sent all Australian iron is reserved for building purposes, but the producer who wants to build a shed in order to enable him to market more produce should not be compelled to use the imported article at the price now ruling. Yesterday I required a certain quantity that did not come in the category of housing material, and imported iron was quoted at £212 per ton and Australian iron at £61 2s. 6d. I sincerely hope that the Minister will bring this matter under the notice of the Minister for Housing.

I repeat that, much as I dislike this legislation, I shall support its continuance. I do not approve of the vicious penalty of imprisonment provided in the measure, and I hope that in Committee it will be removed. I still have no objection to making the punishment fit the crime by providing an ascending scale of fines in relation to the money expended on any unauthorised work.

On motion by Hon. J. McI. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.21] in moving the second reading said: When a similar measure was before Parliament two years ago, some exception was taken on the ground that the duration of the Act might well have been extended for a longer period. This Bill proposes to extend the operation of the Act for a period of five years, which will obviate the necessity for bringing down continuance measures every two years.

This legislation was first brought into operation in January, 1931, and many thousands of farmers have sought its protection. With the introduction in 1935 of the Rural Relief Fund Act, a majority of the farmers obtained financial assistance to adjust the claims of their creditors and had their stay orders cancelled. The two Acts are complementary, and it is necessary for the debts adjustment Act to be continued to enable the Rural Relief Fund Act to function. The Rural Relief Fund Act provides for the continuous use of the funds held by the trustees for debt adjustment purposes only.

Assistance under the relief fund Act has amounted to £1,291,730, of which £1,283,000 was granted by the Commonwealth Government and the balance was made up from money repaid by farmers. Since the Act was amended to provide for the discharge of mortgages on payment of 20 per cent. of the amount, 1,651 farmers have taken advantage of the concession and have repaid £107,514. This was a very fine concession granted by the Government. If the farmers paid 20 per cent. of the old debt, the rest was wiped off. There are still a large number of farmers who have not availed themselves of this generous concession.

With the coming of prosperous times to the farming community, the Acts are more or less dormant, and administrative work is carried out by officers of the Lands Department as part of their normal duties. The principal Act has been of material benefit over the years to many farmers, and it is considered advisable to keep it on the statute book, not only to enable the functions under the Rural Relief Fund Act to be carried on, but also to ensure that in an emergency a farmer could be granted a stay order to give him an opportunity to put forward proposals to his creditors for carrying on his farming operations. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. A. Logan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 25th October, 1951.

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CONTENTS—continued

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Presentation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce that, accompanied by the member for Canning, the member for Cottesloe, the member for Gascoyne and the member for Nedlands, I waited upon His Excellency the Administrator and presented the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's opening Speech. His Excellency was pleased to reply in the following terms:—

> Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly: I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to His Most Gracious Majesty the King and for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament.
>
> J. P. DWYER,
> Administrator.

(2) Approximately how many Commonwealth-State rental homes are being built annually?

(3) What is the average rental charged for houses now being allocated for—

(a) two-bedroom brick;

(b) three-bedroom brick;

(c) two-bedroom timber;

(d) three-bedroom timber?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The following schedule sets out the number of existing priorities in the metropolitan area, established as the result of inspections up to April, 1951. The figures shown since April, 1951, represent the applications received in the metropolitan area monthly. Inspections in connection with these will be made and need determined at a later date.

(2) 1,166 Commonwealth-State rental homes were completed during the past 12 months.

(3) Rentals for Commonwealth-State rental homes now being allocated in the metropolitan area are as follows:—

(a) Two bed-room brick—from 46s. to 49s. per week.

(b) Three-bedroom brick—from 50s. to 55s. per week.

(c) Two-bedroom timber-framed—from 40s. to 44s. per week.

(d) Three-bedroom timber-framed—from 44s. to 48s. per week.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Totals
1946	2	4	....	3	5	1	6	2	3	....	2	2	30
1947	11	14	20	18	16	20	32	30	36	22	31	18	268
1948	36	43	47	100	99	83	114	83	99	78	85	66	933
1949	99	97	73	50	60	46	41	56	49	49	54	31	705
1950	65	56	42	27	49	36	44	46	59	79	103	93	699
1951	162	136	141	147	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	586
1951	....	....	....	....	231	249	239	245	145	85	....	....	1,194
													4,415

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

As to Commonwealth-State Rental Homes, Priorities, Number and Rentals.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many priorities were granted to applicants for Commonwealth-State rental homes for each month respectively from the date of granting of priorities of houses now being allocated, to the present time?

METROPOLITAN MARKET TRUST.

(a) As to Personnel, Remuneration, Auctioneers, etc.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What are the names and occupations of the members who constitute the Trust under the provisions of the Metropolitan Market Act, 1926-1941?

(2) What interest does each of the members of the Trust represent?

(3) What amount of remuneration by way of salary and/or fees was received by each member of the Trust for the year ended the 30th June, 1951?

(4) What is the prescribed distance from the Metropolitan Markets within which the Trust has prohibited the sale of prescribed produce (except on the premises of the seller)?

(5) What does such prescribed produce include?

(6) How many auctioneers are at present operating as such at the Metropolitan Market?

(7) What are the names of such persons, firms or companies?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) K. D. Wilson, retired; C. W. Harper, company director; C. H. Webb, union secretary; W. A. Haynes, orchardist; J. Murray, contractor.

(2) Messrs. Wilson and Haynes, Governor's appointees; C. W. Harper represents producers; C. H. Webb representing consumers; J. Murray is the nominee of the City of Perth.

(3) K. D. Wilson, £33 12s.; C. W. Harper, £23 2s.; C. H. Webb, £21; W. A. Haynes, £27 6s.; J. Murray, £23 2s.

(The Chairman, Mr. Wilson, receives a fee of £4 4s. per meeting, and others £2 2s. per meeting.)

(4) Quarter of a mile.

(5) Fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs and poultry.

(6) Ten.

(7) Fruit and vegetables auctioneers—Glendenning & Co.; Berryman & Langley Pty. Ltd.; W.A. Fruit & Produce Markets; F. W. Lantzke & Sons; Producer Markets Co-operative Limited.

Poultry Auctioneers—Nelson & Son Ltd.; Farmers' Poultry Auction; Giles & Ryan.

Meat Auctioneer—Nelson's Meat Market.

Fish Auctioneer—A. J. Langford Pty. Ltd.

(b) As to Garden Produce Containers.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) It is a fact that commercial producers of potatoes and onions are remunerated for the cost of bags by the respective marketing boards and/or in conjunction with the Prices Commissioner?

(2) Is it a fact that primary producers, including market gardeners, are required to pay additional charges for bags in which fertilisers, such as superphosphate and blood and bone are supplied by merchants or superphosphate companies?

(3) Does he, or the Trust, still contend that under Section 13, Subsection (1) paragraphs (4), (5) and (7) of the Act, the Trust does not possess the requisite authority to instruct auctioneers that, when growers indicate as a condition of sale that the crates and/or bags containing produce are to be sold separately or made available to the growers, the requirement of such growers must be carried out?

(4) If reply to (3) is in the affirmative, will he or the Trust explain why?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) Board prices are those fixed by the Prices Commissioner and the items included are known only to his office.

(2) No.

(3) Section 13 empowers the Trust for certain purposes stated in subsections to make by-laws. Any by-law so made could state conditions under which sales are to be made.

(4) The Trust sees no reason to interfere in contracts capable of being legally arranged by persons amongst themselves.

(c) As to Costs of Bags, etc.

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the cost of second-hand and new bags per dozen, that are used by market gardeners to deliver their produce?

(2) What is the weight of bags used by market gardeners?

(3) If he has no authority under the Metropolitan Market Act to intervene and ensure fair treatment for the producer, would he consider amending the Act?

(4) If so, will he move in the matter as early as possible?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) Prices are subject to orders issued by the Prices Control Commissioner.

(2) Weights are variable.

(3) He does not agree that the producer is getting unfair treatment.

(4) Answered by (3).

TOMATOES.

As to Disposal of Crop.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What quantity of tomatoes was disposed of—

(a) oversea;

(b) to the Eastern States;

(c) to ships' stores;

(d) on the local market, since the 1st July last, and for the similar period last year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

Exported to Malaya—Season 1949, 44,166 cases; season 1950, 41,892 cases; season 1951 (9th July to 11th October), 25,196 cases.

Exported to Melbourne—Season 1949, 155,733 cases; season 1950, 165,726 cases; season 1951 (9th July to 11th October), 74,984 cases.

No figures available for tomatoes disposed of to ships' stores.

Consigned to Perth—Season 1949, 120,369 cases; season 1950, 127,990 cases; season 1951 (9th July to 11th October), 43,295 cases.

(Tomatoes for export are packed in ½ bushel cases (24 lb.).)

(Tomatoes for local market are packed mainly in ¾ bushel cases (36 lb.).)

REAL ESTATE.

As to Qualifications of Valuers.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Attorney General:

(1) Has he seen under the head of "The Law Courts" in "The West Australian" of the 19th July, 1951, a statement by Mr. J. F. McMillan, S.M., in the Local Court, that two land valuers who gave evidence in a case involving an increase in rent were a burden rather than a help, inasmuch as one valuer had valued a six-roomed house at £4,900 while the other had valued it at £3,500; that one valuer calculated the area at 14.21 squares, while the other had based the area at 20.73 squares?

(2) What qualifications, if any, must be possessed by a person before being entitled to describe himself as (a) a land valuer; (b) a sworn valuator?

(3) What examinations, if any, must be passed before a person can hold himself out as a sworn valuator?

(4) Is any registration necessary, and if so, with what authority must applicants register?

(5) What are the prescribed fees, if any, chargeable by sworn valuators for services in valuing real estate?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) No.

(2), (3) and (4) Before anyone is entitled to describe himself as a sworn valuator he must be appointed by the Governor in Council under the provisions of Section 14 of the Transfer of Land Act and registered with the Registrar of Titles as such.

Before appointment is made, careful investigation is made by the Registrar of Titles into the character, experience and qualification of the applicant.

(5) No fees are prescribed by law.

MEAT.

As to Government Storage against Anticipated Shortage.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Premier:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to store beef and mutton this spring to meet an anticipated shortage next year?

(2) Will any statement be made on this question to enable members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation to be informed of Government policy and anticipated action?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Any representations made by the Meat and Allied Trades Federation will receive consideration.

ROAD DISTRICTS ACT.

As to Amending Legislation.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Local Government:

Is it proposed to bring down a Bill this session to amend the Road Districts Act?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

BASIC WAGE.

As to Inclusion of Commonwealth-State Homes Rentals.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Attorney General:

(1) Are the rents paid for Commonwealth-State rental homes taken into account in the determination of the rental portion of the basic wage for quarterly cost of living adjustments made by the Arbitration Court?

(2) If not, why not?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) and (2) For quarterly cost of living adjustments made by the Arbitration Court, the "C" Series prices indices are used. These are compiled from information collected in pursuance of the Commonwealth Census and Statistics Act, 1905-1949, and under the directions of the Commonwealth Statistician. Under his instructions the "rents" paid for Commonwealth-State rental homes are not used for the purpose of computing the "C" Series. The State Statistician uses the same prices indices as those used by the Commonwealth Statistician.

WATER PIPING.

As to Road Transport from Eastern States.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) In what way was the amount of £10,004 arrived at which was the cost to the Government of having approximately 190 tons of galvanised water piping brought from the Eastern States by road by Mr. R. O. Williams?

(2) Was the fact that Mr. Williams was transporting timber to the Eastern States from Western Australia, and that the water piping would be back-loading taken into consideration when the price to be paid for transporting the piping was agreed upon?

(3) Was the timber which Mr. Williams transported to the East on the occasion referred to sold by the State Saw Mills?

(4) When Cabinet approval was given for Mr. Williams to have the contract, had the price to be paid been agreed upon?

(5) Was any price agreed upon before Mr. Williams transported the pipes?

(6) Does the Government intend to have more piping transported by road from the Eastern States?

(7) If and when more piping is to be transported by road, will the Government seek tenders for the work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) On the basis of a price per ton mile.

(2) No.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes.

(5) Yes.

(6) Yes, if circumstances warrant it.

(7) The matter will be considered when the occasion arises.

PETROL.

As to Stoppage of Supplies to Country Centres.

Mr. MAY (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Premier received a letter from the Collie Miners' Union, setting out the serious position which has arisen owing to the action of the various oil companies in stopping petrol supplies to country stores?

(2) Is he aware of the fact that stores, bus proprietors, timber contractors, open-cut contractors and others are being restricted in their work by this action?

(3) If the position has been brought to his notice, will he say what action he proposes to take to remove the bottleneck, which is having a serious effect, particularly on coal production in this State?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) In view of the representations, I will have early arrangements made to have the position investigated.

SANITARY PANS.

As to Shortage.

Mr. NALDER (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is the Minister aware that there is a grave shortage of sanitary pans for the purpose for which they are intended by local governing bodies?

(2) As the shortage has been brought about by a scarcity of 22-gauge iron, will she endeavour to procure some of this material and earmark it for this purpose?

The MINISTER replied:

I can assure the hon. member that I always endeavour, when these shortages are brought to my notice, to see that the material is supplied, if possible. I will do what I can to see that this matter is attended to.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Kelly, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. A. H. Panton (Leederville) and Mr. Needham (North Perth) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [4.46] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is not a large one. It contains only alterations to two principles in the parent Act. One deals with the fees to be paid to the Commissioners or members of the Harbour Trust. The Bill proposes that they shall be prescribed by regulation. I think members know that in the present Act they are fixed by the Act itself. Section 10 provides that each Commissioner shall receive a fee of £2 2s. for every sitting he attends; and Section 11 provides that the chairman's fee for each meeting shall be £4 4s. These provisions were made many years ago.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Could not you fix the fees by Act instead of regulation?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am coming to that point. The provision, as I said, was made many years ago, and obviously £2 2s. today is not worth anything like what it was then. Uncertainty exists as to the relative value of money in the future. Whether there will be a return to its original value when the Act was passed or a further depreciation, because of a continuation of the present trend, I do not know. It is therefore considered advisable that, as is the case in many other instances where members of statutory bodies are paid, the fees shall be prescribed by regulation. At the moment, it might be fair to fix £4 4s. and £6 6s. It might, two years hence, be fair to fix £5 5s. and £7 7s., or £3 3s. and £5 5s.

I do not think a matter of this nature should involve the bringing of an amending Bill to Parliament on each occasion, particularly, as in many other instances the same method of prescription has been followed in relation to fees paid to members of commissions or boards of a statutory nature. The regulations, of course, would be laid upon the Table of the House. There have been, on more than one occasion during my membership of this

House, motions to disallow regulations fixing fees in this manner, and those motions have been debated in the House and a decision come to, one way or another. I well remember on one occasion, when a fee of £7 7s. per sitting was prescribed by regulation, and an immediate motion was moved, when the regulation was tabled, that it be disallowed. I do not recollect whether Parliament agreed to the motion or not, but I make it quite plain that not only has such action been taken, but that it can be taken under this provision if it is considered desirable.

In view of the lapse of time since the present fees were fixed, the great amount of work which now falls upon the members of the Harbour Trust, and the considerable responsibility that they have, in the line of present-day money values it would be fair to fix fees at four guineas and six guineas, or at least five guineas in respect of the chairman. But that is purely my own personal view, although I believe that the Minister in charge of the Trust holds the same ideas. If the Bill is passed, the fees will be prescribed by regulation.

At this stage I would like to mention that Mr. L. L. Bateman of Fremantle is the chairman of the Commission, while the other commissioners are the Assistant Under Treasurer, Mr. Byfield, and Messrs. F. Mann, H. J. R. Hooper and H. J. Prater.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They are certainly worth more than they are receiving at the moment and what was prescribed in those days.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Certainly. The commissioners meet on an average about 60 times a year—that is a little over one meeting a week. The second provision in the Bill is to delete Section 59 of the Act. This section states—

> All drafts upon the Treasury for expenditure by the Commissioners shall be by orders signed by two Commissioners, one of whom shall be the chairman or acting chairman and countersigned by the secretary.

As members probably know, the practice in all other State trading concerns is that orders or cheques of this kind are signed by trusted employees specially authorised to carry out that duty. The Trust has suggested that, as the work of signing such documents has become more onerous because of the greatly increased volume of it, the principle followed in other State instrumentalities should be followed in this case. Therefore they have requested that Section 59 of the parent Act be repealed to enable that to be done. In the light of modern conditions and working, I think that is a reasonable proposal. Those are the two provisions in question and I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

BILL—PARLIAMENT HOUSE SITE PERMANENT RESERVE (A1162).

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is to delete the word "twenty-one" in line 12, Clause 3, and substitute the word "ten."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This Bill was intended to cover a period of 21 years during which time the buildings upon this particular reserve would be covered by this Act, and at the end of that period the question would be brought before Parliament for further consideration. Apparently it is the desire of another place that opportunity should be given to Parliament further to discuss this matter at the end of ten years. As both Chambers have approved of the Bill in principle, and as the House Committee is apparently anxious that both Chambers be given the opportunity to discuss the possibility of completing Parliament House and the provision of buildings for various Government departments, I do not propose to ask the House to disagree with this amendment. Therefore, I move—

> That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is regrettable that both Chambers have agreed with the principle contained in the Bill and, consequently, the only outstanding argument is with regard to the period of time. I intend to move an amendment to delete the word "ten" for the purpose of inserting the word "five," and will give some rather cogent reasons for it. If the Premier and the Minister for Works will pay some heed to my remarks, and have some regard for consistency, they must agree with my contention.

