

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th December, 1933.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills:—

- 1, Constitution Acts Amendment.
- 2, Geraldton Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial Institute Lands Vesting.

QUESTIONS (2)—EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS.

Railway Passes for Juniors.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Employment: 1, Is he aware that W. Phease, aged 15 years, was "picked up" for the work of tomato picking at Geraldton for a period of seven weeks? 2, Is he aware that during that period Phease earned a total of £5 10s.? 3, Is he aware that the Government charged Phease £3 15s. for railway fares? 4, Is it the policy of the Government to make children accept such jobs and then to absorb practically all their earnings in railway fares? 5, Will he consider the granting of some rebate in cases such as this? 6, As goldfields boys sent to coastal jobs receive free passes, why do not metropolitan boys receive free passes to country jobs? 7, As boys under the Child Welfare Department receive free passes to jobs, why do not boys who are not under that department receive free passes? 8, As men on sustenance during 1931, 1932 and 1933 have received free passes upon being sent to sustenance jobs in the country, why should not boys who do not cost the Government anything for sustenance receive free passes also?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: 1, Yes, by the Boys' Employment

League. 2, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, Applications supplying particulars will be considered on their merits. 6, 7, 8, Answered by 4 and 5.

Clearing at Wooroloo.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Employment: 1, Is he aware that men between 60 and 70 years of age are being forced to clear land at piecework rates at Wooroloo? 2, Is it a fact that these men are supposed to be on light duties? 3, Is he aware that five of these old men have lately been injured whilst felling timber?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: 1, The men employed at Wooroloo have been placed there at the request of their own representatives and are employed on work which, as far as humanly possible, is regulated in accordance with their age and physical fitness. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, No. There have been a few injuries to men of varying ages but nothing out of proportion to those occurring in other camps where a similarly large number of men are employed.

BILL—PURCHASERS' PROTECTION.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Contracts by married women:

Mr. LATHAM: I hope the Committee will not agree to the clause, which is an insult to the intelligence of women. In my opinion, women have as much intelligence as men. In these matters they cannot involve their husbands because the husband is not liable for any debts incurred by his wife except those relating to his household.

The Premier: Indirectly, he is.

Mr. LATHAM: Not if she has property of her own.

The Premier: The husband would have to pay her debts, otherwise she might be sent to prison.

Mr. LATHAM: There is a point in that. Of course, the Premier might not like his wife to go to gaol, but some men might be pleased at the prospect! At any rate, I do not think a magistrate would send a married woman to gaol if she could not pay.

The Premier: Of course he would. There is no distinction between a married woman and a man.

Mr. LATHAM: I am surprised at this clause and members on the Government cross-benches should read it carefully. As it stands, the interpretation of "married woman," in Subclause 4, would seem to imply that the possession of additional property indicated additional brains. I disagree with that point of view.

The Premier: The wife may be in a position to pay with means of her own.

Mr. LATHAM: The usual argument we hear from Labour members is against the property qualification. I hope the Committee will read the clause carefully and see what it actually means. I am sorry the member for Forrest, the only lady member of the House, is not present, because I would like to hear her view on this clause. We have found women intelligent enough to allow them to sit in this House, to occupy important positions, and even to be manageresses. If we are to grant this special protection to married women, we should see to it that men have the same benefit. Many men sign contracts without reading them, and it is impossible to legislate to protect a fool against himself. I do not see why married women should be singled out in this fashion for special legislation. In every respect we grant them equal rights with men, but now we are asked to agree to a clause that suggests that a married woman has not sufficient intelligence to exercise that right. I shall vote against the clause.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I shall not swallow the bait held out by the Leader of the Opposition, although I sit on the Government cross benches.

Mr. Hawke: On a very cross bench!

Mr. Sampson: You are not one of the bad boys!

Mr. NEEDHAM: Even at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the member for Subiaco, and running the gauntlet of his eloquence, I propose to move an amendment.

Mr. Hawke: You will run a grave risk.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I believe in according protection where necessary, but I do not think that that protection should last for 12 months which is an unconscionable period within which any person, married or single, is to be allowed to complete a contract for

the purchase of land or anything else. Surely six months is a reasonable time within which such a person should be expected to make up his or her mind. If at the end of six months the transaction is not completed, it should go by the board. The member for Northam asked why a married woman should be allowed 12 months and other purchasers were required to complete the business within a much shorter period. I move an amendment—

That in line 8 of Subclause 1 the word "twelve" be struck out.

If my amendment be agreed to, I shall move a further amendment to insert "six" in lieu of "twelve," and that will reduce the period to six months.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I think the member for Perth is under a misapprehension.

Mr. Moloney: He has slipped a little bit.

Hon. N. KEENAN: He has slipped in a way that the member for Subiaco does not appreciate, because, as the clause is drafted, a married woman can repudiate a contract at any time—it might be five years—if the contract or agreement is not ratified by her husband. There is no limitation to the period in that respect; the limitation of 12 months referred to by the member for Perth applies to the alternative which relates to the execution of a contract. I think the first portion of Subclause 1 goes to far too great a length in order to protect a married woman. At present she enjoys all the rights of a man. She has the same right to dispose of her property as a man has, and can incur the same liabilities, except that her husband has to pay her bills if they are incurred in the course of the ordinary management of her home. No doubt that exception is of great advantage to married women, and some day men may rise up and demand its revision. Now we are setting out that a married woman is a kind of person that requires protection. I understand that the reason for the provision is that married women who enter into contracts, although for the time being not liable for any more than their separate estates, may, on the death of the husband, become entitled to his estate and the vendors could stand aside and wait for that time.

Mr. Latham: It might apply equally to a single woman.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It would not be likely to happen often, and I doubt whether

we would be justified in legislating for such cases. The Minister, however, might be justified in legislating to some extent, but I doubt whether the clause should go so far. Probably the Minister is under the impression that the limitation of 12 months applies to such a case, but it applies only to the alternative. The amendment of the member for Perth is reasonable. If we allow a married woman six months in which to repudiate a contract, it should be sufficient.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The select committee, in their definition of "married woman," have gone a long way towards meeting the objections raised to the clause as originally drafted. While married women have their rights, the definition of "married woman" provides that the clause shall not apply excepting to those married women who have substantial separate estate or income. If they had substantial separate estate, they would have the means to meet any undertaking into which they had entered. As the Premier interjected, a man would not like the prospect of his wife's being imprisoned for not satisfying a debt. That has to be guarded against. As mentioned by the member for Nedlands, a married woman might have no estate, but if her husband died, she might become possessed of estate and the company with whom she had entered into a contract could then sue her. I do not regard the period of 12 months as too long. I am desirous of protecting married women throughout the currency of the contract. Independently of the completion of the contract, she should be able, within 12 months, to repudiate the contract. The select committee have also extended the definition of the reference to "residing." The term now embraces any cases where the husband is periodically absent from the place where his wife resides in connection with any trade, profession or business in which he is interested. As the provision applies only to married women possessed of no separate estate the protection should be retained.

MR. NEEDHAM: The first part of the clause gives a married woman an opportunity to repudiate a contract unless it is ratified by her husband at any time, but the latter part of the clause gives the long period of 12 months in which to repudiate, whether the contract be completed or not. If the contract be completed, even at the end of 12 months, a married woman could repudiate,

provided it had not been ratified by her husband.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	..	17
Majority for					7

AYES.

Mr. Clotbier	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hawke	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Latham	Mr. Warner
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Welsh
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. North	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brockman	Mr. Moloney
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munste
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Troy
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Millington	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

MR. NEEDHAM: I move an amendment—

That "six" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

HON. N. KEENAN: I wish to direct attention to a somewhat extraordinary anomaly. Subclause 4 defines a married woman as one who is residing with her husband, is maintained by him and has no substantial separate estate or income that would enable her to complete the contract. Subclause 1 deals with a completed contract which may be set aside, and under it a married woman may secure relief, but under Subclause 4 she would not be a married woman within the meaning of the subclause, and would not be entitled to relief. Such an anomaly might produce profit for the profession to which I belong, but is not calculated to give satisfaction to purchasers.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I cannot follow the argument of the member for Nedlands. Provision is made whereby a married woman may at any time cancel a contract.

HON. N. KEENAN: But a married woman is defined as one who has not sufficient means to enable her to fulfil the contract.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: She is a woman who has no substantial

separate estate or adequate income to enable her to complete the contract.

Mr. Latham: But she may have had adequate income to enable her to make the payments.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: She may have had sufficient money with which to pay the instalments, but provision is required to repudiate the contract within a given period. It probably would not be her money that was paid to meet the instalments. Many married women have been imposed upon by land agents, having been induced to sign contracts committing themselves or their husbands to future payments, and we desire to provide protection in such cases.

The Premier: You are virtually committing the husband because the woman has no separate estate with which to pay.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: There comes a time when pressure is put on the wife to pay and the husband has to decide whether he will pay or let the wife be proceeded against.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is perfectly clear that if a woman were possessed of sufficient means to complete a contract and did complete it, she would not be entitled to any protection, because she would not be a married woman within the meaning of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Members are getting away from the amendment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: As the Bill is drawn, the expression "married woman" will be restricted to a woman who has not sufficient means to enable her to complete a contract.

Mr. Moloney: That is what we want.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Is it not extraordinary that we should give protection to a married woman only because she has not sufficient money to complete a contract? We might very well protect all married women, and not make this distinction. Let a married woman have the measure of protection which the House thinks necessary owing to the weakness of her sex or for any other reason.

Mr. McDONALD: As the clause is drawn, there may be room for difference of opinion as to how far legislation of this kind is desirable. However, the clause is based substantially upon the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner, who, of course, had an opportunity of ascertaining what had been done and of hearing the experiences of witnesses. The wording of the

clause gave the select committee much anxiety, because it was desired to protect people who needed protection and, at the same time, not to restrict people who, by reason of their means, should be in a position to enter into contracts without any restriction whatever. There is something in what the member for Nedlands has said with regard to the way in which the clause is expressed, and it might be preferable to recast it in order to make the meaning clear. Perhaps the Minister for Employment might consent to the clause being deferred and reconsidered.

The CHAIRMAN: Members have got away from the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The argument is that we should differentiate between the sexes, but the Leader of the Opposition said it would be an insult to womenfolk to insert a clause such as this in the Bill. The select committee did not desire to insert a protective clause unless they thought it were absolutely necessary. The Royal Commissioner indicated that some measure of protection is necessary. Now it becomes a question of what form the protection should take. The select committee do not desire to protect a married woman who has a substantial and separate estate of her own. It is unnecessary to protect her, if she wishes to enter into business transactions.

Mr. Moloney: That has been emphasised by many members.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: There should be a line of demarcation between the married woman who has separate, substantial estate of her own and is therefore able to meet any commitments she may enter into in connection with land transactions, and the married woman who has no separate, substantial estate with which she can meet such commitments. The clause is clear and gives to the latter class of women the protection they should have.

Amendment put and passed: the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Certain property offered for sale at houses to be available for inspection:

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: 1 move—

That the word "subdivisional" be inserted before "land" wherever "land" appears.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15—Provisions relating to contracts made by a person acting in contravention of Section 12:

Mr. LATHAM: I move—

That in line 3 the word "twelve" be deleted and "fourteen" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

New clause:

Mr. WILSON: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 11:—"The court may grant relief to any purchaser who has entered into a contract of sale prior to the commencement of this Act, and in such case the provisions of the preceding section and the next ensuing section shall apply with the necessary modifications."

Last week I asked certain questions with respect to the doubtful transactions of some companies. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I desire to give the Committee my reasons for moving the insertion of the new clause in the Bill. Some time ago I received a letter, dated 13th November, 1933, from a man named Richards, of Collie, as follows:—

As a result of a court case held here in Collie last August, in which I had to appear on a summons drawn up by Land and Homes, Mr. Crockett, the Magistrate, convicted me and considered I could pay 10s. per week towards £27, for which the company were suing me.

Land and Homes Ltd. were suing Richards for £27. It is only fair to state that they never received one penny on account of the contract. The letter continues:—

My average earnings were £3 10s. per week, given in on that case, which is hardly enough to keep wife and three children, together with buying the house in which we are living.

Richards has been buying a house since 1928. I have particulars of the contract here, from which it appears he is paying £1 per week, plus about 5s. per week interest on the balance of the principal. He paid that money out of the £3 10s. he was earning. Richards then goes on to say:—

Seeing that I have not been able to pay anything towards this conviction, the sergeant of police appeared two weeks back with a commitment summons for £5 17s. 6d., or default 30 days. Three weeks' grace were allowed me, and as that expires on Friday

next, and I have not been able to pay anything on the summons, am I getting a fair deal in having to do the 30 days?

