that the bookmaker will not pay tax on turnover he does not handle. Therefore the turnover figures will not be overstated and if we can be certain that the winning bets have not been overstated and the turnover tax has not been overstated, we are on a pretty sound basis to make a subtraction and see what the percentage is.

The other evening I was quoting from the figures showing the experience on-course. I will complete the illustration by giving the off-course figures for 1954 in

South Australia. The member for Dale made the surprising interjection that because there are so few bookmakers off-course, one could not have regard to the experience because it was no good. I disagree with him entirely because it does not matter how many bookmakers are operating off-course. If we have a number of off-course bookmakers operating in a certain district and doing all the business to be done within that district, their experience will be similar. But what would be the experience in other districts in like circumstances?

It is quite wrong to think the volume of off-course betting in South Australia is so infinitesimal that it can be disregarded because the 1954 report shows that the number of bets made on premises in South Australia was 909,722, and the sum involved was £627,663. The winnings paid to bettors and upon which they had to pay winning bets tax was—this amount would not be overstated—£579,308, leaving a gross profit of £48,355. Turnover tax had to be paid then amounting to £12,554 and ticket tax of £2,123, leaving £33,678 as the then remaining profit, or 5.36 per cent.

Mr. Wild: How many bookmakers would that be divided among?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It does not say.

Mr. Wild: It would be six or seven.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not matter because the percentage on the operations would work out the same if it was five or 50.

Mr. Wild: Not a bad return to five or six for the year's net profit.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised at the hon. member! Does he not realise these people have to pay out for cleaning, telephone expenses and electric light? The approach hon. members opposite have to this question shows that they have given it no thought whatever.

Mr. May: They are completely out of their depth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have the figures for 1954-55 but I do not propose to weary the House with them. However, I will go on to the latest year, 1956, and see what the experience has been over the same field. The total of all on-course operations for the year ended the 30th June, 1956, was 12,484,683 bets laid. The turnover involved was £29,317,734. That is substantially greater than the turnover in Western Australia.

Winnings paid back to bettors out of that turnover—and this is a very important point, because winning bets tax was paid on every £ of this and we can be sure it is not overstated—amounted to £28,367,962, leaving a gross profit of £949,772, out of which turnover tax had to be paid of £293,190, and ticket tax of

£29,755, leaving a profit then, before rent, light, telephone and result services were paid, of £626,827, or 2.14 per cent.

Now I will turn to operations in premises. The number of bets laid was 767,934, and I would remark here that, contrary to the arguments which the Opposition advance, that figure shows a falling off in premises in South Australia instead of an increase.

Mr. Court: But it has increased in Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Increased in one year. I do not know how the hon. member can arrive at that conclusion.

Mr. Court: Some months of this year would be part of last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What a comparison that would be! The turnover in premises was £701,022. The winnings paid back to bettors were £654,124, leaving a gross profit of £46,898 out of which turnover tax had to be paid of £14,000, ticket tax of £1,830, leaving a profit of £31,047, from which had to be paid all the expenses of running the business. Without these expenses being taken out, the percentage profit is 4.43 in the premises. That 4.43 per cent. is on all operations including interstate races, local races, coursing and trotting.

If further indication is required as to what is a fair tax to levy, one gets it from the experience of Tasmania because in 1932 when legislation was introduced in that State, a 2½ per cent. tax, overall, was provided. In 1935, after three years' experience, it became obvious that the 2½ per cent. was too heavy and the Government, by legislation, reduced the tax to 2 per cent. on all bets other than those on local events. The bets in premises in Tasmania are, in the main, bets on interstate races, and on those races the Government, having first imposed a tax of 2½ per cent., reduced it to 2 per cent. I suggest that if there were this big margin to play with and if there were this big volume of money that the Treasurer could use for his benefit, the Government of Tasmania, having once imposed a tax of 2½ per cent. would not reduce it to 2 per cent.

I think we must have regard to the experience in those States where figures are available, and I say to those members who have all sorts of ideas as to the percentage we can impose here, that in justice to themselves, if to no one else, they ought to set down the bases upon which they arrive at their decision. So far as I can see up to date, it is pure guesswork.

Mr. Court: No, it is not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it is.

Mr. Court: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have taken the trouble to examine closely the situation in Western Australia, with the limited experience we have had, and the limited figures available, and I am prepared to say that the average gross profit of the off-course bookmaker in Western Australia is round about 7 per cent. which exceeds the experience in South Australia on last year's figures.

Mr. Court: Do you know that the s.p. bookmakers have admitted to a higher percentage than that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All of them?

Mr. Court: What was represented as a good cross-section.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I challenge the hon. member to give me particulars of a dozen—

Mr. Court: You will not tell us one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —that would substantiate the statement he has just made. That is not very many—

Mr. Court: We will give you figures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —and it would not be representative. I am giving my opinion, but I cannot prove it in the way I was able to prove other statements. But this is my opinion for what it is worth: I believe that the percentage of profit of the off-course bookmakers in Western Australia is round about 7 per cent. The Government proposes a betting tax of 2 per cent. The stamp tax costs .7 per cent. and wages 2.8 per cent.

I arrive at that figure from an examination of information—figures taken from taxation returns lodged with the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation here—which has been available to the member for Netherlands. So one must accept those figures as being reliable and they give a wages cost of 2.8 per cent. The cost of telephones—I think I am conservative in this estimate—is 2 per cent. One man's telephone bill exceeds £2,000 a year.

Mr. Court: He would be a very big man.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He would be the biggest.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's time has expired.

On motion by Mr. May, time extended.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I repeat that .2 per cent. is the amount at which I arrive as the cost of telephones, and I think that is a conservative figure. Anyone who knows anything about the business at all is aware that its success depends upon getting results accurately and quickly within a few minutes of the race. If the bookmaker is to keep the interest of his patrons, he must have the results and the prices. He cannot get them himself.

There is an organisation which supplies this information and it has been in existence for many years—even in the illegal days it was flourishing—and it does not work for nothing. As a matter of fact, in my view it is handsomely paid for what it does; but if the bookmakers want the results, they have to pay the price asked. I put this cost down at .1 per cent. These expenses that I have mentioned total 5.8 per cent. There is no allowance in them for the cleaning of premises or the rent of premises; and in the city the rent is substantial. Neither have I included the cost of electric light or other incidentals.

If the overall gross profit is 7 per cent. and we take the total I have given of 5.8 per cent., without the other incidentals I have mentioned, we can see that there is probably 1 per cent. or less available to the bookmaker for his profit. Members might snigger, but at least I have made an attempt to give figures whereas those who have sniggered have nothing.

The Minister for Transport: Only the editorials of "The West Australian."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those who snigger have not examined the position and cannot get up in their places to substantiate their point of view with figures. It is easy to snigger!

Mr. Court: You might be surprised.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will be surprised if the hon. member gets up and talks sense on this question—

Mr. Court: Good.

The Minister for Transport: It will certainly be newsworthy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —because he will disregard the experience in South Australia and say it is not applicable to Western Australia; he will disregard the experience in Tasmania and say it is not applicable to Western Australia; he will disregard the fact that the Tasmanian Government actually reduced the tax from 2½ per cent. to 2 per cent. and say it is of no moment, and that in Western Australia we can impose a tax substantially in excess of 2 per cent. I say there is a responsibility on any member who believes that that is possible to get up and try to justify his view and not just to sit in his place and snigger.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you say the bookmaker will be carrying the maximum tax under this amendment?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say it is my view that, having examined local experience and having regard to the experience of bookmaking in South Australia, which is clearly, concisely and completely set out in the report, 2 per cent. is the correct figure to impose. If it were not, the Tasmanian Government would not have reduced the rate there from 2½ per cent. to 2 per cent., and South Australia would definitely have increased theirs from 2 per cent.

Mr. Court: Do you place any significance on the fact that the same men bet off-course and on-course in Tasmania.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not make any difference.

Mr. Court: It would, on your own figures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not make any difference. The same factors are involved with the results off-course, as with the results on-course. There we get the bettors trying to win money and the bookmakers trying to prevent them from winning it. The bettors are using such information as they get and such guesswork as they adopt to try to make their winnings, and the bookmakers are using their knowledge of the game and the information which comes to them to fix prices that will make it impossible for the bettors to win.

It is the same the world over, but local circumstances will influence the situation from time to time. Over the years, however, the general experience will be the same and the bookmaker will win because the figures he uses are designed to make him win. All sorts of other factors are brought forward and some bookmakers lose and go out of business, but, as a class, they win just as the bettor, as a class, must lose.

But these large sums which the South Australian experience shows have been repaid to bettors are not figments of the imagination. These are no cooked-up figures; these are the actual amounts on which the successful bettors have paid the winning bets tax. I have yet to meet the punter who will pay the Government a tax on a bet that is not a winning bet. So we can assume that every £1 in these totals, shown as being money won by the bettors, has actually been won by them.

Thus, if we make a simple calculation, we can easily arrive at the amount of money which is left with the bookmaker and work out the percentage of profit. I know members have in their minds the 13½ per cent. which is taken out of the totalisator which is still supposed to pay the same price as the bookmaker. They cannot get over that. But the circumstances are very different. The totalisator pays a final price and it pays all investors at the same price. If a person invests on the totalisator half an hour before the race, he will get precisely the same dividend, if he supports a winning horse, as he would get if he invested 10 seconds before the race.

But what is the experience with the bookmaker? He might start laying a horse at 10 times the odds that he will finally pay out. In this connection an example comes to my mind quite readily. Recently a certain horse that had been well tried in private was considered by his connections to be next door to a certainty. In

the betting charts in the off-course shops he was quoted at 20 to 1, and I know some men who actually took him at that price off-course.

Mr. Oldfield: Were you in it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I was not, unfortunately. I know some men who actually got 20 to 1 off-course and they coupled the horse with another winner. What actually happened with one bookmaker on the course was that the horse opened at 25 to 1 and bets were laid at that price. Subsequent bets were laid at 20 to 1; 10 to 1; 8 to 1; 6 to 1; 4 to 1 and finally 5 to 2. The tote paid out at about 5 to 2. But a lot of punters collected from bookmakers at 20 to 1; 15 to 1 and 10 to 1.

Mr. Court: You are referring particularly to on-course bookmakers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On-course and off-course, because the off-course bookmakers laid the horse at 20 to 1, too. This illustration shows that we cannot make a fair comparison between what the totalisator pays to the bettor and what the bookmaker will pay. It is true that on occasions the opposite result will occur in that a bookmaker will lay a horse at a low price and the horse will ultimately start at a high price and the totalisator will pay at that higher price. But such occasions are rare because the general attitude of race patrons is, if a horse blows in the betting, to leave it alone.

There are few occasions when a horse which blows in the betting is successful and the bookmaker has to pay out. It is nearly always the other way round and if a horse firms in the betting, it is more likely to be successful. Under those circumstances, the bookmaker has to pay out a lot more money than the tote. A lot of people have the idea that this is all to the advantage of the off-course bookmaker.

Anybody who knows anything about it will be aware that the off-course bookmaker sets the price for the on-course bookmaker, because he gets out a chart on Fridays, when betting commences, and the knowledgeable ones who put their heads together come in and take advantage of the price that is offering. Then on race days a certain number of scratchings take place with the result that the prices offered by the bookmakers on the course are very much reduced. So, under those circumstances their liabilities are not to be compared with those of the men off the course, and those are circumstances which must be taken into consideration when assessing what is a fair amount of tax to impose.

Because of the existing set-up, there is an inducement for owners and trainers who ought to be supporting their horses on the racecourses to support them off the courses and carry out what are called starting-price jobs. These men would lose their enthusiasm for this method of betting if the turf club and the trotting club would

only be realistic. The off-course men desire to place such money where it belongs—and that is on the course—and they have asked for facilities to enable them to place this money, which should have been wagered on the course in the first place, back on the course.

For a time the W.A.T.C. provided the facilities but then, because of some strange notion, it withdrew them. Here is an opportunity for the clubs to build up their percentage because the Government is prepared to give them 60 per cent. of the turnover tax on the course. Instead of keeping this money off the course, or trying to, and allowing owners and trainers to take advantage of that method, the turf club and the trotting club could easily stop it by providing facilities for the off-course bookmakers to put this money on the course.

Whilst it will certainly be to the advantage of the off-course men for a week or two, because they will use the owners' money to get longer prices on the course than they will pay the owners, it will not last because the owners will soon get jack of that and will put the money on the course themselves. That is precisely what the off-course men want. If that happens, it will improve the racing game; and it will do away with a lot of those practices which are against its best interests and it will increase the revenue of the clubs.

Therefore, I suggest that the clubs give away what inhibitions they have about these facilities because I believe that although they think it is assisting the off-course bookmakers—and they do not want anything to do with them—they have to realise that the activities of those bookmakers are just as legal as those of the men operating on-course and they are paying their taxes in the same way. If the clubs will only take advantage of this opportunity they can get a lot more money for themselves and they can make the owners and trainers keep their money on the course and wager on the course instead of trying to get bigger odds by arranging starting-price jobs.

Mr. Court: It is reputed that this money is going back to the courses now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is, but not all of it—in a roundabout way.

Mr. Court: Will any more go back?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A lot more. I would say more than double.

Mr. Court: It can go back only once.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It can go back only once, but if it is possible to get it all back, it will be that much better.

Mr. Court: It is reputed that most of it is going back now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But who reputes it?

Mr. Court: I understand the on-course bookmakers consider they are getting the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are only getting some of it.

Mr. Court: Have you any idea what proportion of it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Like the hon. member, I can only guess. But I am sure there would be a lot more if the facilities were made available. I suggest to the hon. member that that must be so because if the off-course bookmakers were already getting back to the course all the money they wanted to get back, they would not be anxious to obtain these facilities.

Mr. Court: How do you suggest that it be got back to the course?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the same way as it was a few months ago; they will be given telephonic communication with the courses and the moment the money is lodged, they can telephone an accredited person on the course, who is known to the club, and he will supervise operations and will ensure that the money goes straight on. That would mean there would be no possibility of a successful off-course commission.

I am sure that if that were done, owners and trainers would soon get sick of placing their money with the off-course bookmaker and letting him use it to bet with the bookmakers on the course and get longer odds than the bookmaker subsequently has to pay them. They would very soon find that it was better to place the money with the on-course bookmaker themselves. That is what the off-course bookmakers prefer, and I am sure it is what the on-course bookmakers prefer, too. In addition, it would be to the ultimate benefit of the turf club. So if the clubs really want more money, that is the way they can get it. It will improve the racing game in many respects and will make the position generally far more satisfactory.

Mr. Wild: Do you think there should be more than one channel?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not completely familiar with what the previous facilities were. I only know that there were facilities because the deputy chairman of the club told me so. The club had no complaint about the way the facilities were being used but because some members of the committee objected to the club having anything to do with off-course bookmakers, the facilities were withdrawn. That was the only explanation given to me. There is room for a proper and satisfactory arrangement to be made which must be to the ultimate benefit of the club. It cannot be anything else in more ways than one, because I think we all

desire that as much of the wagering which has to be done should be done on the course.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Do you think it would be to the betterment of the punter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it would be to the betterment of the punter, too, but not to the punter who wanted to get longer odds by keeping secret his intention in regard to starting his horse and giving the impression that he was not backing it. It would not be to his advantage, but I do not think we should be worried about him because after all the basis of wagering on the course, and the basis of odds, is that a horse shall be quoted at the relative figure in accordance with the support being given to him for a particular race. If there is less support than is expected because of his performance, in the natural course his price will lengthen.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Nevertheless, money going on the course would depress prices generally.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the money is wagered on the course, it will depress the price of some horses and lengthen the price of others.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Whereas if it is kept off the course, the opposite is the result and the prices of horses that ought to be lengthening are shortening and the prices of horses that ought to be shortening are lengthening. So we get a situation which is not a true one and which is most misleading.