As all members are aware, there are many continuance Bills which come before Parliament every year, including the Marketing of Eggs Act, the Prices Control Act, the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act and legislation controlling rents, as well as many others. Those are annual measures and there has not been any effort on the part of the Government to continue them for a period of two, three, five or ten years. With regard to the Lotteries (Control) Act, it took several hours of discussion in this Chamber before we could get the Government to agree to the Commission being given a longer term of life than twelve months.

Various amendments were moved and it was finally resolved that the Lotteries Commission could continue until the year 1955. An amendment to extend the life of the Act for ten years, until 1960, was

defeated in this Chamber with the vote of the Premier, the Minister for Works and a majority of their supporters. Everybody knows that the Lotteries Commission is a permanent institution; far more permanent than the buildings around which this Bill centres. I desire that members of Parliament should have an opportunity to discuss this matter at frequent intervals.

I have been a member of Parliament for eight years and during that time I have seen no less than 36 members leave this Chamber through death, defeat at the polls, or resignation. From that it would be appreciated, surely, that it is desirable to have a short period so that there will be at all times a considerable number of members who are familiar with all the facts and circumstances. It is desirable that the Government of the day, irrespective of its political complexion, should be urged by private members generally and given to understand that it has an obligation to the Public Service and that it should provide that service with decent central offices; that it has an obligation to Parliament to rid this area of the ramshackle hovels that are spread over it at present. It will be agreed that whether the period is five years, 10 years or 21 years, as the Minister desired in the original Bill, the period will be extended—in other words there will be continuation Bills brought down from time to time.

As the principle has been established that the buildings already erected will be legally there with the passing of this Bill, it will be possible for the Government to complete the structure that was commenced. That is all that was sought, and all I am doing is endeavouring to ensure that at frequent intervals members of Parliament will have an opportunity of expressing themselves on this matter and prompting and reminding the Government about it. On each occasion that this matter is brought before us there should be a majority of members who have recollections of the number of debates, understandings and circumstances generally surrounding the whole issue. I hope the Minister will agree with me on this matter. Perhaps I should not be debating it because it might be possible that he is prepared to accept a shorter period without any debate. I move—

> That the amendment be amended by striking out the word "ten" and inserting the word "five" in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not prepared to accept this amendment because I feel no good purpose will be served. The hon. member laid emphasis on the fact that it would give members an opportunity in five years' time to discuss the whole problem of completing Parliament House and providing accommodation elsewhere for the Public Works Department. But surely Parliament can do that on the Estimates or at any other opportunity and, if there is a majority to carry the motion, the Government's hands can be forced if necessary. The original suggestion was 21 years and it has now been cut to 10 years. I feel that is a reasonable compromise. Seeing it cannot be done now, no-one will suggest that we will be in a position to complete Parliament House within five years.

Mr. Graham: Or 10.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Or, as the hon. member says, 10.

Mr. Graham: Then why do not you come down to earth and oppose the Council's amendment?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I believe that within six or seven years it may be possible to make some provision in the way of accommodation for departments and civil servants on the area which has been selected. As I said when introducing the Bill the Government felt, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, that after the Government Printing Office had been completed, and because of the extra accommodation made available by the existing printing office building and by those buildings which have been permitted—and now called temporary—it would be many years before it would be necessary to provide extra accommodation for Government departments within the city. Therefore I believe that 10 years is quite a reasonable period in which to allow Parliament or the Government to make progress in the matter of providing accommodation; to make progress, if there is to be progress made, in the completion of Parliament House, as now envisaged. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. READ: I would like to add my protest to the number of temporary buildings going up in the city, and support the member for East Perth in limiting the time to five years. The Minister said that no good purpose could be served by cutting the period to five years.

The Minister for Works: None whatever.

Mr. READ: The purpose I see in this amendment is that it will give us an opportunity to protest against any action by the Government to put up these temporary buildings and thus spoil the face of the city. There are temporary buildings in Plain-st. for two or three different purposes.

The Minister for Works: Approved by the City Council.

Mr. Graham: Under protest.

Mr. READ: The City Council protested on every occasion when any of these substandard or temporary buildings were put up in these areas. They are forbidden under the by-laws. But both the State Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament have continually erected these temporary buildings. Why should there be a policy of constructing permanent

buildings section by section? There is an area in St. George's Terrace, next to the Christian Bros. College, where permanent buildings should be commenced in order to provide accommodation for the Public Service. If they were permanent they would be there for all time and would be an ornament to the city. After all, these temporary buildings do not accommodate the officers of the department in the manner in which they should be accommodated. I think the time has arrived when we should proceed with the erection of permanent buildings for civil servants.

Mr. GRAHAM: All I can say about the Minister's reply is that he was making exceedingly heavy weather. It is all very well for him to suggest that we can discuss these matters on the Estimates. He knows, as every other member does, that discussions on the Estimates are purely for purposes of debate.

The Minister for Works: There are thousands of other opportunities.

Mr. GRAHAM: There is now an opportunity of doing something about it, and we know that private members have no say or influence whatsoever.

The Premier: You have had a lot of influence.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not think there is any occasion for the Premier to be facetious. All he has to do to satisfy himself on that point is to take a look at the division lists and he will find that I have been in the minority on several occasions, even when there has been a mixed division.

Mr. Marshall: Bad judgment on your part.

Mr. GRAHAM: There will be an opportunity for members of this Chamber and for the Legislative Council to tell the Government—not the departmental officers who seem to be running the whole show—whether the term is reduced by five, 10 or 15 years, that the time has come to start the construction of permanent Government offices. This will be indicated to the Government by a refusal to pass a further continuance measure. It would not be left to Dumas or Clare who, everybody knows, is the Government in this matter.

The Minister for Works: That is a nice thing to say!

Mr. GRAHAM: It is a shocking thing to say. The Minister knows that it was at the behest of those gentlemen that the law of the land was defied; it was not what was done by the Solicitor General or his departmental officers or the House Committee that defied the law of the land. Private members seem to be treated with contempt by departmental officers and by the Ministers. When Ministers or departmental officers require chairs or other facilities, these are provided within a matter of a few hours or a day or two; yet it is impossible for us to get a few chairs for this Chamber. —three on the left and three on the right hand side of the Speaker. There have been workmen on this site, as members will have observed, before Parliament has finally decided this measure.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have eyes to see. They have been there yesterday and today.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There has been a noise coming from down there.

The Minister for Works: Yes, and there are noises coming from here now.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is usual when a member is on his feet.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Even when a Minister is on his feet.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: For the Minister to suggest that a reduction from 21 years to 10 years is a reasonable compromise is absurd.

The Minister for Works: Just as reasonable as five is to 10.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister knows that, on completion, the present structure will be there for many years, unless private members show a little initiative—which they have failed to display on this measure—by intimating to the Government on some future occasion that something should be done.

Mr. Hutchinson: You can hardly recommend that we begin a Parliament House extension at the present time.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have not suggested that course. What I am suggesting is that sooner or later a start will have to be made on permanent offices for the Public Service. But so long as we allow the Government to put up little hovels and shanties, to that extent are we not delaying the construction of the permanent structure? When this Bill was before us during the last session the argument was adduced that something would have to be done and done urgently out of consideration for the Public Service.

Mr. Griffith: Do not you think you are exaggerating when you refer to the buildings as hovels and shanties?

Mr. GRAHAM: The best I can say of them is that they are not a credit to the capital city.

Mr. Griffith: Then do not exaggerate unduly.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is not a question of exaggerating but of using a different term which indicates, by and large, the same thing. I hope members will support my amendment because, if agreed to, nothing whatever will be upset. The validation of the old buildings will be accomplished and

the Government will be able to proceed with the new building. On the other hand, the amendment will provide for us and our successors at reasonable periods an opportunity to direct the attention of the Government to the then existing state of affairs and, when it is felt that the time is opportune to refuse the passing of further validating measures, to insist upon the Government's getting on with the job.

Surely this House and Parliament generally have a sense of reasonableness, and if Australia were embroiled in a war or times were exceedingly difficult a further extension of five years would be granted. All my amendment seeks to achieve is to give members at reasonably frequent intervals an opportunity of expressing themselves on this question. I would not go to the point of the ridiculous by suggesting it should be done at monthly intervals. The Government has introduced Bills such as those for the continuance of the Lotteries (Control) Act for periods of 12 months whereas I am suggesting a period of five years. If continuance measures can be introduced in respect of other Acts, surely they could be introduced in connection with the measure under discussion.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	20
Majority for	2

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Read
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Styants
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Kelly
	(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Manning
Mr. Ackland	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Owen
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Bovell
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes
Mr. Panton	Mr. Hill
Mr. Needham	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Mann

Amendment thus passed; the Council's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's amendment.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.25]: Unless the Minister can advance some more substantial reasons in support of the alterations indicated in the Bill, I do not propose to vote for it. The object is to increase the training period for anyone not qualified as a general nurse who wishes to take a midwifery course, from 18 months to two years; and to increase the training period from nine to 12 months for a general nurse who is qualified as such after three years' training.

The reasons given by the Minister have very little to recommend them or warrant their acceptance. They were that the training period had been found to be too short to allow of a sound and complete training in all branches of midwifery. The Minister did not tell us on whose authority that statement was made. It is certainly not borne out by the statistics which show that the standard of efficiency of general nurses who have qualified after taking their midwifery courses since the 40-hour week was granted by the Federal Arbitration Court some four or five years ago, is not less than that of nurses who qualified in that direction previously. We find that the maternity mortality is approximately the same over the past four or five years as it was in earlier days, so I do not know on what authority the Minister's statement was made.

The reason given for what she said was the lower standard of efficiency during recent years was that the introduction of the 40-hour week represented a very severe impact upon the period spent in training, which tended to reduce the standard of efficiency. I cannot imagine who informed the Minister that the 40-hour week is in operation for trainee nurses in this State. If it were so, there would be some logic in the contention that the reduced time of the working week from 48 or 44 hours per week to 40 over the nine-monthly period would have some effect. The Minister stated that the main training centre for midwifery in this State is the King Edward Memorial Hospital and that the nurses there worked 40 hours a week.

The Minister for Health: Only some of them.

Mr. STYANTS: My information is that the vast majority of them work 48 hours a week and practically none work 40 hours a week. They are paid ordinary time for

the first 40 hours and overtime for all time worked from 40 to 44 hours and time and a half from 44 to 48 hours. My information is that almost the entire staff of midwifery trainees at King Edward Memorial Hospital work 48 hours a week. Thus the main contention advanced by the Minister to warrant the alteration proposed in the Bill has nothing to substantiate it.

The Attorney General: You would not think it desirable to continue that practice, would you?

Mr. STYANTS: In New South Wales and Victoria, we were told, the authorities have increased the training period in a manner similar to that proposed in the Bill. That may be so, but we have to remember that the 40-hour working week is something more than a theory or token in those two States. Those trainees are working 40 hours a week, and it is quite easy to reckon out that our midwifery trainees in Western Australia, working 48 hours a week for nine months, serve almost an equivalent time to that served by trainees in midwifery in Victoria and New South Wales who work a 40-hour week for 12 months.

What should have been done by the Nurses' Registration Board—and it might have been done, but the Minister did not tell us; the information given to the House was very meagre—when it was notified last January that the intention of the boards in New South Wales and Victoria was to make this alteration is this: Instead of agreeing, the board should have pointed out that whereas the midwifery trainees in Victoria and New South Wales were working a 40-hour week, those in Western Australia were working 48 hours a week. That is something that the board should have placed very strongly before the boards in New South Wales and Victoria.

The Minister said that those two States were not prepared to accept our certificate under a nine-months training scheme as the equivalent of the certificates issued in those States. Perhaps the Minister can define exactly what she meant by that. At the worst, I should say it would mean that if we retained the nine-months training period in Western Australia, those nurses who qualified under that system and wished to go to the Eastern States to carry out midwifery nursing would have to serve a period of three months' additional training in exactly the same way as has been the case for many years with those nurses who have gone from Western Australia to Great Britain.

Reading the Minister's speech, one would be led to infer that Great Britain has recently altered the training period for midwifery trainees from nine to twelve months. That is not the case; it is not an innovation there. For many years, nurses proceeding from Western Australia and wishing to take up midwifery work in Great Britain have had to serve three months before being able to register as qualified midwives, but they have not had to sit for any further examinations. The examination passed in Western Australia is recognised by the Nurses Registration Board of Great Britain, but the period of training is not recognised and the nurses have to do an additional three months.

If we retain our nine-months training period, that is all that will have to be done by nurses who go from here to the Eastern States and wish to take up midwifery work there. I have never read or heard of any complaint about the efficiency of our midwifery nurses who qualified under the nine-months training period; and it is quite evident that to say the introduction of the 40-hour week has had a severe impact is so much nonsense, for the simple reason that a 40-hour week has never been in practice with these trainees. They have served an equivalent training period by working 48 hours a week in nine months to that served by trainees in Victoria and New South Wales who have done 40 hours a week over 12 months. I believe there is some logic in the contention of the boards in New South Wales and Victoria that the reduction from 44 to 40 hours a week has had an impact upon the training time for nurses there; but, so far as this State is concerned, there is no justification for the contention at all.

It has to be remembered that at one time the training period for general nurses in this State was two years. I believe the statement contained in the Minister's speech is a definite reflection on those nurses who have qualified since the introduction of the 40-hour week by the Federal Arbitration Court. It is an unjustified reflection on those nurses, who are quite as competent as those who obtained certificates prior to the introduction of the 40-hour week, since they have served the some amount of training time, having worked 48 hours a week and the 40-hour week never having really applied to them.

I am informed on good authority that few of the nurses who have qualified after three years' training have left this State and gone to the Eastern States to qualify for the midwifery certificate. It has to be realised that the midwifery section of nursing is the most unpopular of all. That is borne out by the fact that of some 1,700 or 1,800 who have qualified as general nurses in this State, only about 1,000 have taken the maternity course. That can be discovered by reference to the "Government Gazette." The Nurses Registration Act makes it incumbent upon the board to keep a register of all qualified nurses. Those nurses pay a registration fee of one shilling and register with the board annually. That register has to be kept in three parts, and each year a copy has to be published in the "Government Gazette." Any member can see for himself that only

a little more than one in two of those who qualify as general nurses take the maternity qualification as well.

It is said that a number of our nurses go to the Eastern States to obtain training as midwives. If anyone peruses a copy of the register, he will see that there are scores of nurses who, in exactly similar circumstances come from the Eastern States and Great Britain and follow their vocation here. In the register, members will find scores of names of those who have qualified as general nurses in the Eastern States and have come to this State and received midwifery training here. Alongside the names in the register are the qualifications of the individuals concerned, their home addresses, and where they receive their qualifications. Such nurses have come from every State in Australia, and quite a number have come from oversea; but they were qualified as midwives when they came here. It is true that we lose a percentage of our trained nurses to the Eastern States; they go for experience and travel, in order to see the country. In exactly the same way—and perhaps it is more in our favour in the balance—nurses come to Western Australia from the other States.

I am informed on good authority that not a great number of our nurses go to the Eastern States, but rather that more come to Western Australia than go from here. Not many of the nurses who go from here qualify in the Eastern States. The incentive is to leave Western Australia because the period of training in the East is just the same as here, but under a 40-hour week there as against a 48-hour week at the King Edward Memorial Hospital. I know of my own experience that the majority of Western Australian nurses who have gone to New South Wales will be found at the Concord Hospital—the big military hospital—because they get better wages and conditions there than in the other Government hospitals.

By going there they have the opportunity of seeing Sydney itself and certain portions of the State of New South Wales. Then they travel on to Queensland or Victoria. They leave here for the purpose of gaining varied experience and seeing Australia. I would like the Minister to tell us what effect this legislation will have on those who have qualified under the nine-months' period since the 40-hour week was declared by the Federal Arbitration Court. If, as the Minister's speech indicates, the opinion is held that they have not been thoroughly trained, it would be logical to say that those who have already qualified are not up to the average standard of the nurses who qualified prior to the 40-hour week being declared by the Federal Arbitration Court. What is to be done as far as they are concerned?

If there is an inefficiency or an inadequacy in the training period because of the 40-hour week, there would be, I think it is logical to say, an inefficiency of a like degree with respect to those who have already qualified. Are the people who have obtained their certificates since the inauguration of the 40-hour week to be called back, or will their midwifery certificates be cancelled until such time as they serve an additional three months? What will happen to those who are in the course of training entered into on the understanding that the period would be nine months? Will they have to serve 12 months? To do so would be a distinct breach of contract. Those nurses went into the King Edward hospital on the understanding that they would work for nine months. I mention the King Edward because it is recognised as the main training centre, and the one with respect to which the Minister said great difficulty was being experienced in obtaining trainees.

Are we going to say to those who have completed seven months' training that the course will not be for nine months, but 12 months? I would like the Minister to make clear to the House what the position of those nurses will be. In the event of the amendment being carried, will those who have entered into a contract to train for nine months at the King Edward to obtain their midwifery certificate, and who have been there only a month or two, be permitted to break their contract and go to the Eastern States where they will be able to train for 12 months, the same period as will be in operation here, under the 40-hour week, as compared with the 48-hour week at the King Edward?

It is distinctly unfair to agree that our trainee nurses, for midwifery, should serve a period of 12 months under a 48-hour week simply because in the Eastern States, where the 40-hour week operates, it has been decided to increase the training period fron nine to 12 months. I believe that had the Nurses' Registration Board not been so agreeable as to acquiesce in the suggestion from the Eastern States to make this alteration, but had put up strongly to the nurses' registration boards of the other States that our trainees work 48 hours a week for nine months and so serve approximately the same time as do the trainees in the other States who work for 12 months, but on the basis of 40 hours a week, those registration boards would have realised the justice of the position and that, in fact, no reduction was taking place in the training period for the midwifery course in this State because of the declaration of the 40-hour week.