On the 26th November last Mr. Richards wrote to me again as follows:—

We had a visit from the sergeant yesterday and he said that, seeing that I had to go to gaol, what day would suit me during next week.

He was an accommodating sort of officer of police. On the next day I received a telegram from Mrs. Richards informing me—

Husband taken this morning to Bunbury gaol.

I would not have said anything about this except that Land & Homes, Ltd., took occasion to write to the Press about this particular case last week and said what was not true.

The Premier: Land & Homes ought to be deported from the State.

Mr. WILSON: And I would be very willing to help the Premier to deport them. I should have thought that after the exposures in connection with the land frauds investigated by the Royal Commission that inquired into transactions returned soldiers had with land dealers some years ago, other people would have been more careful. I interviewed Mrs. Richards last week and found that she had three children under 10 years of age. The husband is now in gaol. The statement made to me was that Mr. Richards met in Collie a school mate of his named Harold Cooper. Cooper suggested that Richards should buy a block of land in Perth from Land & Homes, Ltd. Richards replied, "No, I have plenty to do at the present time with my money." Cooper afterwards went to Richards' house when Richards was away and asked Mrs. Richards to buy the land in Perth, and he told her how nice it would be for her to own a home in the city. Mrs. Richards replied that she did not want any more houses or land as she was then paying off for the house in which she and her family were living. Cooper afterwards met Richards in Collie and told him that Mrs. Richards had said she would like to have a block of land near Perth. Richards replied, "Very well, if that is the case she can have it." Thereupon he signed a contract. When Richards returned to his home he told his wife what he had done and she replied that she told Cooper no such thing, that in fact she told him she did not want the land.

Richards then wrote to Land & Homes, Ltd., explained what had happened and added that he could not pay any money because of the payments he was making for the house he had in Collie. He wrote three letters, but received no reply to the first two. To the third, this letter came from Land & Homes, Ltd.:—

Your letter of the 24th inst to hand, contents of which have been noted. We have to advise that the company does not resell or undertake to resell individual allotments. Your communication will be handed to our representative, Mr. Cooper, and we will get him to write to you direct.

Mr. Cooper never wrote that letter to Mr. Richards.

We would be obliged if you would forward us your cheque for the amount of 30s. being the amount now due and owing.

Richards has never paid anything. In the meantime he got a lawyer in Collie to try to negotiate on his behalf and although the negotiations between the solicitor and Land & Homes came to nothing, the legal costs came to £2 8s. 8d. I have the receipts here. In last Friday's paper Land & Homes, Ltd., said that the magistrate's order was for 5s. This is contrary to what Richards and his wife told me. They examined the court records which showed that 10s. was the order made by the magistrate. In company with Messrs. Lowry, McCabe, Buckley, and Glancy, and in the presence of the constable in charge, I interviewed Richards on Sunday last. I repeated to him what Mrs. Richards had told me and he said that the particulars given me by his wife were correct in every detail. He further added that he had examined the court records and saw the words written plainly, "Order for 10s. per week." Therefore, as Richards was induced to buy this land by means of a trick, it is due to us to offer him the protection to which he is entitled. Only to-day I have received a letter from a man named Ferguson in which he says that he, too, bought a block of land from another land syndicate some time ago, and that he has already paid over £70, as well as rates and taxes, and that his desire now is to forfeit the lot. The agents, however, will not allow him to do so.

Mr. Stubbs: There are a lot of cases like that.

Mr. WILSON: This man goes on to explain that his wife has been on the verge of a breakdown because of the threatening lawyer's letters, and he adds that he has no

possible chance of paying anything more, not even 2s. 6d. per week, which he was trying to do up to September, 1933. The lawyer, however, insists on the payment of 5s. per week. People who are lured into signing contracts by means of lies and trickery should receive protection, and the time is over-ripe for passing legislation of this type. Reverting again to Richards, he has been paying £1 5s. per week to complete the purchase of his house. Richards has always been a steady man and his wages have been £3 10s. per week. The fact that out of that sum he has been able to pay 25s. weekly for many years towards the purchase of the house will show the type of man he is, and it is hardly likely, with that load on his shoulders, that he would agree to speculate in land elsewhere. There is no doubt about it, he was tricked into signing that contract, and therefore justice should be done to him now. The other man, who paid £70 off his purchase, is quite willing to forfeit the lot but he is not permitted to do so. What is the world coming to? As a member of the Royal Commission that inquired into the soldiers' dealings in land some years ago, I have a recollection of the manner in which many of those soldiers were tricked into paying huge sums for land that was practically worthless. This kind of thing has been going on almost ever since, and we should do our best to stop it. I know of a case where a man 32 years ago was induced to buy a block of land near the place where dogs are quietly put away not far from Perth. I visited the place four weeks ago and found it was a low swamp not fit to build a house on. The purchaser is trying now to give away his land but no one wants it even as a gift. I trust the Committee will pass the clause that I have submitted so that protection may be afforded those who might easily be tricked. I commend the new clause to the Committee.

Mr. RAPHAEL: These go-getters tried to foist some of their land on me during the successful run their salesmen had, and pictures were painted of what a particular estate was going to become. When I was first interviewed I was told that the trams were going through to the estate and that I would be getting a wonderful bargain if I took some of this land at £150 a block. A few months before, however, I had been offered land about 300 yards from this estate for £10 a block, and yet Land & Homes

wanted £150 for a block. I could quote a dozen instances at Victoria Park of the tales related by these sharks, thieves and thugs, when trying to sell their land, even to people on the dole. I remember the case of a foreigner who had not been here more than 18 months. He was on part-time work which took him into the country and his wife and young children were living in Victoria Park. Land & Homes succeeded in palming off some of their land on to this man and, while he was in the country, his wife, who was unprotected in her home, was approached and told that if she did not keep up the payments she would be sold up or put into gaol. That was the threat used by the thugs of Land & Holmes. Therefore, I hope that the Committee will agree to the new clause so as to afford protection to a section of the community who have been the victims of go-getters.

Mr. CROSS: I intend to support the clause, and I would have supported it with greater pleasure if it had been specially aimed at Land & Homes, Ltd. The only thing I fear is that it might implicate others, though at the same time I am satisfied that this manner of doing business is not entirely confined to Land & Homes, Ltd.

Mr. Wilson: It is not.

Mr. CROSS: There are a number of firms that have sprung up like mushrooms and most of them have resorted to practices like those about which we have heard so much lately. Since I spoke on this Bill a few weeks back quite a number of people have congratulated me on the case that I put up and all have asked me to endeavour to get for them relief from having to make payments for their blocks of land that they had been tricked into buying. I know of one man who has moved from house to house in the hope of dodging Land & Homes because they were trying to force him to keep the contract into the signing of which his wife was tricked during the period of his absence. It is a pity that we are not treating the company in a manner similar to that adopted by South Australia, from which State they were hounded out. I intend to support the clause in the hope that some of the people who deserve to get the relief may be able to secure it from the court.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: In introducing the Bill I mentioned that there were many provisions which, if we were setting out to clean up the whole posi-

tion, I would have liked to insert. I also mentioned that the House had agreed to the appointment of a Royal Commission to report on practices indulged in by a certain firm. The Royal Commissioner submitted a report, and this has been taken into consideration by the Government. As representative of the Government, in drafting the Bill I kept as closely as possible to what the report contained. Since then this Chamber appointed a select committee in order to gather, as far as possible, the opinions of all sections. The select committee reported. They fully realised the necessity for giving relief, if possible, to purchasers who had been dealt with previously. The Commissioner's report, however, makes no such suggestion as is contained in the new clause. In order to ensure some degree of relief, it is desirable that the new clause should not be pressed. Subclause 2 of Clause 11 already provides that relief shall be given in respect of judgments obtained prior to the passing of the Bill. The purpose is to enable the courts to relieve certain people against whom judgments have already been given. Such people, on application to the court, can secure the relief indicated by Subclause 2 of Clause 11. I do not wish to be placed in the position of having to vote against a provision to which in other circumstances I would agree.

Mr. McDONALD: I also hope that the new clause will not be pressed. The select committee gave careful consideration to the question of retrospective legislation. The select committee also considered the legislation of South Australia, and went so far as to suggest retrospective action regarding protection of houses and furniture. There was justification for that, because the company chiefly concerned gave an undertaking that they would not enforce any liability against houses and furniture.

Mr. Wilson: Why did the company put Richards in gaol?

Mr. McDONALD: It is an old saying, but a true one, that hard cases make bad law. I wish the member for Collie to rest assured that nobody feels more strongly than I do about the kind of case he has mentioned. I do not think I can for a moment be accused of holding a brief for either Land and Homes, Ltd., or any other company selling land.

Mr. Wilson: No one suggests that.

Mr. McDONALD: If retrospective legislation is passed for one set of people, it is

very hard to show why it should not be passed for another set. In South Australia there has been some degree of retrospective legislation regarding the sale of subdivisional land, but that was done by a separate and temporary measure. The suggested new clause should not find a place in a measure of this kind, which is to operate permanently for the protection of buyers of subdivisional land.

Mr. THORN: I hope the new clause will be carried. Such a provision is long overdue. The position has become so serious that we must deal with it. The operations of Land and Homes, Ltd., have caused more distress in the community than any previous operations connected with the sale of land. Some sad cases have come under my own notice. If Land and Homes, Ltd., continue with their present methods, many people will be forced into bankruptcy. Purchasers have been misled, and have signed contracts without knowing what they were signing. Many cases have been mentioned where people who have been asked to sign slips of paper stating that they had been taken to inspect certain blocks, found a few days later that they had signed contracts of purchase.

New clause put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The carrying of the new clause necessitates a consequential amendment in Clause 2.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. P. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.43] in moving the second reading said: In introducing this measure I desire to state that the principal Act has been in operation for several years. Hon. members associated with country interests are aware of the effects of that legislation, and how it has helped farmers who have been brought under its operation. During the year ended 31st March, 1932, the farmers carried on under the Act numbered 415, and for these farmers £167,000 was made available to crop 230,000 acres of land and to fallow 110,000 acres. The advances were practically repaid in full,

and in addition £65,000 was distributed amongst other creditors. In that year the price of wheat to the farmer averaged about 2s. 9d. per bushel. In the year 1932-33, 382 of the original 415 farmers were again carried on, showing a reduction of 33 in the original number, and additional applicants to come under the Act brought the total up to 580. Thus 580 farmers operated under the Act during the year 1932-33. The total advances to farmers that year amounted to £265,000, and included funds released by creditors from the previous year. Those advances were made to crop 250,000 acres, of which 236,000 acres were for wheat, while 167,000 acres were under fallow that year. The price of wheat last year averaged 2s. 5d. per bushel, and the total amount repaid last season was £221,000, and there was distributed to other creditors £26,000. Members will notice that last year there was repaid to creditors who had arranged to carry on the farmers, £44,000 less than the amount advanced. For the 1933-34 season, which will end in March next, 478 out of 550 settlers helped during the previous year were again assisted, and, with the addition of those who came under the Act this year, the total number of farmers assisted during the present year was 512. Those settlers have seeded 237,000 acres, of which 219,000 were for wheat, and they were to fallow 166,000 acres. The method of finance for this season is:—

	£
New moneys to be advanced by the Associated Banks	66,833
Moneys, including horse loans to be advanced by the Agricultural Bank	1,288
Proceeds released by creditors ..	51,158
Supplies in kind (super, etc.) ..	106,741
Supplies provided by settlers out of subsidy	11,065
Total	£237,085

Considering the position of the wheat industry, I think the response by the creditors and others concerned can be regarded as reasonably satisfactory. Under Section 13(b) of the Act, which provides for bills of sale arrangements not necessitating the issue of stay orders, the following figures disclose the operations under that section during the past three years. For the 1931-32 season, the area cropped under that section totalled 48,000 acres, and the

advances represented £41,000. Those advances are distinct from the others I have referred to under the Act. For the 1932-33 season, the farmers who were assisted cropped 56,000 acres, and the advances totalled £51,000. For the season 1933-34, the area to be cropped is 68,000 acres, and the advances will total £78,000. Under this particular section of the Act, the number of applications approved totalled 325, so that last year, under the Act, over 800 farmers were assisted. Since the inception of the Act, statistics show that 944 stay orders were issued; 601 successful meetings with creditors were held; in 62 instances satisfactory arrangements were made and stay orders were withdrawn, while in 281 cases no satisfactory arrangements were found possible. The Bill proposes to re-enact the legislation for one year, and certain amendments are included, but they embody no drastic alterations. The amendments are regarded as necessary because those charged with the administration of the Act have found the amendments will make the operations of the measure more successful and satisfactory. The amendments embodied in the Bill include provision for the extension of some sections. The definition of the word "farmer" requires some extension to bring in executors and trustees under bequests. The scope of the stay order has been extended to embrace all assets of farmers. Certain amendments are included to define the position more clearly. The powers of receivers in relation to produce are dealt with. Power is given to the director to appoint auditors to audit balance sheets provided by receivers. It has been found necessary to provide, also, that where a farmer dies, his estate may be carried on pending a new meeting of creditors. A quorum is also provided for. Secured creditors are permitted to make further advances on the security if production will be increased thereby. That is to say, they may make further advances if by so doing they can make their security sounder and effect further production. New wire netting is to be a charge on proceeds by, of course, instalments. The farmer will be able to approach the department to secure his netting supplies. A clause is also included in the Bill simplifying the statement of the position in connection with hills of sale, but nothing in the clause will affect properly registered bills of sale or statutory liens.

