

he would consider it an honour to be asked to take a seat on this Commission in an honorary capacity.

I know the amount mentioned tonight is not very much when we consider the money the members of the commission handle. But this Commission was appointed to handle money for charity, and when we know of men who stand high in the estimation of the people and who give up their time in an honorary capacity to many charitable organisations, I think the Government would be well advised to look round for such men and appoint them to this Commission in an honorary capacity. I make no complaint about the way in which the present members of the Commission are doing their job, but I do not think we should pay men for that work when there are others who would discharge the duties just as capably in an honorary capacity.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There is too much involved in it, for that.

Hon. E. H. HALL: We have a paid staff there, and the executive head is the secretary, so why do we need paid Commissioners to distribute the money?

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till tomorrow at 11 a.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Friday, 10th December, 1948.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Question : Meat, as to exports to Malaya ...	3411
Bills : Bush Fires Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r., remaining stages ...	3412
Assembly's message ...	3435
Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment, returned ...	3419
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 2r., remaining stages ...	3419
Assembly's amendment ...	3444
Hospital Benefits Agreement, 2r., remaining stages, passed ...	3411
Health Act Amendment (No. 3), 1r., 2r. 2r., remaining stages, passed ...	3419
Gold Buyers Act Amendment, returned Assembly's amendments ...	3425
Mining Act Amendment, Assembly's message ...	3419
Land Sales Control Act Amendment, Assembly's message ...	3424
Parliamentary Superannuation, 1r., 2r., remaining stages ...	3425, 3442
Assembly's message ...	3435
Marketing of Apples and Pears, Assembly's message ...	3458
Loan, £2,815,000, 2r., remaining stages, passed ...	3435
Bush Fires Act Amendment (No. 1), Com., point of order, recom., remaining stages ...	3444
Assembly's message ...	3449
Electricity Act Amendment, 2r., defeated ...	3458
Appropriation, all stages, passed ...	3452
Parliamentary Superannuation, appointment of Trustees ...	3453
Complimentary remarks, close of session ...	3458
Adjournment, special ...	3459

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read prayers.

QUESTION.

MEAT.

As to Exports to Malaya,

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON asked the Chief Secretary:

On the 10th November the following questions were submitted to the Premier:—

(1) Has the Premier's attention been drawn to the paragraph in the issue of "The West Australian" dated the 8th November, dealing with a protest against re-

strictions on the export of sheep to Singapore from the northern agricultural and pastoral areas of Western Australia?

(2) As 3,425 tons of meat is to be sent from Australia to Malaya, will the Premier do his utmost to ensure that all, or most, of this allocation is reserved to Western Australian farmers and pastoralists who had exclusively handled this trade in past years?

(3) In view of the importance of the above matter to farmers and pastoralists, and to the port of Geraldton which handles the major portion of this trade so far as shipping is concerned, will the Minister inform the House of the progress of the Premier's representations in this regard?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) The British Ministry of Food control the import of live sheep to Singapore, and anyone here must get an import license issued. For Western Australia the quota is 100,000 live sheep, and there are certain agreements entered into whereby shippers draw sheep from pastoral areas and not from agricultural areas. Sometimes, they do enter agricultural districts if the quota is not sufficient from pastoral areas, but this also has to be approved of.

Shippers have to get their own freight space.

The Department of Commerce and Agriculture forwards information to the Customs Department which issues the necessary permit. This is done after the meatworks approve that they can go.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [11.4] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is being introduced to give effect to a number of amendments which have been requested at various times by local authorities, farmers' organisations and other interested bodies. At the same time, opportunity is being taken to incorporate amendments which will enable the easier operation of some sections of the Act, and to redraft others, the effect of which, from a legal aspect, is not clear. These amend-

ments do not alter the principles already contained in the Act, but merely clarify the wording. I think members will agree with me that much of that could be done in connection with a number of other Acts.

It is certainly a step in the right direction that we should clarify those measures so that people may be able to understand them. All the amendments that vary the provisions of the Act have been recommended by the Rural Fires Prevention Advisory Committee, the membership of which includes three from the Road Board Association, so it will be appreciated that there is ample opportunity for the views of local authorities and others interested to be considered by the committee.

Before outlining the proposals contained in the measure, I would like to explain several important features of the Act that are dealt with. A great deal of confusion exists regarding the different periods specified in the Act. I refer to the burning season. The first extends from the 1st October to the 31st May in every year, period. During this time burning operations may be carried out only when certain precautions have been taken and quite a number of conditions specified in the Act have been complied with. The second period concerns prohibited burning times. These are declared by the Governor and vary in different parts of the State.

The utmost confusion exists sometime where two districts adjoin and a different burning season may apply on one side of the fence from that applying on the other side. The prohibited burning time vary for different parts of the State, covering any time of the year and overlapping the first period I have mentioned, namely the 1st October to the 31st May. During this latter period burning can only take place subject to a number of conditions but during the prohibited burning times no burning can take place at all except for certain special purposes and under most stringent conditions. In the agricultural areas the prohibited burning times commence in October, November or December and burning under the control provisions must then cease. In other words, the prohibited burning periods which may be declared for any time of the year take precedence over burning carried out under any other provisions of the Act, except those specifically dealing with burning during

prohibited times. One of the purposes of the Bill is to clarify the two periods I have mentioned.

I shall now outline the main provisions of the Bill. The Act gives the Governor power to suspend the operation of declared prohibited burning times to enable railway land, and land under the control of the Conservator of Forests, to be burned during those declared periods. It is necessary that this protective burning should be carried out, but owing to variable seasonal conditions, it is rarely known until nearly the commencing date of the prohibited time whether the burning can be completed. If the work cannot be finished, there are then only a few days left in which to make application to the Governor for the suspension to enable the burning of firebreaks to be carried out.

It is difficult to obtain the Governor's consent in the time available and it is therefore proposed that these particular powers shall be exercised by the Minister. This provision is desirable, as I know from experience that it is difficult to extend the time, and to get the permission of the Governor is a cumbersome procedure. A week may be wasted before it can be obtained. The power to suspend the declared prohibited times to which I have just referred, extends to any "railway reserve," but because of the use of the words "railway reserve" in the parent Act, it has not been possible to grant these suspensions to the Midland Railway Company, as that company's land is not covered by the term. However, it is desirable that firebreaks should be provided on the Midland line as well as on the Government lines.