If the amendment is carried it will certainly be no deterrent to general nurses, who are qualified as such, going to the Eastern States in numbers at least equal to those in the past. As a matter of fact, there will be a definite inducement for the general nurse to go to the Eastern States to qualify for her midwifery certificate because she will serve the same period there as she would under the amendment here.

but with a 40-hour week with two days off, instead of the 48-hour week at the King Edward Memorial Hospital.

The Minister said that great difficulty was being experienced in staffing the King Edward Memorial Hospital and that was one of the reasons for the amendment. I would like her to explain how the proposal to increase the training period from nine to 12 months with a 48-hour week will be an inducement for trainees to qualify as midwives here, as against going to the Eastern States where they can qualify by working for the same period, but with a 40-hour week. All it will do will be to impose an additional training period on every trainee who goes into the King Edward and who wishes to have her qualifications recognised in the Eastern States, in order to go on with the midwifery course. In that way it will penalise hundreds that go through the training period at the King Edward.

The worst that could happen, if we retained the nine months' training period here, would be that the Eastern States would demand, as has been demanded by the Nurses' Registration Board of Great Britain, that the trainees who had had a period of nine months' training here should do a further three months on arrival over there. I hope the House will not agree to this proposition which will mean, in effect, that there will be hundreds of trainees from the King Edward who will serve an additional three months to acquire their midwifery qualifications just for the sake of having this State's certificate recognised immediately when they go interstate, and desire to practice midwifery. The statistics show that only a small percentage of the trainees that go to the other States take the midwifery course, because it is very unpopular among our nursing trainees.

As one who has had a considerable amount of experience as a union official, I believe my reactions to an amendment of this kind would be such that I would immediately advise my members to stick to the 40-hour week and, if necessary, approach the Arbitration Court for an award to that effect. There is certainly no justice in saying that midwifery course trainees for this State will be called upon to serve a 12 months' course on a 48-hour week as against 12 months on a 40-hour week in the Eastern States. That would simply delay the qualifying of double certificated nurses for a further three months, and I would point out that in almost every district in this State there is an acute shortage of nurses holding the double qualification.

Crisis after crisis has arisen in the Kalgoorlie District Hospital and we have appealed to the Public Health Department to send midwifery nurses there in order to keep the maternity ward open. On occasions the department has been able to send a few such nurses, but we have had repeatedly to canvass the district in an effort to get married women who are qualified as midwifery nurses to come back, either full time or part-time, in order to keep the maternity ward functioning. The course we should adopt would be to get the other States to recognise the Western Australian certificate given after nine months' training on a 48-hour week, and that would be a great inducement to nurses to stay in this State and qualify for their midwifery certificates. The case, as regards this State, is unanswerable and I think the Eastern States would be agreeable to the course I have suggested. If they did not agree, the only disadvantage would be to the small percentage of nurses who qualify as general nurses in this State and go to the Eastern States to qualify in midwifery.

I do not think there is much to recommend the amendment. I have exploded the theory that the 40-hour week had anything to do with the training period for midwifery trainees, because it has been a theory only. I have been informed by the highest authority at the King Edward that the vast majority of trainees there work 48 hours a week as I have explained. There has been no reduction of hours because of the declaration of the 40-hour week for our trainees. They are still working approximately the same time in the nine months, with a 48-hour week, as they would work in 12 months on a 40-hour week in the Eastern States. The suggestion that it has affected the efficiency or standard of training is not borne out by the statistics. Had there been a falling off in the standard or efficiency of the nurses during the last four or five years, it would have shown up by now.

The suggestion was made some months ago, that, during this three months of additional training, nurses should be taught how to administer anaesthetics. Nurses do not value that very much because they point out that with modern means of transport, which operates even in the country districts of this State, it would only in very difficult cases be necessary to administer an anaesthetic. Also, because of the usually prolonged time of delivery in those cases, in ninety-nine out of a hundred it would be quite easy to get a medical man there to administer an anaesthetic.

There was a point I overlooked in regard to the additional training received by Western Australian nurses who are under instruction at King Edward Memorial Hospital. Under the Act, before a trainee can sit for her examination, she must have performed at least 20 deliveries. However, I am given to understand that, owing to the shortage of staff at the hospital, the trainees, on the average, double that number of deliveries, and the average trainee, before sitting for an

examination, in addition to working a 48-hour week, has performed 40 deliveries instead of the prescribed number of 20. Unless the Minister can advance more substantial reasons for these amendments than she did in her second reading speech, I intend to oppose the measure. On behalf of the trainees who decide to take on the double certificate, and on behalf of those who decide, because of certain other reasons, to take on only the maternity certificate, and for the reasons I have outlined, I hope the House will not agree to the amendments proposed in this Bill.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Thursday next.

Motion put and a division called for.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The nurses' secretary is not getting back until Tuesday, and they are having a meeting on Tuesday night.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	....	19
Noes	....	23
Majority against	....	4

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Kelly
Mr. May	*(Teller.)*

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Manning
Mr. Ackland	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Owen
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Read
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Yates
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Mann	*(Teller.)*

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Needham	Mr. Hill
Mr. Panton	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Oldfield

Motion thus negatived.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [6.5]: I am very disappointed that this House should treat our nurses in the way it has done this evening. The facts are that the secretary of the Trained Nurses' Association is in the country and will not be returning to Perth until Tuesday. The association is having a meeting on Tuesday night to discuss this question. After all the good work that our nurses do, members here do not even have the decency to adjourn the discussion on a Bill for three or four days so that the nurses may have an opportunity to decide upon the question.

The Attorney General: You did not have the courtesy to tell us.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Why is there all this undue haste about discussing the question tonight? What is the difference between this evening and next Thursday.

The Attorney General: Why did not you have the courtesy to tell us about it?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Why did not the Attorney General have brains enough to think, or realise, that there was some special reason for my moving that the debate be adjourned until Thursday next. Surely he must have realised there was some special reason for it.

The Attorney General: Yes.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the Attorney General had kept his nose out of it, the Minister would have agreed. However, he put his bib in, with the result that the debate must continue.

Mr. Marshall: We will lift his bib out of it if he is not more careful.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: There is something wrong with this Bill, because apparently the nurses are not too happy about it, and, after all, we must take notice of what they want. They would not be against it unless there was something wrong.

The Minister for Health: They are not, really.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Nurses constitute a wonderful body of women; they are a lot of ministering angels. I remember in years gone by when the profession was under discussion. The nurses have always said that they do not worry about the hours they work or what wages they get because they are in the profession for the love of the game. That was in days gone by. I think they are entitled to be paid a reasonable salary and enjoy decent conditions. We are doing our best to get those for them. The Bill will not improve their conditions. I must admit that I do not know much about nurses and their conditions of working, but I have only to look at the Bill to see that it is not going to improve their position.

It is intended to increase the training period of a nurse who has not passed her general certificate from 18 months to two years and, for a general certificated nurse, from nine months to 12 months and then we are told that if they go to the Old Country or to the Eastern States their qualifications are not recognised. I think it would be better to tell the people in the Eastern States to strive for the conditions that we have here. I have always said that we lead and others follow, and we should not tell this wonderful body of women who devote their lives to the care of the sick and the suffering that they have to fall into line with the conditions prevailing in the Eastern States. It is not too late, even now, to permit of an adjournment of the debate—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: —to give us an opportunity to discuss the position with their secretary who can speak officially for them and thus find out about the Bill as a whole. The member for Kalgoorlie has pointed out that if they go East they have to work for a few months as trainees, but are not compelled to go through another examination. I do not know whether this is correct or not, because I have not discussed the position with the nurses, but I believe that if one wants to know anything about nurses' conditions one should discuss such subject with nurses and, if one wants to know something about law, then the matter is discussed with lawyers. The trouble is that lawyers have so many different opinions, but that is not the case with nurses. If an opinion is asked of a nurse as to her conditions of working it can be taken for granted that the same opinion will be obtained from another nurse. Lawyers are different from nurses altogether. I want an opportunity to discuss the Bill with the people who know the game.

The Attorney General: What about the Trained Nurses' Association?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is the organisation I am talking about. We want to discuss this with the secretary of the Trained Nurses' Association.

The Attorney General: She has been consulted.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Who said she had been consulted? The Minister has put his foot in it this time because she has not been consulted. The Minister meant the Nurses' Registration Board, which is a different body altogether, so it can be seen that I know a little about it because the Trained Nurses' Association has not been approached. Mrs. Hassell, the secretary of the Trained Nurses' Association, is away in the country and we have received word that she will be back on Tuesday and it is intended to hold a meeting of the Trained Nurses' Association on that evening. If the Minister had only let us discuss it with them we could have given a better opinion on the Bill than we can now.

If nurses go to the Eastern States they have to work for a few months as trainees and the same applies if they go to Great Britain. What difference does that make? We can say to the Eastern States and Great Britain, "We think we are right. You follow us. You reduce your training period to the same as ours and everything in the garden will be lovely." If the Attorney General will only keep out of the argument I am sure the Minister will be reasonable enough to give us time to consult those people who know something about the Bill. I understand that the measure is bound to go through unless we can get another half dozen speakers up on their feet. Therefore we should be granted an adjournment until next Thursday when we can obtain some information about the matter. It is all very well for the Nurses' Registration Board to talk about trained nurses. They are the heads. The board is comprised of two or three doctors and some matrons.

When a nurse rises to the position of matron it is generally found that she gets the little fellow to do a bit more. She has a tendency to say, "This is not what we did when I was a girl. We had to do this and we had to do that and we had to work 56 hours a week for 5s. or so," and so it goes on. Are we going to allow the Nurses' Registration Board, which the Minister has consulted, to speak for the nurses themselves? We want to hear the position from the members of the Nurses' Association and not from the Nurses Registration Board.

Mr. W. Hegney: This has nothing to do with the Hospital Employees or Mental Nurses Union, has it?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: No, this is something different altogether. I should think that if some bodies were treated in the same way as we are treating the nurses under this Bill they would say, "Down tools! Look after the sick yourselves!" and it would serve us right. However, I do not think that the members of the Trained Nurses' Association are built that way. It is their life's work to look after the sick and suffering, but it would serve us right if they did say that. I think we should adjourn the debate on the Bill until we have an opportunity to discuss its provisions with the nurses themselves.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [7.30]: In view of the information we have received from the member for Fremantle I think the Minister would be well advised to adjourn this debate until Thursday next. The Attorney General is, I think, mistaken to a certain extent about this union. I can assure the Minister that the secretary of this particular nurses' union is now in the country and it is intended to have a meeting on Tuesday night. In view of the facts we have before us I think the debate should be adjourned until Thursday next.

The Premier: You cannot make a speech on the adjournment.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

MR. MAY (Collie) [7.32]: As the Minister stated when introducing this Bill, the changes occurring in the coalmining industry and in the methods of production

have made amendments to the Coal Mines Regulation Act necessary. It is also true that several conferences have been held between the companies, the Mines Department and the union concerned in regard to amendments, and by a series of such conferences unanimity has been reached in regard to the nature of those which should come before Parliament for legislative action. I think the system of all parties in the industry conferring on matters affecting the industry is a good one and it has, over the years, proved successful as it relates to the coalmining industry. I want to confirm the Minister's expressed anticipation that all parties concerned in these amendments have agreed to them.

The modernising and mechanising of coalmines has brought about many changes which need up-to-date legislation. As a result of this Bill several changes will take place. There are quite a number of machinery clauses in the Bill in connection with interpretation upon which I do not intend to make any comment, as they are purely of a consequential nature. But there are, however, one or two references in the Bill to alterations which it has been found advisable to make in the legislation covering the coalmining industry in the State. There is one in particular which indicates how the industry has grown over the last few years, and that is the one which refers to the State Mining Engineer. At one time the State Mining Engineer used to cover all the mining activity in the State, but it was found that the coalmining industry was expanding so rapidly that on many occasions when the State Mining Engineer was needed in connection with some matter on the coalfields he was found to be in some other part of the State.

In consequence it has been considered advisable to appoint a coalmining engineer whose job will be to operate in the industry as separate from any other mining operations in the State. The appointment was made some time ago, but in the Coal Mines Regulation Act reference is made only to the State Mining Engineer. As a result, however, of this amendment the reference in future will be to the State Coal Mining Engineer. Another feature contained in the Bill is in regard to the reports of the workmen's inspector. There are two governmental inspectors—the Chief Mining Inspector and the assistant—and there is another inspector elected by the workmen, who is known as the workmen's inspector. In the past any reports made by the workmen's inspector were simply written in the report book in the manager's office and that is more or less where it ended. Under the provisions of this Bill, however, it is proposed that all workmen's inspector's reports in the future shall be made out in triplicate. One copy will be posted adjacent to the mine tunnel mouth so that all the employees, both underground and on the surface, will see the inspector's report.

What is more important still to the men working underground is that they will know when any action is being taken in regard to such reports concerning the safety and smooth working of the mine. The second copy of the workmen's inspector's report will be sent to the miners' union office for reference if necessary, and the third copy will go to the Inspector of Mines. I think that is a very good move on the part of the Mines Department as it will give a lot of satisfaction to the men working in the industry, and that is what we so very much desire.

A further provision is made in the Bill for the tightening up of inspections, particularly underground. In the past the Minister has been authorised to appoint any person to make a report on any mine, but in future that will be obviated and in its stead a competent inspector will be designated those duties, and he will be a man well conversant with coalmining. This will make for further safety in regard to the working of the mine.

Another amendment relates to the management. On many occasions in the past, when for some reason or other the manager has been absent, nobody in particular has been appointed to assume his responsibilities. That will be altered in future as the department proposes the appointment of somebody with the necessary experience and technical qualifications to act for the manager during his absence.

Under the provisions of the Bill, any worker from a foreign country wishing to enter the industry will not be permitted to do so unless he can speak and understand English. One exception is made, however, in that the Mines Inspector will have discretionary power in a case of hardship to determine whether the man shall be retained at work in the mine or put off.

Conditions in the coalmining industry are somewhat different from those in the goldmining industry. I understand that, on the Goldfields, a foreigner in no circumstances is permitted to work on a mine unless he can speak and understand English, but the methods of working the two types of mine are totally different. On the Goldfields, I believe an employee may be sent to any particular job in any part of the mine to do any sort of work.

In the coalmining industry, however, there is an agreement, that has been subscribed to by all parties, providing for a seniority list, and any man entering the industry almost without exception has to commence on the surface and gradually work his way to that of an unqualified shiftman underground and then a qualified shiftman until eventually he reaches the coal face as a miner. If a foreigner commenced work on the surface and eventually obtained a position at the coal face, he would have spent several years

on the mine, and if by that time he was unable to understand and speak English, he would have no right to be employed either on the surface or underground.

Another matter dealt with by the Bill is that of inspections underground by inspectors of the State Electricity Commission. Under the Act, inspectors of the Commission are responsible for all electrical matters underground, but they are not conversant with the underground workings of a coalmine. Each coalmine employs electricians who are capable of doing any electrical work, and it has been agreed that the underground electrical work shall be covered by the mine electricians. Often it is necessary to take immediate action in connection with some electrical occurrence underground affecting pumps, motors and so forth, and if one had to look for an inspector of the State Electricity Commission before action could be taken, anything might happen to the mine.

Those are the main provisions of the Bill, the other matters being purely of a consequential nature. The proposals might well be approved by the House because they have been agreed upon by the parties concerned. This system of ironing out differences in the industry before legislation is introduced has been of considerable assistance to all concerned. Members may think that it is an easy matter to arrive at such decisions. As a matter of fact, many conferences were necessary before the parties could reach an acceptable determination, and I again remind members that the amendments in the Bill have been finally approved by all concerned.

It would not be out of place to mention that the coalmining industry in this State has enjoyed a long period of industrial peace; in fact there has been no trouble at all. This has been due mainly to the men responsible for the administration of the affairs of the union, to their knowledge of the industry and their broadmindedness in relation to the management side. This has resulted in peace and contentment prevailing in the industry and this in turn has been of great benefit to the State.

There are many problems associated with coalmining that do not come to the knowledge of the public, but over the years it has been the consistent policy of the union to avoid any trouble in the industry. This has been brought about through the co-operation of the union, the Mines Department and the companies. The State should be grateful for the manner in which the industry has been controlled, at any rate insofar as the employees are concerned.

Efforts are continually being made to increase the output of coal, because we are a long way from reaching the point where production will be equal to the requirements of the State. As the Premier and the Minister for Mines are aware, it is in the interests of the State that the executive officers of the union should visit Perth periodically to discuss ways and means of increasing the output of coal, and I may mention that these visits have been made at their own expense. This must have cost the union many pounds, and I feel the State should be thankful that we have such a body of men, broadminded and sound in their knowledge of coalmining practice, ready to agree at any time to meet in conference the companies and the Mines Department in regard to matters likely to cause undesirable trouble. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and hope that it will be passed.

MR. MARSHALL: (Murchison) [7.51]: Like the member for Collie, I want to express my enthusiasm for this measure. Since I vacated ministerial office I have not been in close touch with the coalmining industry. At that time things were not in a very happy condition and I think there was justification for the discontent of the employees at Collie. Since then, however, there have been great strides forward in the direction of supplying amenities and providing conditions for the employees which have led to a great deal of contentment and satisfaction. However, I eulogise the coalminers of this State for preserving harmony under vicious conditions. Assisted by the Mines Department, they struggled on while endeavouring to influence the companies to introduce much-needed amenities. Even under adverse conditions they stuck loyally to their job, and deserve the appreciation and commendation of the whole of Western Australia.