Mr. Court: Most of the figures used during your speech have been based on Tasmanian and South Australian experience. Have any official figures been submitted to you or your Government by the starting-price bookmakers here setting out their experiences?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have available to us the same figures as have been available to the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Country Party and the member for Nedlands. We have had no more and no less.

Mr. Court: Those figures are not confidential.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course they are not! Who said they were?

Mr. Court: I was just thinking of the attitude of the Government in not disclosing certain information sought by the member for Mt. Marshall.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Nedlands is being finicky. This has no relation whatever to the questions asked by the member for Mt. Marshall.

Mr. Court: It has.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: None whatever; because where the bookmakers' taxation returns were made available to

us, it was of their own volition and, after all, it was their business. But the member for Mt. Marshall asked the Government to disclose figures which if given must result in the average person being able to say that the turnover of such and such a bookmaker is so much. Is it reasonable and correct that the Government ought to put anybody in the position of being able to get the information in that way?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But he would be giving average figures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Of course he would.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member does not know the first thing about the matter because it so happens that in certain of those categories there is only one bookmaker, and it would not be an average at all.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did not the hon. member ask for the figure above £300,000?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He asked for figures and the questions could not be answered with an average because in various categories there is only one bookmaker concerned.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Today he asked for the total.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not intend to take up the time of the House much longer; but I say to members who have ideas in their heads about what percentage can be imposed, and who have gained ideas from the Press and from a superficial consideration of the subject, that they owe it to themselves, if to nobody else, to get a basis in front of them upon which they can arrive at a conclusion.

This business does not allow for guesswork. The member for Nedlands surprises me in his attitude to this question, because he is an accountant and accountants do not guess. They would not write a report on guesswork; they would want the information in front of them; and if it was not produced, they would say in their reports that it had not been given to them. They would make no assumptions about that information; but on this question the member for Nedlands is prepared to come to conclusions and make assumptions without even a fraction of the data in front of him, which he ought to have.

Mr. Court: I have not yet spoken.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has spoken plenty by way of interjection.

Mr. Wild: Before the Minister sits down, would he not agree that if there are facilities to channel this hot money—as the Treasurer referred to it—back to the

course it is definitely to the advantage of the s.p. man because he has to pay only at s.p. rates whereas—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have already mentioned that aspect. It will be to his advantage for only a week or two because the owners would see that happening and would know that it was their money that was getting back. They would not try it a second time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [7.30]: One must be impressed with the amount of study which the Minister for Works has given to this particular subject. I only regret that his energy has not been devoted to a more worth-while subject. We have been accustomed to hearing the Minister going to a great deal of detail on some matters that have been discussed in this House, but I cannot remember any speech he has made in which he went to more detail than in speaking to the betting tax Bill.

Some of us were entirely opposed to this legislation when it was first introduced. We are not very surprised that it has not worked out exactly as those who supported the legislation expected. However, this legislation is with us. Some of us who opposed the legislation when it was introduced recognised that once a law is passed and by so doing revenue for the Government and other public bodies in the community is produced, it is very hard to get rid of it.

Then again, some of the interjections made during the course of the debate, as well as some of the speeches, indicate, in my opinion, a rather distorted sense of values. The member for Subiaco stated that the way in which the betting situation was handled in Western Australia indicated that this State was more progressive than any other in the Commonwealth. Surely that infers a very queer method of judging progress in any community.

In the course of the debate it became very evident from the speeches of those supporting the Bill and those opposed to it that the racing and trotting clubs in this State have been adversely affected. The clubs themselves are partly to blame. I would have expected that the racing and trotting clubs would have recognised that the legislation, when it was being introduced, would be extremely injurious to them. One would have expected much greater opposition on their part, and stronger support for those who opposed the legislation than has been apparent. I have the feeling that some of the committeemen of those organisations thought easy money would be derived for the trotting and racing clubs as a result of this measure.

There can be no question that the racing and trotting clubs at present are facing a very difficult situation, more serious than any they have faced within my memory. Some of those who opposed the legislation did not see anything wrong with racing and trotting as a sport. In my view, if a person went to the race-course or the trotting-course to take an interest in the sport and to avail himself of the occasion for relaxation, there was nothing wrong. However, I consider that the setting up of betting shops in the city and suburbs is developing into a growing evil in the social life of this community.

The figures issued indicate there has been a considerable increase in the patronage of betting shops. How great is that increase is hard to judge, without figures to make a comparison with the previous position. I recognise in view of some of the arguments which have been put forward by those in support of this legislation, that it is dangerous to be dogmatic. We all recognise there has been some increase in betting.

Mr. Rodoreda: How do you know that?

Mr. PERKINS: Since the legislation was passed, figures have been supplied by the Betting Control Board. The point I make is this: Whereas the Treasurer and the Minister for Works, together with other speakers from the Government side, have stated that this is the only practical amendment to the existing legislation to put the racing and trotting clubs on to a reasonable footing, I believe that if one were to take notice of the way in which this business is handled in the other States, one would realise that there are other alternatives.

For instance, in South Australia betting shops are legalised in two or three country centres, and there is only a very limited number operating. I suggest that one way to put the racing and trotting clubs into a reasonable position is to do away with betting shops entirely in the metropolitan area, and make the way easier for the patrons of the sport to go to the courses.

The Treasurer: You seem to be on the wrong Bill.

Mr. PERKINS: This is a taxing measure. Before we agree to any taxing measure in this House, I take it we are entitled to discuss the principles underlined therein. In my opinion, it was right and proper for me to discuss this aspect during the debate on the Bill. I have very little hope that the Government will follow the course that I have suggested. I would point out to those who are supporting this legislation that the course outlined is not the only possible one to take. Another course, which probably would be very much more acceptable to the racing and trotting clubs, is preferable; that is, to close the betting shops in the metropolitan area at

some hour before racing commences so as to encourage those who want to bet to go to the courses.

I understand that in Tasmania the betting shops within 50 miles of the race-course are closed at midday or at some hour previous to the start of the race meeting. The position is that patrons of racing and trotting, who live within a reasonable distance of metropolitan courses, will be encouraged to go to the courses rather than to hang around the city and bet at the shops. In my opinion, that would be much more preferable because it would minimise what some of us would regard as the growing evil of the betting shops, a problem which will cause us more worry as time goes on.

To anyone who has only a passing interest in this matter, it is noticeable that there is an increasing number of people hanging about the betting shops. For some strange reason the Betting Control Board has licensed premises in nearly all cases in close proximity to hotels. This is somewhat at variance with what we were led to expect during the debate on this legislation when it was first introduced—that the evil of betting shops being established close to hotels would be controlled by ensuring that licensed betting shops were located at some considerable distance from hotels.

The Minister for Transport: That only goes to show there was no political interference and the board made its own decisions.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister perhaps can draw that inference from the result of where the betting shops have been licensed. But the fact remains that the Betting Control Board apparently entirely ignored—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would remind the hon. member that this is a tax Bill, and I think he should apply himself to a discussion of the incidence of taxation. He is dealing with the general principle of betting, and if he desires to discuss that, he will have an opportunity to do so at the third reading stage of the other Bill. I suggest that at this stage he confine himself to discussing the taxing measure.

Mr. PERKINS: My only method of raising these principles is to oppose the imposition of the tax at all; and, of course, that automatically raises the whole question of whether it is feasible for this legislation to continue to operate without some major alteration in the whole set-up. However, I have little more to say on this particular question. I really desire to deal with the more general question, and to point out that none of us can dispute the point that the racing and trotting clubs are facing a very difficult financial position. But this method of tinkering with the tax is only one way in which the position could have been approached.

I realise that even if the Government makes some more general approach to the question, and perhaps follows the suggestion I have made that betting shops should be closed early in the day to encourage patrons to go to the course, probably some alteration of the betting tax is justified. I have not made a sufficient study of the question to say what such alteration should be, but it must be perfectly obvious that if the betting shops were closed earlier in the day and patrons were encouraged to go to the course, and attendances there were very much higher than they have been in recent months, the financial position of the racing and trotting clubs would be altered very considerably; and that, of course, in turn would alter the need for the changing of the rates of tax on book-makers on the course as compared with those operating in the shops.

In my opinion the whole question will become more difficult and complex, and I forecast that this is not the last time that we will have Bills before the House dealing with the matter of the betting tax. These measures are only tinkering with the problem; and if they do not work out as well as the Government hopes, and the racing and trotting clubs continue to deteriorate in their ability to keep the sport on a decent basis, we will find additional evils creeping in, and I have no doubt that further discussion will have to take place here on some other measure.

However, I feel that a case has been made for some alteration of the betting tax; and while the Government is no doubt, by this measure, improving the position for the clubs to a degree, those in control of these bodies will still feel very dissatisfied with the position. I think all members have had correspondence from the committees of those bodies. Some of us have had discussions with individual members of the committees; and we cannot help feeling that even if this legislation goes through in this form, the problem will not be solved by any means so far as the racing and trotting clubs are concerned.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [7.50]: I find the present position somewhat amazing. For several weeks we have had legitimate industries slam-banged from one end of the House to the other.

The Minister for Transport: Wrong again!

The Treasurer: Illegitimate!

Mr. COURT: Now we have the spectacle of the same Government and the same people introducing a measure dealing with a business I would class as illegitimate, and almost apologetic that there has to be some further tax. We on this side have been chided with having no knowledge of the subject—

The Minister for Transport: Hear, hear!

Mr. COURT:—and no understanding of the trials and tribulations of being an s.p. bookmaker. Maybe that is so; and it is to our credit if we have not a very intimate knowledge of the problems than confront those gentlemen. I have very vivid recollections of the member for Leederville on one occasion referring to doctors and lawyers as parasites who lived on the misfortunes of the community. If he would class doctors and lawyers in that category, I do not know in what category he would place s.p. bookmakers.

Mr. Jamieson: You don't have to go to s.p. bookmakers.

Mr. COURT: Apparently the hon. member shares the views of the member for Leederville. The original measure was introduced in 1954, and it is generally known that I opposed the legalising of s.p. bookmakers. I had very strong views on the subject. I felt—as I do today—that this group of privileged people will become an ever-increasing force in this community; that they will, through pressure, increase their influence on Governments and on people in this community.

Mr. Moir: They will become almost like those St. George's Terrace people.

Mr. COURT: I would not like to think that the member for Boulder was going to slam-bang legitimate industry and almost apologise for the imposition of a tax on s.p. bookmakers.

The Minister for Police: Legitimate industry in the newspapers give the business a big impetus.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr. COURT: It may be argued that if one is opposed to the legalising of s.p. bookmakers, it follows that one must automatically be opposed to an increase in the tax on them.

Mr. Moir: You were talking about influence.

Mr. COURT: Superficially I suppose that sounds as though it has some logic: that if one is opposed to a thing, one should be opposed to taxing it. But the fact remains that there is nothing that we on this side can do about the legalising of these shops, and the obvious course is to tax the operators so that they pay their full share to the community, if we have to tolerate them.

I cannot speak with the obvious knowledge of the subject possessed by the Minister for Works. He does make something of a study of this matter, and on previous occasions has been to some pains to explain the various ramifications of the betting game. It would be silly of me to try to make a speech counter to him based on the technicalities—if that is what one can call them—of betting, because I am a mere babe in the wood when it comes to the technicalities of this subject.

However, I want to rely on some information. I am sorry the Minister is not present to hear, because I think it gives full credence to the claim of some of us that the bookmakers can stand more tax. I do not think for one minute that they would be out of business and surrendering their licences. I look firstly to the South Australian situation, because the Minister for Works has laid great stress on the experience in South Australia and Tasmania.

He quoted the 1954 figures and, I think, the 1956 figures. If I remember correctly, he did not quote the 1955 figures for South Australia. However, that is comparatively unimportant to the point I want to make. He stressed that in his view betting was more or less the same from one end of the world to the other: that people bet, the bookmakers won, and the margin left was not great.

I consider that there are three separate situations. We have the situation in Tasmania and that in South Australia, and we have another situation in Western Australia. Here the s.p. operators are in a different position altogether. They operate throughout the whole of the racing day. They do not have to shut down as do the operators in Tasmania, and they do not officially share the hazards of the course, they operate as s.p. bookmakers.

In South Australia the incidence of s.p. bookmaking is comparatively small, because only one centre has survived the onslaught on s.p. bookmaking and has legalised shops. If we are to accept the proposition that experience for the same conditions in each State would be the same, I submit that the Minister for Works has fully substantiated the viewpoint of those on this side of the House; because, if we isolate the s.p. operators of South Australia, we find that their experience is very interesting.

Their gross profit on local racing in 1954—as disclosed by the official figures that were part of the report used by the Minister—from their premises operations was 5.06 per cent., and their interstate racing 11.2 gross, and the total overall premises betting 7.7. If we take the 1955 figures—I would read those for 1956 if they were available, but I believe the only copy is possessed by the Minister for Works—we find that the experience is as follows: The s.p. shops had a percentage on local racing of 7 per cent. gross. On interstate racing—and this is rather interesting because it is tied to a figure I want to quote in a few moments—it was 15.14 per cent. gross. If we average the two, we have 10.39 per cent. gross.

So far as I know, those operators do not field at the course as well as operate their shops, and it is rather interesting to note that for their premises operations confined to this area, they show such a considerably higher gross profit percentage than the rest of the South Australian

experience. That is consistent with the observations made by the Minister, because he demonstrated that the hazards of being an on-course bookmaker were different from those and, in fact, greater than those of being an s.p. operator. But does it not follow that if we transplant the off-course operation experience of South Australia to Western Australia, we might get something of a comparable figure?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Didn't the Minister suggest the same thing should apply here?

Mr. COURT: He did not quite say that. He said that in his view the betting experience would be the same in all parts of the world—that it took a fairly definite pattern. Where I differ from him is that I think it is necessary to relate comparable circumstances; and here we have in Western Australia a situation which is fairly akin, I would say, with the off-course operations of South Australia except that ours extend over the whole State and they have a very wide field both for local races and for interstate races.

My next reason for suggesting that the gross margin in this State for s.p. operators is higher than we are led to believe is the question of tote odds. The Minister was inclined to ridicule that and say it has no bearing but out of the tote odds the Government takes $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. before any calculations are made and the remaining 6 per cent. is divided between the clubs and those who have the right of operation of the totalisator. In spite of all the movements in the betting market—and I can understand its operating very strongly against the on-course bookmaker—I cannot see that they have a completely negating effect in the case of the tote.

The next point to which I invite attention as to why I consider this margin is greater than we are led to believe is discounts. There was, as we know, a general practice of giving discounts and although I know these are brushed off as being of no consequence, they were in fairly general operation. There are many people who will testify that they took 10 per cent. off their accounts, and others who will testify that they have operated on a $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. basis, and no very convincing argument has been brought forward to demonstrate that that was not an important factor. I understand that if such a state of affairs existed today, it would be illegal and so we are entitled to assume that it no longer continues.

A further point that leads me to believe that this business is more profitable than we are given to understand is that several of these places, we are informed, have changed hands and that there has been a goodwill consideration. How that is achieved, I do not know, because one of the Ministers obtained an amendment to the original Act forbidding the passing

of good-will when licences were transferred. I believe the licences are, in fact, not transferred but that one man goes out of business and another takes over.

However, amounts mentioned for two particular shops were £1,500 in each case, which is not an inconsiderable sum for a business which is supposed to be so hazardous and which in any case has only just got going, especially in the light of the fact that it might not continue. The legislation has a definite life and it could be that Parliament in its wisdom might not re-enact the measure as it did before.