It is hoped that, in future, a way will be found to provide these firebreaks by means other than burning, but at the present time this is not practicable. Probably there are other means of destroying grasses, for instance, with acids. I do not know whether this is so, but that is what is in my mind. The burning of these firebreaks takes place at a rather dangerous time, and the section of the Act concerned does not lay down any conditions governing the burning, presumably as the only person concerned is the Commissioner of Railways. In fairness to the Commissioner of Railways, I would say that he does take every possible precaution. To my knowledge, and I have had a fairly long experience, I do not know that a fire on

railway land has got out of control. If it has, there were many people on the job who could put it out promptly.

Hon. L. A. Logan: A fire got away last week.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Did it do much damage?

Hon. L. A. Logan: It put one man in the hospital.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: How many acres did it burn?

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: Seven.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is the first occasion that I have heard of such an occurrence.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The fires do get away sometimes.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But they have always been put out. I know of at least half a dozen fires that got over the break, but the men there—the railway men and the farmers—got it out before it caused damage. It is news to me that the Railway Department lets a fire get out of control.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Of course, it is not done purposely.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not referring to fires caused by engines.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The fire I referred to was due to burning off.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: As the privilege of burning these breaks will be extended to a private company, it is considered that there should be some conditions specified to ensure that the work is done with adequate precautions. Provision has therefore been made in the Bill for that purpose. Another amendment deals with the burning of firebreaks on private land adjoining the railway at the same time as the railway land is being burnt. This is a desirable condition, as it will be of great benefit to a farmer to burn off while the railway men are present, because he would have their help, if necessary. In my opinion, too much burning off cannot be done, and surely a controlled fire is to be preferred to one that might get out of control. The more burning that is done along a railway line and elsewhere, the better. At present, the

adjoining landholder may burn back on his own land for a distance of one chain. In certain circumstances, one chain has proved insufficient to afford reasonable protection, and many requests have been received to extend the distance to a maximum of three chains.

On some banks, at Mokine in particular, engines blow out sparks and lumps of coal and the wind carries these for a distance up to three chains. At other places, it would not matter if there were no firebreak at all, as some engines do not seem to emit sparks under certain conditions. That is the only change actually made by the amendment, but the opportunity has been taken of redrafting this particular section. An extension of the permissible width of a firebreak on land adjoining the railway is considered reasonable, as it is unlikely that any person would burn a wider break than he felt was necessary for protection.

The Act provides that permits may be issued by authorised officers for the burning of clover during the prohibited times, to enable clover burr to be collected. The authorised officer has power to refuse to issue a permit when he considers conditions are such as to render burning dangerous, but he has no power to cancel a permit once it is issued, irrespective of the fact that very dangerous conditions may have developed after the issue of the permit but before burning had actually taken place. In the gathering of clover burr seed, it is desirable to burn the ground first. Rollers are then taken over it to pick up the seed. The issue of these permits involves an inspection of the land concerned, and many local authorities have asked that they be permitted to charge a fee for this inspection.

Provisions to cover these matters have been included in the Bill. Under the principal Act, any person burning the bush within two miles of a State forest is required to notify the nearest forest officer if the burning is intended to take place between the 15th December and the 15th March. In some years, a considerable number of fires lit after the 15th March have escaped into State forests, and it is desired to extend the period during which it is necessary to notify the Forests Department, to the 15th April. Returns over a number of years have indicated that tractors are frequently instrumental in starting serious fires.

I know that on quite a few occasions the railways have been blamed when tractors have started the fires. I personally have advocated that there should be a compulsory fitting of adequate spark arresters on tractors. A strong demand has been made by local authorities and farmers' organisations for the fitting of spark arresters and the carrying of knapsack sprays on tractors to be compulsory, so that there will be a ready means at hand to extinguish a fire before it can escape. Requests are still being received for this amendment, and it could almost be said that the demand is unanimous.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You cannot get knapsack sprays.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so, and in that case it is not likely the Minister would insist on this provision.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He would not take action, but an ordinary person might.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A conviction could not be obtained if a man tried to get what was necessary, but was unsuccessful. I am not sure that a standard spark arrester has been evolved, but we see all sorts of them on tractors.

Hon. L. A. Logan: A bit of flywire can be rigged up.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. A man without a spark arrester on his tractor in the summer ought to be locked up.

Hon. L. A. Logan: I have worked mine for 15 years without one.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers howl enough if the railways do not do the right thing. If the farmers do not do the right thing, there is a certain amount of excuse for the railways. However, we want it both ways. It will not come into force immediately the Bill is proclaimed, as it is realised that some considerable time must elapse before farmers can so equip their tractors. Standard-type spark arresters are obtainable locally, and there should be little difficulty in regard to supply. However, the position will be carefully watched and every opportunity given for compliance with the Act before this particular section is enforced.

It was apparently the intention of the Act to provide that fires burning on the 1st October should be extinguished unless they conformed to the provisions of the Act which permitted fires after that date. It was found that the words "conformity with the Act" could be taken to cover almost any fire, and the term was so wide that many fires which it was intended should be extinguished were, in fact, burning "in conformity with the Act." I believe that many fires started at the beginning of the summer—say, in November—have come from burning off operations which had been carried out during the winter. I have always been inclined to take the period back to prior to October unless very strong precautions were taken.

Hon. A. L. Loton: If you put the period back, how are you going to get your clearing done?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It should be done with very strong precautions. Many fires have been caused by stumps burning underground. Amendments are, therefore, being submitted to clarify the particular section of the Act concerned, and to ensure that fires burning on the 1st October are extinguished unless they conform to sections of the Act which have now been specified. It is proposed to give a local authority power to carry out, at the request of the owner or occupier of any land, works for the removal of fire danger, and to recover the cost of carrying out the request. The purpose of this amendment is to enable absentee owners or persons unable to do the work to arrange for the local authority to clean up property which would otherwise constitute a fire menace.

I know, in a road board area with which I am concerned, that some abandoned properties have scrub right up against the road. In one case, we cannot find the owner. Under this amendment, the board will be able to clean up that property. For some years past, it has been the practice to request local authorities to submit a return showing particulars of estimated fire losses, with causes of fires occurring in their districts. The majority of local authorities have co-operated in every way, but unfortunately the information desired has not been obtained from all districts, approximately 70 per cent. only of the local authorities complying, and so much of its value has been lost.

These statistics, if they covered the whole State, would be of great importance, as from them it could be ascertained which districts, over a number of years, have a higher fire hazard than others. It would also indicate those areas where the prevention and control organisation was not operating as effectively as it might. Sir Charles Latham should be interested in that. If later on we found that in the Bruce Rock district the hazard was not so very great, and also by statistics that any fire was quickly put out, there would be a very good argument for the continuance of the measure for over two years. Possession of this information would also enable efforts to improve the fire prevention organisations to be directed where they would be most beneficial.