I support the Bill with enthusiasm. It contains one or two provisions which satisfy me that great strides forward have been made in recent years. One of the most valuable provisions from the point of view of the State is that which gives power to the Inspector of Mines to watch closely the procedure in working coal seams in order that loss of coal will be minimised. The member for Collie could have unfolded a pathetic tale if he had gone back a few years and revealed the amount of coal lost through muddled methods of mining. That was the situation when I took up the office of Minister for Mines. Under this Bill, the inspector will have an opportunity to observe conditions closely and, if he finds that the companies are not developing their mining propositions on an economic and scientific basis, he can report that to the State Coalmining Engineer, in which case I suggest the Minister would be justified in taking some action. That is a very important amendment.

Some years ago, when I was more directly connected with the coalmining industry at Collie, I was afraid we were proceeding on wrong principles in grabbing, because of

the demand, all those seams of coal that were close to the surface and could be mined by open-cut methods, without giving attention to the necessity of carrying on developmental work underground to open up the mines, and have them ready to take the responsibility of producing the same aggregate total of coal when the open-cuts petered out, so that there would be no shortage. That aspect is covered by this provision in the measure, and I sincerely hope the Mines Department and others responsible will watch carefully to see exactly how these companies proceed.

Many of us can speak of what occurred in the metalliferous mines on the Goldfields years ago, when the companies made a sort of jumping jack of goldmining propositions and rigged the Stock Exchange. There were false reports and shares would fall, and those in the know would buy in and reap rich sums through boosting up the values of the ores on false premises. In that way they tore the eyes out of the mines and closed them down. I am pleased to see a provision in this measure that will guard against that sort of thing.

Another provision upon which I wish to elaborate is that providing for a skeleton plan of a mine to be drawn up, kept up to date and posted in a position where it will be accessible to all men, so that they will have a complete knowledge of the whole workings of the mine. That is particularly valuable. It will give the men, especially newcomers, an idea of exactly where they are and where they might have to go in case of accident. They can see where the intake and output of air are located. The plan will give a full digest of the whole workings of a mine, and those interested in their job and in their own welfare will study it carefully. I hope there will be no breach of that provision.

The only clause that gave me some thought was that in regard to permitting to work underground individuals who are incapable of understanding the English language. The member for the district has explained the whole situation, however, and it differs from that in the metalliferous mines. It appears that so far as the coalmining industry is concerned, all newcomers have to serve an apprenticeship and are gradually promoted. According to the member for Collie, who should know and whose word I accept, that may take some time, and it would therefore be a fair while before any newcomer was in a position to endanger his own life or the lives of others.

We have had trouble on the Goldfields in this respect. Individuals who have had no experience whatever have gone down into the face of the mine and worked in the stopes; and, because they have not been able to understand and speak the English language, they have been a positive danger to themselves and to others working in close proximity to them. The principle adopted in the metalliferous mines is different from that at Collie and the hon. member's exposition of what takes place there has satisfied me. I want the Government to understand, however, that if at any time pressure is brought to bear for the introduction of a similar provision into the Mines Regulation Act I will be positively hostile to it. I could quote dozens of cases where, because men have not understood the English language, they have lost their lives and endangered the lives of others. They have had no idea of what they were being told when experienced men spoke about the danger facing them from overhangs and in firing and other mining practices involved in the production of gold-bearing ore.

I want the Government to understand that while I sanction the provision in this measure, because of the difference in the system of mining, I would not entertain the idea of altering the Act to give similar conditions to the metalliferous mines. I sincerely hope that the authorities appointed under the Bill to carry out the things I have enunciated will do so with efficiency and enthusiasm. If they do, I am satisfied that the miners at Collie will be well pleased with their lot and, with the additional amenities which they so richly deserve coming forward each year, as the opportunity arises, there will be satisfaction and contentment in the industry which will be worked on a basis where efficiency and economy will be the order of the day.

In these circumstances, I express my appreciation of the miners at Collie for their loyalty, during the war period and at other times, to the industry and to the people of Western Australia. It is not a pleasant experience to put in a third of one's working life underground, and to see very little sunshine during the winter months. Mining is not a particularly delightful job in any of its forms, apart altogether from the danger that confronts the men working in it. To pass most of one's adult hours underground is unhealthy. Western Australia can enthusiastically acclaim the loyalty of the miners at Collie. With these few observations, I shall certainly support the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale—in reply) [8.2]: I thank the members for Collie and Murchison for their observations on the Bill. It is indeed a pleasure to know that the union at Collie, the Mines Department and the employers have seen fit to get together. There have been many conferences, as both of the previous speakers said, over the last 12 months, and as a result we have this measure brought to the House with the unanimity of all concerned on the proposals submitted. The member for Murchison mentioned the clause relating to foreigners, and to those who work in metalliferous mines, particularly the goldmines. It is highly desirable that those men who cannot speak English should be kept out.

My mind goes back a few years to a time when a foreigner would work on a mine and very soon learn to use a jack hammer and so get into a drive or stope; and, before we knew where we were, he would introduce a newly-arrived mate from a foreign country and have him included in the team.

As a result, the lives of not only the miner and his mates but everyone else were in danger because of lack of knowledge of the language. I entirely agree with the member for Murchison that these people should not be allowed in any mines in Western Australia. The explanation given by the member for Collie that a man has to start on the surface and, by seniority, work his way through the various jobs until he finally gets on to the coal face, proves that over the years he would acquire a knowledge of English and that, by the time he got to the coal face, he would have a reasonable knowledge of the language.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

1, Law Reform (Common Employment). With an amendment.

2, Petroleum Act Amendment.

3, Muja-Centaur Coal Mine Railway. Without amendment.

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [8.10] in moving the second reading said: Last year this House passed the Agriculture Protection Board Act and the Noxious Weeds Act, and amended the Vermin Act. The first named had to be dealt with before the two latter as they are administered by the Minister through the protection board, authority for which first had to be obtained. Because of this procedure, references in that Act to the officers in charge of the branches under the other Acts did not conform with their titles when those Acts were subsequently amended. The Bill will correct the position and the reference to "Inspector" will be changed to "Vermin Control Officer."

The same situation arises in regard to the "officer in charge of the administration of noxious weeds control" who is known as the "Chief Weed Control Officer" in the Noxious Weeds Act. The parent Act provides for the Government Entomologist to act as chairman of the board during the absence of both the chairman and deputy chairman, but the Bill will make this office that of the acting deputy chairman. A new subsection is added to provide for the Minister to appoint a person to act in the capacity of chairman in the absence of the chairman, deputy chairman and acting deputy chairman, should they all be absent at the one time. Provision is also made for the Minister to appoint a deputy in respect of each member of the board, representative of the same interests.

It was originally thought that departmental officers could take the place of absent members, but the Crown Law Department has given a ruling that such action would not be legal. Because of this ruling, provision has been made in the Bill for the Minister to appoint deputies for absent members. It will be seen that under the Act the Minister only has power to appoint deputies in respect of nominee members. If a deputy is appointed in the absence of the Chief Vermin Control Officer, the Chief Weed Control Officer, or the Government Entomologist, he will have the powers of a member only. He will not have the powers of the chairman, deputy chairman, or acting deputy chairman, unless he has been appointed to that office by the Minister. This provision is necessary because the Minister will not appoint someone to act as chairman unless the chairman, the deputy chairman and the acting deputy chairman are all absent at the same time, because those offices and the order of filling the position will be definitely stated under the Act.

When the Act was before this House last year it provided that the protection board could control and prohibit the trapping of rabbits on any holding by any person other than the owner or occupier. However, an amendment was made in another place which specified that consent to trap rabbits could be given to any person by the owner or occupier. This House did not agree with the amendment, but it was subsequently agreed to by Parliament after being considered by a conference of managers, this House being represented by the members for Melville and Katanning and myself. It has now become necessary to amend the Act so that the responsibility for the controlling and prohibiting of rabbits rests solely with the protection board.

This has been brought about by the introduction of the virus disease known as myxomatosis. It can be easily recognised that there must be complete control from a health point of view and it is very desirable that the board have power to prevent the trapping of rabbits in areas where the disease is being spread. I am told that the spread of the disease in the Eastern States has been seriously interfered with by the trapping of rabbits during experiments with myxomatosis. Under the Health Act, diseased carcases may be condemned, but there is nothing to prevent the trapping of rabbits for sale. The protection board is determined to do everything possible to eradicate rabbits. It is

not known whether myxomatosis will do this, and other methods may have to be tried out, but total extermination is the ultimate aim. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY (Hon. D. Brand—Greenough) [8.15] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to amend the Act of 1914, which has been amended on a number of occasions since then. I feel that it would be as well for me to trace briefly the history of the irrigation activities of the department in this State. The first of our irrigation work was done in 1916, following the opening of the Harvey dam, which, at that time had a capacity of 520,000,000 gallons, from which was served an area of some 3,000 acres of citrus growing land, allowing for a four inch watering each season. Owing to the failure of a number of citrus orchards, mainly due to water logging, many of the orchardists decided to clear their land and go in for dairying, with the result that today there are few citrus orchards remaining in the area and a large percentage of the landowners are dairymen who are now concentrating their efforts on intense culture and the growing of pastures.

During the depression period the Government of the day decided that, to find employment for a number of men, it would increase the capacity of the Harvey Weir to 2¼ thousand million gallons and extend the acreage under irrigation to some 14,000 acres. In an endeavour to find works to provide employment attention was given to the construction of further dams and the irrigation of areas further south, particularly in the Waroona, Brunswick and Dardanup districts. I am informed that at that time there was real opposition to the extension of irrigation in those areas mainly, I suppose because the majority of the landholders objected to the cost and because they believed that irrigation was not suitable to their particular areas.

Since then additional dams have been built—one at Drakesbrook of 500,000,000 gallons capacity, one at Sampson's Brook of 1,800,000,000 gallons, Wellington dam, with approximately 800,000,000 gallons and Stirling dam with 12,000,000,000 gallons. Plans are now in hand further to raise the wall of the Wellington dam and the result, of course, will be that many hundreds more acres will be irrigated from that source. When irrigation was first commenced in this State the main pastures were paspalum and subterranean clover. Since then a great deal of attention has been given to the introduction of natural pastures in order to provide a more balanced feed for the stock. It has been found that a concentration on sub clover or any other particular pasture was not in the best interests of the health of the animals.

The Government has invested approximately £2,337,546 in irrigation works in the South-West and it is felt that the time has come when we should receive a greater return for the capital that has been outlayed in this direction. In order to achieve that end a system has been adopted whereby settlers are being educated to make the best use of the water available to them and to irrigate these areas efficiently. I know that the department encourages settlers to produce more from each acre they hold; a more intense culture, as it were. Until we can, throughout the irrigation areas, go in for more intense culture, and produce more per acre, the return for the money expended on these works will be very small.

In a State like this—a very young State—I believe a sound foundation is being laid and it would be most difficult to assess what this country can produce as a result of a good irrigation scheme backed by an assured supply of water. Up till now the system of watering has been on the broad acre basis. This has been found to be a most inefficient method. Some farmers are not grading their land, not irrigating efficiently, because it is a matter of water over broad acres. The price at the moment is a 9s. per acre minimum—that is for one watering per season—and 3s. for each additional watering.

Mr. Manning: We want more land graders.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY: I thought the member for Harvey would interject along those lines, because he has made representations to me and to the departments concerned for assistance to grade the land. While the Government is anxious to assist where these graders are available, it is not possible in such a short time to meet the demands of every individual farmer. Each farmer must, in his turn, endeavour to grade his land in order to take advantage of irrigation as we know it today. Therefore it has been decided to introduce a system of metering. This system operates in other States, and the commission set up to advise the Minister is anxious that we should adopt the same idea. The commission has recommended that as an experiment we should install immediately a number of the meters in the South-West area. The meter to be used on this experiment is the Dethridge meter which is the type used in Victoria and New South Wales. Where the meters are not installed it is intended to carry on under the old scheme and under the old basis of providing the water.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are these meters made here or will they have to be imported?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY: I should think that the first few meters will be imported but, if we find that they are suitable for our needs, it is proposed to produce them en masse in this State. They are a rather large piece of equipment and I should think it would be a most uneconomical proposition to import them from the other States. The meter is really a wheel, something like a water wheel, which is forced to revolve by the flow of the water. There has been some suggestion that these wheels will present difficulty because branches and trees will be caught up alongside the wheels in the channels. But I see no reason why that problem cannot be overcome by the introduction of screens.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: And they may not be accidentally caught up, either.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY: There is always that danger, but our inspectors will be on the watch and will take necessary action to discourage such stoppages. There is provision in the Act that where a meter is caught up, or ceases to function, the land will be watered by some other arrangements. The Bill also sets out, in legal terms, the means by which the quantity of water consumed is ascertained and available for checking by the settler himself, after the irrigation has been completed.

At present, other than the original Harvey irrigation area of some 3,000 acres—on the Korejikup estate—all districts are rated on the basis of one acre in every three held by any owner—that is irrigable land, of course. As I said, the rate at the moment is 9s. per acre for one watering and for every additional watering in that season the charge is 3s. per acre irrigated. Prior to 1950-51 the charge was 7s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. respectively. Where the meters are installed the commission will determine a price per acre foot which is equivalent to 271,596 gallons, and the settler will be charged by meter measurement for the quantity used in the same way as a consumer in the metropolitan area is charged for the quantity he uses and is registered by a meter. The Bill does not apply to any particular type of meter, even though tonight I have suggested that we might, by way of experiment, introduce the Dethridge make.

Section 11 of the Act provides for the clearing and deepening of the channel of any water-course, and the Bill provides for the addition of the words, "and straightening and otherwise altering the channel." It will be apparent that in any improvement to an existing channel, this additional power is necessary. Another provision seeks to repeal Subsections (3) and (4) of Section 25. The Crown Law Department has advised that the gazetting of regulations and by-laws and the submission thereof to both Houses of Parliament, are covered by the Interpretation Act, No. 30 of 1918, which sets out the procedure necessary for regulations, rules and by-laws including the provision that these be laid before both Houses of Parliament within 14 days after publication if Parliament is in session, and if not, then within 14 days after the commencement of the next session.

There has also been some doubt in the minds of Crown Law officers as to whether the wording of Section 42 of the Act authorises the Minister to charge for the water supplied. The Bill, to overcome this legal doubt, provides for the substitution of the word "charges" in lieu of the word "prices." There is also provision for the describing of charges for water in excess of that to which a ratepayer would be entitled for rates assessed, such provision being necessary, particularly in the case of metering. Section 59 of the Act dealing with by-law 15 is amended in the Bill by removing the words, "subject to the provisions of this Act" and inserting in lieu the words, "with the approval of the Governor," thus conforming to the requirements of the Interpretation Act. That is the final provision and I think I have covered quite fully the intention of the Bill. I believe, that, as a result of the introduction of metering in the irrigation areas of the South-West, we will get more efficient farming, greater economy and the Government will begin to show some return for the large expenditure of capital.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Can the Minister say whether the words in the Bill and the minimum quantity of water to be charged for are intended to mean what they seem to say?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY: I am assuming that when the irrigation committee decides on the charge, that will be the minimum.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think that is what is meant, but I do not think it says that.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY: I believe that is the intention and, before the second reading is completed, I hope to be able to tell the Leader of the Opposition the true position. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hoar, debate adjourned.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Message.

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER: I move—

> That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to pass through all its stages at the one sitting.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think the Premier should give some reason for his motion. The Leader of the Opposition knows and I know—or, we think we know—why the Government wants to take this step, but nobody else on this side of the House knows and it is a rather remarkable procedure that a Bill, dealing with an Act which is not operative, should be regarded as so urgent as to require the suspension of Standing Orders to get it through. So I think that instead of just getting up and moving that the Standing Orders be suspended, the Premier should take the House into his confidence and tell members why he desires to proceed in this way.

Mr. Graham: Private members, however, do not matter.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The intention here is to introduce a Bill which includes amendments and the only person on this side of the House who has seen those amendments, I understand, is myself, and I studied them for the best part of an hour. But nobody else here has the slightest idea of what those amendments are and as Parliament consists not of two or three men, if this is the urgent matter which the Government seems to think it is to warrant this line of action, then I think the least it can do is to make some explanation so that all members will understand why it is they are asked to agree to the motion. I do not think that is asking too much. It is not for us to make the explanation. It is not our Bill; it is the Government's Bill. So I think that before we should be asked to agree to the suspension of Standing Orders the members of the House should be told the reason for it. The Act, which the Bill is to amend, has been on the statute book for about five years and has never operated and it will not operate, if at all, for at least another two years.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, in 1953.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: So that of itself does not suggest any great urgency. I think that members of the House ought to be told why it is necessary to rush through, without an opportunity to consider the contents, a Bill which has for its sole purpose the amending of an Act which does not operate and to provide for its continuance when it may never be used.

Mr. Hoar: The Premier is taking too much for granted.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Those requirements, in my view, need some explanation, and whilst I might be satisfied to allow the Government to proceed some distance with the Bill, other members on this side of the House have not the slightest idea of the reasons for the action which it is proposed to take nor of the contents of the Bill. So I think in the circumstances we are not asking too much when we ask for some explanation, however simple it might be, for the course which the Government proposes to follow.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am amazed to hear what the member for Melville has said. I represent the biggest wheatgrowing electorate in this State—

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: How long since?