Another aspect of interest in surveying the whole subject, in the light of the lengthy arguments of the Minister for Works, is the submission on behalf of the s.p. operators themselves. This sets out what they considered to be an adverse position and after the initial submission they came to light with a further proposition for a scaling down of the percentage of tax.

This, to my mind, is too ludicrous for words. It follows in normal business that a concern with an expanding and large turnover can bear certain costs which cannot be borne by a small operator. The proposition put forward by the s.p. operators is interesting. While the Minister said that they could not stand any more than 2 per cent., they put forward a proposition saying that the small boys could stand 3 per cent. and that it should be downgraded to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the higher bracket. I find that hard to swallow.

After all, under the present method proposed or foreshadowed by the Treasurer, in addition to the tax there will be licence fees for the premises, fixed on a flat scale for the metropolitan area. Every metropolitan operator will pay £100 and every country operator £50. That, to my mind, gives the big operator an advantage over the small man, because he is not subject to a graduated tax upwards, according to his volume of business, and for these people to suggest that not only should they be on a fixed fee of £100 for a licence in the metropolitan area and £50 in the country, but on a downward scale of a percentage tax is to me ludicrous.

The Treasurer: The Bill does not provide for that.

Mr. COURT: No, but the Minister for Works, made great play of the fact that he thought 2 per cent. was the maximum tax these people could stand and it is interesting that they are prepared to say that some of their people can pay 3 per cent. but that the big ones can pay only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The Treasurer: It is a case of big business always being prepared to swallow smaller businesses.

Mr. COURT: That is rather a pertinent observation and the Treasurer has brought me a little early to my point; that normally he would follow the practice of taxing the big ones heaviest, on the basis that they could best afford to pay, but on this occasion he has not sought to extract more out of those in the higher brackets. If we were considering this tax tonight in the light of a rigorous investigation conducted by a person with all the original powers proposed in the profiteering prevention legislation—the power to search without warrant and to conduct inquiries in any manner thought fit—and had before us figures upon which to examine the situation, we could be more tolerant in outlook.

But we have to take figures submitted by a firm of accountants on behalf of the s.p. bookmakers. I do not doubt the arithmetical accuracy of the figures or suggest that the accountant did not painstakingly and accurately collate the figures given to him, but we still have a grave reservation in respect of the figures given to him to collate and it would be difficult for anyone to satisfy himself that the figures given to him were, in fact, the ones we were seeking.

I am rather intrigued at the figures given to the House so that we could assess the incidence of the tax in the various categories. The member for Mt. Marshall asked for some figures and, on the grounds of secrecy of information, the Premier refrained from giving figures beyond certain limits. We will not quarrel with that, but one is entitled to indulge in a little conjecture about these figures because one of these gentlemen, in speaking to the "Sydney Morning Herald," as published in that paper on the 29th May, said that his business had a turnover of from £15,000 to £20,000 per week.

He said, "There is nothing secret about it. All goes in to the Government in returns." Of course if we multiply his figures by 52, we immediately arrive at a figure of over £750,000 as a low and over £1,000,000 as a high, per annum. It is also interesting to note that in quoting figures today the Minister for Works gave the telephone costs of one operator at £2,000, or .2 per cent. of his turnover. By simple arithmetic, unless my figures are wrong, that brings him into the £1,000,000 class straight away.

What figures are we to accept? Are we to accept those given to the Press by one of these operators, or was that just a boastful moment, or does it mean that his returns are not accurate and complete? It is interesting to relate to that the telephone figure given by the Minister as £2,000.

The Minister for Transport: I think he said it was in excess of £2,000.

Mr. COURT: He might have done that; I would not remember in detail. I thought he said that £2,000 was .2 per cent.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It would make it bigger if it was in excess of £2,000.

The Minister for Transport: Anyhow, £2,000 was not an accurate figure.

Mr. COURT: Whether it is under or over, if it is .2 per cent. it is so close to £1,000,000 per annum that it does not matter.

The Minister for Transport: It would still be a long way off the actual figure.

Mr. COURT: I do not know what the Minister implies. Does he imply that the official figures quoted are the correct ones? I trust that the Government will make a rigorous search in connection with this because a man cannot go around boasting in this manner without paying the tax for it.

The Minister for Transport: Obviously, the Betting Control Board knows every penny of bets that passes through each bookmaker.

Mr. COURT: We hope so.

Mr. Heal: It does.

Mr. COURT: How does the hon. member know?

Mr. Heal: I have taken the trouble to go down and find out. Have you?

Mr. COURT: The Betting Control Board has only the information given to it. It hopes that every telephone bet is recorded and it probably makes tests to find out that they are, but we cannot say without qualification that every bet is recorded.

Mr. Heal: Do you record everything?

Mr. COURT: I try to. In conclusion I want to say—

The Minister for Transport: Before you go on, are you still in favour of the 5 per cent. turnover tax advocated by your leader in his last policy speech?

Mr. COURT: I was just coming to that point. Based on all the information we have; based on the South Australian experience; based on the statements of the s.p. bookmakers themselves, and based on the peculiar privileges that the s.p. bookmakers enjoy in this State, it is my considered opinion that a tax on a graduated scale could be borne by the s.p. operators, at a higher rate than that proposed by the Government in this measure.

At the last election the Liberal Party suggested that the tax could be 5 per cent. I would not make so bold tonight as to say that that figure could be completely substantiated. In my opinion, based on the information given to me during the 1954 debate, I would say it could be, because one of the most prominent operators in this State told me, when he was opposed to the Bill in its original form and was lobbying us to oppose it—which is rather humorous today—that no bookmaker worthy of his salt made less than

15 per cent. gross. It is rather interesting that the Eastern States figure, as disclosed in the 1955 South Australian Betting Board report, is 15 per cent.

Surely we are entitled to accept his word, given at that time, and give some credence to it, if he wants us to accept his word today. For that reason, the 5 per cent. would not be unreasonable. However, I feel that whilst I would not make so bold as to say it should be 5 per cent. at the moment, I do suggest that a graduated scale should be imposed starting at 2 per cent. for the lower bracket of bookmakers and graduated to a maximum of 3 per cent., for the time being and subject to review next year, in the higher bracket of bookmakers.

The Minister for Transport: We tried that one and it showed that certain bookmakers would finish with a negative quantity.

Mr. COURT: Based on certain information, but I do not think the Minister would be thoroughly happy that he had the full position in front of him; and it does not line up with the South Australian experience.

We on this side are very concerned at the incidence of Eastern States betting. If the A.B.C. did conform to the Government's request for the interstate broadcasts of racing, we can see it being calamitous, and a greater emphasis going on the s.p. betting of Eastern States races with further detriment to true racing in this State. For reasons stated I feel the tax should be heavier, starting at 2 per cent. in the lower rung and being graduated up till it reaches 3 per cent. for the bigger operators.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [8.15]: This is a taxing measure and at the outset I would like to say that we on this side of the House, at least those of us who are on the back benches, are at a disadvantage in that we have not yet had any indication of what is in the Budget, and consequently we do not know just what the need is for the State revenue for the next 12 months. Various taxing measures, such as this one, have been introduced. We have had one which will mean reduced revenue for the Government, and consequently we cannot view this particular proposal in relation to other proposals that the Government might wish to take in connection with State finance.

However, it has been quite obvious from various statements made and answers given to questions, and so on, that the Government does appear to be in dire stress financially, and it has either increased charges or is contemplating increased charges in all sorts of directions. This leads one to wonder why it is that the proposals relating to off-course betting are so relatively low. Apparently it has been necessary to put up hospital charges as

a matter of necessity, and that is something that affects a great many people, particularly the more unfortunate members of the community. When considering that, one finds it hard to believe that a particular section of the community such as off-course bookmakers should be so relatively leniently treated.

I am informed that the total proposals of the Government, as far as tax and licensing are concerned, will mean that very close to half of the s.p. bookmakers will pay nothing extra, because I understand that 97 out of a total of 210 will pay very little, if anything, additional at all. One would feel that the off-course bookmaker was one section of the community that could profitably be taxed, perhaps, to the limit without having any undesirable effects on the community generally and on the cost of living, etc. which can be associated with such increases as affect hospital charges, vehicle licences, rail freights, and even publicans—the suggestion is that the Government will get another £150,000 out of the publicans.

These charges all affect adversely the cost of living of practically everyone in the State, and one asks oneself, in view of all the circumstances, whether the Government is really getting as much as it can from the starting price bookmakers. I think they are a section that does not contribute greatly to the welfare of the community, generally, and they are not deserving of any special consideration. To me it is amazing that while the Government accepts the idea of taxing people who make profits from industries which are producing necessary goods—I do not say I object to this principle because I realise the Government must have money—the taxes that are levied on all sorts of industries are much heavier than will be the taxes—so it appears to me—on the s.p. bookmakers.

Even the sales tax is more than double the Government's proposals for the s.p. bookmakers; and I am yet to be convinced that the risks and overheads involved in s.p. bookmaking are much greater or more complex than they are in any other form of business which, in the normal way, contributes all sorts of taxation, both direct and indirect. I ask myself why the off-course bookmaker appears to be given such undue consideration. It is also not clear to me why it appears to be a fair thing to have a sliding scale of tax on turnover for the on-course bookmakers and yet, when we come to the off-course man, we have the rather amazing argument put forward that the bigger the turnover the less tax he can afford to pay. There is something screwy about it.

I do not purport to be an expert on betting, but I fail to see that the difference is so great between off-course and on-course betting that a sliding scale imposing a heavier rate on the bigger man on the course is a fair proposition, and

yet it is suggested that a flat rate should be considered for the off-course man, notwithstanding the size of his turnover. It does not seem to add up to me and it seems to be completely inconsistent with the general trend in business where the bigger the turnover the greater the profit and, generally speaking, the percentage of overhead drops in such cases. I have not yet heard it successfully argued, and I do not think anybody here who supports this proposal has attempted to explain why the larger man could not afford to pay a greater amount of tax.

Probably all members, if they really spoke their minds, would agree that there is some considerable degree of reservation regarding the figures which have been produced by these people. There seems to be a widespread opinion among members of the general public who take an interest in these matters, that a great many bets are never recorded—telephone bets, money laid off with other bookmakers, and so forth. It is suggested that those figures are never included and it does not seem to have been convincingly argued that all money that is placed with off-course bookmakers would necessarily be subject to taxation.

I would not expect them to say straight out that they did, in effect, avoid taxation in that manner; but to me it seems to be a simple method of avoiding it and nobody has suggested that it could not happen or that it would not be difficult to detect. I think members are entitled to view with a good deal of reservation the figures that have been placed before us with regard to total turnover and also the capacity of that business or industry to pay more than 2 per cent. tax on turnover. It seems to me that this is one section of the community which could very well be taxed to the reasonable limit it can stand in the interests of improving the State's revenue rather than that additional charges should be imposed on wealth-producing industries which add considerably to the economic welfare of the State.

For my person, if I were a member of a Government which brought in a measure of this nature I would have very great personal reservations about supporting a tax on this level on this particular business or industry seeing that all other charges are going up. I am well aware that an additional tax on the s.p. bookmaker will not by a long way be the complete solution to the State's economic disabilities, but I think that it is an avenue that should be fully exploited. I doubt very much whether the proposals that the Government has put forward are going to exploit the industry from the viewpoint of taxation yield to anything like the extent to which it could be exploited, or anything like the extent to which it is desirable from the State's financial viewpoint.

I do not propose to enter into a discussion of the effect of s.p. betting on course attendances, or anything like that. I am well aware that an increase in the rate of tax will also mean an increase in the amount of money that will go to the race clubs. But it will also mean an increase in the amount of money that will go to the Treasury and it is to that particular aspect I think all Government members should give serious consideration.

After all, if we are in financial difficulties—and we do not know just how bad they are yet because we have not seen the Budget, but if last year's trend of State's finances is any indication at all I think we will be completely justified, in the absence of any information, in assuming that the State's finances are in a fairly parlous condition—we should not shrink from the imposition of taxes on a particular section of the community which contributes very little by way of real wealth to the community and which obviously can be taxed to a very much greater level without having any deleterious effect as would be the case if additional taxation were imposed on other forms of industry. In that instance I refer to primary producers and manufacturers who are producing articles that can be utilised internally as well as exported.

For that reason alone I think there should be a graduated scale upwards. I would not be greatly concerned if the rate of tax was such that it made the position of the off-course bookmaker not a particularly easy one. I feel that the real indication of whether we have reached anything like saturation point in this matter is the relative incidence of illegal betting. If we tax the off-course operator too heavily, I am well aware of the fact that it will lead to an increase in the incidence of illegal off-course betting and if that happens it will mean a reduction in the tax yield, because the operators will be trying to dodge, as much as possible, the payment of tax.

We have almost reached that stage in regard to certain matters, such as railway freights and so on, but I am not convinced that the present proposals will mean that we have reached saturation point so far as the betting business is concerned. I ask the Government to have another look at this proposal in the interests of the State's economy generally, to see if it would not be possible for this sphere of activity to carry a very much heavier tax than the one proposed by this measure.

MR. WILD (Dale) [8.28]: While I intend to support this measure, I must make a few brief observations regarding the taxation it is proposed to impose because, like other speakers on this side of the House, I am not satisfied that the rates proposed are fair and equitable when one takes into consideration the many increases

in taxation that have been imposed on the people of Western Australia in the last few months.

As I mentioned the other evening, when this legislation was first introduced by the then Minister for Police, Hon. H. H. Styants, no mention was made of the incidence of taxation; the whole idea was to get rid of this canker that we had in our midst of people betting on street corners, behind trees and the like. To a large degree the Treasurer held the same views because he said as much when he supported the second reading of that measure.

But now the whole situation has taken a different turn. The finances of the State are in a parlous condition and the question of whether somebody or other can afford to pay so much has now loomed largely in the minds of members of the Government. It is along those lines that I want to speak this evening because I do not think that the taxation which the Government proposes to impose on the on-course bookmaker compared to that which is to be imposed on the off-course bookmaker is in any way equitable.

Firstly, the percentage increase for the on-course bookmaker on a turnover of over £50,000 is to be from $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Whilst that increase will affect only a small number of operators, I still hold the view that in order to attract people to the racecourses there have to be good horses, a strong ring and good amenities. I also wish to state again that the proper place for people to bet is on the racecourse. I fail to see why we should impose extra taxation on the on-course bookmaker whose turnover exceeds a certain figure when the s.p. man is not obliged to pay any increase whatsoever.

The on-course bookmaker has certain charges to meet which the off-course bookmaker has not or has them to a minor degree only. If the Government continues with its proposals, every bookmaker on the course, betting on the local races, has the privilege of paying £25 to bet on six or seven races. On the other hand, the s.p. bookmaker is to have his licence fees scaled down to £2 per week and yet he will be betting on anything up to 36 races and possibly more because he is allowed to bet in two or three places, according to the licence granted by the Betting Control Board.

Mr. Rodoreda: That is an unfair comparison.

Mr. WILD: I do not think it is. The on-course bookmaker is forced to pay £25 per day for the right to bet on six or seven races whilst the man off-course has to pay only £100 per year, but he has the privilege of being able to bet on about 36 races.

Mr. Rodoreda: But he has to pay rent and wages.

Mr. WILD: I know that, but the difference is that the bookmaker on the course is permitted to bet on only six or seven races—I admit that there may be some who will lay a few bets on races held in Sydney or Melbourne, but at least 75 per cent. of them confine their wagers to the local races. It is not fair that the percentage on turnover for the man on-course should be increased from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Why the Government does not increase the percentage on turnover of the s.p. men I do not know, especially when five off-course bookmakers have between them a turnover of £2,000,000 to £3,000,000.