It is therefore intended to make the submission of an annual return of fire losses a requirement under the Act. When this return is available, it is proposed to pinpoint all fires which occur during the fire season on a map at the department. This is done in Victoria, and the information shown would be most beneficial as an aid to help keep fire losses to a minimum. If there were a number of fires near a certain railway, for instance, it would enable the department to sheet home the blame. The section dealing with general penalties for offences against the Act has been re-written and a minimum penalty of one-tenth of the maximum has been laid down.

Provision has also been made that when a person has been convicted for an offence against the Act, any expenses incurred by a bush fire brigade or other persons in connection with the offence, may be recovered by applying to the same court which convicted the person concerned. At present the application for these expenses must be made separately to another court. The provision in the Bill will not prevent application being made to another court, but will simplify in the majority of cases, the existing procedure. Finally, it has been provided that when a person sets fire to the bush, complies with all the provisions of the Bush Fires Act, and is not negligent, then he shall not be liable for damages arising from his action.

An amendment to the Bush Fires Act was introduced in 1936 but the then Minister, Hon. M. F. Troy, would not agree to it. I hope that the House will endorse the Bill which is now before it. Surely if a man does everything possible and has the

required number of persons available, has firebreaks and does not do anything which is negligent, then he should not be convicted. This is a good Bill and it will clear up a lot of anomalies. We are particularly concerned in regard to fires in country districts and with the improvements of our pastures over the last few years, the fire hazard is greater than at any other time in our history. Of course, to offset that we have bush fire brigades but the Bill is to simplify the problem and surely prevention is better than cure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 5:

Hon. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: Will the Minister advise me why it is proposed to delete the interpretation of the word "Minister"?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot give that answer at the moment. I do not know why it is done.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Surely it is a mistake.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think the reason is that it may be desirable to place the control of the Bush Fires Act under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Agriculture. The Interpretation Act sets out—

"Minister" means the Minister of the Crown to whom the administration of the Act or enactment or the Part thereof in which the term is used is for the time being committed by the Governor, and includes any Minister of the Crown for the time being discharging the duties of the office of the Minister.

If Sir Charles Latham desires something specific put in the Bill, then I am quite agreeable, although I consider it unnecessary.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Then why do it at all?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In the Act the "Minister" referred to means the Minister for Lands but

now that it is to be taken out, the Interpretation Act will automatically cover it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I would rather see it in the Bill.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: When dealing with another Bush Fires Act amendment the name of the Minister for Agriculture was freely used as having control of issuing permits or granting local authorities certificates as to the proficiency of bush fire brigades. That would seem as if it were taken for granted that the Minister for Agriculture is to be in charge of the Bush-fires Act.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Instead of taking out the word "Minister" the words "of Lands" should be taken out. It would then read "Minister" only and the Interpretation Act would completely cover the position.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment in the Bill does not propose to delete the word "Minister." It proposes to delete the interpretation of "Minister."

Hon. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: It is set out in all Acts what Minister shall be in charge of that Act.

The Chief Secretary: It is absolutely unnecessary. It is already covered by the Interpretation Act.

Hon. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: That is all right for a lawyer but this Act is administered by local authorities as well as the Minister in charge.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think any amendment is really necessary. Under the Interpretation Act wherever a Minister is mentioned in an Act it means the Minister who for the time being is in control of the Act. In most Acts he is defined but apparently it is not necessary and there is some reason for taking it out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the clause will be retained so that we can delete the interpretation of "Minister." The Interpretation Act was passed to include definitions of many terms and thus shorten the provisions of Bills. Wherever "Minister" appears, it means the Minister appointed by the Governor for the purpose. Sometimes it is desired that a special Minister shall have control and then a definition to that effect is inserted in the particular measure. In this case it might be thought con-

venient if the Minister controlling fire brigades took charge of the administration. The deletion of the definition in the Act will leave it open to the Government to determine which Minister shall administer the Act.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: After hearing the explanation of the Chief Secretary, I am satisfied that the Minister to administer this Act should be the Minister for Lands or the Minister for Agriculture. I suggest the Minister for Agriculture. I know of the definitions included in the Interpretation Act, but we have included a definition of "Minister" in many measures.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: After the explanation of the Chief Secretary, the clause should be retained. It might be desirable to hand over control to another Minister, and the deletion of the definition from the Act will enable that to be done.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 9:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The proposed new Subsection (3a) (a) (i) refers to firebreaks mentioned in Section 11, which lays down the precautions to be taken when bush is being burnt, and it is now proposed to reduce the firebreak from a width of 10ft. to 6ft. I have yet to learn that a 6ft. firebreak is of much use, especially when a fire gets away. I move an amendment—

That subparagraph (1) of the proposed new Subsection (3a) (a) be struck out.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I oppose the amendment. Over the years it has been found that a 6ft. break is sufficient, especially as this will apply only where the burning is being carried out between the farmer's property and the railway. I wonder whether the amendment is in order, seeing that the greater width will impose a heavy charge on the revenue. I do not think that a fire has ever broken away under these conditions as there have always been plenty of men in attendance.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Even with the firebreaks now prescribed, we have had most disastrous fires in the eastern districts.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: But they were caused by sparks.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The fact remains that the fires occurred. Flames will jump a greater width than 6ft. If members consider that 6ft. is sufficient, I am sure they will find out later on that it is not.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I think Mr. Baxter has in mind the time when the ploughed break was the sole means relied upon to stop progress of a fire. The practice today is to plough a break on the outside also, and thus make even greater provision than 10ft.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: My experience is that it does not matter whether the firebreak is 6ft. or 10ft; under certain conditions a fire will cross it. I agree with the Honorary Minister that 6ft. is a useful break and provides an opportunity to burn back and prevent the fire from spreading. Many people do not provide breaks at all. It is too much to expect a farmer to make a 10ft. break. I would prefer to see two small breaks with a strip burnt in between. A 4ft. break will not stop a fire. The Railway Department has done a good job with regard to fire breaks, but we have been told by the department that time and again the farmers do not do their part in many districts where the Railway Department has complied with the regulations. We cannot have it both ways. If we force the department to provide 10ft. breaks it is only reasonable to expect farmers to do likewise.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Actually it does not matter whether the break is 4ft., 6ft. or 10ft. That is not the finish of it; it is only for the purpose of burning in between. Mr. Baxter mentioned the fire in the eastern districts. I do not think that was due to the width of any break. The sparks blew over all the breaks.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I thought it did. Where did the sparks land?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: In the railway break.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is rather surprising to me because I have never known of any railway land that has not been burnt.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It was a bad burn.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Then the fire was not

on account of the width of the break but because of a bad burn.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: With regard to the fire we have been discussing, once the sparks jumped on to the railway break, the fire passed over the roads and over the 12ft. break and caused considerable damage. One man was burnt right out.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—New Section 12A added:

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of proposed new Section 12A the word "May" be struck out with a view to inserting the word "March" in lieu.