Mr. Latham: I think it will.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Has the Leader of the Opposition read the Bill?

Mr. Latham: I have not had time to go into it thoroughly, but glancing through it I think the clause will have that effect.

Mr. Ferguson: Yes, if the bills of sale are given within six months.

Mr. Latham: If a bill of sale is given within six months of the stay order, I think it will set aside the stay order.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am glad the Leader of the Opposition referred to the point, because I raised it myself with the Crown Solicitor.

Mr. Latham: I notice that the trustees are still to get their £10 a year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But they will not be able to get both. The court has ruled that they can get both the £10 and the 3 per cent. The Bill provides that in future they will be able to get £10 or the 3 per cent.

Mr. Latham: Has that matter been before the court?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think so.

Mr. Latham: I have not heard of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have been informed that it has been before the court. At any rate, the Bill provides that the trustees can get £10 or 3 per cent. They will be able to take one or the other, but not both. There has been a lot of criticism of the Act, but, on the whole, it can be said that an atmosphere of good-will has surrounded the operations of the Act. In fact, there must be an atmosphere of good-will; otherwise the Act could not be operative at all. There is no compulsion under the Act to compel any creditor to carry on a farmer; it must be done quite voluntarily. There must have been an atmosphere of good-will surrounding the administration of the Act, inasmuch as 800 settlers were carried on last year. Although I have read criticisms and listened to controversies regarding the Act, since I have been Minister for Lands not one settler who is under the Act has made a complaint.

Mr. Latham: The criticism has always been indulged in by persons who have never been under the Act, and never worked under it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At any rate, I can say that not one personal com-

plaint has been made to me with reference to the operations of the Act. As the affairs of 800 settlers were dealt with last year, there must have been—and there ought to be—an atmosphere of good-will, otherwise I would have heard something about it. The creditors, of course, have been much maligned, and I can understand it in these days when people are in difficulties. There is an air of resentment because of prevailing conditions, which are very difficult. Those conditions create an atmosphere that causes discontent and hostility. Nevertheless I think the creditors have responded very well to the spirit of the Act. I regret that the enactment of this legislation is again necessary. I would have been delighted if the position regarding wheat had so improved in Western Australia as to make it unnecessary.

Mr. Ferguson: Would not we all?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am hopeful that the position will improve. I do not say that I expect it to improve this year or next year, but I hope it will improve soon. I want to point out that we had absolutely no control over the conditions that developed in Western Australia, as a result of which the price obtained for our wheat was not payable. They were governed by considerations over which we had no control whatever. The Federal Government could do something to assist, and intend doing something this year, when they will distribute amongst farmers upwards of £3,000,000, if the legislation proposed is agreed to. Last year about £2,000,000, I think, was provided for the farmers of Australia, and of that amount between £300,000 and £400,000 was distributed in Western Australia. Under the present Commonwealth scheme, I believe about £600,000 will be available for farmers in this State and if that be so, then our farmers will receive, as the result of that Commonwealth assistance, about one-third more than they did last year. Of course I cannot say that definitely, and I must be very careful in making any statement regarding the position. In saying this, I add the necessary qualification that the position has not yet been definitely worked out, but so far as we can judge, our farmers are likely to receive one-third more than they did last year. I am very glad, as I know members generally are, that the wool position is much brighter. Earlier in the year those interested in the wool industry proposed that a rehabilitation

plan should be agreed upon to overcome their difficulties. I fully appreciate that one swallow does not make a summer. I do not pretend that present-day prices mean that the wool position is secure. Nevertheless, we must be thankful that prices this year have, on the whole, been satisfactory; practically more than double those that ruled last year. I am sure that the wool growers must be much happier now than they were 12 months ago. I hope the improved position will continue. On the other hand, we cannot hold out much hope for an improved wheat position this year. It appears to me that the wheat problem is much greater than the wool problem because of over-production and the fact that countries that were formerly buyers of our wheat are now large producers themselves. It may have given great satisfaction to Signor Mussolini to announce to his people that they had accomplished a wonderful achievement in producing all the wheat necessary to meet Italy's requirements, but the announcement was not welcome to us. It is a much more serious matter from our standpoint. The same position applies in other countries, like Germany, France, and even England. This year the British Government paid out between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 to wheat producers as a bounty to encourage the production of wheat. That is a very good thing for the English farmer.

Mr. Patrick: They have a fixed price for a definite quality of wheat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and they have bonussed it. That is a very good thing for the English farmer, but we feel it is ruining our markets; the policy of England in regard to their wheat farmers is a very serious thing for our country. It is quite possible that many of the farmers will reduce their wheat acreage. I think they would be wise in doing so and changing over to something else. Quite a number have been carrying on for the last few years with their own resources in the hope that prices would improve. But they will have to grow less wheat and go in for more stock. I advocated that three years ago, when first the position arose. That policy should be pursued by all; then one day when every country does the same and the tide goes out, there will be a shortage of wheat and in consequence the price will rise. And that might be very soon, too, for one or two bad seasons are sufficient to set up a short-

age of food-stuffs. Certainly I hope the time will soon arrive when the wheat-grower comes into his own again. We ought not to be putting all our eggs in one basket. To avoid that risk the farmers must be helped to lessen their acreage of wheat and produce other commodities.

Mr. Patrick: Some of the districts are equipped only for growing wheat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We know that; there is no fencing and no water supply for stock. If the country has the resources and can repair those omissions, it would be one of the best works we could embark upon—the provision of water supply and fencing and stock. No doubt the farmer who has 300 or 400 sheep has received a nice cheque for his wool, which will provide at all events a living allowance for him and his family, apart entirely from his crop proceeds. The Act cannot be judged only on the number actually working under its provisions. Its effect elsewhere is noteworthy, and its general effect has been good. I am not throwing bouquets at the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Latham: No, but I think you might well do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have supported this legislation from the time it first came into the House. I was a member of the select committee that recommended the Bill.

Mr. Patrick: The select committee did not leave too much of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They usefully reduced it; previously it was over-loaded and was not a bit workable.

Mr. Latham: You took out quite a lot, and in another place more was taken out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is now a simple, workable measure. The basis which is observed in connection with farmers whose affairs are administered under the Act has become in very many instances the basis of amicable arrangements outside, thus obviating the necessity for stay orders. The Act provides no compulsion on the creditor, yet it is a sort of policeman. Under the Act the farmer can get a consideration which he could not get if he had to ask for it privately. The fact that the legislation has had its influence apart altogether from the farmers under the Act is especially worthy of note in relation to the undertaking given by the Federal Attorney General to submit

amendments to the Commonwealth Bankruptcy Act, which if passed will allow State legislation of this nature to function freely, and permit of the State Act becoming the accepted medium for arranging farmers' affairs where practicable, so that farming operations may be continued.

Mr. Latham: But they promised that when Mr. Brennan was Attorney General.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but Mr. Latham has had a very much easier passage than Mr. Brennan had, and so he has time to give to these affairs. The officer administering this Act has many callers looking for advice as to the best method of dealing with a creditor or creditors who may be applying pressure. The measure has been of great use to the farmers, notwithstanding that many of its operations have been the subject of criticism. I repeat, that not a single farmer operating under this legislation has made any protest to me. The Bill if passed will operate for one year. There have been demands elsewhere for drastic legislation regarding farmers' debts. I hope during the recess to go thoroughly into the whole position and get some knowledge of the New South Wales Act, which has been put forward as a measure to meet the situation.

The Premier: And there is a new Act in South Australia also.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but that is not so much applauded as the Act of New South Wales.

Mr. Latham: It is a bit harder.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, very much harder. As I say, I hope during the recess to go thoroughly into the farmers' problems and difficulties, and to submit to the House next session legislation of a more comprehensive nature with a view to giving the farmer hope and confidence in the future. I do not think the Government ought to be stampeded into legislation which has not been fully investigated. Some people think that schemes they put forward will meet the situation, but in my opinion those schemes will not meet the situation, and may destroy the farmers' credit. So I do not propose to be stampeded into any such legislation until I really know where we are going, which can only be learned after investigation. The Government have appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the affairs of the Agricultural Bank. That Commission, I

hope, will report next year, before the House meets. So it would be unwise in the Government to introduce legislation dealing with farmers' problems in face of the fact that a Royal Commission is now inquiring into those problems; for the Agricultural Bank is the largest single creditor of the farmers. When that Royal Commission reports, the Government may make that report the basis of any new legislation. So on this occasion I propose merely to submit the amending Bill, to operate for one year, after which I hope we shall have more comprehensive legislation based on the knowledge that what we propose will be of lasting benefit to the farmers and the State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Premier, so much of the Standing Orders were suspended as to enable the Bill to be passed through all its stages at the one sitting.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

First Reading.

Bill introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

Second Reading.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [6.13] in moving the second reading said: The Bill merely appropriates the expenditure of money already approved by Parliament under Revenue and Loan Account. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LOAN, £3,946,000.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [7.35] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to authorise the raising of money to carry out the works approved by the House on the Loan Estimates. In addition to the amount proposed for loan works, it is necessary to secure authority to borrow the amount provided by the Commonwealth Bank through the Loan Council for revenue deficits. That accounts for the fact that the total amount of the Loan Bill is considerably in excess of the amount of the Loan Estimates passed by this Chamber. We have to raise a loan to cover deficits.

Mr. Stubbs: A short-dated loan?

The PREMIER: The money to cover the deficits has to be raised by loan, whether short or long, and we need authority under the Loan Bill to do it. This Bill, therefore, covers not only the total amount of the Loan Estimates passed by this House, but also two years' deficits on revenue account. The amount asked for is £3,946,000 and of that £2,646,000 is required for works and £1,300,000 to meet revenue deficits. I wish members to bear that in mind. The total of the Loan Bill appears to be high, but it covers two years of revenue deficits. Last year the amount provided for was £2,176,000, and the increase over the amount provided last year is due, in part, to the gradual exhaustion of authorities obtained in the past under previous Acts, as well as to the inclusion of the amount advanced to meet revenue deficits. When reviewing past operations, we must remember that additional moneys were raised by means other than a Loan Act. For instance, the expenditure under the Loan Acts of the past three years did not cover the whole of the money borrowed. In 1930-31 a sum of £600,000

was raised by the issue of mortgage bonds and debentures.

Mr. Latham: From the Commonwealth Bank?

The PREMIER: Under the Agricultural Bank Act and the Finance and Development Act. The latter Act was passed during the first year of office of the Government with which the hon. member was associated. That amount did not figure in the loan expenditure for that year, so that actually the loan expenditure during that year was £600,000 greater than would appear from the figures. The money was raised under a separate borrowing power. In 1931-32 a further £100,000 was raised by similar means. Altogether, therefore, £700,000 was raised by those means apart from the amount raised under Loan Acts. The money was borrowed from the Commonwealth Bank and was at call. We are paying interest on it now, and the money is still at call.

Mr. Latham: The total has been reduced.

The PREMIER: Slightly reduced, but the money is at call and I hope the bank will not call it up. I do not know how we should manage if the bank did call it up. I mention these facts to indicate that the actual expenditure of loan moneys in those two years was £700,000 more than it is generally believed to have been. This avenue of raising money is now closed to us, and so we must raise the money for all requirements under the sole authority of a Loan Act. The other Act is still in existence, but money is not available to us under that authority. Previous to 1930 revenue deficits were financed out of authorised loans, but with the exhaustion of loan funds and the closure of the loan market, it became necessary to obtain assistance from the Commonwealth Bank through the issue of Treasury bills. Those bills form part of the public debt, and as such they require Parliamentary authorisation under the Loan Act. Accordingly, provision is made in the Bill for authority to borrow £1,300,000. The estimated revenue deficit is £748,465, and the difference represents part of revenue deficits not authorised by any previous Loan Acts.