What added charges would a big bookmaker have, as compared with a small operator, other than the cost of the extra employees required to handle the greater volume of business? He has certain charges that must be static. Firstly, there is his licence fee, then there is the rent of the premises, the telephone rent, and the rent for the service that he gets over the telephone. Then we come to the added charges according to turnover.

Mr. Lawrence: Did you say that the rent was static?

Mr. WILD: The rent is static because regardless of whether a bookmaker is turning over £10,000 or £20,000 a week, he still has to pay the same rent.

Mr. Lawrence: Are you saying that the small bookmaker pays the same rent as the large bookmaker?

Mr. WILD: There is no comparison between the bookmaker who is turning over £300,000 a year—such as one bookmaker who, on his own admission, has such a turnover—and is paying only a small licence fee and the man in the suburbs who has a turnover of only £1,000 a week. It does not add up.

Mr. Lawrence: He is not paying the same rental.

Mr. WILD: Another point comes to my mind. According to the Minister for Works, the s.p. bookmakers are on the bread line, but I wonder what would happen if the Betting Control Board decided to issue another licence for an s.p. betting shop somewhere near the Shenton Park Hotel? In my opinion, there would be so many applicants that one would be killed in the rush if one tried to apply. Yet if one were to believe all that the Minister has told us, one would think that these off-course operators are spending their last 10s.

It has also been publicised—and it is fairly common knowledge—that there has been at least two changes made in s.p. betting establishments in recent months and, as quoted by the member for Netherlands, these shops have changed hands for a goodwill of approximately £1,500. This would not seem to indicate that off-course bookmakers are on their last few shillings and are anxious to get out of the game.

The Minister for Education: Are you suggesting an increase to 5 per cent. on turnover?

Mr. WILD: I am not going to suggest that the percentage should be 5 per cent. or any other particular rate. However, if an on-course bookmaker is to be forced to meet an increase in percentage on turnover of from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on a turnover of £50,000 and upwards, the bookmaker who is holding big money can afford to pay more than he is obliged to under the Bill.

The Minister for Education: But the member for Nedlands said that the Liberal Party agreed to an increase up to 5 per cent. on turnover.

Mr. WILD: Whether he did or not, I agree that the big bookmaker can afford to pay more than the 2 per cent. he is being asked to pay today. Like the member for Nedlands, all I ask is that the payments be made on a graduated scale, but what the scale should be I do not know. If one could obtain the figures that were requested by the member for Mt. Marshall, we could work out what would be a fair and equitable scale. I am a great believer in the bookmaker on the course. That is where people should bet. As I have said, if we are to attract people to the racecourse there must be good horses, a strong ring and good amenities.

Mr. Lawrence: What is the difference between betting on-course and betting off-course? You are still betting.

Mr. WILD: That is a subject for another lesson. I still think that this Bill provides for an inequitable distribution of the tax imposed and whilst it is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill, I think the Government should give it more consideration. Although the Bill is directed at the man who turns over £1,000 or £1,500 a week, nothing is said about those big bookmakers who are holding £300,000 or more every week.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Do you think they make the same amount of gross profit as the man who has a smaller turnover?

Mr. WILD: The only difference that I can see is an increase in staff. I fail to see why the bookmaker who has a big turnover cannot afford to pay more.

The Treasurer: Taxation is a big factor.

Mr. WILD: Possibly he may get into the higher income tax group, but I still say the Government would do well to have another look at this particular factor I have mentioned because if it is so desperately short of money, surely this is another field from which the Government could obtain a few more thousand. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. RODOREDA (Pillara) [8.40]: I, of course, am supporting this Bill, because we private members really have no

option. But I am tremendously disappointed in the measure. I would have expected the tax to be at least 1 per cent. higher than that indicated in the provisions of the Bill. In common with other speakers, I hope the Government, and Cabinet as a whole, will have a really good look at the proposition during the ensuing twelve months to enable us, and ourselves, to obtain some really reliable information so that we will know the position as it actually exists.

We have all received this document from C. P. Bird & Associates and, without any equivocation, I would say it is one of the most extraordinary documents that has come under my notice since I have been in Parliament. How the bookmakers and C. P. Bird & Associates—though I doubt whether they are as much to blame as the Bookmaker's Association—could have the effrontery to publish a document such as this and expect us to believe it, is beyond my comprehension.

Let us have a look at some of the statements in this document J or B or whatever members would like to call it! One statement is to the effect that "The bookmakers submit, and justifiably so"—note that, justifiably so—"that any turnover tax should allow for incentive to build a business." If that does not beat the band, I would like to know what does. They suggest that the turnover tax should allow for incentive to build a business. Yet when this Act was introduced, it was an Act to control and minimise s.p. bookmakers. Now, as an inducement to liberalise their taxes, we are told they should be given incentives to build their business.

Further, the document states—

To leave the position as the Government proposes certainly does appear unfair and not in the best interests of progress in industry.

One would think they are talking about exploring for oil or running a big manufacturing concern, or some other large industry! They contend it is not in the best interests of progress in this important industry of letting people have five bob each way on something that usually runs second-last.

I would like to examine more closely the figures supplied to us by the Bookmakers' Association. For a start they group them in categories numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4, and the percentage gross profit is shown as 10 per cent. for Group 1, $10\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. for Group 2, 9 per cent. for Group 3, and 9 per cent. for Group 4. It was mentioned by a previous speaker, and it has always been the impression among people who take any interest in betting or book-making, that a bookmaker who cannot show a gross profit of 15 per cent. should not be in the business. Whether that impression is correct or not I do not know. But I do know that quite a few of the

bookmaking establishments now put their expenses down as anything from 10 to 12 per cent.

From my knowledge, therefore, I know these figures are presumably approximately correct. I would, however, like to quote the expenses mentioned. Let us take Group 4 as an example. This deals with bookmakers holding over £200,000. Let us give them £250,000 as their turnover for the year. On that they show a net percentage of about four to two per cent. But let us have a look at their expenses. Wages are given as £160 per week roughly. That may be so.

Rent is shown as £1,403, which is about £28 per week. That is a fantastic amount for some of the places involved. Then we have other expenses which amount to £100 a week. What do those expenses comprise? Would they constitute telephone rent and calls? He would have a job to spend £100 a week on telephone calls, because we must not forget that most of the telephone business is paid for by the subscriber, not by the bookmaker.

Mr. Hall: They have added the printing of their dockets.

Mr. RODOREDA: All the bookmaker does is to ring up a few calls to lay bets off; the remainder are all incoming calls. There is, of course, the cost of stationery, printing and other incidentals associated with this business, but I will never believe that these expenses would run into £100 a week; it is too fantastic, and I will not believe it.

Hon. A. F. Watts: £5,200 a year.

Mr. RODOREDA: It is incredible, and I would like a thorough investigation made into that angle of the business. It suggests that a person who holds £250,000 a year is only getting £3,400 out of it; I find that too much to believe. The question of income tax does not enter into it. Any person, whether he makes £2,000, £3,000 or £4,000 has to pay income tax. That has nothing to do with the matter which we are discussing; it is for the individual concerned to worry about. The more he makes the more tax he pays. According to this document, they do not make too much nor do they pay too much tax. To suggest that those other expenses could not be cut down by £1,000 a year—which would represent about half per cent. of tax on £200,000—simply does not cut any ice.

I would say that the Betting Control Board is responsible for some of the extras, particularly as they insist that betting shops remain open every day. There is no need whatever for the shops to be open every day. The bulk of the shops would go two or three days a week without more than three or four people entering them. They could do their business equally well on race days, and I would suggest that the Betting Control Board minimises the

labour expenses at least by allowing the bookmakers to open of their own accord on non-race days.

We have only to look at these glossy, glamorous palaces of which we are so proud—those buildings that are called s.p. shops—to see where the profit is going. There is no need for all this glamour and glitter; for all the chromium-plating and the rest of it around the shops. It all constitutes expense and overhead. I agree with the member for Dale in respect of progressive tax. It is an essential part of our taxation system that the more one's income and volume of business the greater one's tax.

As was said by one speaker during this debate, the more money an s.p. bookmaker handles, the more careless is he in looking after the expenses. The small operator holding between £800 to £1,000 a week has to be very careful of his expenses and he cannot afford to put a clerk on to save himself doing the work. If we were to increase the tax we would compel some of the big s.p. bookmakers to do some of the work themselves, instead of employing a couple of extra men to do it for them because the expense did not matter to the bookmaker.

Some of the smaller operators have been compelled to put their wages employees off after getting over the first flush of enthusiasm of obtaining licences, when they thought they were going to get money from heaven. Most of the operators employed too many clerks, but they were soon brought to earth. The big operators still employ too much labour. There is room for solid investigation into the expenses of the bookmaking industry.

Turning to another angle, it is a pity that some system cannot be devised to obtain from the s.p. punters the equivalent of racecourse admissions. The s.p. punter does all his betting for nothing; he only has to lay out money for his bets. On the other hand, the person going to the racecourse has to pay about £1 in expenses before he can even make a bet. I have given a great deal of thought to devise some scheme under which it would be possible to tap the still untapped field of s.p. punters, but I have given up the job as I considered it was well nigh impossible. The only solution in my mind was one I did not like, and that was the imposition of a winning bets tax. I would far sooner see that done than for the s.p. punter to get out of it without having to pay anything.

Mr. Lawrence: Is that the view from your own experience?

Mr. RODOREDA: If notice is given to that question, I shall answer it, and that will be as enlightening as some of the answers we receive from the Minister.

Mr. Bovell: I suggest a tax on s.p. betting tickets.

Mr. RODOREDA: How will the bets over the telephone be coped with? That is the biggest volume of s.p. betting. If anyone can work a method to satisfy all of us, he would be somebody out of the ordinary and I would have great respect for such a person. I would suggest that at present there are too many licensed s.p. bookmakers. We see them operating in all the suburbs. There are too many of them battling to get a living out of the same turnover. The result is that profits are smaller than they otherwise would be. Unfortunately, Parliament has no control over the number of s.p. bookmakers. Parliament in regard to this measure did what it has always done with contentious matters; it handed control over to a board. Parliament has no say in the number of bookmakers to be licensed or the amount of fees paid.

Mr. Lawrence: In your opinion, were there more s.p. bookmakers under the old system than under the licensing scheme?

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know. Figures are not available to make a comparison. Personally, I think there are more of them operating now.

The Minister for Transport: Not a fraction of the number previously.

Mr. Nalder: There are more bettors today.

Mr. RODOREDA: Dealing with that point, I do not know where the greater number of bettors come from. I believe the volume of betting is greater. In the old days where a punter used to make a £1 bet, nowadays the over-average bettor bets in £5. That is where the increase in volume has come from. I would say that not so many people are betting nowadays as previously. However, we do not know that for sure. We are all guessing. I have just as much right to assume there is less betting today than for some other member to assume there is more.

In the early days of the war when the s.p. shops had an open go in the city and the suburbs, there were three or four times the number of people in the shops than are found there today. One had to force his way to the counter to place a bet, but nowadays a shop with 30 customers at one time is something out of the ordinary. On the average one would not see more than 10 to 12 persons in the suburban shops. That is from my own experience. I do not know whether anybody else bears that out. I am at a loss to know how this tremendous increase in s.p. betting has taken place. I suggest that the bigger bet may be the reason.

I am glad that the Minister for Works did not keep going on much longer; otherwise I would have felt inclined to move an amendment that we subsidise the s.p. bookmakers rather than tax them. We were beginning to plead for them. We have reached the position where some s.p. bookmakers may have to go out and do some

work, and there is nothing more heart-rending than that! I could not correlate one or two statements made by the Minister with information I obtained. He stated that the gross profit from s.p. book-making would not be more than 8 per cent. I would point out that their own figures show they are making over 9 to 10 per cent. I suggest that the true profit would be a little higher than that even.

Then again, the Minister for Works also stated that in South Australia the gross profit was about 4 per cent. He was questioned on it and he maintained it was the gross. Goodness me, one cannot run a shop under 8 to 10 per cent., so the operators in South Australia were losing 6 per cent., on their turnover all the time! That does not add up. I listened with very great interest to the Minister and I praise his efforts and the great trouble he took to obtain all the information to place before this House. He put up a very good case for the Government but I was rather surprised to see him go to so much trouble to defend the Government, which is, in fact, guaranteeing the profits of the s.p. bookmakers. That is what it amounts to,

In the course of his speech the Treasurer told us the other evening that it was not the responsibility of the Government to guarantee the profits of the racing clubs, but apparently when we deal with the s.p. bookmakers, it is the province of the Government to see that they are not highly taxed to give them a chance to make profits. Had it been left to me I would have made the tax 4 per cent. or at least 3½ per cent. and then we would have found out in 12 months how many s.p. bookmakers would turn their licences in. That is the only way to find out, so let us try it. A suggestion has been made that if we did that it would drive them underground, but this will not hold water as we now have better legislation with which to deal with the under-the-lap bookmaker.

It is different from the days when we had to charge them with obstructing the traffic, and there would be enough bookmakers in the business to thoroughly police it themselves. I am sorry the Government has let them off so lightly because they will all be there in 12 months. They are delighted with this legislation; there is no question about it. It is a pity we did not give them something to think about and make them get cracking to run their businesses efficiently and also see that these businesses are not expanded but minimised. If we can cut down these shops in numbers, we can do a bit towards minimising s.p. betting.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [9.2]: Having made a small contribution to the complementary legislation associated with this Bill, I would like to make a pass on this one before it slides on to the statute book. Like other speakers, I find myself nonplussed at the arguments adduced

here, both for and against any increase in the turnover tax. The Minister for Works in effect said—and in his case what he lacked in logic, he made up in emphasis—that bookmakers were scraping the bottom of the barrel to get by and could not pay a higher tax.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Whose barrel?

Mr. CORNELL: Probably the punters, although they do not admit to making fortunes. In turn the race and trotting clubs say they are whittling away and will eventually fade out—so what is the true story? On the figures the Minister for Works gave us one can expect a series of mass suicides on the part of s.p. operators, but statistics show that the mortality rate in this class is no greater than the rest of the public. As previously indicated, I favour the bookmaker with large holdings paying more tax, and I am glad to see that the member for Pilbara concurs in that proposition. However, the Government is sold on the story put up by the off-course bookmaker and has indicated it is unable to go any further in that connection.

I submit to the Treasurer that a full-scale inquiry should be held into the two aspects of this case; namely, the necessity or ability of bookmakers to pay more or less tax, or the need, or otherwise, for clubs to receive more assistance to enable them to carry on and keep racing at a reasonable standard of efficiency. The Treasurer has refused to answer my questions in regard to some holdings of the top grade s.p. bookmakers, and, as I have already indicated, I am withdrawing from the unequal contest.

However, in this regard—and the member for Nedlands stole my thunder—by doing some research in an Eastern States paper, I came across the identical reference to the tallest s.p. poppy in this State who was incidentally described as being the “Mr. Big” of W.A. s.p. betting. He is said to have informed the newspaper’s special reporter that his turnover was from £15,000 to £20,000 per week. According to the replies given by the Treasurer, no bookmaker in this State holds in excess of £750,000, so there is some discrepancy between those two sets of figures. I do not propose to be a spoilsport and spoil a good story for a quarter of a million pounds.

Reference has been made by “The West Australian” to what is described as a very elusive document which was circulated by the premises bookmakers. We get more terms the further we go. We know the fraternity as s.p. operators, off-course bookmakers, s.p. merchants, shop bookies, and now they describe themselves as premises bookmakers. However, “a rose by any other name . . .” I had not previously realised until I read this case, just what a very exalted person in the community the s.p. bookmaker is, and, if I may be permitted

to say so, if ever they adopt a coat of arms, I suggest emplaced thereon should be the figure of Narcissus. Members may not know but when this legislation was being talked about, a deputation from these premises bookmakers met the Leader of the Opposition. I was not privileged to be at the deputation but I understand the member for Greenough was there.