I fail to see why it is necessary to continue this closed period late into the season till May. By that time seeding is well under way.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is some merit in what Mr. Loton says, and I am prepared to meet him half way. In March there is a certain amount of danger if a person should happen to be stripping. Some people do that, though it is not done often. I would be prepared to agree to "April" being inserted in lieu of "May."

Hon. A. L. Loton: I am agreeable to that.

Amendment (to strike out word) put and passed.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I move an amendment—

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

Amendment (to insert word) put and passed.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Could the Minister tell me whether the fire extinguisher referred to in paragraph (a) is to be a chemical extinguisher or a knapsack spray?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I would not consent to the use of a chemical fire extinguisher. In this instance "fire extinguisher" will mean a knapsack spray.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: When they are procurable.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The provision will

not be enforced until these sprays are available. I would have no objection to the insertion of the words "knapsack spray" instead of "fire extinguisher."

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No, leave it open.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Yes; something new may be developed.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Very well.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 16, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [12.10]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I have some comments submitted by the fire brigades' committee relating to the fire extinguisher, which I would like to read for Mr. Loton's benefit. It is as follows:—

It has been considered best that the type and capacity of the fire extinguisher to be carried on a tractor should be left to regulation. Under the existing circumstances it is intended that a knapsack spray should be carried on tractors, but it will be necessary to ensure that any appliance used shall be maintained in a condition to ensure that it will be immediately effective.

I think that leaves it more or less open; and, as some hon. member said, something new may be evolved and can then be used.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [12.12]: I would point out that there is some difficulty about carrying a knapsack spray on a tractor. I do not know whether the Minister has tried to fit a spray and carry it efficiently on a tractor.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: It is more or less impossible. If it is put on the footboard one's feet are in the way and the hose gets kicked about. If it is carried on the machine when one is harvesting, it can be carried efficiently; and in those circumstances it is far easier for the operator to use the spray.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Where do you carry it on the harvester?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: On the platform. It is put in a box with a cover over it. It cannot be worked on a tractor.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
Without amendment.
- 2, Gold Buyers Act Amendment.
With amendments.

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the previous day of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—HOSPITAL BENEFITS AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [12.20] in moving the second reading said: I think this Bill will commend itself to members. It is necessary in order to ratify the agreement with the Commonwealth Government under which the Commonwealth pays 6s. per day for hospitalisation, the amount now being increased to 8s. per day. The Bill must be passed to give effect to that increase, which will be of decided advantage to all hospitals, though it is still far from sufficient. The agreement is set out in the Schedule to the Bill, and is rather lengthy, but I am sure it will meet with the approval of this House. The legislation has already been passed by the Commonwealth Government and it is now necessary for us to ratify it. The sooner that is done, the better. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [12.22]: I hope, now that the State Government has control of prices, it will ensure that the price of hospitalisation is not increased to an extent that will mean the public will lose the benefit of the extra 2s.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [12.23]: I understand that in the past price control has been perhaps too severe in this regard, and some private hospitals have had to close down because they could not make ends meet. That, of course, may have been because they were too small to be an economic proposition. Prices will be closely watched, so that the sick may receive effective hospitalisation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [12.27] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to amend the Health Act so as to enable better control to be effected in connection with a number of matters relating to preventive medicine, such as power to deal with cracked crockery and utensils in restaurants, which constitute a medium for the spreading of disease. It deals also with the regulating of industrial products, such as wallpaper containing arsenic, cosmetics containing dangerous ingredients, and so on, which may be harmful.

At present there is no power to deal with pig swill, which is a likely source of swine fever and other diseases of pigs. Therefore the control to be given by means of this Bill is desirable. No doubt the Honorary Minister for Agriculture will be able to

give more detailed information in that direction and as to the urgent necessity for this legislation. One of the main provisions of the Bill will enable research to be undertaken into industrial diseases caused by the deleterious effects of working in the paint, cement and other similar industries. Under the Bill power is taken for the compulsory examination of employees, in order to enable such research work to be done.

The Health Act at present prohibits the use of penicillin without a doctor's prescription. Members will recall that I referred to that fact when dealing with the pharmacy measure. When introducing that Bill I mentioned that an amendment would be made to the Health Act, and this is that amendment. As members know, penicillin is one of the most useful drugs used in the treatment of mastitis in stock. It will readily be understood how impossible it is to secure a doctor's prescription for the use of the drug for veterinary purposes. Power is therefore sought that the Governor may from time to time proclaim regulations to exempt any particular drug from the provisions of the Health Act. As I have already told members, it has been regulated by the Pharmacy and Poisons Act.

The National Medical Research Council considers that the increase in pre-natal deaths and also the deaths of children shortly after birth is far too high and, due to research into this matter, it is thought that investigation by post-mortem examinations regarding pre-natal deaths would materially assist in deciding the cause of death both of stillborn children and those who die shortly after birth. It is the opinion of medical authorities that such deaths result from the same causes. It is for this reason that it is desired to have post-mortems of stillborn infants. Various local authorities have been conducting immunisation campaigns in conjunction with the Health Department. There is no authority in the Health Act enabling them to do so, and provision is made in this Bill to authorise them to carry on that excellent work. There are other amendments which can more appropriately be dealt with in Committee. As Sir Charles has suggested, it might be advisable to adjourn the Committee stage of this Bill till later in the sitting to enable members more fully to appreciate its contents. For the information of members I will go

through the various clauses *seriatim*, and they will thus be more conversant with them.

Hon. A. Thomson: Which clause in the Bill deals with men engaged in industrial occupations?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will deal with that matter now. Clause 3 provides that cosmetics, absorbent cottonwool and surgical dressings shall come within the definition of "drug" and therefore be under the control of the Commissioner. As members can readily understand, cosmetics may contain dangerous ingredients, or harmful bacteria, such as tetanus germs.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What about absorbent wool?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is all the same.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is all carefully wrapped by the wholesalers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It may be. There is no question when absorbent wool is carefully wrapped by a reputable firm. Nor is there any question regarding the packing of cosmetics and surgical dressings by a reputable firm. But other firms put their products on to the market now and again and it is desired that there should be power to control them. Strangely enough, in the definition of "sanitary convenience," baths and wash-troughs are not included, although last year sinks were. It is proposed to include baths and wash-troughs because it has been found that they do require attention, especially those that are used by a large number of people. It does not mean that the health authorities will enter a person's house to see that the bath conforms to the health regulations, but it does give them power to do so if the occasion demands. All members will agree that in some portions of the City of Perth—might I put it, in the slum areas?—it is advisable that the health authorities should be permitted to inspect the bathing facilities for householders.