Mr. Latham: That is by arrangement with the Loan Council?

The PREMIER: Yes. That brings the total of the Loan Bill above the total agreed

to under the Loan Estimates. The provision of funds for entirely new works is limited to the Yuna-Dartmoor railway and the Southern Cross Southwards railway, though the commencement of the Canning reservoir may almost be regarded as a new work. Last year part of the floating debt was funded out of the loan raised in November, 1932. Treasury bills to the amount of £474,000 were converted into Commonwealth stock. By such conversions the State loses, because the Treasury bills carry a much lower rate of interest than do Commonwealth stock. We might pay interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on Treasury bills, but the average for Commonwealth stock is $3\frac{1}{4}$ or $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Consequently the interest charges against the State are increased on that account.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do the ordinary sinking fund provisions apply to Commonwealth stock?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And the Commonwealth Government contribute 5s. per cent.?

The PREMIER: Yes; to all moneys borrowed, the sinking fund applies. The loan requirements of the Government from 1930 to November, 1932, were financed by the Commonwealth Bank through the issue of Treasury bills. Those were the years when we could not go on the market. The money market, both in London and Australia, was practically closed to us, and so all Australian Governments were financed during those two years by the issue of Treasury bills to the Commonwealth Bank. No other means of obtaining the money were open to us. In addition to the loan moneys raised by the issue of Treasury bills, the deficits of all Australian Governments were financed by the issue of Treasury bills to the Commonwealth Bank. The effect of the issuing of those bills by all Governments, including the Commonwealth, has been to create a large unfunded debt which could be called up by the Commonwealth Bank at short notice. Unfortunately, industry is making little demand for financial assistance from the banks, and the banks invest funds in Treasury bills. Otherwise they would have frozen money on their hands. From the point of view of the banks, the financing of Treasury bills is a good investment. The security is safe; a large amount of money is not needed by the industries of the Commonwealth, and it suits the banks to make money avail-

able for the issue of Treasury bills. The policy of the Commonwealth Bank is to convert as much as possible of this floating debt into a long-term debt, now that loan money is available in the market. There has been a sharp difference of opinion at Loan Council meetings, especially at the recent meeting and one held earlier, between the State Treasurers and the Commonwealth Bank as to the way in which loans raised in Australia should be utilised by the States to meet their needs and as to the amount that should be made available for funding the Treasury bills. The policy of the Commonwealth Bank is to keep on reducing the Treasury bills, if they can.

Mr. Latham: They want more money.

The PREMIER: Yes. The short term, or floating debt, of the Commonwealth and States at 30th June last was £83,000,000, of which the indebtedness in Australia was £48,875,000 and in London £34,125,000. Admittedly, that is a very large sum of money to have as a floating debt, a total of £83,000,000. It has been higher, because part of it was funded during the past year or two. That is the position so far as the Commonwealth is concerned. The position with regard to our State at the end of June last was:—

	£
Australian indebtedness ..	5,875,000
London indebtedness ..	3,098,000
Total ..	<u>£8,973,000</u>

That is our floating debt, which is covered by Treasury bills in London and Australia because of the impossibility of raising loans in the usual way during past years by financing through the Commonwealth Bank by Treasury bills. Our sinking fund at the 30th June was £1,346,000, held as follows:—

	£
National Debt Commission ..	106,000
Crown agents ..	1,151,000
Endowment policy account "Kangaroo" motor ship ..	89,000
	<u>£1,346,000</u>

As members will know, the National Debt Commission is an Australian body. The amount held by Crown agents, £1,151,000, is in respect of a loan of £998,000 falling due in London in January.

Mr. Latham: Then you have more than you want.

The PREMIER: Yes. We have a loan falling due in January of £998,000, against which we hold in the sinking fund £1,151,000, so there will be a surplus of about £160,000. The sinking fund exceeds the amount of the loan and the difference will be available on redemption. Our debt per head has been increasing. It increased in the last ten years by approximately £52 per head. In comparison with the per capita debts of the Eastern States, that amount may appear to be unduly high. It must be remembered, however—one cannot repeat this statement too often—that no real comparison can be made of the per capita indebtedness of this State and of the other States of Australia. Ours stands out very much above the other States, and those who do not understand the circumstances of the States are apt to come to the conclusion that we are carrying a far heavier debt per head of the population than do the other States. That is not so, because, as I have frequently stated, and as hon. members know, many of the public utilities in Western Australia are financed from Government loans, which is not the case in Eastern Australia. There they are financed by trusts and boards, which have separate borrowing powers. In many cases, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney, very large sums of money have been borrowed for public utilities, and those borrowings do not show at all in the loan indebtedness of the States, and consequently do not figure in their per capita indebtedness.

Hon. N. Keenan: Have you the correct figures?

The PREMIER: I have not, but I can cite a few outstanding instances. There is the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works which controls the water supply and sewerage of Melbourne. In our State the money for water supply and sewerage was borrowed by the State and therefore figures in our national debt. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works alone has borrowed £25,000,000, so that for purposes of comparison, that amount should be included in the public debt of Victoria.

Hon. N. Keenan: By how much would that increase the public debt?

The PREMIER: I have not worked that out. There are other bodies in Victoria with borrowing powers, for instance, the Harbour Trust.

Mr. Latham: And the Tramways Board.

The PREMIER: Yes. The moneys expended on harbour works in Melbourne were borrowed by the Harbour Trust and do not appear in Victoria's public debt. In addition, very large sums of money were expended in the construction of the Melbourne tramway system. That is a very big system, extending as far as 20 miles out from the city. None of that money appears in the public debt of Victoria, because it was borrowed by the Tramways Board.

Mr. Sampson: You agree that that method has a good deal to recommend it.

The PREMIER: I am not talking of the principle. As a matter of fact, I believe it is right, but that is by the way.

Mr. Latham: The assets are there to represent the money.

The PREMIER: I am pointing out the difference. The amount expended on our electricity supply appears in our loan indebtedness, whereas the great electrical works in Victoria, that supply Melbourne and hundreds of miles of the country districts, were financed by a board, and the amount borrowed does not appear in the public debt of Victoria.

Mr. Stubbs: Several million pounds were expended on that undertaking in Victoria.

Mr. Latham: Ten million pounds.

The PREMIER: Those four items alone, water and sewerage, harbour works, tramways and electricity supply, not to mention some others—there are other boards, the Geelong harbour trust has separate borrowing powers—account for an enormous sum of money; whereas the expenditure on similar undertakings in our State figures in our loan expenditure. In Sydney, a similar state of affairs exists. I have not the figures, but one can easily imagine the amount of money that would be expended on water supply and sewerage for a city as big as Sydney. Only a month ago the Water Supply Board of Sydney, with the consent of the Loan Council, borrowed £2,000,000. That was a windfall for the Treasurer of New South Wales, because the Water Supply Board were in arrear with their interest payments to the Government to the extent of £1,000,000. Immediately the board secured the loan of £2,000,000, the Treasurer of New South Wales took £1,000,000 of it into revenue to meet the interest owing to the Government.

Mr. Latham: This State has borrowed money to assist farmers, whereas in the other States farmers were assisted by a separate bank.

The PREMIER: That applies also to South Australia. I think this aspect of the question cannot be stated too often.

Mr. Stubbs: It should be broadcast all over the State.

The PREMIER: Yes, so that we might not be held up to the public, who do not know the facts, as an extravagant, borrowing people, who have borrowed far in excess of the other States of Australia.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The amount set out in the Bill is to cover the Estimates we have just passed. I need not repeat what was said on the discussion on the Loan Estimates. During the depression many people have lost their employment, private industry has been at a standstill, and there has been an obligation on the Government to provide work. Because of the depression, it is not possible to pay for this work out of revenue. We must either find work for the people, or provide them with sustenance, and in the circumstances I think we are justified in bringing forward this Loan Bill. It is inevitable that money should be borrowed for this purpose. I can only hope that we are nearly turning this invisible, this mythical, corner.

Mr. Mann: It is mythical.

The PREMIER: In some respects it is, but it is comforting to know that the pastoralists have turned the corner, although that is not the case so far as those engaged in farming and agricultural pursuits are concerned. Unfortunately, it is not so with the wheatgrower, as to whom this State is carrying a very heavy burden. Having regard to all the circumstances, and the relative population of our State and of other States, I believe we have granted the wheatgrower a greater measure of financial assistance than has been the case in the other States of Australia. As a matter of fact, it can almost truly be said that here wheat farming is a great national enterprise, a State-owned enterprise, because the wheat-growers have been financed almost entirely by the Government for many years past. That is an obligation which is still with us, a very

serious one, having regard to the fact that the price of wheat remains as low as it is at present. I realise, as much as anyone does, the dangers of over-borrowing, especially when such a large percentage of our total revenue is now required to meet interest and sinking fund charges. There is no doubt the position is a serious one and if we over-borrow we shall be forced to tax the people beyond their capacity to pay the ever-increasing interest charges. However, I see no way out of it at present while the position continues as it is. While the State and the Commonwealth and, in fact, the whole world, remain in the slough of the depression, there is nothing else left to us, because if we do not raise the money to find work for the unemployed by borrowing it, we shall have to find it somehow or other from revenue to maintain the unemployed on sustenance. Therefore, it is almost as broad as it is long. The amount that would be required to meet the sustenance payments would be double what we are borrowing. The expenditure on sustenance for the year before last was, I think, about £700,000. At that time little work was being organised and the men were drawing sustenance, but giving very little in return for it. I am hopeful that the expenditure on sustenance this year will be under £300,000, considerably less than half what it was two years ago. That can only be done, of course, because of the greater amount of money we are borrowing to find work. If we did not borrow, we should have to find that amount for sustenance, and at the end of the year we should have to borrow the amount and include it in a Loan Bill for the next year. That is the present position, and I am afraid that until things improve there is no escaping it. I do not wish to raise false hopes or delude myself into the belief that we are on the road to prosperity, but certainly it does seem to me that there are indications, not only here but throughout the Commonwealth, of some improvement as compared with the position of a year or two ago. In the circumstances I am unable to submit a Loan Bill for any lesser amount than that indicated by the figures. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

MR. LATHAM (York) [S.2]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill. I am one of those who believe that some amendment of the Dentists Act is necessary. At the same time I hold that the amending measure should be a Government Bill. I look forward to the Minister for Health bringing down a Bill which will remedy existing shortcomings of the Act.

Mr. Lambert: Do you think such a Bill would have any greater merit than this one?

Mr. LATHAM: I shall deal with that aspect as I go along. In introducing this Bill, the mover laboured certain aspects. The main points at issue, however, Clauses 3 and 4, he left alone; and those are the two dangerous provisions. In fact, they open wide the door to admit any unqualified man into the dental profession in any haphazard way.

Mr. Lambert: State the case fairly; do not state it untruthfully.

Mr. LATHAM: I could not possibly state it as unfairly as the hon. member did. He was suffering considerably from the effects of imagination. It would be well for us to have an idea of what dentistry is to-day. It is not the old profession, which simply knocked out persons' teeth. To-day dentistry is a highly qualified profession. If we agreed to the views of the mover of the Bill, a few more teeth would be knocked out. Conditions have altered very much recently. For example, the story told by the hon. member about a Chinaman belongs to the distant past. There has been such vast improvement and development in the profession that things of that kind are not likely to occur to-day. Some people think that dentistry simply means extracting teeth and fitting plates, but to-day the dentist is a recognised specialist in a branch of medicine. If one goes to a medical man for examination, one of the first things the practitioner does is to have a look at one's teeth, and he is very likely to direct the patient to consult a qualified dentist. That is an important aspect, and we should build up our case from that. If the medical man is to send us to a practitioner in another branch of medicine, we ought to be assured

that we shall receive the best possible treatment in that other branch. The only way to achieve that is to have properly qualified dentists possessed not only of practical knowledge but of theoretical knowledge as well.

Mr. Lambert: You know that there was an amendment of the Dentists Act in 1920.

Mr. LATHAM: I am aware of that. I read that Act carefully, and I have also read the speeches delivered on it here. I remember a speech of the hon. member, who did not appear to be in favour of the Bill.