It must have been a rather interesting one particularly in view of the propaganda which was poured forth by the s.p. bookmakers against the Treasurer and his party at election time. I do not know whether the question of shaking hands with a cobra was mentioned. I think it would be like looking into a nest of snakes. I think if television had been with us, it would have been a most entertaining show.

The Treasurer: It should have been broadcast.

Mr. CORNELL: However, to bolster up the case of the s.p. bookmakers, the deputation contained an ex schoolteacher who is known to members of the Chamber. His part I understand was to prove that there were morals in betting, and he was there to state the case of the moral aspect of betting. I do not know what sort of case he put forward or who prepared his brief as it is not on record, but no doubt to bolster that case he quoted a well known chorus from “The Belle of New York.” It is as follows:—

Our virtues continue to strike us
As qualities magnificent to see.
Of course you can never be like us
But be as like us as you are able to be.

The SPEAKER: I hope the member is coming back to the taxation Bill now.

Mr. CORNELL: I am glad you put me back on the right track, Mr. Speaker, but I thank you for your indulgence. As often happens in this Chamber we have to swallow the whole pie to get one plum and as there is no purpose in my opposing this measure in full I give it my support with reservations.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [9.9]: I do not intend to occupy the time of the House for very long because I must say I deplore the fact that Parliament has to waste so much time on the matter of betting, which should be outside its jurisdiction. Any measures such as this should be acceptable to all members and passed if necessary, in as little time as possible.

When it introduced a measure dealing with this problem two years ago, the Government endeavoured to stamp out the sore of illegal betting. All I can say is that, in my opinion, the Government, by the legislation it then introduced, created one of the most dangerous monopolies ever brought about in this State. I opposed the Bill then and I am not very happy to see Parliament wasting its time

on measures such as this when it is faced with many difficulties, financial and otherwise.

The original measure was introduced, not as tax-raising legislation but, as I say, to legalise a sore which, in the opinion of the Government was apparent in the community then. Now we see the Government using this legislation to raise further taxes. In doing so, it is inclined to overlook the fact that the sport of racing and trotting has been made available to the public for many years by the established clubs. I have no objection to the Government endeavouring to raise funds in this way. As a matter of fact, I think it is preferable to many of the other measures which the Government has introduced for tax raising since it was returned to office in April of this year.

We have the position that increases have already been made in water rates, hospital fees, harbour dues and land valuations. The last item means that the land tax will be a considerably increased revenue producer for the Government. In the legislation before us, we have increased charges to be discussed in the matter of liquor sales.

The Treasurer: Do not talk about this Bill!

Mr. BOVELL: This all has to do with taxing. Increased rail fares and freights have been foreshadowed by the Treasurer; and he has even foreshadowed the possibility of a tax on improved agricultural land. I feel that all these measures could well be overlooked as tax-raising legislation, and we could allow the one that we are now dealing with to furnish some of the money so urgently needed by the Government.

If the Treasurer is going to increase charges and taxes on the community, which will cause a continuation of the inflationary spiral, there is no option for us but to support the measure before the House. I repeat, however, that I feel Parliament's time should not be occupied for so long on measures of this nature. We have been discussing both these Bills for some considerable time now, and I feel it is a reflection on our parliamentary system that our time has to be devoted to such measures when there are more important matters on the notice paper.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [9.14]: Mr. Speaker—

The Minister for Transport: Another time waster!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I support the Bill. I am happy that additional tax is being levied on bookmakers, but I would more gladly support a Bill which provided for a graduated scale so that the big boys in the s.p. business could be taxed according to the huge amounts they make.

Although they probably already know, I point out to members, that it is not within the province of the Opposition to move for an increase, so I am led to believe. If it were within our province to do that, we would seek to add to the 2 per cent. which is before us. It was refreshing to hear the comments of the member for Pilbara. Besides being a refreshing speech, it was a courageous one because by so speaking the hon. member seemed to be bucking his party. I trust that he will not be pilloried in the future.

The Minister for Transport: This has never been a party Bill.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It has not?
The Minister for Transport: Never!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: There has been a definite one-way approach to it, as far as the Minister's party is concerned.

The Minister for Transport: You have tried to be obstructive, but unsuccessfully.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I noticed that when the member for Pilbara was speaking, the faces of the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport gradually lengthened as his gallant speech developed.

The Minister for Transport: Not mine.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: At first there were a few wry smiles, but later there were very glum looks. I feel that what the member for Pilbara said has a great deal of sense behind it.

The Minister for Transport: I think you are a bit unfair to me. I have never been to a race meeting in my life, so do not know the first thing about it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am only commenting on the way the Minister's usually happy face changed.

The Minister for Transport: Where does that appear in the Bill?

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the member for Cottesloe should address himself to the Bill and not discuss the member for Pilbara.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, although the subject of the Minister for Transport's face is quite an attractive one. However, I would like to say that I fall into line with those who feel that there should be a graduated scale and that the flat rate of 2 per cent. is not in accordance with what the tax should be on s.p. business. I am certain that the figures supplied, by circular letter, to the House have been especially framed in order that we can only construe the picture in the sense that the big s.p. merchant cannot make a go of it if he is taxed beyond 2 per cent.

Mention was made by a member previously that he was a babe in the wood with respect to certain technicalities regarding betting. I would say there are some babes on the Government side when

they accept the proposition that the big s.p. merchant who has a turnover of over £300,000 annually, cannot pay more than 2 per cent.; that he is scraping the barrel to pay that amount. I am happy to say that the member for Pilbara feels the same as I do in this regard.

I hope that even at this late stage the Government will see the error of its ways and will formulate a graduated scale of tax. As has been pointed out, it would not be very difficult to do. The information is readily available to the Government and a graduated scale of tax, rising to, say, 3½ per cent. in the upper bracket would not impose many hardships upon those big s.p. merchants. I support the Bill purely because, as the member for Mt. Marshall said, we have no other course open to us, but I would prefer to see a graduated scale.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [9.20]: If this Bill could be described as a dress, I would say that more embroidery has been put on it than on any other dress I have ever known. In fact, some of the speeches made almost convinced me that this was a measure to reduce the existing rate of turnover tax. I became so doubtful about the issue, at one stage, that I looked up my original notes and also had a careful look again at the Bill itself.

Hon. D. Brand: Was that after the Minister for Works finished?

The TREASURER: This is a Bill to increase the turnover tax. I think it is necessary for me to remind members of the increases in the ruling rate of tax which will take place if the measure becomes law. The present rate of turnover tax is a flat rate of 1½ per cent. which applies equally to on-course bookmakers and those who operate away from the courses. The Bill proposes to leave the present 1½ per cent. rate operating in relation to on-course bookmakers whose total turnover in any year does not exceed £50,000.

Where the on-course turnover of an individual bookmaker does exceed that figure, he will pay an increase of ¼ per cent. above the ruling rate; in other words, instead of paying 1½ per cent. he will pay 1¾ per cent. on that portion of his total turnover which exceeds £50,000 in any one year. The flat rate of 1½ per cent. which now applies to off-course bookmakers, will be increased to a flat rate of 2 per cent. The total increase in the turnover tax per year under this Bill, as compared with the existing law and the actual operations of the year which ended the 31st August last, will be £133,000, which I submit is an increase of some significance.

It is true that there has to be allowed against that total increase, an amount of £53,000 per annum which will represent the reduced amount of licence fees paid by off-course bookmakers, if the conclusion

arrived at by the Government previously in connection with licence fees does become an established fact. However, as I said in this House last week, when dealing with the subject of licence fees, the Government will have another look at that particular issue. It could very well be that as a result of further examination of that issue of licence fees, we will finally agree not to reduce them to the extent suggested. That might easily apply to those off-course bookmakers who have the larger turnovers, particularly in the metropolitan area.

One member suggested that in the event of this Bill becoming law, the on-course bookmakers would be disadvantaged as compared with off-course bookmakers, but that will not be so, on the basis of a comparison with the existing situation. As I have said, the Bill proposes to leave on-course bookmakers, whose total yearly turnover does not exceed £50,000, with the same rate of taxation as they now pay—1½ per cent. Even where the turnover exceeds £50,000 per annum on the course, the increase is only ¼ per cent., whereas the increase to be applied to all off-course bookmakers is ½ per cent.

Mr. Court: The Minister for Works conceded that on-course bookmakers could not stand as much taxation as off-course bookmakers.

The TREASURER: I am not concerned as to whether on-course bookmakers or off-course bookmakers could stand more taxation, but I am arguing that under the proposed new law, as demonstrated in this Bill, the on-course bookmakers will be in a better position, compared with the off-course bookmakers, than they are under the existing flat rate of 1½ per cent. on total turnovers.

The Government made that decision deliberately. I think I explained when introducing the Bill—either this or the other measure—that we consider on-course bookmakers make some contribution to the actual staging or running of race and trotting meetings. They are, in fact, an actual part of the whole set-up and, consequently, in the shaping of this Bill and deciding the new rates of turnover tax to be applied, we decided to give on-course bookmakers favourable consideration, as compared with the new rate of tax to be applied to off-course operators.

There was at least one remark made by the member for Vasse with which I entirely agree—I have always agreed with the view expressed, which was that Parliament spends far too much time in discussing betting issues, just as we spend far too much time in debating booze issues. Strangely enough, there seems to be something in the make-up of each of us which causes everyone to be an expert on these two subjects, either for or against, according to one's particular point of view of prejudices.

Hon. D. Brand: I suppose it is only natural, as betting and booze rank among our greatest social problems.

The TREASURER: I very much doubt whether they do rank among our great social problems. I think we sometimes get confused in our thinking on those subjects. Quite frankly, I regard booze as a far greater social menace in the community than betting. I would suggest to anyone who does not agree with that point of view that he go to the Child Welfare Department and examine the files there. Having done so, I think he would come away convinced that booze is many times more destructive of family life and social welfare than is betting, despite the fact that "The West Australian" is a great advocate and a great protector of the booze industry and yet, at the same time, is a great opponent, a vicious opponent indeed, of anything associated with s.p. bookmakers.

Mr. Court: On what do you base that assumption?

The SPEAKER: Is the Treasurer coming back to the tax bill?

The TREASURER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I was going to say that I suppose the attitude which people take in connection with these two issues is one which can be influenced by many factors. For instance, the betting act prohibits bookmakers from advertising, and I suppose that is an important consideration in how they might be treated by some people.

Mr. Court: You are referring to the Press.

The TREASURER: Yes, of course; but I could not say so because the Speaker would probably say that I was coming back to the tax Bill too slowly. Now I am back to the tax Bill.

Mr. Court: Before you get back to the tax Bill, I think that what you said was rather unfair.

Mr. Heal: But quite true.

The TREASURER: This is not a Bill to reduce the tax on s.p. bookmakers; it is a measure which will considerably increase the tax rate on off-course bookmakers. The rate of increase is 60 per cent., which is fairly substantial.

Mr. Court: From which you have to deduct the proposed reduction in charges.

The TREASURER: As I said a few moments ago—and I am sure the member for Nedlands heard me—the Government intends to have another look at the question of licence fees.

Mr. Court: Over 100 bookmakers would not be affected in the net result.

The TREASURER: Some of the smaller ones would not be, but all of the bigger ones most certainly would be affected and

would, under these proposals, have to pay considerably more on the same volume of turnover than they paid during the previous 12 months. I know as we all know, that we are keen to see the other bloke socked in regard to taxation, but none of us likes to pay more individually. When a need arises for additional taxation to be obtained, we are all in favour of the other bloke paying the whole of it and not in favour of paying any ourselves. I have no doubt that there is quite a bit of that attitude in regard to this situation. I think all members have indicated that they intend to support the Bill, partly because it will give more money to the racing and trotting clubs and partly because it will give some additional money to a very harassed and headachey Treasurer.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 2 amended:

Hon. D. BRAND: I wish to discuss that part of the clause which relates to the 2 per cent. tax on off-course bookmakers. So far as we on this side are concerned, we take the view that a greater percentage of tax should be carried by the off-course bookmaker. During the election campaign, we said that we thought a tax of 5 per cent. could be imposed, and I think the Country Party decided on something like 4 per cent. This evening the member for Pilbara suggested that it could be 3½ per cent. I think we should adopt a sliding scale along the lines of that adopted by the Government as regards on-course bookmakers. If it is fair and reasonable to apply such a principle to the on-course operator, surely it is only right to apply it to the off-course bookmaker!

We realise that the Treasurer is hard pushed for money and he is looking at other avenues in order to increase his income. Certain measures have already been foreshadowed in that regard. We believe that before he finally decides to place a further taxation burden on productive industries, he should have another look at the possibility of increasing the rate of tax on off-course bookmakers, especially those in the higher brackets. We cannot deny the fact that an operator who has a turnover of £750,000 per annum, or even £300,000 per annum, must have a profit of more than £3,000 or £4,000. Therefore I move an amendment—

That the words "the rate of two per centum" in line 27, page 2, be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—

- (i) Two per centum if his turnover does not exceed £40,000 per annum.

- (ii) Two and one quarter per centum if his turnover exceeds £40,000 per annum but does not exceed £150,000 per annum.
- (iii) Two and one half per centum if his turnover exceeds £150,000 per annum but does not exceed £300,000.
- (iv) Three per centum if his turnover exceeds £300,000.

According to my colleague, the member for Nedlands, who has worked on the figures given in reply to a question from the member for Mt. Marshall, this amendment, if agreed to, would mean an additional income to the Treasurer of £60,675. That would be a welcome addition, particularly as up to date only £80,000 will accrue to the Treasurer as a result of this taxing measure.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I cannot accept the amendment because Standing Order No. 391 provides that a private member is excluded from moving an amendment to a taxing Bill. That Standing Order reads—

It shall not be competent for a Private Member to move the House into a Committee of Supply, or of Ways and Means, nor into a Committee of the whole House, for imposing any tax, indent, or impost, nor shall it be competent for a Private Member in any such Committee to propose increases on the amounts proposed therein.

In the circumstances I cannot accept the amendment.

Hon. D. BRAND: Very well, Mr. Chairman, I bow to your ruling because it is quite clear. However, I have been given the opportunity to explain to the Committee what we would have done if the Standing Orders had permitted it. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 8th October.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [9.42]: In view of the absence of Leader of the Opposition, I wish to have a word or two to say on the Bill and to indicate that we oppose its second reading or, alternatively, request that its passage through the House be delayed. If members will cast their minds back a few months they will recall the arguments advanced by the Premier and his colleagues during the State

elections on the tax which was being imposed on liquor by the Commonwealth Government. At that time, there was a great deal of hostile criticism emanating from every quarter in respect of that proposed tax, which urged the electors of this State to reject the parties in Opposition at that time because they were the ones who were associated with this move in the Commonwealth House.

Some of the points made by the Labour members at that time were that it was imposing yet a further tax on the workers and it had the effect of increasing the cost of living. We know the arguments that were advanced on every possible opportunity in order to create a diversion in the thinking of the electors at the time, despite the fact that the point at issue was purely a Commonwealth matter. It is therefore strange indeed that the Premier should come forward, through his Minister for Justice, and introduce this small measure which will have the effect of imposing a burden of approximately £120,000 on the proprietors of clubs and hotels in this State.

It has been said that there was a possibility that the increase would be borne by the proprietors of the clubs and the hotels, but experience has proved that ultimately these increased charges find their way to the cost of the schooners or other containers sold or, in other words, that there is an increase in the price of beer as a direct result of the increased tax. If, as was asserted during the State elections, liquor was too heavily taxed then, surely the position is no different now. In fact, costs have since risen and I for one was extremely surprised to learn that the Treasurer proposed to increase this tax.