Hon. L. Craig: In a private house?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course, it means a private house, but the Health Department will not worry very much about private houses. In the same way, the police do not arrest a drunk; they only run in an objectionable drunk. There would be considerable trouble if health inspectors started inspecting private bathrooms without

a reasonable and proper excuse. They would have cause to inspect them if, say, my neighbour complained that there was a dreadful stench coming from my bathroom, and I think it would be admitted that the health inspector should investigate the cause of it. The health inspector does not want to rush away to get a justice of the peace to inspect this, that or the other.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Cannot he do that now?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not with bathrooms, but he can with drains. It is necessary for the health of the people. Clause 4 contains an amendment to Section 18. At present, the local authority has power to dispose of night-soil and refuse, but there is none regarding the disposal of pig swill. The matter of pig swill will be dealt with by the Honorary Minister, who will tell the House that it has been extensively policed by the Department of Agriculture and the City Council. It is a matter which we require to bring under the Health Act so that it can be dealt with properly. It is a source of danger to the pig-producer.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What about new paragraph (47a) dealing with the use of damaged crockery? That is a matter that urgently needs to be taken in hand.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I mentioned that matter earlier in my remarks. Clause 5 gives the Governor power to make regulations to prevent overcrowding in gangways, passages and aisles not in a public highway, and for the prevention of fires in buildings in which people are employed. It is also to secure the public safety and convenience. It is proposed to amend the section so that it will not only include all members of the public but all other persons. For example, it will give protection to all employees in bio-boxes in theatres, because it is considered that employees are not members of the public. Clause 6 gives the Governor power to make regulations requiring persons engaged in prescribed industries to submit themselves for periodical medical examination. That means that the regulations will have to be laid on the Table of the House.

Hon. H. Hearn: What industries have they in mind? They must have some in mind.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For instance, the paint industry and the cement industry, and might I suggest that possibly, and very probably, a factory where a lot of people are employed and where there is danger of T.B., being contracted.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It might be in a factory where there is a lot of dust.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: In a furniture factory, for example.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Undoubtedly, where there is all that dust and sawdust, and with the employees swallowing chips. Clause 7 creates an offence for publishing false statements in an advertisement relating to the contents or effects of patent medicines. At present, the section does not prevent such advertisements over the air, and it is desired that this should be so.

Hon. L. Craig: Nor coupons!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Therefore, the section is amended to prevent any false statements being made over the air and members will agree that this is in keeping with scientific progress. Clause 8 creates an offence of the sale or exposure of any compound as a disinfectant, germicide or antiseptic without disclosing on the label the substance of the compound. It is desired to include insecticides. This is considered desirable as many insecticides claim to include D.D.T., and actually they may not do so. I think it will be found that no-one will purchase insecticides unless they are branded as including D.D.T.

Under Clause 9, power is sought to make regulations to prohibit the manufacture, sale or offering for sale of any wallpaper or any paper used for wall covering or wrapping food in which there is colouring matter in excess of the quantity permitted. This is to guard against poisoning. Where there are small children, we all know they are inclined to tear a piece of wallpaper from the wall and suck it. It does not matter that they have a little more dirt than usual but it does matter if there is any colouring matter in the paper.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There is not much wallpaper used now.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That may be so, but it is curious how children discover it. Power is also sought to prohibit the sale for use for wearing apparel of textiles which contain arsenic or other deleterious

matter or compounds. I understand that some of these articles will not affect many people, but they will affect some, and therefore it is said, "Very well, we will prohibit their sale because they will affect some people and give them dermatitis, which will be passed on." We must protect the public in that regard. It is also sought to prohibit the sale of tubed nursing bottles for infants' food. These are considered highly objectionable. It may surprise members to know that there are quite a number of mothers, shall I say of the slum type, who are in the habit, when feeding their babies with a bottle, of tying it to the wall with a long tube attached, leaving the infant to feed itself. That in itself does not matter but what does matter is that they do not cleanse the tube and hence the infant contracts a disease.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It is a long time since they were on sale.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understand they are on sale every now and again. When I was Minister for Health, it was pointed out that that was so. It was an extensive practice.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They are used with a glass tube right inside the bottle.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is not so much the glass tube but the rubber tube that is the danger. Regarding Clause 11, there is now power to make bylaws for isolating persons, houses, etc., and authority is sought to include disinfecting. This may become desirable in the event of an outbreak of typhus, which is possible, particularly owing to transport of persons by aircraft from infected areas. Section 269 gives power to proclaim that certain drugs shall not be sold without a prescription by a medical practitioner, but there is no power to remove a drug from the prescribed list. Power is now sought to do so under Clause 11. Penicillin is one of these, and farmers desire to purchase this drug for use for stock. This is simply power to remove a drug from the prescribed list. As penicillin is one of these, it is now desired to remove that from the list.

The next clause deals with midwives and sets out that they must furnish reports, in writing, of each case attended. A form is prescribed so that it will be filled in by the midwife concerned. A new subsection is to be added to the relative provision in the Act

requiring a similar report to be furnished by the medical practitioner in attendance. Power is also given to conduct a postmortem examination on any stillbirth. The next clause seeks to give authority to local governing bodies to conduct immunisation campaigns. They have been doing so in the past and have carried out excellent work, but it has been without statutory authority.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do they want that power?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Very much so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think so.

Hon. E. M. Davies: But they do not want to pay for it themselves.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Whatever they do in that respect is for the benefit of their own ratepayers. The next clause deals with Section 330, which imposes a duty on police officers to demand the name and address of any person committing a breach of the Act. The intention is to impose the same duty upon health inspectors, and I think members will agree that that is quite proper.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Will you give a further explanation of paragraph (e) of proposed new Subsection (6)?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have dealt with that. There are a far greater number of stillbirths and of deaths not long after birth than some people imagine, and the authorities are much concerned about it. They desire to conduct a research with a view to determining the explanation. The principal way of conducting that research will be by means of postmortems, and for that purpose medical men will be specially appointed where required. Quite obviously it would be impracticable to do that in every district because doctors might have to travel long distances in order to carry out the duties, and in consequence the appointments will be made in prescribed districts and in such manner as the Minister may decide. Last session, when a Bill was introduced dealing with the Health Act, great objection was raised to it on the score that it was applicable to the country districts. In this instance it is not intended to do that, but it will apply to the larger centres where more cases are likely to occur. I remind the House that the object of the clause is merely to enable the desired research to be carried out with a view to avoiding a greater calamity in the future.