Mr. Lambert: I have never been in favour of letting people in by the back door, as was done at that period.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LATHAM: In view of the great improvement effected since then, I should have thought the hon. member would be horrified at the idea of re-opening the back door, and that is really what the Bill proposes. To-day, I repeat, it is not only a question of practical knowledge but of theoretical knowledge as well. A dentist must be able to diagnose lesions and pathological conditions of the jaw. It is to that end the medical man sends his patients to the dentist. Frequently the dentist, in dealing with a patient's jaw, discovers something which he knows calls for the attention of a surgeon; and then he sends the patient to a surgeon for treatment. In order to be able to diagnose such conditions, the dentist must have the highest possible qualifications. Recently an Act was passed for the establishment of a school of anatomy in Perth. That step was taken specially to assist students of dentistry. My hope is that eventually that school, in conjunction with a chair of dentistry at the University, will enable local students to be qualified highly enough to enjoy reciprocal advantages with other Universities. The last thing we should do is to lower the standard of the dental profession. All our endeavours should tend towards building up the standard.

Mr. Lambert: Can you point out where the standard is being lowered in the Bill?

Mr. LATHAM: If the hon. member reads Clauses 3 and 4, he will see that a lowering of the standard is contained in them.

Mr. Lambert: What about the rest of the Bill?

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member stressed other aspects, but he omitted any reference to the back door entry. We provide free education in the schools and at the University, and do almost everything possible to assist our people to secure higher qualifications. If this legislation passes, we shall be breaking down those qualifications instead of building them up. To-day the dental student has to qualify by education, and then he is expected to spend a period at the Technical School, where he receives free instruction in science.

Mr. Lambert: How many members of the dental profession do you think could to-day pass the matriculation examination?

Mr. LATHAM: It is not a question of what has been done in the past. We are setting up a standard for the future. Let us build up to that standard.

Mr. Lambert: That is for the other fellow.

Mr. LATHAM: Where are we going to stop? We must stop somewhere. In 1920 we started, and we have gradually built up a standard of high qualifications.

Mr. Moloney: What about the South Australian Act?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LATHAM: Our desire is to have dentists of the highest possible qualifications. I do not think anyone desires anything else.

Mr. Lambert: Do you believe that I desire anything else?

Mr. LATHAM: No. The hon. member is unfortunate, however, as regards Clauses 3 and 4 of the Bill. I do not doubt that the hon. member's present intentions are as honest as his intentions were in 1920. In the Bill he puts up all sorts of provisions, of which some may be useful, though I consider that in the main there is little need for them. No one would suggest for a moment that anything should be done to discourage the specialist in medicine. On the contrary, specialisation in medicine is encouraged in every way; and similarly we should encourage specialisation in dentistry. In fact, the tendency is to specialise in every branch of medicine. I propose to read to the House some remarks made by the present Ministers in days gone by. I quote from the "West Australian" of the 16th June, 1924—

The Minister for Works (Mr. McCallum), when replying to a deputation of civil engineers seeking to secure more encouragement from the Government in the matter of professional employment on Government works, pro-

misled that the deputation's case would receive full consideration, and assured them that the Government were fully alive to the necessity for the existence of properly qualified engineers in the State. The Government proved that when the position of Engineer-in-Chief became vacant, for it offered a larger salary than any paid in the other States. They could rely upon the Government's giving preference to local talent and assisting graduates to get a proper professional footing.

I believe that is correct.

Mr. Lambert: Your Government showed appreciation of that position by sacking the finest Engineer-in-Chief Western Australia ever had.

Mr. LATHAM: One cannot keep an engineer if one cannot afford to pay him. On the 16th June of this year the "West Australian" published the following:—

The Minister for Industrial Development (Mr. Kenneally), in reply to a deputation from the Master Tailors' Association and the Clothing Trades Union alleging that factory-made suits were being sold to the public as tailor-made, said that the question was important from the point of view of tradesmanship, and anything that could be done to preserve the position of trained tradesmen would be of benefit to the people generally.

It appears that the tendency in the minds of Ministers is to build up standards and not to tear them down. On the 31st May of this year the following appeared in the "West Australian":—

The Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Millington), when opening the third annual Exhibition of Building Designs and Material, said, "There was a disposition among builders of homes to leave out the architect and to accept something designed in a rough and ready style by an amateur. Personally he always believed in consulting the expert, as the work would then be economically and effectively done."

I think we can apply those sentiments to dentistry. If we are to have a good job done, we must obtain the services of a well-trained man—not one who has merely spent a little time in the surgery or in the workshop, but one who has gained a thorough knowledge of those things which are essential to the building up of professional skill. This is the day of the specialist. Everyone is specialising in something or other.

Mr. Lambert: There are two branches of dentistry, which fact distinguishes dentistry from every other profession. There is the manufacturing branch, and there is the operative branch. That must clearly be borne in mind.

Mr. LATHAM: It is borne in mind. In both respects one must have the very best trained men. I know of nothing that can be more uncomfortable than a dental plate which does not fit well. I know of nothing more serious than to have one's jaw dealt with by a man whose knowledge is confined to using the forceps upon it. Everywhere we turn to-day we find the training of men along lines of specialised knowledge, and we should encourage that tendency. Certainly there will be people outside the House who will strive to secure cheap labour, but it is too often found that cheap professional advice is dear professional advice. The story with the moral that the doctor who makes a mistake buries his patient, contains a lot of truth. A man may experience life-long suffering simply because of bad treatment. Some dentists are practising to-day under conditions that were permitted when we passed the amending Act in 1920. Since then, we have set up a high standard.

Mr. Lambert: Where,

Mr. LATHAM: In Western Australia.

Mr. Lambert: Merely an educational standard to keep others out.

Mr. LATHAM: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Lambert: I wish you would point out where the high standard has been set up.

Mr. LATHAM: I cannot imagine that the present Minister for Health would do anything but encourage highly qualified men. He gave evidence of that when he assisted to establish the present Dental Hospital, where students are trained. I agree with the Minister that it would be better if all our students were trained there.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the practice to-day.

Mr. Latham: They can be trained better under that method. They must attend there in order to go through the school of anatomy. I agree that it is all to the good if students are articulated to the Dental Hospital.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is what is done.

Mr. LATHAM: I was informed that it was not altogether so.

Mr. Lambert: If you give me the opportunity, I will make it compulsory under the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: I have given the hon. member some indication of the clauses that I regard as objectionable and perhaps between us we may be able to knock the Bill

into decent shape. At any rate, the Bill is one that should have been introduced by the Minister for Health, not by a private member.

Mr. Lambert: It may interest the hon. member to know that Mr. Justice Draper, when he was a Minister of the Crown, asked me to introduce the Bill I did previously. He asked me specially to do so.

Mr. LATHAM: He may have asked you to do so because he was opposed to it.

Mr. Lambert: That was not the position. I took a deputation to him to discuss the matter.

Mr. LATHAM: To-day we are contributing a lot of money towards the maintenance of hospitals. We are building up infant health centres in order to start off our children under healthy conditions. If we agree to the Bill under discussion, what will it mean? The effect will be that the dental treatment the people will receive will be at the hands of people who are not qualified. I hope the House will not agree to anything of the sort. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) may have some knowledge of what students are expected to study. One thing that we should do is to safeguard the public health. We should protect the public from unskilled treatment. People are entitled to expect the very best professional treatment when they pay for it. That being so, we should prevent persons from practising who are not qualified. I made inquiries with a view to ascertaining the curriculum that dental students are expected to undertake. It is just as well for members to have some idea of what the students have to study. In the first year, they have to study the anatomy of the head and neck, with practical dissection; chemistry, theory and practice; metallurgy, theory and practice; practical dental mechanics. In the second year, the subjects are: Physiology; dental anatomy; operative technique; dental mechanics, theory and practical. Up to that stage they have no surgical work at all. In the third year, the subjects are: Dental materia medica and therapeutics, dental surgery and pathology; bacteriology and general pathology; hospital practice in operative dentistry and mechanical dentistry; dental radiology. In the fourth year, they have to study: General medicine and oral surgery; orthodontia; advanced dental surgery and pathology, theory; advanced dental mechanics, theory; advanced practical operative and mechanical dentistry. Examina-

tions are held every November, and there are supplementary examinations in February for those who may need them.

Mr. Lambert: You will get an awful shock if you are told how many of the students pass.

Mr. LATHAM: Nearly all of them pass.

Mr. Lambert: Since the latest rules of the Dental Board were issued?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. Of course, some students have given up the course during the last few years because they had not sufficient money to enable them to pay their fees.

Mr. Lambert: Or was that occasioned as a result of the Dental Board's elaborate programme regarding dental science?

Mr. LATHAM: That was not the position.

Mr. Lambert: You may be pardoned for not knowing; I am in a very charitable mood.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member is, of course, very charitable, but he made some wild statements that I have investigated. For instance, he said that qualified men in the city sent unqualified dentists into the country districts as their substitutes. I have found out that that is not so at all. No qualified men are sending unqualified dentists to country centres. I inquired from some of the dentists who are practising in the country, to find out how many are practising there. As a result of my inquiries, I found that in this State we have one dentist to every 2,490 persons. In South Australia this year, there is one dentist to every 2,995 persons; in Victoria, there is one to every 2,270 persons; in Tasmania, one to every 1,850 persons; in New South Wales, one to every 1,825, and in Queensland, one dentist to every 2,070 persons. It will be seen, therefore, that we have a fair number of dentists for the population of the State and we compare favourably with the conditions that obtain in the Eastern States.

Mr. Lambert: But when the Act was amended in 1920 the argument used then was that there were not sufficient dentists for the population of the State.

Mr. LATHAM: I find that there are 44 dentists practising in the country districts, and 82 in the metropolitan area, making a total of 126 dentists. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie asked me how many apprentices there were, and I made inquiries in order to ascertain the facts. I find that there are 111 apprentices who were registered from the 1st January, 1920, to 1933.

Of them, 82 have completed their course and are registered as dentists, or are entitled to be so registered. Those who are still serving articles number 18, and 11 only have not completed their course. The standard of the examinations is not so high that the strain is terrific. That must be apparent when members realise that 11 students only out of 111 have not completed the course. There are probably reasons other than those associated with the examinations to account for the failure of those 11 to complete their course. I find that in nearly every country centre from one to three dentists are practising. In those circumstances, the statement of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie that these unqualified people go into the country areas and do all sorts of wild things is not borne out by the facts. I cannot imagine local dentists not policing the Act in the country districts. Of course they do police its provisions, and they will not allow those who are not qualified to compete with them.

Mr. Lambert: It is only necessary to go 10 miles from the nearest registered dentist's premises, and a man can practise till the crack of doom.

Mr. LATHAM: I can just imagine it.

Mr. Griffiths: Massey-Crosse is doing it with his caravan.

Mr. LATHAM: But he is a registered dentist.

Mr. Griffiths: Yes.

Mr. Lambert: Under Section 4 of the 1920 Act.

Mr. LATHAM: That is not operating to-day.

Mr. Lambert: Of course it is. Anyone can be a blacksmith or a tinker and engage in the business so long as his partner is a dentist.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member is providing for far worse things in his Bill. It sets out clearly that provided a man is of good behaviour and has been engaged in the practice of operative and prosthetic dentistry for not less than eight years he will be registered so long as the application for registration is made within six months of the passing of the legislation.

Mr. Lambert: That is not so; that refers to registration of articles of apprenticeship.

Mr. LATHAM: Clause 4 provides that any apprentice whose articles have been registered by virtue of the provision I have

referred to is to be entitled to be registered as a dentist, provided he proves that within four years after the registration of his articles he passes an examination in practical dentistry, as defined in the schedule of the 1920 Act. That Act was a small one and its purpose was to allow certain men who had served overseas during the War to enter the profession.

Mr. Lambert interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I think if the Leader of the Opposition were to address the Chair he would get on better.

Mr. LATHAM: I am endeavouring to do so. I am afraid that the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie will find it difficult to persuade members to his way of thinking. It would be very unfair to allow a man or a woman to pay £200 to qualify for entrance to the dental profession and then just before completing his or her studies, to introduce a Bill that would throw open the door to almost anyone to enter on the strength of an examination very little above the ordinary school standard. That would be most unfair to students. I remember that on one occasion we amended the Act relating to architects, and later we permitted one man to become registered, although the Act would have deprived him of that opportunity. We must view these problems in the light of present day circumstances. We must first have regard to the health of the people and see to it that they get the best professional advice possible. We should permit our students, having provided them with free education, not only to practice here but in any part of the British Empire, once they are fully qualified. That could not be done unless we set up a high standard of efficiency.

Mr. Lambert: It cannot be done under the existing Act.

Mr. LATHAM: It is for us to see that the standard is maintained. What is the School of Anatomy for, except to build up this education? I hope the House will regard the whole position, first from the point of view of public health, secondly from the point of view of the profession, which is that when a person comes along for advice he should get the best, and thirdly, that we shall give some consideration to those who desire to build up the profession. It is no use our training people when there is no opening for them.