As has been said by the member for Vasse this evening, the Treasurer has increased taxes in many directions. Quite a number of them have been foreshadowed and we on this side of the House feel that the Budget should be introduced to give us an overall picture of the financial situation of this State. We would like to know what steps the Treasurer anticipates as a whole rather than to see the problems tackled piecemeal and here and there, all of which steps apply increased taxation on the community. According to the notes

I have here, this tax will mean an increase of 4½d. on a bottle of Scotch whisky, 2½d. on a bottle of Australian whisky and 2½d. on a bottle of wine.

The Minister for Education: How much on a bottle of coca-cola?

Hon. D. BRAND: I could not say. I will leave that to the Minister for Education. It would probably be more in his line to find that out. In certain towns, at any rate, members opposite made great play during the State elections with the claim that the extra tax to be imposed by the Commonwealth Government on the

price of beer would create hardship for goldminers, coalminers and those people who were accustomed to having their daily quota of ale.

If such remarks were correct then, they should also apply now. I feel that the Government and the member for Collie as well, should have given more consideration to the problems associated with an increase in this taxation and should have delayed the introduction of this Bill. Surely it is only right that all increases in taxation should be delayed until after the introduction of the Budget! I hope the Treasurer will agree to our request that we should hear what is proposed in his Budget before any further measures of this kind are brought down.

There is no doubt that the finances of the State are chaotic. The Treasurer himself said tonight that he was harried, and I readily understand that. Every day in the Press we read of the increasing difficulties that beset the State Treasurer in regard to finance. I think in fairness to us all that if the Budget was introduced to the House so that we could review the overall financial position for ourselves, a Bill of this nature might be more acceptable. Therefore, in an effort to avail ourselves of that opportunity I move an amendment—

That the word "now" be struck out with a view to adding other words.

The other words which I propose to add are "after the introduction of the Budget".

The Minister for Transport: You must have been listening to the member for Beeloo earlier this evening.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—on amendment) [9.50]: I oppose the amendment. This Bill is capable of easy understanding.

Hon. D. Brand: Very readily.

The **TREASURER**: Therefore it should be within the compass of every member to make up his mind whether he supports or opposes it. Delay will achieve nothing except, possibly, to lose to the State some of the revenue which would come to it under this measure. As there is nothing to be gained and something to be lost by delaying the Bill, I hope the amendment will be defeated.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—on amendment) [9.51]: In a sense I agree with much of what the Treasurer has said, but I feel he has not given enough regard to what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said when he spoke of the general desire of this side of the House to have the Budget introduced so that we could take the opportunity of viewing the Government's fiscal policy in a wider frame, and perhaps thus being able to appraise better than we can now the complete show. As it is, we have been presented

with odds and ends of taxation measures; and I think it would have been more orthodox, and certainly more instructive to us here, if the Treasurer had brought down the Budget at an earlier stage.

This in a sense appears to me to be an attempt to request that the Budget be brought down at the earliest opportunity; it seems a form of protest that the Treasurer has not done so already. I do not know what the reaction of the departmental officials would be in relation to the delayed introduction of the Budget; nor do I know what the attitude of the Treasury officials is. But surely they cannot be too complacent about the delay! In any case, I believe that, as an Opposition, we would be better able to frame constructive criticism in relation to the fiscal policy of the Government if we had the overall picture to view.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling—on amendment) [9.53]: I find myself, as it were, between three opinions on this matter. I propose to support the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I think the year 1956 shows the Budget as being introduced later than it has for at least a decade. I will not allow my memory to carry me any further than that. We have today arrived at the 23rd October and we have not seen any signs of the Budget being introduced.

It has been the custom during all those years to at least see it by the middle of September when Parliament has met—as it met this year—in the last week of July or the first week in August. In a general way, therefore, legislation of this nature would have been discussed while the Budget was before us. The fact that the Budget is not before us—nor even has notice of its introduction been given—has put us in the position of having one or two taxing measures, of which this is one, without the opportunity—as the hon. member has said—of seeing the overall position at this stage.

The Minister for Transport: How many members discuss finance on the Budget anyhow—apart from "Gimme, gimme!"

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That does not matter in the slightest degree. Some members do, particularly those who take considerable interest in the affairs of this State in general as opposed to the particular items of concern in their electorates.

The Treasurer: The ex-member for Claremont always did.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: And they concern themselves perhaps more than the Minister for Transport thinks, even though they may not have addressed themselves to it. Many of them, I know, make themselves cognisant with what is there, even if they do not take up time or spread themselves on actual discussion of the overall position.

I was, however, going on to say that the second point of view that I see is, of course, the evident necessity which I think has been made apparent, even in the absence of the Budget, that the Treasurer is on the hunt for further funds. Even if one did not have that impression from the general position in recent years, one would certainly have gathered it from the replies to the innumerable questions that have been placed before the Ministers regarding proposed expenditures. The replies have been couched in terms which in effect say, "If finance is available." From that, of course, one must realise that the Government at least thinks that a lot more money is required from somewhere.

The third point of view I have in regard to this matter is that I do not feel disposed to assent to any increase in taxation. I maintained what may have been a discreet, or not discreet silence—depending on how you look at it—on the second reading of the measure which deals with betting taxation, but I am certainly not anxious to agree to any taxation which is likely to be passed on to the public; and taxation proposed by this measure is almost certainly going to reach the public by way of increased charges before a very long time has elapsed. I say that for two reasons.

The first, and perhaps the most important, is that I think the public, in many respects, has just about reached saturation point in regard to taxation. The second is that I agree with the member for Greenough that it is an extraordinary thing that the Government should now propose taxation of a sort which it hotly criticised during the March-April election campaign, because that taxation came from the present Federal Administration.

We cannot have it both ways. Either it is wrong to be "Tax-us Rangers," and to tax the public on all possible occasions no matter how desperate one's financial arrangements may be, or may not be; or, alternatively, it is not wrong. But the Government formed the opinion five or six months ago that increased taxes in this particular line of country were wrong; and I contend it is equally wrong today. The stronger argument is one that I first used in regard to this particular matter, namely, the desire to impose further taxation on a number of items on which just about saturation point has been reached; and the one dealt with by this measure is one of them.

I agree whole-heartedly with the Treasurer, especially when he made reference to looking at the files of the Child Welfare Department and that the evils of liquor are far worse in the net result on family life, in many cases, than are those of betting. I do not suppose—in fact all the evidence I have is to the contrary—that continuing to increase the price of liquor is going to diminish that problem to any

extent. The evidence is all against that, because there is on record—and in clear statistics—evidence to show that, while the excise increased, the consumption of liquor has risen rapidly over the last 10 years. The consumption has increased in about the same proportion as the increase in taxes.

So taxation does not appear to minimise the evil at all. If it did, I could subscribe to this measure more readily. I do not want the tax at all, for the reasons I have given. I do not think that it is going to benefit anybody in particular. I do not think it is justified in the circumstances surrounding this question of increased taxation in the last few months; but I do feel that, if it is to be persisted with, then it ought not to be persisted with until we have had a look, which we should have had three or four weeks ago in the normal way, at the overall position of the State's finances. As both purposes which I wish to achieve will be attained for the time being by supporting this amendment, I propose to do so.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood—on amendment [10.2]: The Treasurer was most unconvincing when he used the argument that this amendment should be opposed on the ground that everybody understood the intention of the Bill. That argument in no way disposes of the objection raised by the member for Greenough. He did not suggest there was anything particularly difficult to understand in the Bill, and I do not think anyone would suggest that we would be better able to understand the Bill if it were brought forward after the Budget. The member for Greenough put forward the proposition that this taxing measure should not be introduced until after the Budget had been brought down.

I would point out to the Treasurer, and draw attention to the fact, that in today's notice paper there are at least three other Bills to be read a second time, namely, the Vermin Act Amendment, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment and the Land Act Amendment Bills. All of them could quite conceivably be ruled as raising charges against some section of the community. We have had no assurance from the Treasurer that there will be no more taxing measures to be introduced in this manner.

The time has come when it is fair and reasonable to ask the Government to desist from introducing any taxing measures until after the Budget, because it places the Opposition at a very considerable disadvantage. We might find that, possibly after having opposed taxation measures, we could quite conceivably have agreed to them if we had known what the real financial position was. Our attitude could be used against us politically at a subsequent date, and I do not think that is fair tactics.

I cannot accept the argument of the Treasurer that if we were to delay the passage of this Bill the State would lose revenue, because the fault lies on the Treasurer to a large extent, in that he could have brought the Budget down at an earlier date. There does not seem to be any reasonable argument why it was not introduced earlier. If that had been done, this matter could have been cleared up more readily.

The only two arguments on which the Treasurer bases his opposition are the loss of revenue to the Treasury—which is largely his responsibility—and that the Bill is a simple measure which everybody can understand. Those arguments have nothing to do with the point raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. On that ground, and because no assurance has been given that this is to be the last taxing measure to be introduced in this manner, the Opposition has every right to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that this procedure is rather unusual. We feel we should be treated more courteously in that respect. I support the amendment.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—on amendment) [10.5]: I support the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I regard 1956 as a crucial financial year in the history of this State. I think the people are expecting, if not demanding, to see the overall financial picture. It is only fair that they should be able to see the financial picture, because all sorts of things have been foreshadowed. There is apparently to be a complete reorganisation of the railways and a complete reorientation of railway finances. There is the vexed question of probate duty to be discussed and various other matters.

For that reason I feel that this tax, while it is obviously simple to understand, should be regarded in the overall framework of the Government's financial measures. I have very vivid recollections of this particular subject of tax on beer becoming a very vital election issue. I remember the Treasurer seizing on that issue very smartly.

The Treasurer: You do not remember anything of that kind.

Mr. COURT: We had more references to beer and tobacco during that election than I can ever remember.

The Treasurer: Not by me.

The Minister for Lands: You are drawing on your imagination.

Mr. COURT: The Treasurer knows that is not so. At the time when the "Tax-us Rangers" cry was on, he seized on every item he possibly could. If ever there was an election floated in beer and smothered with smoke, it was that election, and with some betting to aid and abet the rest of the machinery that was employed. For that reason I support the amendment.

It is appropriate that we should have the overall financial picture of the State. Surely it will not be long before the Budget is brought down, not only the Revenue Estimates but also the Loan Estimates. It is going to be a mighty hard struggle for non-Government members to absorb the Estimates and at the same time deal with the very contentious legislation. I see the Minister for Lands smiling and I also notice that he still has some contentious measures to be dealt with this session. If we are not careful we will finish up with this very vital financial statement which we are expecting this year being given scant consideration. I feel that all financial measures should be capable of review at the one time.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	15
Noes	....	....	....	....	21
Majority against					6

Ayes.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Court	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. I. Manning	

Noes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Evans	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Molr
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Heal	Mr. Potter
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Toms
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. May
Mr. Johnson	

(Teller.)

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Oldfield	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Tonkin
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Thorn	Mr. Hall

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [10.15]: I shall now speak to the Bill, and would like to say at the outset that I am not happy about the tax at all.

The Minister for Lands: You don't look happy at all.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It seems to be imposed by a tax-mad Government—one which is desperate for finance, and is exploring every possible avenue and field it can to rake up a few extra shillings. I hope the Government will bring these Bills before the House in two years' time, prior to the next election; and I would hope they would not be brought forward merely for the sake of wiping them out.

It is quite obvious the Government is making hay while the sun shines and hopes the public's memory will be short. But I feel that this taxation measure is imposing

a further charge upon an industry which is already heavily burdened; and as has been mentioned by the Leader of the Country Party, the tax will be eventually—if not immediately—passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices for glasses and schooners and higher prices for bottled beer.

Mr. May: You would not call this an industry; it is a business.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The member for Collie, if he likes, can split straws. I do not want to quarrel with him.

Mr. May: An industry produces something.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I can say that this business means the employment of a great number of people in this State; and in that sense it is an important industry, and too great an interference with it and too much taxation imposed upon it will have bad results so far as employment is concerned. That is something which springs to my mind when the member for Collie mentions the fact that this is possibly not an industry. There are many industries associated with the liquor trade. There are industries which have to do with case making and bottle making.

The Treasurer: Undertaking!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: There is the hops industry, and no doubt very many others associated with this particular liquor trade. Much of what I was going to say has already been dealt with in essence in the previous debate on whether or not this Bill should be deferred until after the introduction of the Budget. But despite the fact that some of the items have been mentioned before, I feel one or two are worthy of reiteration.

Like some of the others who have spoken to the debate which has just concluded, I would say it is ironical, to say the least, to compare the Government's attitude to this taxation measure with the attitude it adopted during the election period prior to the 7th April. It is very vivid in my mind the number of advertisements that were inserted in the paper having regard to this side of the House being called, "Tax-us Rangers", and from the lips of most of the Labour people who spoke on the hustings came forth criticism of the Federal Government's action in imposing taxes on beer and on tobacco.

During the previous debate, the Treasurer mentioned that he was not one of those who spoke in that vein; and I am prepared, of course, to take his word for that. But I have no doubt in my mind that, so far as he could visualise the end result of the taxation with regard to an election result, he could not but have felt pleased with the imposition of that tax, and must realise his party used the increased Federal taxation measures

at that time to help both him and his party to the Treasury bench. So I feel that those people who keep a note of these things must see a certain irony when comparing the attitude of this Government with regard to that.

It has been suggested that the Bill becomes necessary because of the fact that the Grants Commission feels that we should come into line with the standard States in our taxation of this particular item. I do not know how far we are to go in tying ourselves to the standard States, or how far we must dance to the tune that the Grants Commission pipes upon such matters. It is not difficult to visualise the time when the Grants Commission might well say, "You will have to increase your fares and freights because New South Wales and Victoria have recently jumped their railway fares and freights by 50 per cent.," as New South Wales did fairly recently. Of course, we must be guarded to some extent with respect to that particular feature.

This opens a field of thought as to how we can interpret the rulings of the Grants Commission in this regard. This is a field that I am not prepared to enter into to any great extent, but I point out that we cannot continually do what the Grants Commission suggests we should do because the standard States have done it. I was going to make a point that I have already made in my remarks on the deferment of the debate, regarding the fact that it would have been better, as far as we are concerned, had the Budget been brought down so that we could see this matter in the overall picture. The fact that we are viewing these things as individual items, without having any knowledge of the overall picture, seems to me to be a wrong way of doing it.

I made the point earlier that this tax would increase the burden on the liquor trade to an extent of, I think, £120,000. I also mentioned that heavy burdens were carried by the trade at the present time. I point out that excise paid in Western Australia for the year ended the 30th June, 1956, amounted to £12,460,000; and of that total, the tax on beer contributed £6,360,293. This is an enormous amount of money to be drawn from a trade and placed in Government revenue. Of course, the charges are passed on to the consumer.

Again I make the point that the State tax which is being imposed under the Bill is a charge which will eventually, without any shadow of doubt, find its way to the consumer. Possibly the charge will be felt in the country districts more than elsewhere, because if the freight charges that have been mentioned become effective, they will be placed on top of the costs that are borne by the liquor industry so that they, together with this £120,000, will find their way to the Treasury coffers via the workers' pockets.

It is interesting to note that since 1938 the consumption of beer has increased by 275 per cent., but excise has increased in the same period by 1,160 per cent., indicating the extent to which taxation is hitting at this trade and at the worker's pocket. This Government was greatly incensed and hotly critical of the Federal Government's action in taxing the trade to this extent because it hit at the worker's pocket, but now it is doing the very same thing. It might be contended that it is not doing it on the same scale; it might be asked: "What is £120,000 compared with £6,000,000?" The principle however, is still the same. If the Treasurer felt he could extract still more, he would do so.