Hon. H. Hearn: But it does mean the compulsory surrendering of the stillborn body to the doctor?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. It must be remembered that at that stage the mother will still be in bed, and I doubt whether the father will be shown the child or would desire to see it in such circumstances. It is to avoid the unpleasantness of having to ask the permission of the parents for a postmortem to be held that the provision is included in the Bill. It is certainly not a pleasant duty to have to go to the parents in such circumstances. They would not want to know of such a happening. Why should they? This is being done in the interests of science and is not being proposed as something to be undertaken willy nilly.

The postmortems will be conducted only by doctors specially appointed for that purpose, and they will not be undertaken by all and sundry. The doctor who attends the birth is very often the man who should not be permitted to conduct the postmortem, which should be carried out by some independent man. For instance, it might be that the doctor had wrongfully used an instrument on the mother. I do not suggest that position arises by any means, but that is a possibility. The death might have been due to negligence on the part of the midwife. The postmortem examination would furnish the explanation. Under existing conditions when a stillbirth occurs, the doctor makes out the death certificate and that is the end of it. No-one knows the reason for the death.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Would you expect one doctor to give away another?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the idea of having independent medical men appointed.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: At any rate, there has been only one serious instance in this State.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I agree. Nevertheless the very fact that such legislation is on the statute book will tend to make those concerned more careful, particularly when they know that a postmortem examination will be made. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [12.50]: I have pleasure in seconding the motion for the second reading of the Bill because I am particularly interested in two of its clauses. The first is the one that contains a reference to penicillin, which drug has been used with tremendously beneficial results in the dairy-ing industry. That applies particularly to the prevention and cure of mastitis. Under existing conditions, it is very difficult for dairy farmers to secure the supplies of the drug that they require without going to considerable trouble to procure the requisite order. That very often necessitates the lapsing of a period between the discovery of the disease and when application can be made to a veterinary surgeon or medical man for an order to procure the penicillin, that is very detrimental to the cow concerned.

Under the Bill, the availability of penicillin will be made much easier and it is hoped that any cow affected with the disease will be more promptly cured. The amendment embodied in the Bill is most desirable and it is advisable that the dairymen should be able to make full use of this wonderful discovery, which has not been available to them in the past as liberally as it should have been. The other matter that concerns me is the disposal of pig swill. Members will recollect the outbreak of swine fever some years ago. At that time it was proved definitely that the fever had been transferred to the pigs in swill, and particularly in the rind of bacon.

Hon. L. Craig: Of imported bacon.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is correct. The experts say there is still doubt as to the desirability of feeding untreated swill to pigs. I can assure members that there is no hardship involved in its treatment. At present one large factory or treatment works can deal with an enormous amount of pig swill, while some smaller ones that have been established in the metropolitan area can deal with lesser quantities. The officers of the Agricultural Department have experienced considerable difficulty in policing the transfer of pig swill from places in the city to the treatment plants. As a result of discussions that took place, the co-operation

between the Perth City Council and the Agricultural Department should prove satisfactory.

We have come to an agreement to have the Act amended as indicated in the Bill with a view to giving the City Council power to control pig swill just as it does night soil at present, and that should tend to overcome the difficulty. The Bill provides for the granting of licenses by the department to those concerned and the authorities will not grant a license to any individual unless satisfied that he is the proprietor of a proper treatment plant. If a person is licensed, the City Council will allow him to collect the pig swill from a hospital or hotel and the quantity each licensee will be allowed to handle will be in proportion to the capacity of his plant. A small one may be able to treat two tons a day whereas a large plant would be capable of handling 20 tons.

This amendment is desirable because the authorities are most concerned about the proper treatment and disposal of pig swill. Every preparation has been made to deal with the situation and as soon as the legislation is agreed to, action can be taken. I understand that at Fremantle pig swill is being turned into manure. Personally, I think its food value is too great for it to be turned into manure, but that is for the Fremantle people to determine. The main point is that in future swill will not be available to the producers unless first treated.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned till a later stage of the sitting.

Sitting suspended from 1.0 to 2.15 p.m.

BILL—GOLD BUYERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 12, page 3—Delete paragraph (c).

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I consulted the Minister for Housing, who was in charge of the Bill in another place, about this amendment. He considers it would be very hard to implement the paragraph. Goldfields members should support me. If we delete this paragraph, it will make the provision less restrictive. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 17, page 5—Delete paragraph (b).

The CHAIRMAN: I might mention, for the information of members, that paragraph (b) sought to be deleted by the Assembly is the paragraph (c) appearing in the Bill as originally introduced here.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not feel inclined to agree to this amendment. We had considerable debate on the matter, and we were told it was very hard for the gold stealing detection staff to get convictions. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: We should agree to the amendment. This is against British justice.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: This would be an extraordinary power to give to the police. It is not justice. This will allow a man to be arrested and convicted without prior knowledge that he was in possession of gold.

Question put and negatived; the Assembly's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 made by the Council, and had disagreed to No. 1.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 4: Page 2, new Section 9A—Insert after the word "any" in line 30, the words "qualified coal."

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing is—

In view of the serious shortage of coalmining engineers, there might be periods when no such engineer would be available, and in order that the Coal Mines Advisory Board should not cease to function, the services of one of the State Mining Engineers should be available as Acting Chief Coal Mining Engineer.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

The object of this amendment was to provide that no-one but a man with coalmining experience should be acceptable. The proposal is that it shall be a temporary appointment only and the Government will obviously have the best man available in the service to do the job while the coalmining engineer is away. Rather than be compelled to appoint some person who has merely the qualifications and may or does not have the experience of coalmining, the Government should be in a position to appoint the person whom it considers to be most suited.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I endeavoured to make sure that we would have a qualified coalmining engineer in the position and that was the reason for my moving to have the Bill amended when it was previously before the Committee. However, as those amendments were defeated and in view of the fact that the appointment is to be of a temporary nature only, I do not intend to press for our amendment.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I hope the amendment will be insisted upon. The idea of the Bill is to put the control of coalmining into the hands of qualified men and for that purpose lectures on coalmining are conducted at Collie. Coalmining is a separate and a distinct branch with its own qualifications and if we agree to the Assembly's request we will be destroying the principle of the Bill.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am satisfied that this clause deals with a temporary agreement only. It is nothing to do with permanent appointments. It may be that the coalmining engineer takes sick or is compelled to leave the State on business. The Minister must have certain latitude in appointments of this description and I think it would be unreasonable to insist upon our amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

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

BILL—LAND SALES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan-Suburban) [2.45]: In many ways this is a most acceptable Bill, because it brings under direction many matters that have long since needed control. I commend it to the House because it has features that should be regarded as desirable by everyone. Each one of us has seen in cafes and restaurants where food is supplied to customers, damaged vessels and cups. For many years, it has been regarded as something that could not be avoided because of war-caused difficulties. We must not allow that to become the standard of our health laws and we should insist in future that all drinking vessels are whole. In the circumstances, I think everyone will see the wisdom of that provision.