The Premier: Ask the member for Swan what he thinks about apprentices.

Mr. LATHAM: A little while ago we were training teachers in excess of the opportunities available to them, and we had a number of trained nurses who could not possibly find employment. We do not want to overdo these professions; we want in the profession only so many as will have opportunity to earn a livelihood.

Mr. Lambert: What an awful thing it would be if a training for politicians were introduced.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member would never pass the examination; there would be one vacant seat immediately. The hon. member has too thorough a knowledge of everything under the sun to enable him to qualify as a politician. I desire that we should amend the Dental Act, and if the Minister will bring down an amending Bill to shape the Act more in conformity with the legislation of the Eastern States, I will give him every assistance. But I do not like the Bill introduced by the hon. member.

Mr. Lambert: And I did not like the Bills introduced by you.

Mr. LATHAM: You were not here to like them, although probably you were behind the scenes somewhere. Clauses 3 and 4 are the objectionable features in this Bill.

Mr. Lambert: Has the Bill no merit at all?

Mr. LATHAM: It ought to be left to the Minister to bring down such a Bill, for he has greater knowledge of these things, and can get expert advice. But the hon. member sits down and thinks out all the worst things he can of the profession. He wants the Dental Board to form themselves into a court of petty sessions to deal with common assault cases. Of course that is ridiculous. No one would suggest that the Dental Board should do that kind of thing.

Mr. Lambert: There are provisions for it in the Act.

Mr. LATHAM: And there are provisions for it in the Police Act also.

Mr. Lambert: What about the Medical Act?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have a chance to reply.

Mr. LATHAM: He will have no reply to make if you, Sir, permit him a few more interjections. I hope the House will not agree to the second reading, and that the

Minister will bring down a Bill, as the result of which the Act will come more into conformity with the legislation of the Eastern States.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.35]: I supported the amending Bill of 1920 on the ground that there had been no amendment made to the Act since 1899. In that year there were 52 dentists registered in the State, and in 1920 there had been an addition of only one dentist, while the population of the State had increased by 140,000 persons. At the time I supported that amending Bill there had been endless bickering, and all sorts of complaints and anomalies. The Dental Board were accused of being a close corporation which would not allow deserving people to enter the profession: in some instances the board had to be threatened with Supreme Court action before they would allow qualified men into the profession. In 1899 the population of the State was nearly 191,000. Up to that date there had been registered only 52 dentists, and 21 years later, with an increase of 140,000 to the population, there was only one additional dentist. In 1933 we have a population of 437,515, or an increase in 13 years of 106,000; and we have 171 registered dentists, showing that the amendment to the Act in 1920 has resulted in an increase of nearly 300 per cent. Since the passing of the Act in 1894, 52 dentists were registered in the first five years, one was registered in the next 21 years, 53 in the next four years, and since then 65 have been registered. The hon. member, when moving the second reading of the Bill, said that Perth had no registered dentists for business in the agricultural districts. But whereas Perth had 53 registered dentists in 1920, it now has 85. And one can go down the list and find that all the suburbs of Perth have been supplied with dentists, and in many suburbs their number has been increased. In 1924 there were 11 new towns that had no registered dentist, whereas to-day those towns have 13, while eight suburban areas have acquired nine additional dentists. So even though up to a certain period the Dental Board may have been somewhat conservative, the amending Bill of 1920 has thrown open the door to a great influx of dentists; whereas we had 53 in 1924, to-day we have 171. Then, if we look down the list of fees charged by the dentists, we see that there must be intense

competition, else those fees would be much higher than they are. The hon. member, when moving the second reading, put before us the amorous behaviour of certain dentists when their lady clients called upon them. That had nothing to do with the Bill, of course, but it supplied a flippant air to the hon. member's remarks. The Leader of the Opposition pointed to the unfair statements made by the hon. member about metropolitan firms sending out unqualified men to the agricultural districts. Certainly I think the hon. member, when making such a statement, should have given names. The Dental Board have not had from the Crown Law Department the backing they should have had. In one instance the Board went to the expense of £20 in securing a verdict at Bumbury, but the Crown Law Department vetoed the carrying out of the final decision of the court. The hon. member, when moving the second reading, said many things, some of which were reported as follows:—

Under existing conditions, dentists in the metropolitan area can leave their business and whether registered or not—many unregistered men do this—visit the country centres. They previously advertise in the local Press that Mr. So-and-so, registered dentist, will be in the township on a certain day.

Mr. Latham: You do not believe that is being done.

Mr. LAMBERT: I know it is done.

Mr. Latham: Do you mean that unregistered men are saying that they are registered?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not desire to mention any firm, but let us say that anyone owning a dental parlour—

Mr. Latham: You mean that they send out substitutes?

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. Any registered dentist can advertise that he may be consulted at a certain country town on a specific date, but he need not go there himself. He can send an unregistered and unqualified person. That is being done.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member is not reading from "Hansard" of this session.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am reading my own notes taken from "Hansard"; but it really is what the hon. member said. It was most unfair to affirm that metropolitan dentists were sending out unregistered men to practice dentistry illegally. I am ready to believe that the hon. member is sincere in his efforts to improve the conditions of the profession, but I cannot see how he will improve those conditions

if he succeeds in admitting men to the profession by the back door. You, Mr. Speaker, might be having your son educated for the dental profession, and might be spending a certain amount of money on that education. In course of time your boy passes his examinations and qualifies, and you find that the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie proposes to admit to the profession men who will not go to the trouble of qualifying. The hon. member referred to the Supreme Court case *Blitz v. Syme*. That occurred in about 1908 or 1910, but it appeared from the hon. member's remarks that it was an occurrence of recent date. I object to the definition of dentistry given in the Bill. It states—

"Dentistry" includes any operation on the human teeth or jaws, or the artificial restoration or reparation thereof, or the treatment of diseases or lesions thereof, or the correction of malpositions or malformations thereof or therein, but does not include the mechanical construction by an artisan employed by a registered dentist of artificial dentures or other devices.

It will be noticed that the definition relates to any operation on the mouth, and that would preclude any nurse from taking part in such an operation. A nurse would immediately become liable because she would not be a registered dentist.

Mr. Lambert: What do you suggest should be done?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Regarding assistants, I should like to remind members that when the Bill of 1920 was before us, it was a time of stress and unrest. Certain men had returned from the war and provision had to be made for them all. All those men had to undergo a certain examination.

Mr. Lambert: That is absolutely wrong.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Very well, the hon. member will be able to show where I am wrong when he replies to the debate. Another extraordinary provision of the Bill is that no dentist shall act as examiner at any examination at which an apprentice bound to himself or to any person in partnership with him is a candidate. I presume the hon. member had something in mind when he framed that provision, but it seems remarkable that a dentist should be the examiner of his own pupils.

Mr. Lambert: That does occur.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I should like to have proof of it.

The Minister for Mines: That has prevailed. There is not the slightest doubt about it.

Mr. Lambert: Yes, we know that it is so.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Various crimes have been stipulated by the hon. member and all sorts of punishments have been prescribed except hanging. I believe that something might be done to make more effective the operations of the Dental Board. The hon. member desires to bring within the operations of the law those people who act illegally, and I consider that the Dental Board, when they secure a decision against an offender, should be backed up by the Crown Law Department. The Crown Law Department seem to be too interested in such things as ten-cup reading and starting-price betting, but when the Dental Board obtain a verdict, they find it almost impossible to collect the fine.

The Minister for Mines: The Dental Board do not collect the fines. When a man is fined, the money goes into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Well, the fine is not collected. The Dental Board had a case at Bunbury and obtained a conviction. They spent something like £20 to obtain the conviction and, when they pressed for the payment of the fine, the Crown Law Department waived it or held it up and the fine has never been paid, but the man is continuing to do what he was doing previously.

Mr. Ferguson: Was not default provided?

Mr. Lambert: That is why I want to give the dentists a decent Act.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member has padded the Bill nicely to provide certain things for the board. The board should be empowered to follow up offences that have been and are being committed. I have a letter from the articulated apprentices urging that on the ground of fair play, it would not be right that men who have not passed the examination, as they have been compelled to do, should be allowed to enter the profession by a back door. They claim that that would tend to lower the standard of examination, the standard of knowledge required and the standard of the profession generally. The crimes provided in the Bill are for any person neglecting to attend the board, for wilfully insulting the board, misbehaving before the board, interrupting the proceedings of the board—I suppose that

would be speaking out of his turn--refusing to be sworn—

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member would have committed a good few offences had he been before the board.

Mr. GRIFFITHS:—or refusing to answer any lawful question, and the penalty for any one of those offences is a fine not exceeding £50. I agree with the hon. member that the standard and ethics of the profession should be maintained, but the hon. member, by his Bill, is not moving in the right way to attain that goal. A letter has been received from the Western Australian branch of the British Medical Association pointing out that it is most important to maintain the standard of the dental profession because of the close connection between it and the medical profession. Reference is made to dentistry being a specialised branch, and to members of the association having often to rely on the advice given by dentists in treating complications that may arise following dental operations.

Mr. Lambert: The medical profession only dealt with the matter in a very general way. They did not deal with the merits of this Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Reference has been made to the facilities provided for students. There are classes at the technical college for pharmacy students, the attendance being 18. My son attended those classes and passed his examination as a chemist. I understand from the hon. member, however, that dental students have now to attend the Dental Hospital, and I consider it right that they should do so. A circular has been sent to members by dental assistants in which it is stated that 200,000 men were admitted to the dental profession in 1921.

The Minister for Mines: That was in Great Britain?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The figure appeared to me to be excessive and on inquiry I found that the actual number was 10,000. The greater proportion of those admitted, namely 6,000, belonged to a body known as the Incorporated Dental Society of Great Britain and had passed an intensive examination. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie stated that in the universities of the world 80 per cent. of the examination work was on the practical side. In most of the universities of the world the proportion of practical to theoretical work is fifty-fifty, and some of the universities range as high as 60 per cent. of theoretical and 40 per cent.

of practical work. It is interesting to note that the proportion of dentists to population in the United Kingdom is one to 3,093, while in Western Australia it is one to 2,490. I have a letter dated 17th October, 1933, from the Western Australian branch of the British Medical Association to the Dentists' Association of Western Australia incorporated reading as follows:—

It is understood that an attempt is being made in the State Parliament to amend the Dental Act for the purpose of admitting to the dental registrar certain persons who have not undergone any course of training. I am instructed by the Council of the British Medical Association to place before you their views on this important matter.

Mr. Lambert: What prompted the writing of that letter by the British Medical Association?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The letter continues—

The British Medical Association, representing the organised medical opinion of this State, realise that any lowering of medical or dental standards of training will lead to a corresponding lowering of the standard of treatment to be gained by the general public, who, representing the community, have every right to be safeguarded. Untrained men cannot possibly be expected to be in a position to give an accurate opinion or treatment in dental conditions, as preliminary training in anatomy, physiology and pathology is absolutely essential for an accurate appreciation of conditions deviating from normal.

Dentistry is actually a specialism of medicine, and close co-operation has become more essential between dentists and doctors in order that the highest efficiency of treatment will be maintained. The inefficiently trained dentist cannot form an opinion that is of value to the physician in his treatment of the patient. The condition of the teeth themselves is not the only problem, but the condition of the gums, sockets and surrounding tissues is of paramount importance. In a doubtful case extraction of the teeth is no simple way out of the dilemma—the surrounding tissues may conceal (perhaps cancer) and a knowledge of anatomy, bacteriology and physiology is essential to a balanced opinion of the condition. The onus of it all cannot be put on the medical profession because they realise that they are not sufficiently trained in the dental branch of medicine.

The British Medical Association, realising the importance of maintaining efficient treatment, have therefore welcomed every increase in facilities for more thorough training and have assisted practically recently, in establishing an Anatomy School. The British Medical Association view with satisfaction the amendment to the Dental Act which closed the door to the dental profession so that only those could open it who had the prescribed training. They were disappointed to find that under the

Act, the Supreme Court ruled, contrary to their opinion and also that of the Dental Board, men could practise dentistry under cover of a registered dentist. It is interesting to note that in the United Kingdom any medical practitioner covering in this manner an unqualified assistant is considered to have committed an offence grave enough to remove his name from the register. They view, therefore, with apprehension the present attempt to again open the door to the inefficiently trained. From a general point of view, the British Medical Association are in sympathy with all the dentists and students who, in the interests of their profession have undergone an extensive and thorough training, and consider they are entitled to protection by the State in obtaining their livelihood and pecuniary reward without competition from unqualified men whose merits the general public cannot assess if they are once registered. The British Medical Association earnestly hopes that the present efforts to lower a standard so carefully safeguarded in the interests of the public will not be successful. Yours faithfully, (Sgd) Leslie E. Le Souef, Hon. Secretary.