This is one of those discriminatory types of legislation about which, as I said earlier, I am not completely happy. It affects one section of the people only. I point out that the age-old art of beer drinking was at one time a working man's pleasure that could be obtained for a comparatively cheap price. By these tax measures—this particular one plays an important part—this trade is being thrust into the luxury class.

At times, one is astonished, when going into a hotel, to discover how much one has to pay for a schooner of beer. Each time a working man goes into a hotel he realises just how much he contributes by way of tax. So, I rather deplore the fact that the Government has seen fit to impose a further charge on the industry. Perhaps I could view the matter more dispassionately and with better judgment had the Budget been introduced prior to the introduction of the Bill.

For the reasons I have outlined, I feel that the measure should be opposed. I am not absolutely adamant on the point, and I do not intend to divide on it. I just feel that the fact that this Government has adopted a completely different attitude on this occasion to what it did prior to the last election, should be highlighted. It now seeks to impose a charge upon this trade, and the charge will hit at the worker's pocket; and if further charges are made affecting the liquor trade, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that severe inroads will be made on employment in allied trades. With these criticisms, I oppose the Bill.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [10.30]: As has already been pointed out, this Bill seeks to increase the annual licence fee payable by hotelkeepers and others in the liquor trade by approximately 40 per cent. The increase in revenue from that source since 1950-51 has been substantial. In that year the figure was £168,000; and in a matter of six years, it rose to £295,000. Despite the assertion that there was an undue growth in the number of clubs during that period, I find, on checking

the figures, that in 1950-51 clubs contributed 4.4 per cent. of the licensing revenue; and in 1955-56, 5.7 per cent., so the increase during that period was not very considerable.

I wish to make it clear at this stage that I have never favoured the concession granted to clubs, but have felt that they should pay the same licence fee as hotelkeepers and other licensees. However, that discrepancy has been levelled off in this Bill, which seeks to increase to a substantial degree the amount to be contributed by licence holders.

It was last week, I think, that I made a comparison, by a breakdown on to a turnover basis, that the fee at present represents a turnover tax of 1.3 per cent., a figure which this measure would increase to 1.9 per cent. The Treasurer, in speaking to another measure, said that in his view, a turnover tax is a particularly severe one, because it has no relation to the ultimate profit which a business returns; and in refusing to increase the turnover tax on betting holdings he took that view.

But on this occasion the same principle has not been applied to the liquor trade, and the increase is being imposed without any inquiry into the question of whether the trade has the ability to pay it, probably, in this instance, because the tax is easier to pass on and no doubt will be passed on. At a rough guess I would say that this measure would add as much as 1½d. to the price of a bottle of beer.

Following the pattern in New South Wales, which is a standard State and one which—more or less by direction—the claimant States have to follow, I wonder whether this measure foreshadows increases in another direction. We have been informed that a substantial increase in vehicle licence fees is imminent, and that increases in rail freights and charges are to take place. Earlier this evening the member for Vasse forecast that the increases would include an agricultural land tax in the drag-net.

It has been said—probably jocularly—that the increase in the licence fee is the price publicans have to pay for the banning of the one-armed bandits. Whether that is so or not I would not know; but as they were extremely active in their representations for the abolition of that particular "gentleman," there may be some substance in the assertion.

However, like the member for Cottesloe, I see a rather curious inconsistency on the part of the Government in desiring to implement this measure. As the hon. member said, in April last when the Federal Government increased the excise on beer, there was a howl of anguish from the Government supporters at the iniquity of the increase, and I do not think it will be denied that that measure was capitalised to a considerable extent during the ensuing State election, with results most

favourable to the Government. In his reply, perhaps the Minister for Justice or the Treasurer could explain why the pre-election chrysalis was so evil and the post-election butterfly so immaculate.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [10.35]: Like the member for Cottesloe and the member for Mt. Marshall, I feel that this Bill is going to cause an increase in the price of beer, as it is inevitable that the impost will be passed on. The Treasurer has brought forward the argument that we must pass this measure because the Grants Commission has told us to do so in order to bring the position here into line with that in the standard States. I would ask the House to consider how valid that argument is.

We know that certain of the standard States make losses in some directions; and in order to pay their way, they must endeavour to increase their taxation in some regard. We know that the losses on the tramways in New South Wales are terrific, and obviously they must tax liquor or any other commodity which they think will yield sufficient to recoup the loss. On reference to the departmental report I find that our tramways are going much the same way as those in New South Wales.

In 1954 they showed a surplus of earnings over working expenses of £3,500, and in the last report they are shown to be in the red to the extent of £118,000. If we are to follow the trend of the standard States in respect of tramway losses—incidentally the difference between the £3,500 profit and £118,000 loss is very close to the £120,000 proposed to be gathered by this tax—and all their other financial bungling, of course the Grants Commission will say we must impose the same taxes as they do.

But it seems to me that the argument that we must slavishly follow whatever the Grants Commission indicates it would like us to do is very one-sided. Where we can show that we are running our State more efficiently than are the standard States, surely we are equally deserving of consideration by the Grants Commission! I feel that the picture I have outlined stresses the need for a proper examination of State finances before considering individual taxation measures.

There are many economies that the Government could practice in order to save far more than the £120,000 proposed to be raised under this Bill; and in view of the effect which the measure will have on the price of beer, and the fact that the Government made so much political capital out of the Commonwealth increase in excise, and had so much to say about the effect on employment in breweries—I think 90 men were retrenched—it seems amazing that the Government should contemplate a measure of this sort at the present time.

Mr. Lawrence: How many shares have you in the brewery?

Mr. HEARMAN: I have no shares in the brewery, but I do not know how many shares the hon. member has in it. I think I can view this matter fairly objectively. But I do not think the 90 people who were put off would view it objectively, and the member for South Fremantle might bear that in mind when making these interjections. I believe that the brewery behaved generously to the men concerned and cushioned the impact of unemployment. Therefore I think the hon. member's interjection was unfortunate, particularly in view of the cause that he espouses. I oppose the Bill.

Mr. Lawrence: You are not suggesting that the brewery is paying the increased tax?

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [10.41]: It is rather intriguing to find members opposite toying with the suggestion that members of the Government are inconsistent in introducing this Bill. If members of the Government are inconsistent in the attitude which they are adopting, members opposite are ever so much more inconsistent in their attitude.

Mr. Hearman: What about your attitude to bookmakers' licences and bookmakers' fees in this instance?

THE TREASURER: When the Commonwealth Government brought down its heavy taxation proposals members over yonder, who now oppose this comparatively small imposition of taxation, were 100 per cent. in favour of the Commonwealth Government's proposals, and said so publicly.

Mr. Hearman: You have changed your mind.

THE TREASURER: Therefore the member for Blackwood, who talks about the unemployment at the brewery following the application of the Commonwealth Government's policy, was himself partly responsible for the unemployment which developed because he supported the policy which was responsible for it.

Hon. D. Brand: At least we did not have the say; you do have the say in this instance.

THE TREASURER: There is a point—and it is an important one too—that all the money which will be raised under this Bill will be spent in Western Australia; whereas most of the money raised by the Commonwealth Government under its taxation proposals was spent in other parts of Australia. I have a letter which I think broadly covers the other main points raised by Opposition speakers and will reply even more effectively than I could do to those points. The letter is written by a Mr. V. P. Tippet who I think is the licensee of the Hotel Cottesloe.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is correct.

The TREASURER: It refers to an editorial which appeared in "The West Australian" in which it quoted a spokesman of the liquor industry as stating that the consumer would have to bear the brunt of any increase in the cost of liquor licences; and the letter goes on to state—

Obviously he—
the spokesman.

—was referring to the retail portion of the trade. If not by the above remarks alone, then by his remarks further down the column in which he stated—

The added imposition on the industry of £120,000 must be reflected in employment, particularly this of bar tenders, etc."

It is noted, sir, the spokesman avoided mention of any particular section of the liquor industry, directly that is, but you will bear in mind we are by far the larger section and too we refer to our employees as "barmen, barmaids or bar attendants. Clubs for instance, use the words "bar stewards or merely stewards" so you will readily agree that we seem to be included in his statements. At any rate we are of the opinion that that is what your Government and the majority of the public are thinking.

I am a vice-president of the U.L.V.A. (W.A. branch) and have official authority to give you the following facts.

The executive of the association met on the 11th October—

In other words, the day prior to the publication of the article in "The West Australian."

—in other words, the previous day, and in its inaugural discussion of the Bill in question it was unanimously resolved we would carry the increase from the present 6 per cent. to the proposed 8½ per cent. Also, sir, we have no knowledge whatsoever as to the identity of the "spokesman."

You will conclude from this, sir, we have made no protest, but you will please bear in mind we are not in accord. You cannot in all fairness expect us to be. In recent times you will agree we have been rather hit to leg so perhaps in the not too distant future you will permit us an innings and even though we go in late to bat and barely reach double figures we would enjoy the change with thanks.

I think that would appeal to the member for Cottesloe.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Would you say that he is after something?

The TREASURER: That was on behalf of the U.L.V.A.

Mr. Cornell: Do not put him in on a wet wicket.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Treasurer (on behalf of the Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 73 amended:

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

That the words "eight and one-third" in line 22, page 2, be struck out and the word "seven" inserted in lieu.

This is an attempt to minimise the harshness of the tax. Under the proposal in the Bill it is a jump from 6 to 8½ per cent. and my amendment is designed to bring it down to 7 per cent. For clubs it would be a jump from 5 per cent. to 7 per cent. instead of a jump from 5 to 8½ per cent. I think we should minimise the charge that will eventually be paid by the worker. The Treasurer mentioned that a licensee of a certain hotel in Cottesloe definitely stated that the charge would not be passed on. However, the charge is left in abeyance, as it were, until further imposts are made to hit the worker's pocket. During the second reading debate I stated that if the charge was not taken from the worker's pocket immediately, it would be taken in the not too distant future. This amendment, therefore, is an attempt to minimise the tax on the worker's schooner of beer.

The TREASURER: I oppose the amendment. If it were carried, the main result would be to make it necessary for the Government to increase, more than would be necessary otherwise, taxes of a much more important nature than this one. In other words, whereas this tax is to be imposed on an industry which is not essential, other taxation which is forthcoming will be on essential undertakings. If we do not receive what we anticipate from this proposed increased tax, obviously the Government will be forced to obtain more from other directions.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 7 amended:

Mr. NALDER: During the second reading debate the other evening the Minister was not in his place, and I wanted to know what was intended by this clause. Although I have no intention of moving any amendment, I want to know whether it is intended to have the increase in compensation from £15 to £24 implemented on the proclamation of the Bill. I am also anxious to know whether the Minister will use his discretionary power in regard to the increase in the charge proposed in Clause 4.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The whole of this Bill, if passed, will become operative from the date of proclamation. On my return, the Premier made available to me a copy of the hon. member's speech in which he raised one or two matters he wished to have attended to. There is no doubt that the object of the Bill is to increase the maximum amount of compensation payable from £15 to £24; and in the same way, in Clause 4, to increase the maximum charge from 3s. 9d. to 5s.

During the course of his second reading speech, the hon. member asked what would happen to a farmer in a remote area who lost two or three of his pigs. He pointed out that within two or three days a farmer could be the loser of 20 or 30 pigs. Further on in his speech he suggested that stock inspectors should be qualified to make examinations of diseases amongst pigs which are responsible for deaths and which makes compensation payable.

All our stock inspectors are qualified to make such examinations now. It is perfectly true that in remote areas it would be more difficult to advise the authorities of the correct diagnosis of the disease that had caused the death of certain animals, but it was never the intention that no consideration should be given to the nature of the disease that made compensation payable. The Act now provides for compensation to be paid to breeders living in remote areas who suffer loss and cannot apply within the prescribed time. This is always paid at the discretion of the Minister. Death can occur from an acute infection before diagnosis can be established. There are difficulties in the country areas that do not apply to the metropolitan area. But the provision in the existing parent Act covers that situation. It states—

Where the owner does not make an application within the period referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection if it is proved to the satisfaction of the Minister that the delay in making the application is due to circumstances beyond the control of the owner the Minister may if compensation is thus

payable authorise the payment of compensation to the owner in respect of the application for compensation made within any period not exceeding 90 days of the destruction or death of the pig.

Generally speaking, stock inspectors are not only empowered but qualified to act as the hon. member requires. The Minister has power to pay compensation outside the scope of the Act and this is always done.

Mr. NALDER: I am glad the stock inspectors are qualified to inspect and diagnose the probable cause of death. This is not generally known among pig breeders in the State, and I hope publicity will be given to it. If they knew this, I feel sure there would be more satisfaction in the pig industry. The breeders will be very happy to hear it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: My information is that stock inspectors are familiar with normal diseases that afflict the pig industry, and in most cases they are able to make a diagnosis; but where they are not, veterinary inspection is provided.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Section 15 amended:

Mr. NALDER: I understand the Minister has discretionary power in regard to this. I did not hear his second reading speech, and I am not sure of the position. He said the amount in the fund was about £56,000. It was not considered necessary that this fund should be increased to a huge amount. Does the Minister intend the amount of 5s. to be brought in immediately the Bill is proclaimed, or can he from time to time instruct the department of the maximum payable by the producer who sold the pig for this amount, and that he will not be liable to pay it unless the Minister thinks it is necessary?

Mr. BOVELL: I do not see the need for the increase to 5s. The Minister said the fund had been increasing over the years, and the amount is now about £56,000. I think we should leave the amount at 3s. 6d., but whether that would be consistent with the Act I do not know. An increase of compensation should be sufficient without further increasing the amount payable by the producer.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not that there is a lot of money in the fund. We know there is, but we did not intend to increase the amount much beyond £50,000. It stands at £57,000. It is thought that with changes in monetary values and pig values, there could occur a situation due to one or more diseases striking the industry where the fund could be depleted.

I said that the control over the amount charged for stamp duty was not at the discretion of the Minister. If prices remain as they are, it will not be necessary

to increase the amount from what is now being paid, which is 1d. in the £1. The 3s. 9d. covers the stamp duty on a pig valued at £45. While the price for chop-pers is £37 10s., baconers £24 12s., and porkers £24 17s. 6d., there is no need to increase the present contribution. It is a precautionary provision which might be needed in future years. It is not of much use to impose an obligation on the fund for an increased amount of money if a circumstance can arise which will deplete the fund to such an extent that a special call will have to be made to the Government. The industry is self-contained and is perfectly safe financially.

This Bill does not mean that the maximum amount of stamp duty will be charged. The Act now provides a maximum of 3d. stamp duty. If the maximum of 3s. 9d. is retained as the total stamp duty, then if the value of pigs decreases, and we have to maintain the fund to pay the additional amount between, say, £15 and £24 it is possible that the maximum amount of 3d. stamp duty charged on a pig will be assessed at £17 in order to reach the 3s. 9d. provided under the Act.

Mr. Bovell: Under what circumstances is the trust fund kept?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is kept in the Treasury.

Mr. NALDER: Does the Minister intend in the very near future to call a halt to the contribution to the fund? In view of the previous experience where the fund increased at the rate of approximately £9,000 a year clear of expenses, if the contributions are continued at the same rate, next year the fund will stand at £63,000; and possibly, in five years' time, at £100,000.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The fund will be considered by those in charge. The amount will be retained at what it stands today. It is not intended to increase beyond that amount of £50,000 or thereabouts. It will be the responsibility of those in charge to make reductions in the amount of stamp duty to maintain the fund at that figure.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 9th October.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [11.16]: This is only a short Bill, although amendments are made to many sections of the Act. It is really a matter of machinery and is not contentious. It brings shops

and factories into line with other industries. People engaged under the Factories and Shops Act are entitled to as much consideration as those employed in other industries. The Bill provides for a reduction of hours from 44 to 40 over a 5½ day week and the closing time at 5.30 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. on week-days and 12 noon instead of 1 p.m. on Saturdays. Provision is made to include women and boys as workers.