Then there is another that deals with regulations requiring proprietors of premises to take the necessary precautionary measures to deal with rodents. Within our State, rat-borne diseases have become more and more prevalent as the years have passed, and it is decidedly essential that foodstuffs should be protected and kept free from rodents. Then again, the Bill will give much more control over sanitation in connection with public places than is apparent today. Most of us must have noted how the sanitary conveniences in football grounds and such places are being improved these days, and the provision in the Bill will assist in that direction.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Do not the authorities possess that power already?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: They are doubtful about the extent of their powers, and I am not prepared to say just what those powers actually are. From a talk I had with the Commissioner of Public Health some months ago, I ascertained that the regulations required considerable tightening up. Anything that can be done in that direction to deal with sanitation matters is well worth while. One provision that may be regarded with some interest is that which will enable the Governor to make regulations requiring persons in prescribed industries to submit themselves for periodical examination. The view has been expressed by some that the intention is that employees can be called up for examination purely with the idea of investigating the effect the industry in which they may be working has upon their health.

From a discussion I had with the Commissioner of Public Health some time ago, I am certain it is not so much from that standpoint as from the fact that certain communicable diseases are such that workers in industry should not be allowed, while suffering from them, to carry on in that industry. I refer particularly to the handling of smallgoods and foodstuffs. People suffering from skin rashes or other communicable complaints should not be allowed to work in an industry where there is any possibility of their infecting others. The Bill will permit the first stages of an inquiry to be made, and this will take the form of the examination of such people. But I doubt if we can go to the extent of saying that some of those people shall not be allowed to continue in their occupations.

It is a good plan to move step by step, and if we start by making the investigation, then we can at a later stage consider applying the remedy that may be so essential. There are other clauses that tighten up the provision regarding the use of harmful drugs in industry. That is another wise step. Then the final portion of the Bill represents a modification of the measure that was before us last session concerning the investigation of still-births. I am not particularly enamoured of the clauses in the Bill dealing with that subject but nevertheless I regard them as a step in the right direction. When the legislation was before us last year, I said—

The best way of handling an inquiry of this sort is to appoint a young man who is at-

tempting to qualify himself as a specialist in some particular section of medicine and, by some emolument, allow him to undertake an investigation on a scientific basis.

If the provisions in the Bill were adopted, the investigations would supply the Commissioner of Public Health and his department with a certain amount of information, but not to the extent that would be so if the inquiry were carried out by a young medical practitioner who would embody the results of his investigations in a thesis to qualify him for a higher degree. In States where medical schools have progressed it has been because they have the ability to appoint lecturers at half-time salaries or less so that they can devote themselves to the study of a particular specialised subject in which they desire to practise and, at the same time, to carry out their inquiries and present the results in a thesis for their degree.

The matter of stillborn births would be much more effectively investigated were some such plan to be adopted. At any rate, the Bill provides a start because it will enable the Commissioner to make the special appointments of medical practitioners to conduct postmortems and so further the investigation of this subject. I trust that the department will take some notice of the suggestions that have now been made on two successive occasions. I regret that the Bill does not go a little further and enable steps to be taken to provide a sterility clinic. If we desire population in this country, there can be no better population than that derived from parents who have already become Australians or are Australian-born. It is surely better to increase our population by means of our own people than by introducing migrants from abroad.

There are many people in Australia—I would not care to state the number of sterile marriages, but it is quite high—who are without children and the proposed inquiry into stillbirths should throw considerable light on the subject. The number of people who cannot produce a family and are waiting to adopt a child is surprising. They express disappointment at the length of time that must elapse before they can secure one for adoption. There is a big work to be done by the authorities in that direction, and I hope the department will take into consideration the advisability of establishing a sterility clinic.

In the United States of America, where the problem is not one of population but rather one concerning the increased population, much more thought is given to the sterility aspect than is apparent in Australia where population is so urgently needed. Last year, it was my privilege to see in places like Philadelphia and Boston the biological assay departments that have been attached to hospitals there and to note the tremendous progress that has been made. It is practically impossible to carry out the work I refer to without a laboratory of that description. I hope the Bill is to be regarded purely as a step towards a more complete investigation of this subject. I commend the Bill to the House and suggest that, by agreeing to its provisions, we shall confer a benefit upon the Health Department and indirectly upon ourselves.

One feature of the measure that I especially like is that which will give the department control with regard to advertising over the air. Some statements regarding patent medicines that I have listened to fill me with horror. Apparently they are sold on the basis that they are a cure-all for every disease known to mankind. Unsuspecting people are lured into purchasing such lines, whereas the medicines have no real basis of cure at all. If the effect of the Bill will be to enable the department to make those concerned stand up to it and prove their statements, the result will be beneficial to all concerned.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [2.57]: I have no objection to the Bill, but it contains one or two clauses that should receive some consideration. Dealing with the provision concerning the examination of employees in industry, I place a different interpretation upon it than that indicated by Dr. Hislop who suggested it would deal with persons handling foodstuffs. That was a new point of view to me. I would like the Minister to indicate whether that phase is really included. I thought that the prescribed industries would be those where paint, for instance, was handled and that it was from the standpoint of the effect of such work on the health of the employees that they would be subject to periodical examinations. I thought it would apply to industries where there is a lot of dust or fumes, such as in connection with paint or furniture manufacture.

The Chief Secretary: Or baking.

HON. G. FRASER: Yes. I hope the Minister will tell us whether Dr. Hislop's view is correct. At any rate, after the first stage has been dealt with, that of carrying out investigations, careful consideration will have to be given to the positive action to be taken subsequently. Another small point about which I would like some information refers to the reference to toys. I do not know how that provision could be enforced. I do not know to what toys it would apply unless it would be to small ones like those in Easter Eggs, which may contain a little teddy bear, for instance, among the lollies.

The Chief Secretary: Some toys are painted with paint that is deleterious to health.