Mr. ACKLAND: —and I have not the slightest idea what the amendments are that have been referred to in this matter. We find that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has had an opportunity of perusing what is in this Bill. From what I have seen of announcements made by the Minister for Agriculture before he went to Canberra recently, I am left with a big doubt in my mind and I have been collecting quite a lot of information to refute something which might be contained in that Bill when it is introduced. I have not that information here with me this evening—it is at my home in one of the suburbs. I never dreamt this would happen when this Bill was being introduced and I have been unable to prepare amendments which I might think are suitable. It may contain something I do not like. I may, of course, be quite wrong in my fears, but at the same time I would like some explanation from the Premier, and as a supporter of the Government I feel that if somebody on that side of the House has been able to see what is in this Bill, then all of us who represent the industry that this Bill is going to affect should have the same privilege.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I cannot see the reason for wanting to suspend the Standing Orders and I do not think that at this stage of the session it is necessary to rush things through as it is proposed to do. This has been done too often. None of us know what is in the Bill—the hon. member who has just sat down says he does not know—and it appears to me to be very much like bringing it down and pushing it through a sausage machine. I think we should be given at least till Tuesday to see what the measure contains. There is no reason that I can see for pushing this measure through, and if the Premier persists in that attitude I think he will have to put it to the vote.

The Attorney General: Why not hear the explanation?

Mr. GRAHAM: In answer to the Attorney General's interjection, if we are not satisfied with the explanation it will be too late to make any comment. The Premier should have made an explanation in submitting the motion. Apparently he is going to make some explanation when he replies, but then it will be too late to pass an opinion on it. All I think of the matter is that this is just another instance of private members being treated with utter contempt and on every occasion that this happens, whether it is done by the Government or prominent public officials, it is my intention to protest. I hope that some day perhaps I

will be supported by other private members and that we will have a real showdown to avoid a repetition.

I have to confess that I know very little about the matter in dispute, namely the Wheat Marketing Act and, so far as the amendment or the Bill is concerned we, of course, know nothing whatever. Surely the Premier could have told us the circumstances which made this course of action necessary; surely he could have informed us as to the urgency for it. I was amazed to hear the member for Melville say that this Act which was passed four years ago has not been implemented, and yet without having an opportunity of studying the amendments, or coming to a reasonable conclusion as to whether there is any need for the Act to be continued, the Premier wants to rush the matter through. It might be quite a justifiable course of action, but I think we should know the reasons for it.

I agree with the member for Moore that if it were possible to talk over certain points of this Bill with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, some discussion should be arranged between those people who are directly affected and are connected with wheat marketing and wheatgrowing. It is my hope that the Premier will be able to give some satisfactory explanation, but I am quite certain that if we do agree to his proposition to suspend the Standing Orders quite a number of us will do so with an exceedingly bad grace.

The PREMIER (in reply): I agree that perhaps there is some reason for members to complain and to want to know why Standing Orders should be suspended. The member for Moore need not be concerned, because he knows this Act well and it is only a matter of ensuring that it is continued. There are some minor amendments as to how the poll shall be taken and that is what the Bill contains. The reason for the rush is that the Act expires on the 31st of this month.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It has never operated.

The PREMIER: It is true that the Act has never operated, but it will be remembered that when it was introduced we were told that the growers would decide whether the Act should operate or whether they would come in under the Commonwealth scheme. A poll of growers was held and it was decided that they would come in under the Commonwealth scheme. It was considered, however, that this legislation was still necessary in the interests of our wheatgrowers. We do not know at what time the Commonwealth scheme might end or might collapse and then there would be no scheme at all. I cannot say whether this legislation would be necessary or not. At some future time Western Australian wheatgrowers may decide that they will draw out of the Commonwealth scheme, and indeed I think the member for Moore will agree that some of them are talking of doing so. Whether the majority are talking about it I do not know, but I know that some of them would pull out of the Commonwealth scheme if they had an opportunity. We know there were a large number of wheatgrowers who did not want to join the Commonwealth scheme. If we have it, this legislation can be proclaimed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is being proclaimed.

The PREMIER: Well, it can be put into operation if necessary, and all we are seeking to do now is to obtain the right to extend the legislation after the 31st of this month.

Mr. Ackland: Is that all there is in it? Nothing about prices?

The PREMIER: No, there is nothing about prices. There are one or two minor amendments regarding a poll to be taken, as the Minister for Lands will explain.

Mr. J. Hegney: Why has it been delayed so long?

The PREMIER: These matters are delayed.

Mr. J. Hegney: Why?

The PREMIER: It was not decided upon until after the Minister for Agriculture returned from the recent agricultural conference.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We know nothing about it.

The PREMIER: I am quite in sympathy with the member for Fremantle and I do not want to rush something through of which he and other members have not a full knowledge. On the other hand, we do not want the Act to go out of existence after the 31st of this month. If members feel perturbed and consider that further consideration should be given to the matter after hearing the speech of the Minister for Lands, we shall be prepared to grant an adjournment, but I am hoping that, as a result of his explanation, the House will agree to the motion and to this legislation.

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

Ayes	23
Noes	20

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Owen
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Styants
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	*(Teller.)*

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. May
Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Read
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Hill	Mr. Needham
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Panton
Mr. Oldfield	Mr. Coverley

Mr. SPEAKER: As the motion requires and lacks the support of an absolute majority of the House, the question passes in the negative.

Question thus negatived.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [8.55] in moving the second reading said: I greatly regret that, through my action, the member for Moore has been so upset.

Mr. Graham: More than the member for Moore.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is a continuance Bill. As I stated when introducing the original measure, we were proposing to place it on the statute book as an insurance for the wheatgrowers of this State.

Mr. May: Why did not you leave it at that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because the Act will expire on the 31st October, and it was essential to obtain a suspension of the Standing Orders so that the Bill could be passed by both Houses. Failing that, it will be necessary to introduce a new Bill because there will not be time to get this measure through. The only amendment proposed relates to the method of taking the poll. This is necessary for the simple reason that we had no other method of taking a poll.

Mr. Ackland: Why did not you tell your own supporters?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Melville—

Mr. Ackland: He is not interested in a bushel of wheat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In this House he has shown a great interest in questions affecting wheat. I should like to give a brief history of the parent Act and also of the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act. In 1947, the Wheat Marketing Act was passed in order to make necessary provision in the event of an emergency. The Act will expire on the 31st October, or in another six days. During 1947, control of the marketing of wheat was exercised by the Commonwealth Government under the Defence (Transitional Provisions) Act. To make provision in case the Commonwealth did not continue its legislation, we provided in one of our statutes for a State marketing board. The action taken was in accordance with the recommendations of a Royal Commission, which had been appointed to inquire into the various aspects of the stabilisation and marketing of wheat.

I shall not weary the House by reading the terms of reference or the relevant recommendations of the commission, but if any member desires to look them up, they may be found at pages 988 and 989 of the "Parliamentary Debates" for 1947. When I introduced the measure, I stated that it would not be proclaimed unless circumstances rendered this course necessary. The Commonwealth Government did not extend its Defence (Transitional Provisions) Act, and the future of the marketing of wheat became the subject of discussions between the Commonwealth and State Ministers for Agriculture. At a meeting of the Agricultural Council early in 1948, the Commonwealth and State Ministers were unable to reach agreement on the Commonwealth proposals in regard to the wheat industry.

It seemed at that time that the best course to adopt would be to proclaim the Wheat Marketing Act, and action accordingly was taken in June, 1948. This was done to cover the position in the event of the Commonwealth and the States being unable to reach agreement. A State wheat board under that Act never became necessary, as subsequent events directed the course of action to be taken.

A poll of growers was taken in the States of Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia to determine whether they desired a Commonwealth marketing plan. The result of the poll in all the States was emphatically in favour of the Commonwealth's establishing a scheme for the stabilised marketing of wheat. As a result of this decision by the growers, the Commonwealth Government passed its Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, which required complementary legislation to be passed by this Parliament. In December, 1948, we passed the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Bill, which applies to all wheat harvested up to the 30th September, 1953. Therefore, we had both Commonwealth and State legislation to give effect to the wishes of growers who, in all the States, favoured a Commonwealth marketing scheme.

Although the Wheat Marketing Act was proclaimed, it did not mean that action had to be taken to set up a State wheat marketing board, as the provisions of the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act prevail where there is any inconsistency between the two Acts. Under the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, we have a State board known as the Western Australian Agency Board of the Australian Wheat Board. The Commonwealth Wheat Industry Stabilisa-

tion Act will lapse in 1953, together with the complementary legislation on our statute book. We are therefore asking the House to agree to the extension of the Wheat Marketing Act for a further five years to cover again the position should the previously mentioned Acts not be reintroduced after they lapse in 1953. The position at the moment is somewhat similar to when the Act was first passed in 1947. The Bill is an insurance against the future, should the Commonwealth and State Wheat Stabilisation Acts lapse and not be reintroduced.

Leaving those Acts and coming back to the Bill, I mentioned that it contained an amendment in addition to extending the life of the parent Act. Provision is made in the parent Act for setting up a board to be known as the Western Australian Wheat Marketing Board, with a membership of five, four being elected by the growers and one nominated by the Minister. The amendment sets out the method that will be used to compile the roll of growers who will elect these members.

It will be compiled by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., and will consist of the names of growers recorded in the current register of that company. The parent Act provided that a ballot of growers would be held during February, 1951, to see whether the Act should be continued, discontinued, or modified. Action in this regard was not necessary because of the Commonwealth and State Acts which cover the marketing of wheat.

However, if we are going to extend this Act until 1956, it becomes necessary to make provision for a ballot in February of that year to see whether the growers of this State still want the legislation or whether they want any modifications made to it. This position will arise only if the Commonwealth and State Acts in regard to the marketing of wheat lapse in 1953 and are not reintroduced. Those entitled to vote at the ballot will be the growers whose names are recorded in the current register of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

The other amendments in the Bill are all complementary to those I have mentioned. If the House is of the opinion that the Act should remain on the statute book in the form as amended by this Bill, I would remind members that it expires on the 31st of this month, and a speedy passage is desirable.

Mr. Marshall: The 31st of this month?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: Why is the Bill being introduced so late?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Undoubtedly the matter was overlooked, and it became an urgent measure.

Mr. Rodoreda: Who overlooked it?

Mr. Marshall: The officers of the department should have known about it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I suppose the officers of the Department of Agriculture should check legislation, particularly that which expires and for which continuance Bills are necessary. But as I have already pointed out, it was overlooked, and the reason the Premier asked the House to agree to the suspension of Standing Orders was so that it would not be necessary to introduce a Bill for a new Act. Members will understand that if this Act is allowed to expire it will be necessary to introduce new legislation altogether.

This measure departs very little indeed from the parent Act. All we are asking, by way of amendment, is for some alteration in the method of holding a poll of those who are entitled to vote. I think members will agree that the growers whose names are on the register of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. are the ones who are actively engaged in the industry and who should be entitled to vote. That is what the amendment provides for.

Mr. Marshall: You will have to step on it if you want to get this Bill carried, passed through the Upper House, assented to and gazetted.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we could have had Standing Orders suspended, that could have been managed. We could have got it through the Upper House on Tuesday and it could have gone to the Administrator on Wednesday and been assented to and proclaimed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Which would have been a day late.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does the hon. member think so?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It expires on Tuesday.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will be a day late now.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It would have been a day late according to what you said.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Act expires on the 31st; that is, on Wednesday.

Mr. Marshall: Can you not get them to suspend Standing Orders in the other place?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have no hope of getting this through now.

Mr. Graham: Why are you introducing it then?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because the hon. member asked me to, did he not? I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [9.5]: The Government has nobody but itself to blame because the House did not agree to the suspension of Standing Orders. The Minister went about the matter in the right way in the first instance. He realised that he was in a jam, and that if

this measure were to continue on the statute book it would be necessary to do something to facilitate the progress of this Bill. So he took the only course open to him in the circumstances, since the Government, though it has a majority, has not enough members to provide an absolute majority without assistance from this side of the House.

The Minister had to take steps to ensure that he secured some support from his side for a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders. He did the correct thing and the same as I would have done had I been in his place. He approached the Opposition to see whether he could come to some arrangement. Immediately he told me what he proposed to do I naturally raised the objection that his Bill was to contain amendments, and I was not going to agree to the passing of a Bill on the night it was introduced without taking the opportunity to consider what those amendments involved. That immediately required the Minister either to tell me that he was not going to let me know what the amendments involved, in which case he would have had no support from this side whatever; or to let me know in advance what those amendments were. Quite properly, I think, he undertook to do so. I read in this morning's newspaper that a Mr. Watson has already seen the new rent Bill, so I do not know that the Minister for Lands overstepped the mark very far when he showed me the amendments which his Bill included.

Mr. Marshall: It has been a frequent practice in certain circumstances.

The Minister for Lands: Of course! What hope would I have had if I had not consulted with the Opposition?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Up to that stage I was with the Minister. But he delayed showing me the amendments. I did not get them until this evening and I immediately got down to a study of what they involved. That required reference to half a dozen statutes, because the Wheat Marketing Act and the Bulk Handling Act have been amended several times. I realise that if it took me as long as that fully to understand what was involved in the amendments, though they are simple, other members, with no opportunity at all to study them, could not be expected to agree to the passage of the legislation. We are not "yes" men here.

We are expected to be able to study matters ourselves and form our own opinions. So far as we are concerned, this is not a party matter and there can be room for wide differences of opinion. Nor could the Leader of the Opposition or I pledge members on this side to support the Government in rushing the legislation through because some servant of the Government had fallen down on his job and allowed it to remain unattended so that there was little time left to deal with it. This was not our responsibility, but the Government's. The Act, which the Bill is to continue, will expire on the 31st of this month, which leaves but a very few days in which to consider the matter. So, one can understand the urgency that the Government sees, and which forced it to take the action it sought to take tonight. If the Premier, when he moved for the suspension of Standing Orders, had condescended to give some explanation of the position, however simple, I would not have risen in my place and asked for it.

The Minister for Lands: I think he expected me to carry on and give the explanation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was too much to expect that members on this side of the House, who had not been consulted in the matter in any way, would simply agree to the motion for the suspension of Standing Orders when, so far as they were concerned there was no apparent reason for it. So the Government has no one but itself to blame for finding itself in this position. I believe that had the explanation been given, the necessary absolute majority would have been obtained.

There is no necessity at all to amend the Wheat Marketing Act at this stage; all that is wanted is to insert a provision to continue the operations of the legislation for two, three or five years, because the Act does not operate. It cannot operate no matter what its provisions are, for at least two years. So, the Government would have had two years, or one and a half years anyway, in which to amend the Wheat Marketing Act in the direction it desired. The Government could have relied simply on changing the date, which would have expedited the passage of the Bill. That was blunder No. 2, in my opinion. When the legislation was first put on the statute book the Minister who introduced it told us that if we did not agree to it a state of absolute chaos might result.

The Minister for Lands: May arise.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: A very good reason.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, if it were true but I said at the time that that was nonsense. I said there was no need for the legislation because it was clear that the wheatgrowers of the Commonwealth were going to agree to a Commonwealth plan for wheat stabilisation, and that it would be necessary for us to introduce legislation complementary to that of the Commonwealth to enable the Commonwealth plan to function; and that this legislation which was for unilateral action, was not necessary at the time nor, in my view, was it desirable. There existed at that date all the necessary power for a voluntary pool if the stabilisation proposals had not been proceeded with. But some power seemed to be pushing the Governmen

along to get this on to the statute book, and that same power seems to be afraid that this will get off the statute book, which makes one wonder because the machinery of the Act has never been utilised; and, indeed, it cannot be before 1953, and it is improbable that it will be required then.

So, no great harm will be done to anybody if this does disappear. It is not being used, and it cannot be used. It is a different proposition from the rent legislation. Had the Government shown the same concern and dispatch with regard to the rent legislation as it has here, we might have understood it. This is a dead Act; completely lifeless. One wonders why this desire to continue its existence.

Mr. J. Hegney: Bury it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It might be a good idea to do that.

Mr. J. Hegney: Has the Government told us why it wants to continue the legislation?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. I wonder why it does. All the machinery exists for a voluntary pool, should the Commonwealth wheat stabilisation proposals cease in 1953. But some persons seem to be most concerned about having this legislation on the statute book. I wonder if it has entered their minds that there will be an election before the present legislation with regard to the wheat stabilisation proposals runs out by effluxion of time, and that there could be a change of Government. We think there will be and, if there is a change of Government, it is not likely that this legislation will be re-enacted.

The Minister for Lands: There is no harm in your thinking that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Thinking what?

The Minister for Lands: That there may be a change of Government.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, nor is there any harm in my thinking that this legislation might not be re-enacted if there is a change of Government. Other people are probably thinking that, too, and that is the reason behind the desire to make sure that this dead and lifeless Act remains on the statute book. I repeat that no great harm can be done to anyone if the continuance Bill does not receive assent before the Wheat Marketing Act expires. All that is necessary, if the Government desires the legislation, is to re-enact it when the necessity is apparent; and that necessity cannot arise before 1953. So, when one examines the position carefully one fails to find any legitimate reason for this great haste, or the necessity to suspend Standing Orders to force the Bill through Parliament in circumstances which make it impossible for proper consideration to be given to it.

We are only justified in suspending Standing Orders when it is vital to expedite the passage of a Bill. The Government showed no such urgency in connection with the rent Bill—a much more vital matter than this. It showed no great desire to get on with the business then at all. Firstly, there was no desire to call Parliament together earlier than usual, and then no great haste, when Parliament was called together. And now there is no opportunity of benefiting those people, whom we sought to benefit, before the 30th September. And no rent Bill before the Chamber yet, but all this haste in connection with a lifeless Act, because somebody is pushing in order that it shall not be taken off the statute book!