The Bill also amends Section 31 and provides for the payment of overtime at time and a half instead of the existing time and a quarter, to bring it into line with what applies in other industries. Another clause seeks to increase the meal allowance from 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. I support the second reading.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [11.19]: When introducing this Bill the Minister said it merely tidied up the existing Act and was not of very great moment, although the number of amendments contained therein is considerable. He said that commerce now wore seven league boots and as industrial conditions had far outstripped the Act, it was in the interests of all concerned, to use his expression, to tidy up the Act.

Whether the Bill tidies up the Act or indulges in a major spring-clean is a matter of opinion. It is essentially a Committee Bill, but there are two points in connection with it, one of which affects my particular electorate; and I would like to make some comment on these matters. The first of these is the universal Saturday afternoon holiday which this Bill will endeavour to implement.

At the moment, I think there are about 19 shopping districts which still observe Saturday shopping. Some of these are very small areas, the larger ones consisting of Merredin, Kellerberrin, Dowerin, Beverley, Cunderdin, Tammin, Southern Cross and Mandurah. The issue in these areas, despite modern-day conditions, is still a particularly live one; and recently an ex-chairman of the Cunderdin Road Board, in a letter to "The West Australian", pointed out that in his view the two most progressive towns were Cunderdin and Merredin, and he based his assertion on the fact that these were the only two towns in Western Australia to build olympic swimming pools. He said it would be a shame if Cunderdin shops had to close on Saturday afternoon.

More or less simultaneously with that letter, another appeared in a Cunderdin newspaper, written by a resident of Cunderdin, pointing out the inequality of Saturday afternoon shopping in that town and the fact that many sports could not be indulged in—particularly aquatic sports—by many of the young fraternity, owing to the fact that they might have to work on Saturday afternoon.

A poll on the subject was taken in Merredin, and I have a letter here from one of the sponsors of the case for the Saturday-afternoon closing. I do not propose to read it, but the poll on the subject was in favour of the retention of Saturday-afternoon shopping. I think the vote was roughly 52 per cent. in favour and 48 per cent. against. The opinion expressed on that occasion was fairly even. This gentleman was very prominent in the case for the closure of shops on Saturday afternoon, and he bitterly points out in the letter that many of his supporters who promised to vote in favour of closing on Saturday afternoon did not vote at all. What he found out is what is known to most members of Parliament. The flock of liars that abound at election time is considerable.

I may say that Kellerberrin, my own home town, still observes Saturday afternoon shopping, and I would like to say at this juncture that the shopkeepers there are virtually unanimously in favour of closing on Saturday afternoon. Many have approached me to ascertain the progress of this particular Bill. As a matter of fact, at the moment this Bill is the most discussed in Kellerberrin.

Further, I think many of the farming community would be keen to see the retention of Saturday afternoon shopping, but I have had no request whatsoever asking me to endeavour to retain Saturday afternoon shopping facilities. So I can only conclude that generally the public of that particular area have an open mind on the subject and are in favour of closing shops on Saturday. However, the passing of the Bill would deprive the right of country people to determine their local shopping conditions, and would unquestionably destroy a very popular social event which takes place in these towns on a Saturday afternoon.

It should not be supposed, however, that the closing of shops at mid-day on Saturday in the eastern wheatbelt—and many centres are already closed—will cause Sunday sport to stop, because experience has proved otherwise. The travel factor in these areas at the moment precludes Saturday sport taking place on an organised basis, and it can only be brought about by the introduction of a five-day shopping week. That brings us to the provision of a shorter working week. In order to give the people more leisure time, someone has to do the work to provide that leisure time; and I think it cannot be denied that Saturday morning shopping is still retained to give those people an opportunity to shop on that morning who work for the rest of the week.

I have been looking around for a sensible compromise, mainly for two reasons. One is that there will be some opposition

to the taking away of Saturday afternoon shopping, and the other is that organised Saturday sport is more desirable than organised Sunday sport. I have been looking for a reasonable compromise and was wondering whether the Minister would give consideration to a late shopping night on Friday and closing all day Saturday. I throw the idea into the ring and would like to see the Minister's reaction to the proposal; and if he feels like making it on a State-wide basis, so much the better.

As I have already said, I see several advantages; and I think the Minister, on reflection, may be inclined to agree with me. I feel sure I can enlist the support of the member for Leederville, because a five-day shopping week would make it easier for his five-day banking week to eventuate. I cannot see why shop assistants should work a five-and-a-half-day week any more than other sections of industry. At the moment they are forced to work on Saturday morning to provide facilities to other workers which cannot otherwise be provided, and a late shopping night might be the answer. There may be difficulties, but I give the suggestion to the Minister for what it is worth in the hope he might see merit in it.

The other matter is the question of curtailing the hours of small shops, which I think this Bill intends to do. This class of shop in my opinion is on the way out, anyhow, and it is only a matter as to how long they can resist the fierce competition of chain stores and supermarkets. The small shop does serve a most useful purpose, and it, and the tin-opener have provided more evening meals than this world knows of. The small shop is generally in the hands of the working proprietor and his family; and in the main, they do not employ a great deal of outside labour.

I make an additional appeal to the Minister to give consideration to granting this class of business a further brief reprieve because, as I say, I do not think the small shop, as we know it, will continue to exist a great deal longer. The amendments in the Bill are numerous, although they are mainly of a minor nature. This, however, is one of those measures which attempts to make improvements to an Act which has remained unamended for a considerable time. I support the second reading.

MR. ROBERTS (Bunbury) [11.31]: The main provisions in the Bill appear to seek, first of all, the earlier closing of shops by law rather than allowing the shopkeeper the option of paying overtime after the normal closing hour. They also seek to increase the meal money to employees, yet the majority of awards do not even include a meal-money clause.

Mr. Moir: You do not know much about awards.

Mr. ROBERTS: I shall come to that. The Bill also appears to seek the earlier closing of service stations; and it seems that service stations will not be able to open on Saturday afternoons, although the Minister did give an assurance that they would remain open at that time.

As the member for Mt. Marshall has said, the small shops will not be able to trade after hours because of the overtime provision in the amending legislation. The Bill also seeks to close all shops arbitrarily throughout the State on Saturday afternoons by deleting the provision in the Act for the conducting of polls of electors in various shopping districts. There will be no late shopping nights anywhere in the State. As a matter of fact, there are none at the moment.

The proposed amendments, to my mind, would appear to usurp some of the functions of the Arbitration Court. They also endeavour to change the words "a woman or boy" which appear in the Act to the words "an employee". That can have very wide repercussions, as I shall point out later. The Minister did make mention of certain outmoded sections in the parent Act, and I agree that many sections in the Act are outmoded. But I would like to correct the Minister on one point. He referred to the word "sweating"; and although he implied it was sweating as we know the word, Section 41 of the parent Act provides—

The provisions of this section are specially intended for the better suppression of what is commonly known as the "sweating evil," and shall be construed and applied accordingly.

The occupier of a factory who lets or gives out work of any description in connection with textile or shoddy material to be done by any person elsewhere than in a factory, etc.

It does not imply the old term of "sweat" as we know it.

In regard to the inclusion of the words "hairdressing shops" in the interpretation of the word "shop," I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that in the Act certain standards for shops are set out. Some of the present-day hairdressers' shops may not come up to the standard required by the Act. The Bill specifies particularly the words "and shall be deemed always to have included hairdressers' shops." If the Bill is proclaimed, hairdressers' shops will have to come up to the various standards set out in the Act.

I do not think it would be fair to ask the proprietors of these hairdressers' shops to make immediately the alterations and renovations required by the Act.

Some hairdressers, as the Minister well knows, carry out hairdressing in their private homes, and the Act by Section 109 provides—

A shop shall be deemed not to be closed within the meaning of this Act if it is not locked or otherwise effectually closed against the admission of the public.

How a person conducting a hairdressing business in his private home is going to carry out that section, I do not know. I hope the Minister will give us some indication of what he thinks about it when he replies.

In regard to the amendment dealing with the working hours for women and boys, the intention is to change the words "a woman or boy" to "an employee." To my mind, this change will have wide repercussions because, as the Minister knows, many shops and factories employ certain staff personnel, such as caretakers, after the normal working hours. These fellows are quite prepared to work during the hours of darkness and to receive their award rate; but when I look at this amendment, it appears that they would come under the provisions of the new overtime rates.

Also, there are executive and certain essential staff in shops and factories who are paid a salary commensurate with their ability and responsibilities, and they take it as normal practice to work longer hours than are prescribed in the award. They do not expect to receive overtime for the hours they work after the particular business in which they are employed is closed. But according to the amendment, they could, I think, make a lawful claim for overtime.

Under this clause, the normal working week is changed from 44 to 40 hours. We know it is normal in all shops to work 40 hours at present, as prescribed in the shop assistants' award. The Act provides that an 8½-hour day can be worked by an assistant, and the award provides for an 8-hour day to be worked between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, and lays down the hours 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, except where Saturday is a half holiday in places where they have a poll to work some other day.

In Perth, the majority of shops open at 9.5 a.m., Monday to Friday, and close at 5.30 p.m. On Saturday they open at 9.5 a.m. and close at noon, thus working a 40-hour week. In Bunbury, ever since daylight saving was abolished, the shops have opened at 8.40 a.m. Monday to Friday and closed at 5 p.m., because it suits both employer and employee.

The Minister for Labour: That is the award.

Mr. ROBERTS: The award does not provide for 5 p.m.

The Minister for Labour: They are entitled to work between certain hours.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am pointing out the hours actually worked in Bunbury. The spread of hours mentioned is by mutual consent between employer and employee.

The Minister for Labour: It is by agreement between the employer and the union.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is so. In regard to 6 p.m. closing, some districts may prefer to open later by agreement between employer and employee. I think the Minister will agree that in years to come we may have to consider the present American practice under which shops are open for very long hours and the employees work shifts.

Mr. Court: In some States they do not close at all.

Mr. ROBERTS: I understand that in New York the shops are open 24 hours a day. In time to come, owing to transport difficulties and so on, our shop and factory workers may have to work shifts while the establishments remain open for long periods. I do not mean that the employees individually will work longer hours, as I believe that certain working hours will ultimately be further reduced. I feel that the amendments relating to overtime are wrong in principle and some of the provisions may result in higher overtime rates than are contained in the award. I have not had opportunity of checking every award, but I think it is wrong to lay down in this measure what the overtime rates are to be.

The Minister for Labour: That has been in the Act for 30-odd years.

Mr. ROBERTS: This amendment may have a bad effect on employees in essential industry. Those who work shifts at night do not get double time or time and a half but receive a wage according to their award.

The Minister for Labour: They would not be covered by this.

Mr. Moir: Of course they get penalty rates.

Mr. ROBERTS: They do not get the rates suggested here.

The Minister for Labour: Look at Section 113.

Mr. ROBERTS: I will examine it later. With regard to the closing of shops on Saturday morning, some factories today work a 5½-day week and this would mean they would have to close on Saturday morning or pay the overtime rates prescribed.

The Minister for Labour: Tell us the name of one such factory.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister can reply later to the points I am making. I do not quite understand why the present provisions of the Act are sought to be repealed,

as this measure would not give the shop districts the opportunity of deciding on what particular day they were to have their half holiday. It cuts out the late shopping night, and I whole-heartedly agree that a shop assistant should not be called on to work on any particular night for the benefit of the general public.

Mr. Moir: You are progressing a little.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have always been keen on that. Members must bear in mind that in some of the districts which are far removed from Perth, and which have the Thursday or some other afternoon closing, the main idea is to protect the businesses in the district from the very keen competition of certain city firms with their mail-order systems. The idea is to try to prevent the people in the district from travelling to Perth on shopping sprees. The country shopkeeper must be encouraged as much as possible and the people in those districts must give every support to their local storekeepers, just as the small trader in the metropolitan area needs all the protection he can get to combat the inroads of chain stores, super marts, etc., which were mentioned by the member for Mt. Marshall.

Although the Minister in introducing the Bill said that its provisions would have no effect on the hours of closing of shops for the sale of motor spirit, oil and accessories, I think those places will be affected.

Hon. A. F. Watts: What he said was that the proviso still remained, and therefore the present position would apply in so far as emergency petrol was concerned.

The Minister for Labour: And all that is altered is 6 o'clock to 5.30 and 1 o'clock to noon.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister may be right, but I could not see it from my research. I am of opinion that it will affect the garage proprietors.

The Minister for Labour: Why don't they close at 1 o'clock on Saturdays now?

Mr. Court: If you do not want to affect the position, why are you amending the law?

The Minister for Labour: To keep the times in accord with the other amendments.

Mr. ROBERTS: Competition among garages is very keen today and I think it would be a retrograde step if amending legislation were introduced to close these places down on Saturday afternoons. There is no justification for an amendment which will have that effect, and I hope the Minister, in his reply, will make the position regarding the garages quite clear.

As regards holidays, the proposals under this Bill will only bring into the Act what is already normal practice. So I agree

with that provision, although I think that some of the small shopkeepers may be affected, because of the overtime rates, and will be forced to close on those additional days. Those small shopkeepers must be given every opportunity to open their businesses without having to pay colossal overtime rates.

This applies particularly in tourist centres, because the small shops in those places remain open to give a service to the public. The holidaying public definitely require the small shops at beach resorts and so on to remain open, but I am afraid that if a small businessman is employing staff, he will be inclined to close rather than pay overtime rates.

There is a provision in the Bill dealing with the hours of trading for public houses, hotels, restaurants, eating houses, tea-rooms, etc., and once again these hours have been whittled down as regards half-holidays. If this measure is agreed to, overtime will have to be paid after 2 p.m. on a half-holiday. But the general public requires the opportunity of going into these places after knock off time.

If the Bill is agreed to, I am afraid that the proprietors of these establishments will in all probability bring forward the meal hours so that the staff can leave prior to the time at which overtime rates become affective. Therefore this amendment will bring certain difficulties to the general public because they will be unable to obtain meals, etc., on a public holiday.

I think we as a Parliament should endeavour to bring the factories and shops legislation up to date. There are a number of outmoded provisions in the Act, as the Minister mentioned when introducing this Bill. So it would be better if this measure were withdrawn for the time being, and a good deal of consideration given to re-drafting the Act to bring it up to date in all respects. If I could help the Minister in any way in bringing the Act up to date I would be delighted to co-operate with him.

I think that in most country centres the factories and shops inspectors do not police the requirements of the Act as much as they should do, and there are certain aspects which should be policed more than is done at present. The inspectors are given powers in regard to sanitation, and such like. But as regards sanitation, in my view that should be the responsibility of the local authority. That body should also be able to decide what cubic space is required for a worker, and that should not be the responsibility of the factories and shops inspectors. I hope the Minister will give due consideration to the request that he withdraw this Bill in order to bring the whole Act up to date.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 12 midnight.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 24th October, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

NURSES.

Conditions at Final Examination.

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

(1) Is it a fact that at the recent final examination for nurses the candidates were not allowed to take from the examination room a copy of the medical paper, or the general nursing paper, or even the pieces of paper on which they wrote their own notes which assisted them in formulating their answers? If so, what was the reason?

(2) Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House a copy of the medical paper and one of the general nursing paper?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (for the Chief Secretary) replied:

(1) Yes. This is the usual and necessary practice followed by examining bodies when the "objective" system of examination is followed.

(2) No. These papers may be seen in confidence by the hon. member if he cares to approach the chairman of the Nurses' Registration Board.