Mr. Lambert: That is not from the Zoo, is it?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In addition, the University have made a protest which will probably raise the dander of the member for Coolgardie, who will have his chance to speak directly. In conclusion—

Mr. Lambert: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes. I want to get away. While there may be directions in which the Act can be amended, with benefit both to the profession and to the public, I do not think this particular Bill is calculated to do that.

The Minister for Health: It is beyond amendment.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: With that I will conclude. I will now retire to my daughter's 21st birthday party.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [9.4]: I hesitate to rise to speak on the Bill, because I think the matter is essentially one upon which the Government should express their views. We must realise that the Bill, introduced in so extraordinary a way, deals with one of the leading professions of the State, a profession that should have the very jealous regard of the Minister for Health. I feel he should express his view with respect to a measure that proposes to interfere with a matter affecting the health of the people, upon which he should be a competent authority and should guide us. With the Leader of the Opposi-

tion, I agree that if the Bill is justified, it should be introduced by the Minister for Health. We have to-day in our State a representative body whose duty it is to protect the interests of the profession with which the Bill deals, and at the same time to make it more efficient and more worthy of the respect of the general public. As there is a board of that description in existence, one would expect it to take the initiative in a measure such as the one before us and convince the Minister that something is necessary to assist the profession by strengthening the existing law. The Minister would then introduce the legislation.

The Minister for Health: Suppose the body did not approach the Minister, should the Minister take it upon himself to introduce the legislation?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, certainly not. I thank the Minister for assisting me in the point I desire to make. I think it can be accepted by this Chamber that the time is inopportune for the introduction of a Bill of this description. If the recognised body that controls the profession has not had occasion to approach the Minister on the matter, then one can justly say that Parliament should not tinker with a Bill introduced in such a way that it does not bear the hall mark of justice and sincerity. I venture to express the opinion that no private member should interfere in a matter of this nature. It is not a question for amateurs. It is a question affecting the health of the community, and no private member should take the responsibility of introducing legislation for the purpose of protecting the health of the community.

Mr. Lambert: Mr. Justice Draper, at one time Attorney General of this State, said—

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care what Mr. Justice Draper said on the matter. I sat in this Chamber with that hon. gentleman and I do not know that I would select him as an authority on a matter of this description. He expressed many views with which I differed. I do not know that one could expect him to speak with authority or with special knowledge on this particular matter.

Mr. Lambert: Would you say the Minister for Health has a special knowledge of it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, but the Minister for Health is charged with the

responsibility of guarding the health of the community and, thank goodness, he takes that responsibility more seriously than do the average persons administering health laws. It is his duty to keep in touch with bodies concerned with the health of the people. The British Medical Association is a body that we must respect. The medical profession has a right to an association: it is essential that it should have one. It is proper that they should speak with a combined voice as an organised body. That is what we believe in and what we stand for. Therefore, a profession, a trade or calling that has a representative body speaking on its behalf commands the respect of a Minister of the Crown. The British Medical Association is a body that speaks with authority on behalf of medical practitioners.

Mr. Lambert: Did they speak with any authority in 1920?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know that we gave them authority. If we did, it would be quite in accordance with our policy. The British Medical Association dictates to Governments. Governments do not dictate to them.

Mr. Lambert: They never dictated to anyone in 1920 when that infamous Dental Act was passed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member knows more about that than I do. I do not stand for laws of that description. I was saying that the British Medical Association has become a power in the land, because its members speak with authority on behalf of those whom they represent. They are mighty in their strength, because there is nothing shoddy in their profession. There is a standard of examination and there is a standard of training, and they see to it—quite rightly, too—that no one unqualified is permitted to join the association. No one outside the association is allowed to practise medicine. That is what I stand for, and what I say is proper and sound administration. Exactly the same thing applies to the Dental Board: but, unfortunately, there is in that board a measure of inexperience and a method of practice that is not a credit to the profession. It is certainly discreditable to the State. As long as that weakness exists, there will always be attempts of the kind that took place in 1923 and of the kind taking place now in this Bill. When Parliament realises

there is a weakness of that kind, Parliament itself should right that weakness and not leave it to a private member to attempt to do so, because he may be influenced by a desire to help the shoddy rather than to strengthen the efficient. As I stated, I hesitated to rise to speak on the Bill because I did not think it worth while taking it seriously, but when the second reading was put I thought it my duty to express my views.

Mr. Lambert: What is wrong with the Bill?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What is right with the Bill? The hon. member did not explain what was right with it. When he introduced it, he made an attack upon the profession, but he said very little to justify the measure. He certainly did not convince me that he was the kind of authority for the House to follow in a highly technical and important matter of this kind. Granting that it is proper for a private member to introduce the Bill, then it is quite wrong to deal with it at this late hour of the session. It is bringing the profession into ridicule. We know perfectly well that another place will not take the Bill seriously so late in the session. It is wrong for this House to present it. It is discounting the Assembly to do such things. The Bill having been delayed so long, what is the use of discussing it at the tail-end of the session, when it can have no elevating influence upon the profession? We want to strengthen the profession, we do not want to ridicule it. We are in sympathy with the difficulties of the profession and we should endeavour, by proper Ministerial control of it, to protect it from the encroachments of those not thoroughly qualified to practise it.

Mr. Lambert: In effect you lay it down that no private member has the right to initiate legislation here?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Few private members would essay a Bill of this kind. I quite agree that under the Standing Orders a private member has the right; but I have no hesitation in saying that it is wrong for a private member to introduce a measure dealing with a profession of this nature without the concurrence, or the assistance, or else the direct opposition, of the Minister for Health. To let the Bill go by default would be wrong. It looks as if the whole matter is not viewed seriously by the Gov-

ernment, particularly by the Minister for Health. I understand that the measure of 1920—I was not in Parliament then—was introduced as a final cleaning-up of the unqualified practitioners.

Mr. Lambert: That measure did not attempt to clean up the Act at all.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member may know more than I do of the 1920 Act, but I understand that then there were certain men not qualified to practise, but, in the common expression, practising under the lap, under cover of more or less qualified men. Those unqualified practitioners existed at that time, and had sufficient influence to secure the introduction of a Bill enabling them to obtain registration without passing the qualifying examination, or without being called upon to demonstrate their fitness. True, they were practising in a way; but nobody had any guarantee that they were practising efficiently. At that time—and the same thing still obtains—they claimed that they were not practising. As a matter of fact, they are a living lie all the time, because they say, "We do not practise, but the practise we are doing qualifies us to be registered." We should not encourage that sort of thing. The 1920 measure went quite far enough. Since then there has been a vast improvement in educational facilities. There has been an effort by the Dental Board, which stands towards dentistry here in the position of the British Medical Association towards medicine, to elevate the standard of the dental examinations, and to provide the necessary training through the Dental Hospital. We should rather encourage the board to assist their students to enter the profession than allow unqualified persons to become registered. I submit that the Bill is quite wrong from an industrial point of view. In the Eastern States there is a method by which shoddy, unqualified, jackeroo tradesmen get into trades and callings. In Victoria that became an industrial scandal, and it is so more or less to-day. The man who never served his apprenticeship, who stood long enough beside a tradesman to get some knowledge of the tradesman's work, became an improver, and had almost the standing of an apprentice. Ultimately he became a tradesman so-called. It is that kind of man the Bill proposes to encourage. He gets in as a tradesman although he is not qualified to do all branches of the trade, having merely specialised in one branch. These

dentists are mechanics. They can do something. It is a weakness of the dental profession that the surgical work is not supposed to be associated with the mechanical. In my opinion, that is quite wrong. The two sections should be combined. The idea of having a separate recognised training for the dental mechanic is utterly wrong. The position should be directed and governed by having, so to speak, a general labourer to assist, just as in trades and callings. The industrial standard in Victoria for many years was much lower than it is to-day. The Federal Arbitration Act elevated the Victorian standard. To us that Act has been of little use, because of our special industrial standard; but the contrary was the case in Victoria. We have consistently opposed the introduction of shoddy tradesmen in Western Australia. There is no recognition of the improver here. Time after time an effort has been made in the Arbitration Court by the Employers' Federation, and also by sections of employers, to introduce the man between the tradesman and the apprentice, the man known as the improver; but we have always resisted it successfully. The objection is that the improver reduces the standard of efficiency and consequently always has a tendency to reduce the remuneration. The unqualified man does not work as regularly as the qualified man, and usually accepts any standard of wages he is able to obtain. As the party representing the trade union and Labour movement, we should not agree to this Bill. We have to-day a large section of men who have worked in such workshops as that at Midland Junction. There are men who have been blacksmiths' strikers for 20 years. Those men become highly proficient as strikers, and gain a wonderful knowledge of the blacksmithing trade. It is quite a common practice to put an outstanding blacksmith's striker on to the fire with an indifferent blacksmith, for the purpose of strengthening that blacksmith. But while blacksmiths' strikers have made repeated efforts to join the trade union, they have always been told, "No; you are a labourer. You have a certain knowledge of the trade, but we will not allow you to reduce the standard of efficiency in our calling. We will not allow the improver system to be introduced into Western Australia. Although you have had full contact with the trade for so many years, you are not permitted to take part in it as a tradesman or to be-

come part and parcel of the trade union." The same thing applies to boilermaking. In fact, some men who have been boilermakers' helpers for years and have given special study to the trade through correspondence tuition from technical schools in various parts of the world, obtaining diplomas or certificates, have acquired more knowledge of the trade than is possessed by the average boilermaker's helper. However, the Boilermakers' Union will not permit those helpers to become boilermakers or to interfere with the tools of the trade. It is recognised that while they possess some knowledge, they are not fully-qualified men. Their admission into the trade union would lower the standard of efficiency, and do away with the system of apprenticeship which is rigidly enforced and of which we are rightly proud. Why should we attempt to introduce into the dental profession that which we declare to be against our industrial principles? The trade unions have assisted in outlining the standard of education, have assisted in laying down what may be termed the curriculum, the outline of each section that is to be taught to the apprentice year by year until he has completed his five or six years apprenticeship. That creates and maintains an industrial standard. That is what we have been enforcing for many years in this State, that is what we have maintained up to date. During the last three years a determined effort has been made by the employers to introduce the improver system. In fact, a strong effort is now in progress to reduce our standard of apprenticeship and loosen the system of training and examination; or, in other words, to bring Western Australia down to the level existing in Victoria and elsewhere. If we resist such efforts in regard to our own trades, why should we encourage a lower standard in a profession? I do not say that the standard should be higher or that it should be lower. I believe, however, that proper education is essential to efficiency. We want a standard of education which will raise our tradesmen higher than those in any other part of the world. We are achieving that to a great extent. A tradesman educated here can compete with the best in the world to-day. That is because our standard of education and apprenticeship has prevented the shoddy from getting in. We have resisted all attempts of the unqualified to become members of our trade

unions. We have maintained the standard of efficiency, and we want to encourage other people to do the same. I take no exception whatever to the functioning of the British Medical Association here. I rejoice in the fact that the association can control the profession and so direct it that only qualified, efficient men, conducting themselves properly and attending to their profession in a thorough manner, shall be admitted.

Mr. Wansbrough: A bit of a clean-up there would not do any harm either.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know that the hon. member and I need worry about that. Naturally, there are those who fall by the wayside, there are those who today are efficient but presently become inefficient. However, these things right themselves. In every industrial or professional system there is always a certain weakness. Generally speaking, however, and I believe the Minister for Health will agree with me as to this, the standard of efficiency encouraged by the British Medical Association here is creditably high. I want the same thing in connection with the Dental Board. The board should be encouraged by the Government to clear the unqualified practitioner out of the dental profession, but not by a Bill of this description.

Mr. Moloney: Do you think there should be a doctor on the Dental Board?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have no objection to a doctor being on it.

Mr. Lambert: There are no dentists on the Medical Board.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I suppose there is not the same need for them there. It must be remembered, however, that there are doctors of dentistry. There are doctors who have taken the doctor's degree in dentistry.

Mr. Lambert: They are not members of the Dental Board.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know nothing about that. I am not acquainted with the constitution of the Dental Board. That is for the Dental profession. I do not worry about the executive of a trades union. All I know is that they are elected by the unionists connected with their particular trade. I do not say that this man should be on the executive and that man should not be. I regard them as the elect of their members: and so it is with the dental profession. I do not go into the question of the personnel of the board. I regard the board as rep-

resentative of the profession, and elected by the profession. Therefore the Dental Board should be regarded as representative of the profession, and in a position to voice the opinions of the profession.