As the Minister says, there are only two points in the Bill. The first is to continue the existing Act for a further five years—one wonders why that period was selected—and the other is to change the definition of "grower." The Minister made some attempt at an explanation of this, but I confess that I could not follow it. The existing Act gives the definition of "a grower" as one who during the previous 12 months has delivered wheat. I will quote from No. 49 of 1947, Section 7, where, in (4) (b) there appears the following:—

> For the purposes of the provisions of this Act relating to the election by growers of persons to be appointed to the Board, the expression "grower" means a person whose name is, with the approval of the Minister, included in the roll mentioned in the next succeeding section and who is a grower who shall have delivered wheat to—
>
> (i) The Australian Wheat Board constituted under that name by the National Security (Wheat Acquisition) Regulations while those Regulations are in force and thereafter constituted under the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, 1946 (No. 24 of 1946 of the Commonwealth), during the season immediately preceding or current when this Act comes into operation, or
>
> (ii) the Board during the period of twelve months immediately preceding the last day appointed for enrolment of growers on the roll for the election.

That provides that the persons' names should appear with the approval of the Minister, so there is some ministerial sanction to be obtained there before the necessary roll can be drawn up. The provision which I have read is to be repealed by the Bill and in lieu we are to have the following:—

> (3) (a) Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited shall, at a reasonable cost, furnish the Minister or his nominee

with a list of the names of growers recorded in the register current at the time of the ballot and whose names are so recorded pursuant to the provisions of subsection (3) of section twenty-six A of the Bulk Handling Act, 1930-1950.

(b) Only those persons whose names are at the time of the ballot so recorded shall be entitled to vote at the ballot.

I think the Minister might have been a little more explicit about that provision, as to who would be the persons who would have their names recorded in the current register. A little more information about that would help members on this side of the House who are not au fait with the provisions of the bulk handling legislation. There is no provision here that there must be any approval of the Minister with regard to the names on the roll. Instead, Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited will draw up the roll and will be paid for doing it, and that will be the roll to be used. I see no objection to that, but I venture to say there are a number of members who have not the slightest idea how a man will get his name on that roll or who might be excluded from it. A little information on that point is necessary and would be helpful, especially when one desires to get a Bill through all stages as quickly as possible. I was against the legislation when it was introduced and I said it was not necessary, and that a state of chaos would not result without it. So far as I could see, there had been no demand for this type of legislation outside of a small coterie of persons and I think the position is still the same.

The Premier: They were the persons most concerned.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, the farmers were the persons most concerned, but they did not draw up this legislation.

The Premier: It was done at their request.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Was it?

The Premier: Yes. Many of the leading wheatgrowers in this State advocated that this measure should be placed on the statute book.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It was drawn up by Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited.

The Premier: They are representative of the growers today, and they were at that time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But they drew it up.

The Minister for Lands: The growers are well represented in Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The rank and file of the farmers had not the slightest idea what was in the legislation at the time when it was introduced here. As a matter of fact, the rank and file of the farmers voted against unilateral action such as this. Is that not a fact?

The Minister for Lands: They voted for the Commonwealth scheme.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And this was a State scheme.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, in case!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Rubbish! When it was perfectly obvious at the time that it would not be used, and I said so, and the Minister tried to stampede the House by saying that chaos would result, but it did not—

The Minister for Lands: But it could have.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, it could not have resulted, because, as I have said before, all the machinery existed for a voluntary pool.

The Minister for Lands: What is the good of a voluntary pool?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does the Minister believe in compulsion?

The Minister for Lands: We want them all in; otherwise it is no use.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does the Minister believe in compelling the farmers to do what they do not want to do?

The Minister for Lands: Do not try to put words into my mouth.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Now the Minister is trying to crawfish out of it.

The Minister for Lands: Crawfish, my foot!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister came in a bit too quickly.

The Minister for Lands: I never rush into anything.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister believes a voluntary pool is no good.

The Minister for Lands: I said we want them all in.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: He said it was no good.

The Minister for Lands: I said nothing of the sort.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I have no wish to waste the time of the House, Mr. Speaker, or I would exercise my right and call for a copy of the Minister's remarks and read them out. He said a voluntary pool was no good and every member in this House knows it. Of course, if a voluntary pool is no good, in the opinion of the Minister, it follows that he wants a compulsory pool which will compel the farmers to do what they might not want to do.

The Minister for Lands: If you want proper control over any primary industry you want legislation and you want all the producers in, otherwise it is not a success.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then the Minister believes they should be dragooned if they do not want to follow the leader?

The Minister for Lands: I remember that you introduced Acts of Parliament that contained that provision.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: See how the Minister hedges.

The Minister for Lands: I wanted to remind you of what you did.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister should not interject at all.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, but he does so. This state of chaos which was supposed to have resulted in 1947 did not result, and there will be no state of chaos if this Bill does not pass by the 31st October; it will not hurt anybody. The Minister could have 12 months to think about it and if it was desirable to re-enact the legislation, and the farmers wanted it, they would have an opportunity of saying so. Then a Bill could be brought down and put through Parliament when I have no doubt some more amendments would be inserted. I gave the Minister no undertaking, as he will agree, that I would support the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: That is right.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And I do not intend to support it because I was against it before and I see no necessity for it now. It is still a dead letter and no harm will be done to anybody if this continuance Bill does not pass now. So far as the provisions in the amending Bill are concerned, they are simple enough. There is, firstly, the provision regarding the time extension for five years, and, secondly, the alteration of the definition of "growers" and the method by which the roll of growers shall be compiled.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [9.32]: I support the second reading of the Bill, but consider that my outburst earlier in the evening was thoroughly justified.

Mr. May: Of course it was.

Mr. ACKLAND: Within five minutes of my receiving a most evasive answer from one of the Ministers in Cabinet, as to whether this Bill was to be introduced tonight, I found the Premier getting up and asking us to suspend Standing Orders to enable the Bill to go through all stages. The Premier need not look at me like that because he was not the one who gave me the information.

The Minister for Lands: And I was not the one either.

Mr. ACKLAND: But I did receive it. Yet the Premier gets up and asks for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable the Bill to go through all stages this evening; that occurred just after a remark had been passed to me five minutes previously. On top of that the member for Melville stood up and said that he knew what was contained in the Bill. Therefore I had every justification for my outburst and for my action in the division. But I admit that the fears which I entertained were quite groundless. I had an idea that the amendments were of an entirely different nature and I agree with the Minister and consider it desirable that this Bill should be passed. I still think it can be done by the 31st of this month. The amendment with reference to the roll of growers will be a decided advantage and it will include all wheatgrowers who have delivered wheat to a licensed receiver, whether it be in bulk or in bags, for the previous two years. The only exception is where a wheatgrower, through flood, fire, drought or some other disaster, was prevented from delivering his wheat to a licensed receiver during those two years.

I have not read the Act with reference to that paragraph but I know that the roll will be based on the roll of those people who deliver to Co-operative Bulk Handling, and those who have the right to appear on the register of that company. If the House is willing I see no reason why we should not pass the second reading and the Committee stage of the Bill this evening, and then the third reading could be made an order of the day for next Tuesday.

The Minister for Lands: We will endeavour to do that.

Mr. ACKLAND: The Bill could then be sent to the Legislative Council and passed through that House on Tuesday. I do not profess to be an authority on parliamentary procedure, but to me that seems to be the most logical way of doing it.

The Minister for Lands: It is a possibility anyway.

Mr. J. Hegney: Provided the Council is willing.

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, provided the Council is willing and that this House is willing too. I want to say this to the members of Cabinet: I want to support them, but I am not going to be led blindly by the nose by any body of men, whether it be Cabinet or anything else.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. ACKLAND: I received a most non-committal reply to a question I asked five minutes before this Bill was introduced and on top of that I find that a member, who has no real personal interest in wheat, had been given information which was denied to me.

Mr. Marshall: That was only by virtue of his position.

The Minister for Lands: Of course it was.

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not care whether it was by virtue of his position, but I represent wheatgrowers who grow 10,000,000 bushels of wheat a year in this State.

Mr. Marshall: If ever you are a Minister, which is most improbable, you may find that you will have to do the same thing.

Mr. ACKLAND: I should say that it is most improbable too. I objected because of the most evasive answer I received and because immediately afterwards the Bill was introduced.

Mr. Hoar: Why should you be picked out from other members of the House to receive such information?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am a supporter of the Government and I had a right to know something of what was contained in that Bill.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [9.38]: I do not propose to say very much, but I would like to seek some information from the Minister in connection with the change which is about to take place in the roll of growers who will be entitled to vote at any poll conducted pursuant to this Act. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has pointed out certain changes that have taken place in that regard, and it would seem that the growers' roll is now composed of those whose names appear in what I think is termed the toll register of Co-operative Bulk Handling.

It seems to me that the powers that be have overlooked one feature, namely that certain growers' names do not appear in the records of Co-operative Bulk Handling —that is to the best of my knowledge. I now speak of the growers who deliver wheat to the various flour mills throughout the wheatgrowing areas; they do this without paying any toll to Co-operative Bulk Handling because they do not use that company's installations. Obviously, therefore, those growers have no vote in selecting directors of that organisation. It appears to me that a certain body of growers, in view of that, may be disfranchised. All the growers for instance in the Kellerberrin, Merredin, York, Wagin, and I think the Katanning areas, deliver to mills in the vicinity and, to the best of my knowledge, the names of those growers do not appear in the register kept by Co-operative Bulk Handling. I may be wrong and the company may have a record of those growers, but if there is a record, it would not be kept because of business relations between the growers I have mentioned and the company. Perhaps the Minister could enlighten us on that point because, if the position is as I think it is, a certain body of growers will be disfranchised by virtue of the contemplated amendment.

MR. MAY (Collie) [9.40]: I desire to voice my disapproval of the lackadaisical way the Bill has been brought before the House. The Minister frankly admitted that somebody forgot. I point out that the Bill, not a big one, was not printed in five minutes. Somebody must have known about it some time ago, and it seems strange to me that the Bill, which had to go to the Parliamentary Draftsman, was not properly attended to and it seems that someone failed in his job, because of the way it has been presented to the House. According to the Minister, the chief reason for the Bill is that the Act already in existence will expire at the end of the month. If that is the sole reason, then why encumber it with all the regulations that it proposes to enforce if it is merely to prevent the Act from expiring? Why include all the other amendments in the Bill which will take up so much of the time of the House?

I think the Bill has been badly drafted and a proper explanation to the Chamber is lacking. The amendments may be necessary, but when it is found that the Bill has reached the House at such a late hour to save the Act already on the statute-book, I think the Government would have been well advised to stick only to that amendment which seeks to continue it, and scrap all the others. I am prepared to support the Bill because I realise that the Act must be saved, but I voice my objection to the Bill being cluttered up with a lot of unnecessary minor amendments. I hope the Government will do away with them and deal only with that amendment which seeks to extend the life of the present statute.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [9.43]: I rather agree with the member for Melville that there is not such urgency for the measure as appears on the face of it. The Act has not been used but, if the legislation lapses, another Bill would have to be brought down and that would only take up the time of the House unnecessarily and cause extra expense.

The Minister for Lands: But it has been proclaimed.

Mr. PERKINS: Yes, but it has not been put into operation.

The Minister for Lands: That is right.

Mr. PERKINS: The important executive body which deals with the organisation of wheat handling is the Australian Wheat Board, which is constituted under Commonwealth legislation buttressed by State legislation, but the State legislation is not before the House at the moment.

Mr. Graham: It is the first emergency.

Mr. PERKINS: The State Act, buttressing the Australian Wheat Board, is the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, No. 75 of 1948 and, as far as one can judge, provided that the negotiations between the States and the Commonwealth are brought to a satisfactory conclusion, the wheat industry will continue to carry on under the general control of the Australian Wheat Board. However, if the States and the Commonwealth find it impossible to come to a satisfactory agreement, it may be necessary to fall back on the State Act which the Bill proposes to extend. For that reason, the measure still has some importance although, as the member for Melville has rightly pointed out, it may never operate or have any effect at all on the wheatgrowers in this State.

I think the majority of the growers would prefer to carry on under Commonwealth control if possible and if justice can be given to the wheat industry on a Commonwealth basis. Obviously once distinctions are drawn between one State and another, many anomalies can be created; although perhaps not so much between this State and other States, because we are separated by a big area of arid country where no wheat is produced. However, if we are to try to force the wheat industry of Australia back on to a State basis generally, in some States many difficulties will be created; and although I say that such difficulties are not the immediate concern of Western Australia, any chaos which tends to develop in any Australian industry cannot fail to have repercussions beyond the State boundaries. For that reason, I am hopeful it will not be necessary to make use of the Bill now before the House.

Perhaps the point raised by the member for Mt. Marshall has some substance. It is difficult to give the answer to any question such as this, and I understand the member for Moore is now making inquiries to try to ascertain the position in regard to wheat directly delivered to mills, but I would think that Bulk Handling Co-op. Ltd. would have no record of those growers who deliver direct to mills because the handling and storage installations at the mills are entirely the property of the flourmillers concerned, and Bulk Handling Co-op. has no connection whatever with such wheat. To that extent there does seem to be some flaw in the provisions in the Bill governing the pool and the roll of growers.

The Minister for Lands: Are those growers sending all their crops to the mills?

Mr. PERKINS: Oh yes!

The Minister for Lands: Well, they would get only the home consumption price.

Mr. PERKINS: No, I do not think that would be the position. In reply to the Minister, provision is made for levelling the price over all the growers of the State, no matter whether the pool operates under State or Commonwealth legislation. I think it is a machinery clause which can be cleaned up. If the Minister cannot obtain the information tonight I would have no objection to the Bill proceeding, because he will still have an opportunity to make any correction of what is a comparatively minor anomaly when the Bill goes to the Legislative Council, assuming that it does pass this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 7 amended:

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I took the opportunity of consulting an authority in connection with this matter—none less than Mr. Braine—on the point raised by the member for Mt. Marshall, and I find that what the hon. member thought was the position is the position, that is, that growers who deliver to mills would not have their names recorded in the toll register. This means that if the Bill goes through in this form a number of growers will be disfranchised, which would be most undesirable and something to which I would not agree. So I do not think we ought to pass this until the Minister has had time to see what is necesary to put it right.

The Minister for Lands: I will give you an undertaking.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is the Minister prepared to do that right away?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In that case I will resume my seat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will give the Deputy Leader of the Opposition an undertaking that I will have an amendment moved in the Legislative Council to make those provisions. If the amendment were made in this Chamber tonight we would have no hope of getting the Bill through. So I hope the hon. member will accept that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Section 42 amended:

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister gave no reason why we should extend the life of this Act to 1956. It seems to me that it is not necessary to do so. If the Government wants to guard against any possibility of a hiatus then in my view the Act should only be extended to 1954, because, if in 1953 we have a further Wheat Stabilisation plan in the Commonwealth it will be for a longer period than two years. That is certain. If the wheatgrowers of Australia agree to carry on with the wheat stabilisation plan as at present in existence that plan would be for at least five years and probably 10. So there is only a remote possibility that this legislation would be required, and if it were going to be required it would be required in 1953. If it were not required in 1953 it would not be required at all. It would still be a dead letter so there is no need to provide that the life of this legislation shall be until 1956. I do not want to be an obstructionist, but I suppose that if I moved an amendment and it was carried—which is not likely—it would make it impossible for the Government to get this Bill up.

The Minister for Lands: Do you really think now it is a point of very great importance.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, because if it is dead in 1954 it will still be dead in 1956.

The Minister for Lands: Exactly, so why worry?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Because to me this is a senseless sort of business. We have had an Act on the statute book which has been of no value at all.

The Minister for Lands: It could have been.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister says it could have been. We could have all gone to kingdom come!

The Minister for Lands: We will eventually, there is no doubt about it!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is of no use now and it appears it was of no use when it was put on the statute book, and in my view it will be of no value in 1953. I do not think it will be used. So we are only continuing something for the sake of having it there.

The Premier: An insurance, actually.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, but the Premier will not need it in 1954 or 1955, if it is not needed in 1953.

The Premier: You cannot say that with any certainty.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Why not?

The Premier: You do not know what is going to happen in the future.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does the Premier imagine that if the wheatgrowers of Australia agree to continue in a wheat stabilisation plan after this one finishes they will do it for one year? Is it possible to imagine a Commonwealth stabilisation plan of two years' duration?

The Premier: In regard to future Commonwealth stabilisation schemes the Western Australian growers may not agree to continue.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If they do not that decision will be made in 1953, because that will be the termination of the present agreement. It will be at that date that the growers of the Commonwealth will have to decide whether they are to continue with the same scheme, or whether they will want unilateral action such as is provided in this legislation. So the longest time this would be required would be up to 1954 in order to carry over the year 1953, and if it was not necessary then it would not any longer be necessary. But I suppose a dead Act can do no harm whether its life is up to 1953, 1954 or 1955. It would hold up the Bill if I moved an amendment so I will content myself with having expressed my views and will not oppose the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—PNEUMOCONIOSIS BENEFITS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th October.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [10.0]: This Bill deals with proposals of vital importance to the workers in the metalliferous mining industry. It provides for the consolidation of various Acts dealing with the employment of and subsequent compensation for industrial disease of metalliferous mine workers. At present there are four Acts that govern these matters—the Mines Regulation Act, Workers' Compensation Act, Miner's Phthisis Act and Mine Workers' Relief Act. The last-mentioned Act also embodies the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Incorporated, which is generally referred to on the Goldfields as the old voluntary fund.

The Bill proposes to repeal the whole of the Miner's Phthisis Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Act, the regulations dealing with the examination and notification of mine workers under the Mines Regulation Act, and those portions of the Workers' Compensation Act dealing with the compensation of workers who have contracted silicosis, miner's phthisis or pneumoconiosis in the course of their employment.

I have some knowledge of those Acts gained as a member of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Board and also as organiser of the Mining Division of the Australian Workers' Union, an organisation of which I am the president. I wish to make it clear that I am not at all happy about the provisions of the Bill as it stands, a feeling shared by my colleagues on the committee of the union. It is true that the union has long advocated the consolidation of the various Acts dealing with the employment of mine workers and their compensation for industrial disease, but we feel that this Bill in its present form takes too much away from the workers; it takes more away from the workers than it gives.

I think it a great pity that the Goldfields members were not placed in the same fortunate position as was the member for Collie who, in speaking tonight on a Bill dealing with the coalmining industry, stated that there had been consultations between the parties and the department concerned, and that they had arrived at an amicable understanding on the matters involved. I consider that a Bill of this nature, which is of such far-reaching importance to workers in the mining industry, should have been discussed with the various bodies directly concerned in the industry. I refer, firstly to the mining division of the Australian Workers' Union, which represents the largest body of workers engaged in the mining industry who are principally affected by these proposals. The employers,

too, should have been given an opportunity to discuss these matters, as they might wish to take exception to certain of the provisions.

I had some foreknowledge of the main proposals in the Bill as, some considerable time ago, certain proposals of this nature were submitted to the Mine Workers' Relief Board, of which, as I have said, I am a member. I do not think that the employers' representatives on the board were very happy about the proposals and I, as one of the representatives of the workers, was not happy about them, either.

A conference was held with officials of the State Government Insurance Office and discussions took place. Later, when the matter was being considered by the board, I felt that, as the board had been requested to treat the matter in confidence, the representatives of the workers and of the employers on the board were placed in an invidious position. As a result, I moved a motion at one of the meetings to the effect that we request the permission of the Attorney General to discuss the proposals with our principals. Permission was refused, and the outcome was that the Mine Workers' Relief Board did not discuss the matter any further.

It is regrettable that proposals of such importance were not discussed previously with the representatives of the people so vitally concerned. However, if the Government is prepared to accept the amendments of which notice has been given by the member for Murchison, I feel that the Bill will then contain a substantial measure of equity and justice. I realise that a fair number of people, particularly beneficiaries under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Incorporated—the old voluntary fund—will benefit from the Bill if it is passed in its present form, but, as I remarked before, it takes away benefits to which disabled workers are now entitled under existing legislation, particularly the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Marshall: Have you any idea of the number of beneficiaries under the old voluntary system?

The Attorney General: I have.

Mr. MOIR: I think I have those particulars. Last year the beneficiaries under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Incorporated numbered 361. The number of beneficiaries under the Mine Workers' Relief Act totalled 699, of whom, as I have just mentioned, 361 were under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Incorporated and 338 under the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

Mr. Marshall: But they did not get scale benefits but pro rata benefits.

Mr. MOIR: That is so. I will deal with that in the course of my remarks. I wish to explain to the House the main provisions of the four Acts I previously mentioned as they affect the matter under discussion. Regulations Nos. 250 to 257, inclusive, under the Mine Workers' Relief Act, which the Bill proposes to repeal, are those that lay down the conditions under which a man may be allowed to enter the goldmining industry. They provide for the examination, which I might remark is a particularly rigorous one.

The goldmining industry is the only one so far as I am aware in connection with which a man has to be practically a perfect physical specimen. He must be in absolutely the best of health before he is allowed to enter the industry. If the man passes the examination he is provided with an initial certificate. On the other hand, he may be rejected. He may receive a rejection certificate that will entitle him to come up for re-examination within a certain time. If his current certificate has been allowed to get out of date and he has gone for two years without examination by the laboratory, and provided he has worked for five years in the industry, a man can apply for, and receive, a readmission certificate. Of course, he may be rejected when he applies for his readmission certificate, because one of the conditions laid down is that, while no notice is taken of silicosis, if he is suffering from advanced silicosis or any other disablement, he must be rejected.

The Mine Workers' Relief Act provides for the man's examination after admission to the industry at periodic intervals of not more than two years, and for his prohibition if he contracts tuberculosis, with or without silicosis, and also provides for his notification if he develops solicosis early or silicosis advanced. It also provides benefits to be paid to him if he contracts tuberculosis without silicosis. If he has received his full entitlement to compensation under the Mine Workers' Relief Act for tuberculosis with silicosis or silicosis advanced, he is then compensated or receives benefits under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. When he goes under that Act he is paid from the fund an amount of £750 in fixed weekly payments within certain limits.

When he has exhausted the full amount of £750, he goes on what is called the scale, which at present provides for the payment of 30s. a week for a single man, 30s. for a married man, 30s. for the man's wife and 7s. 6d. a week for each child under 16 years of age. Under the Mine Workers' Relief Act, it is also mandatory for an applicant, before he is granted benefits, to apply for either the old-age or invalid pension if he is eligible for one or the other. The fund also provides for the payment of hospitalisation for those beneficiaries requiring it. The Mine Workers' Relief Act, which came into force in 1932, assumed the liabilities under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Incorporated, which was a voluntary fund founded, I think, in 1913.

Mr. Marshall: No, it was founded in February, 1915.

Mr. MOIR: Then I stand corrected. However, it went out of existence, with regard to carrying those liabilities, in 1932. The old voluntary fund provided for a man to receive benefits under it at an earlier stage of disablement than is allowed under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. A man who had been a subscriber to that fund could obtain benefits when he reached the early silicotic stage, which means that he had been informed by the Minister, on the advice of the medical officer at the Kalgoorlie laboratory, that he was suffering from silicosis early. With regard to the old voluntary fund, to which I referred earlier, those who would benefit immediately under the proposals in the Bill would be the men who had contributed to the fund only for a certain number of years.

When computing the benefits from that fund to which the mine worker would be entitled, the factor taken into consideration is the number of years he has contributed, and the benefits are paid to him on a pro rata basis. It has been impossible to make any alterations in the rules applying to that fund since it was superseded in 1932 by the Mine Workers' Relief Act, and so the payments have remained at the same figure over the years and have not been increased as have been the payments under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. Some of the beneficiaries under that Act receive as little today as 8d. per week and quite a number receive only 3s. or 4s. a week. Those payments are brought about because of the pro rata system under which are worked out the amounts to which the men are entitled.

How that position arises is this way: The fund was a voluntary one. In the Boulder and Kalgoorlie area it was a condition of employment for a miner to subscribe to that fund. If he did not contribute, he did not work on the job. In other mining centres the employees in some mines contributed, but in other mines they did not. It will be understood, therefore, that if a miner worked in Kalgoorlie and contributed to the fund for two or three years and then went to work on a mine in, say, the Murchison area, where the employees did not contribute, the continuity of his subscription to the fund was broken.

The constitution of the board which administers the Mine Workers' Relief Fund is the same as that provided in this Bill, and that is one thing I am pleased about. It is proposed to give much greater authority to the board which will be set up to deal with applications that are made for benefits under the measure. There are also provisions for applicants to be represented either personally, by an agent or by a lawyer, which I think is very necessary and is an improvement on the present set-up of the Mine Workers' Relief Board, though I must say that I have always found the Mine Workers' Relief Board most considerate in its treatment of applications for relief.

I think that when the Miner's Phthisis Act was introduced in 1922, it was the first time that provision was made for the medical examination of miners before they entered the industry. It was provided that miners suffering from tuberculosis could be prohibited and given a measure of compensation. I notice it is provided in this Bill that the Government is prepared to make an annual grant of £30,000 to the fund which is to be set up. The Workers' Compensation Act provides for workers to be compensated for the industrial disease of silicosis, as we have known it hitherto. We have not known the disease by the new name pneumoconiosis.

Under the Workers' Compensation Act, provision is also made for compensation to be paid to miners who contract tuberculosis in addition to silicosis. The rate of payment is £6 per week in the case of total incapacity until £1,250 is exhausted. Provision is also made for certain percentages to be paid if a worker has a lesser degree of incapacity than total. I took particular notice, when the Attorney General was introducing the Bill, of remarks he made about the mine worker who contracts tuberculosis. I would like to quote what he said, as follows:—

> In 1924 silicosis was made a compensable disease under the Workers' Compensation Act, and in 1948 tuberculosis was also covered. Having exhausted compensation payable under the Workers' Compensation Act, a mine worker is eligible for weekly payments of compensation from the mine workers' relief fund. From the time of the Mine Workers' Relief Act until 1948, when the amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act made tuberculosis a compensable disease, a person prohibited from working in a mine in respect of tuberculosis alone was entitled to benefit under that Act.

I have no doubt that that was the intention of Parliament when that amendment was agreed to, but members may be surprised to know that that intention has not enabled mine workers who contracted tuberculosis to receive compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act. I know of not one single instance where a miner who has contracted tuberculosis has been able to obtain compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act.

A mine worker who contracts tuberculosis with silicosis does receive compensation, but not for tuberculosis alone. I think many people have held that belief; but when the officials of the mining division of the A.W.U. were informed that that amendment would enable the mine worker who contracted tuberculosis to be compensated under the Workers' Compensation Act, they had very strong doubts about it. Their doubts were so strong that they never tested a case before the Workers' Compensation Board. I might say that when an applicant who was a

sufferer from tuberculosis made application to the Mine Workers' Relief Board, his right to benefits under the Act was never questioned.

The Mine Workers' Relief Act provides that an applicant for benefits must have exhausted his compensation before he can receive them. But it is only under the Mine Workers' Relief Act that that class of disabled worker can receive any payments. The position was tested this year. I have here a judgment of the Workers' Compensation Board. I do not like to read judgments of this nature, which might take up some time, but this particular judgment has an important bearing on at least one of the provisions of the Bill. The judgment concerned an application made on behalf of a worker against the North Kalgurli (1912) Ltd. before the Workers' Compensation Board at Perth on the 19th June, 1951. The heading under which the case was taken is—

> Silicosis—Miner's Phthisis—Tuberculosis—Communicable Disease.

I shall now quote the judgment and the remarks of the chairman—

> Applicant worked underground on gold mines from February, 1934, with comparatively few breaks up until 12th September, 1949. Routine chest examinations almost yearly showed nil results until as a result of a plate taken on the 22nd August, 1949, Dr. Tighe suspected tuberculosis, which was confirmed by clinical examination and a positive sputum test. The unfortunate man was sent successively to the Kalgoorlie Hospital for about three weeks and then to Wooroloo. From the time of admission to hospital the disease progressed dramatically, and there is no doubt that applicant is totally incapacitated and will be for an indefinite period.
>
> Applicant claims under three and possibly four alternative heads, with which I will deal in turn.
>
> 1. Firstly, he claims under Section 8 and the Third Schedule as a sufferer from miner's phthisis. He produced a certificate in a most ambiguous and meaningless form to the effect that Grierson was suffering from "that form of pulmonary tuberculosis commonly known as miner's phthisis," and had not Dr. Illingworth been called as a witness this board would have required him to be called for clarification. It appeared that all the witness meant was that Grierson had pulmonary tuberculosis. In view of the fact that the doctor told us of no-one else who knew tuberculosis as miner's phthisis or vice versa, and that he himself had had extremely little experience of either, I can only regard the certificate as mischievous. We heard from a number of other doctors and were cited reputable authorities, and had ourselves thought it to be common knowledge that miner's phthisis either was or had as an essential concomitant silicosis. It is also most obvious that the Legislature regarded these diseases as distinct and separate although often fraternal. The Miner's Phthisis Act, 1922, refers to "miner's phthisis or tuberculosis" and in such a way as to prevent interchangeability and in Section 8 (7) refers to "miner's phthisis uncomplicated by tuberculosis." It is most noteworthy that the Third Schedule of our Workers' Compensation Act, which first introduced the term miner's phthisis, was added in 1924, and accordingly closely sandwiched between the Miner's Phthisis Act, which received assent in 1923, and its Amendment No. 42/1925, which did not change the meaning of miner's phthisis.
>
> Counsel for applicant also claimed that the certificate having been produced pursuant to Section 8 (8), was final and conclusive, and cited a number of English authorities in aid of his submission. They were all concerned, however, with the English section which is entirely different and provides that any worker who obtains a certificate from a "certifying surgeon" shall be entitled to compensation, subject to a restricted type of appeal against the certificate. Although one should, of course, flow from the other, it is the production of a certificate and not proof of disease that is there made the condition precedent to a successful application. Since the 1948 amendment, I think our Section 8 (8) merely means that if a worker has (and can prove by the ordinary means) a schedule disease and if he produces a medical certificate to that effect, and if further, he is employed in the appropriate employment, then the onus of proving that the disease was employment-caused, which would otherwise be on the applicant worker, is transferred to the employer. The subsection raises a rebuttable presumption to this effect. By virtue of my finding under the next head, not even this presumption is raised in this application.
>
> The application should accordingly fail under this head.
>
> 2. The second head claims that if the disease is not miner's phthisis, then it is silicosis complicated by tuberculosis. Applicant's counsel, very properly I think, did not appear to press this head, and I think it sufficient to say that I find as a fact that there was no satisfactory evidence of silicosis at all, and certainly none of a disabling nature.
>
> 3. The third alternative was that the disease was a communicable disease. to wit, tuberculosis due to

the nature of applicant's employment with the respondent, and was also based on Section 8 and the Third Schedule. I find that the applicant did suffer from tuberculosis, and was totally incapacitated thereby, and moreover that such disease is communicable. Applicant's employment, however, underground mining, is not such a one to the nature of which the disease is or was due. The whole of the relevant and reliable medical evidence was to the contrary.

4. Now applicant's counsel introduced into his argument a fourth alternative which was not mentioned in the pleadings, and with which I am not sure that I should deal. He said in effect that if the disease was tuberculosis, it was aggravated by the employment; and he said in address and after all the evidence had been heard, that this then formed his chief claim. This cannot be taken as part of the third alternative which is purely a Third Schedule claim and stands or falls on its own merits, regardless of the presence or absence of aggravation. It amounts then to an ordinary claim under Section 7 for injury by accident and it is of no consequence either way whether the disease which was allegedly aggravated happens to be mentioned in the Third Schedule or not. It is certainly good law that if the disease was aggravated or accelerated by the employment, then compensation can be claimed. With this end in view, the medical witnesses were pressed hard as to the possible or probable effects on the disease of any of the concomitants of the employment, such as silica dust and strenuous work, absence of sun and fresh air. The result of it all was that although a number of factors, including silica dust (if it reached a certain stage of damage to the lungs), and strenuous work (if the disease were sufficiently advanced) could aggravate the disease, none of the medical witnesses was prepared to say that either had or probably had. There was no evidence that silica had damaged the lungs, and aggravation by the strenuousness of the work was inconsistent with the absence of distress in the worker.

But I think that the crux of the matter is that there was no evidence of aggravation at all and that being so it is of little use considering the possible causes of aggravation. The natural deterioration of the condition in a progressive disease is not aggravation such as to attract compensation. I think it is useful to ask the question so often posed in the New South Wales cases: Did the applicant's work produce any signs or symptoms distinguishable from the effects which would flow from the natural progress of the disease? Up until the date of disablement, all we know here is that the worker in apparent good health, energetic and with a good appetite, suffered no incapacity at all up until the 12th September, 1949, and was in fact dumbfounded to learn that he had active tuberculosis and must stop work. He was ordered to stop work entirely as from that date. Progress after hospitalisation was more rapid and dramatic, but applicant himself brought no evidence that it had been aggravated, and none of the doctors called by the respondent would, even under vigorous cross-examination, admit that the progress was in any way remarkable, and told us that they had experienced many more rapid cases where the allegedly aggravating circumstances of this case were not present.

I think any claim for aggravation failed on applicant's own evidence and there is here no evidence of the overwork and fatigue which medical authorities agreed had aggravated the conditions in the cases cited to us by the applicant's counsel. I am accordingly of the opinion that the application should be dismissed. Costs to respondent to be taxed.

Members will see that that case was taken under four headings and that it is an impossibility, in view of what I have quoted, for a mine worker to receive compensation when he contracts tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is covered by the Workers' Compensation Act in cases where it can be proved that the worker has come into direct contact with somebody infected by tuberculosis, and that is borne out only two cases further along, where there was a successful application to the board on behalf of a nurse who contracted tuberculosis in the course of her employment at a hospital.

I agree with the remarks of the Attorney General, that one would expect that when a mine worker comes into contact with injurious dust the damage done to his lungs must, one would think, render him more susceptible to the contracting of tuberculosis. But the opinion of medical men is that a mine worker is just as likely to contract tuberculosis through drinking from vessels, in hotels or restaurants, which have been used by persons affected by the disease. The Bill provides a definition of "tuberculosis" which, in view of what I have just read to the House, would, I think, mean that there would be no possibility of a mine worker afflicted with tuberculosis being able to come under this Act. The definition says—

> "Tuberculosis" means tuberculosis of the lungs or respiratory organs which, in the opinion of the medical officer, has been contracted by a mine worker in the course of his employment as such.

That leaves it entirely to the doctor—the medical officer appointed under this Act—to say whether the worker contracted the disease at work or somewhere round the town. I do not think that definition should be in a Bill of this nature and I would very much prefer that given in the Mine Workers' Relief Act, which says—

> "Tuberculosis" means tuberculosis of the lungs or of the respiratory organs and tuberculosis of the glands and other parts of the body where the cause of such disease may legitimately be attributed to the nature of the employment of the mine worker.

That is a totally different definition and one that has never been questioned. I have not had the experience, nor have I heard, of any mine worker who contracted tuberculosis and who had contributed to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund being refused benefits after making application, if he contracted the tuberculosis within 12 months of his working in the industry.