Mr. Lambert: Will you discuss the other clauses of the Bill apart from the one or two you have referred to?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, because I am not qualified to do so. I have not studied the literature that has been sent to us. I have not taken the Bill seriously. I did not think that Parliament would take it seriously. I do not expect it to be passed. I say emphatically that I will not vote for such a Bill unless it be introduced by a Minister of the Crown, charged with the responsibility to protect the public health. If the Bill possesses any virtue, and there is anything good in it, then let the Minister for Health take it into consideration, get into touch with the body representative of the dental profession, and then next session present to Parliament a Bill that will enable us to do what is necessary. I believe that those connected with the profession should be the ones to seek legislation for the protection of their interests. I do not think that those outside the profession should be allowed to influence Parliament, and it is decidedly wrong to introduce a Bill that will so affect the profession. It is most reprehensible to go to those who are not qualified, who have not passed the necessary examination, and have not taken advantage of the opportunities for advanced education and consult them regarding what should be done in the interests of the dental profession. The standards have improved considerably since 1920, and to introduce a Bill embodying provisions that will definitely reduce the standard of efficiency is most reprehensible.

Mr. Lambert: That is quite wrong.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Unquestionably some of the clauses are most dangerous. Particularly do I refer to those to which I have devoted most of my attention, especially from the ordinary industrial standard point of view. In fact, two clauses of the Bill are most dangerous from the standpoint of reducing efficiency and standard.

Mr. Lambert: To which clauses are you referring?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: To Clauses 3 and 4. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) knows why they are included

in the Bill. He put them there, so why endeavour to disclaim any knowledge of them? They are clear and, instead of seeking to adhere to the present standard of qualifying examinations, another method is proposed by the introduction of those who are unqualified. The Dental Hospital was established by the interests represented by the Dental Board, acting in conjunction with the present Minister for Health, when he was a member of an earlier Labour Administration. That was done so that we might get away from the weaknesses apparent in earlier forms of examination and education. Prior to the establishment of the Dental Hospital, the apprenticeship system was not of such a high standard as it has attained to-day. The hospital was inaugurated to give relief to the indigent and at the same time to provide a training centre for apprentices to the dental profession.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There are too many meetings going on on the floor of the House.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Another object was to assure that apprentices serving their articles with private practitioners would attend the hospital at regular periods, to be tested regarding their standard of education. The examinations are uniform for all students to-day, and unless a student is well educated, either at the Dental Hospital or under the guidance of a private practitioner, it is impossible for him to pass the examination. Year by year the standard set by the examinations is improving, and to-day it can be said that those who pass through the Dental Hospital and pass the necessary qualifying examinations are able to compete with those trained elsewhere.

Mr. Lambert: Do you know that under our obsolete Act, a private dentist can accept £200 as a premium and examine his own apprentice?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, I do not.

Mr. Lambert: It is true.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But the examination takes place at the Dental Hospital.

Mr. Lambert: The Dental Board—

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care what the hon. member says; I am speaking of what I know. The dental examinations take place at the Dental Hospital and a special examination board was appointed to conduct them.

Mr. Lambert: Appointed by the Dental Board.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Perhaps so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie must keep order.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Who else would be expected to appoint the examination board? It would not be suggested that they should come to Parliament with their suggestions. Just as the British Medical Association is the natural body to deal with medical matters, so the Dental Board is the natural body to deal with matters relating to the dental profession. Only to-day I was reading of the success achieved by a lady dental student from Western Australia. She had obtained an entrance into one of the educational bodies associated with dentistry in the Old Country. That young lady went through the Perth Dental Hospital and qualified as a dentist. She then went to London to further her education, and the standard set in Western Australia has evidently been recognised as sufficient qualification to enable her to enter upon a higher sphere of education such as is obtainable in London. We have been making progress in Western Australia, and the present Minister for Health assisted materially in raising the standard and making it possible for proper dental education to be available. The present Leader of the Opposition, when Minister for Health, also took an active interest in the welfare of the Dental Hospital. We should not reduce efficiency but rather should we seek to increase it. We should not undermine standards but seek to maintain them. In the circumstances, a Bill of this description should not be supported by anyone, having regard for industrial standards. If we start tinkering with them in this way, and allow unqualified, uneducated, and improperly trained persons to enter such a profession, where will it end? If we commence to interfere with our standards of control, any such weakening of control will tend to spread in other directions. I shall oppose the measure and shall resist a proposal that means substituting for the present apprenticeship system what is really the objectionable and unjust improver system, and that is what the Bill proposes.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco) [9.40]: It takes a good deal of courage to rise and support the Bill after the castigation the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) has received, particularly from the

member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson).

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is so, and it requires inconsistency, too.

Mr. MOLONEY: I listened to the member for Guildford-Midland and I am afraid he has not gone very deeply into the provisions of the Bill, and the application of similar legislation in other parts of the world. I hold no brief for either side, but in my opinion the amendments suggested are reasonable and equitable. I do not budge one inch in viewing the Bill from an industrial point of view, neither will I give way one inch with regard to my participation in technical matters. With all due deference to the member for Guildford-Midland, I compliment the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie upon introducing the Bill in the interests of those people for whom the member for Guildford-Midland has been so solicitous. I refer to the general public. I am not concerned about the people who to-day, from a point of vantage, are exploiting the position that obtains as a result of the 1920 Act. In consequence of the decision in the case of *Blitz v. Syme*, we have the position that confronts us to-day. I do say that we are justified in attempting to introduce legislation to modify the operations of those who are exploiting people at the expense of those who are doing the work and of those who are paying the piper—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have heard those expressions used regarding bricklayers.

Mr. MOLONEY: I should think the hon. member would be the last to say that the bricklayers exploited the people.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I merely pointed out that they had been charged with doing so.

Mr. MOLONEY: The member for Guildford-Midland does not insinuate that such a state of affairs existed?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It has been suggested.

Mr. MOLONEY: It do not believe it and I challenge the member for Guildford-Midland to produce his authority. Assertions may be made, and we are here to combat them.

The Minister for Works: Have you ever heard of such a charge being made against the carpenters?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Or of legislation being passed to put matters right?

Mr. MOLONEY: In some respects, the South Australian legislation is on all fours with provisions embodied in the Bill. The English Royal Commission was in accord with the amendments expressed in this Bill, and in Victoria in 1929 a measure was brought down with a view to raising the status of the dentists. Time was when we had an invasion of people with degrees and diplomas from America. More particularly do I refer to the architects' profession and the building trade. We all know that one can go to America and buy a dozen diplomas for a tanner, and then come back here and pose as a most wonderfully educated person. Many of those who went to America came back here with the whole of Nebraska stuffed up their noses. That is one of the things I am trying to guard against. I understand that to-day there are about 30 men who will come under the operation of the Bill if it passes. Some of those men have up to 18 years service in the practical work of the profession; they are not mere mechanics, for they have been doing the work day by day, and as the result of the application of the 1920 amendment, they are high in the eyes of the registered dentists, who could not do the practical work if they tried. Those who oppose the Bill want those 30 men to pass the matriculation standard.

Mr. Latham: I can see that we shall have to cut out the apprentices.

Mr. MOLONEY: In South Australia a limitation was provided to expire in 1941, after which the standard of intense education of matriculation could be applied. I could mention names of men who have come back here from America armed with heaps of diplomas and tried to enter a profession, but when put to the test of practical work they failed. One of them is now selling silk stockings. I know men who have been doing the practical work for those who cannot do it themselves.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Can they pass the test?

Mr. MOLONEY: The hon. member proposes that there shall be raised the barrier of an extremely high educational standard—which these men, by virtue of lack of schooling, would find extremely onerous—as possibly the hon. member himself would if he had to submit to it. The public do not require to be blinded by science; they want science applied to

practical work. We had that illustrated in the case of Dr. Teakle, about whom the Minister for Lands recently delivered a dissertation. At all times I stand up for applied science, but when science becomes a fetish and not an assistance to the securing of service, when it becomes a privilege fence behind which certain people shall learn for their own aggrandisement and not for the service of the people, I am opposed to it. A poor man four years out of work came to see me and I gave him a letter to the dental hospital in which I said he would pay when he got the money; but notwithstanding that, he had to pay four guineas before they would take an impression. Those are the people who are posing as philanthropists, desirous of helping the public. The dentists are receiving a subsidy from us, charging £200 to every student before he has a chance. Those people are keeping that close preserve, but are not worrying about competency. They are even worse than lawyers, because the lawyers certainly do give some facilities. In the days of our fathers the village blacksmith was the man who drew their teeth. I could read to the House a list, but half of you would not understand the meaning of it, for it relates to subjects in the curriculum.

Mr. Latham: Then you had better read it.

Mr. MOLONEY: If the hon. member likes, I will subject him to an oral examination. I would read the list, but I do not wish to weary the House, my only intention being to convey the idea that many of these things are not essential. We find the B.M.A. are getting behind these dentists, are out to buttress a kindred organisation. The member for Guildford-Midland righteously declares there is no member of the B.M.A. who is not competent. But one has only to remember the case of Dr. Cantor, a member of the profession whom the member for Guildford-Midland stands up for. He took out the whole of the inside of one of his patients and sewed the patient up again. As a result he was brought to book, but that did not alter the fact that he was a member of the profession and an incompetent. Also some of those highly placed in the dental profession would be found to be far from competent, if the acid test were applied to them. When I find members in righteous indignation bring-

ing forward the question of apprentices and improvers, I look behind the subterfuge; not that I am saying my honourable friend would descend to subterfuge. But I say that in this case those men have the right to be incorporated in the Bill. Also I say that the Bill is not a joke, as some members seem to think, but that it is worthy of our support. And if we are not prepared to go in the direction the Bill indicates, we should at least declare that the registered dentists shall be prohibited from exploiting those who are doing their work. Under the existing law a registered dentist can be lying asleep behind a partition, so long as he is on the premises; he can have half a dozen unregistered men doing the work, and he need not look into a single mouth or use a tool of any sort. Is that right?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You condone that.

Mr. MOLONEY: I do not. We should see to it that those people who are supposed to be the dentists do the work, instead of exploiting more practical men. I will support the Bill for the reasons I have given.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.57]: I will support the second reading. I cannot understand the opposition to the Bill. I hope the House will support the second reading and, if necessary, amend the Bill in Committee. Of my own knowledge I know there are unregistered men practising the profession to-day, who have no chance of becoming registered, because they have been repeatedly turned down by the Dental Board. Those unregistered men are to be found at work throughout the length and breadth of the State. They are superior in many ways, perhaps in all ways, in point of dental knowledge to some registered dentists practising in country districts. All that those unregistered men have to do to comply with the existing law is to take registered dentists, perhaps old and more or less infirm men, around with them. I know of one dentist in this State who had his certificate while he was practising in the Old Country, yet he cannot be registered here. Also I know that some of those who missed the examination in 1920, missed it by the merest chance. The Dental Board attempts to make a close corporation of the profession. If we open the door merely to allow the 30

men now practising to continue, it will be only just. I remember when the Architects Act came into operation, one man who had been drawing plans for an individual in the country was admitted as an architect.

Member: Designing fowl-houses.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes; and because he had done that work, he was registered as an architect. A gentleman who once occupied a seat in this House was also registered as an architect, and I do not think he possessed any professional knowledge.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not fair: he did.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The same applies to other men.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: He was a qualified man.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not think he was.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have seen his plans and I know he was.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: When I first knew him, he was not qualified. The same thing applies to veterinary surgeons. Because a man had looked after a sick cow or filed a horse's tooth, when the Veterinary Act came into force, he was registered as a veterinary surgeon, while another man who knew more about the work could not practise because of his inability to pass an examination. For the last 13 years, people have been asking for the door to be opened for the registration of men practising dentistry throughout the State. If we give them a chance, they will still have to pass an examination before the Dental Board. The Minister has agreed that some alteration of the existing system is necessary. Let us pass the second reading and then, if necessary, the Bill can be amended in Committee.

On motion by Mr. Wansbrough, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.4 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 6th December, 1933.

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

SOUTH-WEST PROVINCE.

Seat Declared Vacant.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: I move—

That this House resolves, that owing to the death of the Hon. John Ewing, late member for the South-West Province, the seat be declared vacant.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.36]: I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—GASCOYNE-MINILYA ROAD BOARD.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, ordered "That all correspondence since the 1st January, 1933, between the Departments of Public Works and Labour and the Gascoyne-Minilya Road Board be laid on the Table of the House."

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1. Permanent Reserve (A†1162).
2. Augusta Allotments.
3. Reserves.

Passed.