A further provision with which I do not agree is that the Commonwealth Health Laboratory at Kalgoorlie shall be the sole place where workers in the mining industry may be examined. The chief aspect of that about which I am concerned relates to a worker who contracted tuberculosis in the mining industry and was not notified or prohibited as he should have been under the Act. The majority of the workers in the industry have a full realisation of the danger to their health occasioned by this industrial disease, tuberculosis, but over the years they have had great confidence in the medical officers at the laboratory in Kalgoorlie and have believed that at the slightest sign of tuberculosis they would be prohibited from the industry and would be able to go out and get the necessary treatment. It is most disturbing in later years that that confidence has been displaced.

I have here the case of a mine worker who worked in the industry for a considerable number of years. In February, 1950, he met with an accident, while on his way home from work, and as a result was laid up for a few months. When he had to some extent recovered he was advised by his doctor not to resume work in the mines, but to seek employment down at the coast because it would be better for his health. Before leaving Kalgoorlie this man took the commonsense precaution and went to the laboratory for an x-ray examination. Like other workers in the industry, he had been having annual x-ray examinations at the laboratory. The laboratory people did not give him any warning about his health and so the man left Kalgoorlie to come to Perth.

In December he started to feel off colour and attended the Royal Perth Hospital where, after a medical examination, he was advised to go to the Perth Chest Clinic for an x-ray. He visited the chest clinic on the 9th January, 1951, and was informed that he had tuberculosis. As the man was a returned soldier he was ordered to Hollywood where subsequent examination and tests proved that he did, in fact, have tuberculosis. This man was so disturbed that recently he gave me written permission to view his medical files, relating to this tuberculosis, at the Repatriation Department. The doctor's reports and x-ray plates taken at the Kalgoorlie laboratory were on the file and the doctor's reports disclosed that that man had tuberculosis as far back as 1946. That is a shocking state of affairs.

As this Bill provides that the medical officer at the laboratory shall be the authority who notifies the Minister when a man reaches these stages, we feel that some provision should be made for workers, if they feel so inclined, to go to the Perth Chest Clinic for examinations. I know they have that right at the moment but we want to see such a provision embodied in the Bill so that the medical officers in charge of the chest clinic will also have the right and the authority to inform the Minister who will, in turn, notify the person concerned.

There is also another reason for that suggestion. The worker engaged to work on the mines in, say, the Murchison, and who is not in possession of a laboratory ticket, or his ticket has run out, will not have to travel to Kalgoorlie for examination. The only other alternative that a man in those circumstances has at the moment is that of going up to the mines and working under a provisional certificate, which affords him no protection whatever in regard to compensation for industrial disease or tuberculosis. Under the existing Acts, if a mine worker is working on a provisional certificate, and he has contracted tuberculosis, or has reached a stage of silicosis and this is detected upon examination at the laboratory, he will have no claim to compensation either under the Workers' Compensation Act or under the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

There is another serious objection we have to this Bill and that is the proposal to allow benefits to a man when he reaches 40 per cent. incapacity from pneumoconiosis. Why wait until a man is 40 per cent. incapacitated? The Bill proposes that he must reach that stage before he receives any benefits.

Mr. Marshall: I think it was Dr. Outhred who stated that a man certified as being 25 per cent. incapacitated should not be employed in the industry, indicating that a man was totally incapacitated when he reached that stage.

Mr. MOIR: I want to explain that there are three stages of silicosis—anti-primary, early and advanced. I have discussed this matter from time to time with medical men and they are of the opinion that when a man develops silicosis, or pneumoconiosis, as it is termed under this Bill, he should be required to leave the industry. I think that statement was made by Dr. Outhred, of the laboratory, when he gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Workers' Compensation. I know that that is what the Queensland Act lays down.

The Attorney General: I think that the Queensland Act states 30 per cent.

Mr. Marshall: No.

Mr. MOIR: There is no percentage at all laid down in Queensland.

Mr. Marshall: It is entirely open.

Mr. MOIR: I propose to give members evidence to that effect. In many respects this Bill is similar to Queensland legislation but there are many provisions in the Queensland Act which, if included in this Bill, would considerably improve it. For the benefit of members, I will read out portion of a letter written by the insurance commissioners of the State Insurance Office, Queensland, to my predecessor, Mr. Oliver. Mr. Oliver was seeking information as to the Queensland method of dealing with miners who contracted silicosis and the relevant portion of the correspondence—in regard to the percentage assessments—reads—

> Medical officers are not required to undertake the almost impossible task of assessing the degree of incapacity.

It then goes on to state—

> We have not experienced any real difficulty in regard to the degree of incapacity. Our experience has been that generally once a doctor has found that a man has silicosis he advises him to cease work if he cannot obtain another job which he can do without prejudice to his health.

That is what we believe. There should not be any question of percentages when a man has silicosis. Many differences of opinion occur among medical men when it comes to a question of dealing with percentages of incapacity due to silicosis, although they may be quite honest. But I have been informed by medical men that there is a standard laid down by which they can state when a man has silicosis, that is, when it has reached the nodular stage. The task that is set a doctor under the Bill to decide whether a man has a 40 per cent. or perhaps only a 35 per cent. disability is an almost impossible one.

The proposal in the Bill relating to the Workers' Compensation Act, namely, that the medical officer appointed under the Act is the sole authority to decide what percentage of disability a man may be suffering, is also objected to. Under the Workers' Compensation Act, if a qualified medical officer certifies that a man has a greater degree of incapacity than as stated by the doctor at the laboratory, he can apply for a medical board, which generally comprises three members, for a further decision. We have had those cases and, to acquaint members of the wide disparity between doctors' assessments on these men, I will quote some claims which have been made on behalf of the workers. I will not mention any names, but if the Attorney General wants that information I will make it available to him. This is a letter written to a worker by the branch manager of the State Insurance Office, Kalgoorlie, and he says—

> I have to advise that my head office has now completed its investigation of your claim and has approved payment of compensation at the rate of £6 per week from 23rd September, 1949, inclusive, until the sum of £375 has exhausted. This payment is based on 30 per cent. incapacity due to industrial disease, that being the assessment made by the Medical Officer in Charge of the Commonwealth Health Laboratory in your case, and which entitles you to 30 per cent. of £1,250, i.e., £375.

The union, acting as agent for this worker, advised him to refuse acceptance of the money and applied for a medical board on his behalf, and the result was that the worker received a letter from the branch manager of the State Insurance Office which stated—

> In view of the Medical Board's Report . . . the compensation entitlement in your case has been increased from £375 to the maximum of £1,250.

The reason for that letter was that the medical board found that the man was 100 per cent. incapacitated and not 30 per cent. That shows the position when it comes to a question of assessing percentages of disability. The men on the medical board are highly qualified; mostly radiologists. Another worker who was assessed as being 50 per cent. incapacitated by the officer in charge at the laboratory at Kalgoorlie was told by his own medical adviser that he had a 70 to 80 per cent. incapacity, and on his case being presented to a board it found that he had a degree of incapacity, in respect of such industrial disease alone, of 100 per cent. and no non-industrial capacity when the question was: What was the degree of incapacity of such industrial disease alone for any division of employment which was assessed at 80 per cent.? That worker received £1,250 compensation.

If the Bill became law as it now stands, the doctor at the laboratory would be the sole arbiter as to whether a man had 40 cent. incapacity or otherwise. As I have said, all medical men agree that it is an imposible task, and it is not a fair thing to expect a doctor to assess a percentage of disability. Another question which

arises in regard to percentages is: What is going to happen to a man who is 35 per cent. incapacitated? Seeing that the Bill proposes to repeal the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act in the Third Schedule relating to these diseases, the Workers' Compensation Act will not cover them. Further, it is not only the workers in the metalliferous mining industry who contract silicosis, but also workers in other industries such as quarries, foundries, where they use sand moulds, and quite a number of others.

I do not think we can accept the position of a worker being 35 per cent. incapacitated, which means an incapacity of over one-third, not getting a penny-piece for it. That is what the proposal in the Bill means. A worker, or a mine worker who was incapacitated by an accident, leaving him with a 35 per cent. permanent incapacity, would receive payment of 35 per cent. of £1,250. But the man who is a silicotic can be disabled to that extent and as long as he is not 40 per cent. disabled—which is nearly half disabled—he is not going to get a penny-piece for it. That is something that cannot be accepted at all. We say that the worker should have the right of putting his case before a medical board if a qualified medical officer supports him with a written report.

Under the provisions of the Bill the medical officer appointed is the only person who can report that a man has reached a certain stage of incapacity, and, if he does not report to that effect, it would not matter if all the chest specialists in the State said that a man had reached say 50 or 60 per cent. incapacity; their report would not mean a thing if the doctor appointed under the Act did not say that he was incapacitated. We say that the worker must have the right of approach to some competent authority who should judge the matter. Another point to which we object is that it is to be a contributory scheme. I feel that no responsible person representing a worker can ever accept the principle that he must contribute towards his own compensation; it should be the responsibility of the employer to provide that.

Mr. Totterdell: Not altogether.

Mr. MOIR: I see some members are not entirely in agreement. The Attorney General told us that the fund which it is proposed to set up under the Bill would consist of annual payments of £30,000 which the Government previously paid into the Miners' Phthisis Fund; an amount from the State Insurance Office to meet third schedule claims for silicosis which stands in a fund that at 30th June, 1951, amounted to £591,861; an amount by the Treasurer equal to the amount paid by the employees under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Act; an equal amount by the employer and an equal amount by the employee which last year reached £14,494; a yearly amount from the employers comparable to that paid to the workers' compensation account in regard to Third Schedule claims for industrial diseases which last year was £145,437; and lastly the amount standing to the credit of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, namely £308,000. This makes a total of £900,000.

In reply to a question, the Attorney General said that the employer was not going to get out of paying anything. I am not so sure about that. Under this Bill—I do not say at the present time or when it starts to operate—I think that as time goes on the employers' liability is going to decrease. There is a provision in the Bill to take over the crystallised claims of mine workers who are receiving compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act, and pay them at the rate they were receiving under that Act. When those amounts are exhausted the intention is to go on paying the amounts set out in the schedule. With regard to new claims, I point out that where a man would previously have had a claim to a portion of the total amount of £1,250, which would be paid at the present allowable rate of £6 a week, in the years to come that is going to be reduced in the case of a single man to 30s. a week. Now, at 30s. a week it would take a single man of total incapacity entitled to £1,250 benefit under the Workers' Compensation Act 16 years to cut that out; it would take a married man, who only had a wife dependent on him, eight years.

At present a worker goes on workers' compensation and is entitled to the full amount. If he is a married man with a wife to support, he would be receiving £6 a week which is what all workers automatically get, being two-thirds of the weekly earnings. So I think in future the employer is going to be relieved of a considerable liability.

There is another matter in regard to this fund which I think should be answered by the Attorney General, and that is that in 1948 this Third Schedule Fund held by the State Insurance Office had in it an amount of £670,631, and the annual payment made by the employer in that year was £103,968. Now we are told that the fund has only £591,861 in it—a loss of £98,670, despite the fact that employers' yearly contribution has increased by £36,059. I have taken that from the figures supplied by the Attorney General, who said that £145,000 was paid last year. So I think some explanation should be given regarding these apparent discrepancies in the figures relating to the fund. It would seem that the employers have not been contributing enough to the fund to meet the liabilities. I may be wrong, but that is how it appears to me.

Another matter that I think furnishes serious ground for objecting to the Bill is the fact that, with regard to the weekly payment to a beneficiary, the amount he is permitted to earn is tied up with the

rate he was receiving in the goldmining industry at the time he left it. Had this Bill been operative at present, it would mean that a man would be losing 9s. a week now, and could mean that the benefits paid under the provisions of the Bill would be entirely extinguished. I am even more alarmed than ever about this phase after hearing the speech by the member for Murchison last night. Since the 15th May, 1946, the basic wage on the Goldfields has risen from £5 9s. a week to £10 10s. 11d., or an increase of £5 1s. 11d. Therefore, had the Bill been operating in 1946 and a worker had left the industry then and had been receiving the miserable amount provided under the Bill, with the limitation of £4 10s., the benefits derivable would have been entirely extinguished some time ago. Further attention must be paid to that aspect.

Then again, with regard to the scale of payments, I notice that the Attorney General said the Bill was designed to encourage miners to leave the industry before they were too badly disabled. I do not know what miner, even a single man, would leave the industry today if offered 30s. a week. The lowest wage paid on the mines under the latest basic wage fixation is £12 10s. 11d. per week. With regard to the method of payment, another point is the fact that the amounts paid to a man's dependants are taken into consideration when fixing the permissible amount he is allowed to earn. The effect would be that a single man would be allowed to earn far more in proportion than could a married man with dependants. Another point I do not like is that the dependants taken into consideration are, other than the wife, restricted to three. Apparently, if a man had more than three children, it would be just too bad.

Another provision of the Bill to which I take exception is the limitation upon the time allowed for the submission of claims. In the case of tuberculosis, the time allowed is 12 months and in connection with the industrial diseases of silicosis and pneumoconiosis, it is two years. The Queensland Act in this regard applies to workers in mines, including coalmines, quarries, stone crushing and cutting—

> Who have been resident in Queensland for five years to seven years. Who have been employed in the specified industries from three to five hundred days.
>
> Who make their claim within fifteen years of ceasing employment in the specified industries. (Payment is made in some cases after fifteen years ex gratia subject to satisfactory proof of employment being given).

I have discussed this matter with various medical men and others and they are of the opinion that men should be allowed quite a long period within which to make a claim. Silicosis is a progressive disease. A man may leave the industry and not have any apparent signs of dust in or damage to his lungs. He may remain out of the industry for many years and then find he is badly affected with silicosis. A case was brought under my notice at Boulder recently where a man had left the industry 30 years ago and gone into business. He never returned to the mining industry but was astounded to find that he was in a state of advanced silicosis, from the effects of which he died a few weeks ago. Dr. Robson, of the McIntyre Research Institute, visited this State some time ago in connection with the installation of the aluminium therapy treatment in the mining industry. When he was asked about this aspect, he said that a man's condition was liable to progress after he had left the industry if he had been affected by silica dust and that the disease would be progressive for at least five years.

When Dr. Outhred gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Workers' Compensation, he made the statement that the disease would be progressive for ten years. The Queensland Act provides for a period of 15 years within which a man may lodge a claim and in some cases payments are made ex gratia, subject to satisfactory proof of employment being given. I consider that there is an omission from the Bill in that no provision is made for the payment of funeral benefits in respect of a worker who dies from the effects of pneumoconiosis. Under the Workers' Compensation Act of Queensland, the allowance is £50.

I was pleased to find in the Bill that provision has been made to cover the employees at State Batteries. It is a serious reflection on Governments in the past that State Battery employees have not been covered under the Mine Workers' Relief Act and have not had the requisite examination, with the result that there are unfortunate workers who have contracted tuberculosis and are not entitled to receive benefits under the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

The provision in the Bill for reciprocity is one that should receive careful attention. It is much more emphatic than is the reciprocity section in the Workers' Compensation Act. It refers definitely to countries whether part of the Dominions or not. That would mean that if a worker came here from a dominion and contracted pneumoconiosis, his dependants, if they lived in one of those dominions, would not receive any compensation.

There is a matter I should like to bring under the notice of the Attorney General. The Bill makes no mention of payment to a medical officer appointed to administer aluminium therapy treatment to mine workers, and there is no provision for advances for purchasing aluminium powder

and retailing it to the employers. The fund will be reimbursed as repayments are received.

I earnestly ask the Government to give careful consideration to the amendments that we propose and I hope that no attempt will be made to deprive the workers of something which it has taken them years to get and which would be penalising quite a large section. Under the proposals in the Bill, something will be taken from them.

The Attorney General: They are being given very much more. I do not suppose that the workers want to have their contributions increased.

Mr. MOIR: Why should they?

The Attorney General: Why not? They are getting a life pension. It is the only industry I know of where such a pension is provided.

Mr. Styants: Thirty shillings a week for a single man!

The Attorney General: I think it is a reasonable amount.

Mr. MOIR: I should like the Attorney General to obtain the figures to show how long an advanced silicotic man lives after leaving the mining industry. If he is a single man, he would receive the handsome sum of 30s. a week. Does the Attorney General think that he would be drawing that amount and living 10 years to enjoy it?

The Attorney General: I am told that if he left the industry at 40 per cent., yes.

Mr. MOIR: I could prove to the Attorney General that people who have been supposed to have only 40 per cent. have not lived very long.

Mr. Butcher: They are entitled to all they get.

Mr. MOIR: I am glad that a member on the other side of the House agrees with me.

Mr. Butcher: Anyone would who understands mining.

Mr. MOIR: If one understands mining, one can appreciate how vitally important these proposals are to the workers and can realise that, if a man has been unfortunate enough to contract any substantial degree of dust, he has not very long to enjoy what remains to him of life, and I cannot see that he could enjoy it much on 30s. a week.

Mr. Marshall: The point is that he gets that amount now without the Bill. The Attorney General is just carrying it on.

The Attorney General: No, he does not; it is only when he is totally incapacitated.

Mr. Styants: Equal to about half a day's pay for a machine-man.

The Attorney General: I agree that it is not very much, but it is going to cost an extra £70,000 a year.

Mr. MOIR: It is proposed to give relief to mine workers when they are in the early silicotic instead of the advanced stage. That is nothing to boast about. I conclude by repeating the hope that very careful consideration will be given to the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.39 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 30th October, 1951.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

As to Sleeper Requirements, Production and Exports.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the approximate number of sleepers required annually for replacements on Western Australian railways?