HON. G. FRASER: I am referring to toys which contain lollies. I did not quite understand what the Minister said, when introducing the Bill, regarding Clause 11. It is proposed to release penicillin from a doctor's order?

The Chief Secretary: Yes, penicillin is now dealt with in the pharmacy Act.

HON. G. FRASER: Previously it was not possible to obtain penicillin without a doctor's order and much hardship resulted in consequence. We do not desire that people should use penicillin indiscriminately and so become inured to the drug, because otherwise, if they become seriously ill, the drug will not be effective. The Bill deals with many matters, most of which are well understood and will, when the measure passes, be for the benefit of the public. I refer particularly to the clause dealing with crockery in eating houses. Some of the crockery supplied in eating houses is disgraceful. If the Bill will have the effect of remedying that position, it will achieve good results. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [3.3]: I support the second reading. Clause 22 seeks to add another section to the principal Act. That section will require any local authority to provide for the immunisation of persons against diphtheria and other diseases, the cost to be met from the annual health rate collected by the local authority. This provision would result in hardship as far as Kalgoorlie is concerned. The health rate there is only 6d. in the £. I should like to have an assurance from the Chief Secretary that, if the Bill passes,

the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council will be allowed to continue its present practice. It obtains the serum from the Health Department and the people may have it injected by their own doctor. This saves the council expense. We know that the provision will entail a certain amount of expense, but we feel we should not be called upon to bear the whole of it.

The provision relating to crockery is pleasing to me. Dr. Hislop dealt with this subject, which to my mind is a serious one. Only a few weeks ago I came across an outstanding example. At this particular place the price of a cup of tea had been raised from 3d. to 5d., and we were served cups without handles, but with big cracks. That was at the refreshment room at Chidlow. I cannot say whether the President was there on that occasion, but other Goldfields members were. I intended to make a complaint to the Railway Department, but the other members advised me against that, and so I let the matter drop. On the return to Kalgoorlie, similar cups were served to us, but on this occasion they had handles.

I am much concerned about this matter. My eldest son, when travelling to the Eastern States during the war, had a cup of tea at Beaumont in South Australia. He contracted a mouth disease and whilst at Finchhaven suffered from it for some 12 months. Cracked and chipped crockery is also used in restaurants on the Goldfields. We instructed our health inspector to inspect these restaurants and, as I was a member of the health committee of the council, I accompanied him. We inspected one or two places, with the result that the inspector took action against the proprietors to force them to renew their crockery. I heard a member objecting to the increase in the price of a cup of tea, but it is better to pay a little extra to get clean crockery and to know that one is not in danger of contracting a disease of the mouth.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [3.9]: I desire to express my appreciation of the valuable contribution made by Dr. Hislop to this debate, and also of the other contributions he has made to similar debates during the session. They are of immense value to members. I support the Bill, but I think we should face up to what is required in connection with restaurants in the

metropolitan area, in country towns and on the Goldfields. Many of these establishments are conducted by aliens. I have no objection to aliens, but must say that their standard of cleanliness is much below ours and that leads to their not observing the regulations.

I know of shops where a piece of white paper, about 5 inches square, is used to wrap up two or three lbs. of dressed fish. This parcel is then again wrapped in newspaper, not from a newspaper office, but discarded newspaper. I protested to one shopkeeper. He looked surprised and said that he had complied with the regulations. I replied, "No, you have not." If one goes into a store run by our own people, say Boans or Foys, it will be observed that they conscientiously obey the health regulations. I think the health authorities should be more alert in insisting upon compliance with the regulations.

The handling of our food could be improved. After listening to Dr. Hislop, I am more than ever convinced that we are well behind the times in this respect. I have noticed the condition of the vans of a firm that deals in foodstuffs and am disgusted at the lack of observance of hygiene. I shall not mention the firm's name, as that would not be fair, but the health inspector knows the firm. The firm is a good one and fair to its employees; it supplies good foodstuffs, but its handling methods are over 40 years behind the times. It should be compelled to deliver its products under hygienic conditions. I do not quite understand the reference that has been made to Clause 9. What is more dangerous? Wallpaper for decorating houses, or ordinary paint that has become old and may get on children's hands?

Hon. L. Craig: Wallpaper contains arsenic to keep out moths.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Government is to be commended for bringing in this Bill. I support the second reading.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [3.13]: Generally speaking, I intend to support the Bill. There are one or two phases on which I should like to express my opinion. On the question of regulating the collection and disposal of pig swill, it appears to me that whilst provision is made for the collection of pig swill, nothing is provided in the Bill

as to how the swill is to be treated. I believe the Department of Agriculture has promulgated regulations prohibiting the feeding of swill to swine unless it has been cooked under not less than 40 lbs. steam pressure. Possibly the point is covered by some other Act or regulation. I hope it is, as I am opposed to the feeding of swill to pigs.

Hon. L. Craig: Even if it is treated?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Yes, because, in my opinion, although the swill fed to pigs might be edible, in many instances it is merely filth. It is wrong to feed an animal on such food if the animal is eventually to be used for human consumption.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That has nothing to do with this Bill. Provision is made elsewhere to cover that point.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I admit that, but I take this opportunity of replying to something suggested by the Honorary Minister. He stated that the Fremantle Council intended to utilise swill for the making of manure.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I do not object to that.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: No, but the Honorary Minister said that in his opinion swill had a greater value as feed for pigs and that its use as manure was wasteful.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I praised the council for what it is doing.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: It may be the opinion of some members, but personally, whether it is wasteful or not, I think the swill could be put to better use in combining it with sewage sludge as an activator for composting municipal garbage. I do not wish to be lured into a debate on composting at this juncture, as members might not appreciate it, but I am disappointed that the Honorary Minister thinks it would be a waste to use swill for the manufacture of manure.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I said I thought better use could be made of it.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The Honorary Minister should be interested in this method of composting municipal garbage.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I am, but what about feeding the pigs when wheat is so dear?

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: There are many things that can be fed to pigs. They are fed on skim milk and apples, in the South-West—

Hon. L. Craig: Apples are not food.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I am disappointed that the Honorary Minister is not a strong supporter of the composting of municipal garbage.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I eulogised the council for what it had done.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The Honorary Minister said he intended to open up light land for agricultural purposes and I would point out that we have gone on for too long taking everything out of the soil and putting nothing back.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The pig swill of Fremantle would not go very far in that direction.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Pig swill with sewerage sludge and municipal garbage would form a compost that would put humus back into the soil and prevent some of the erosion that is occurring. I hope the Honorary Minister will take a keener interest in the composting of garbage in the future than he has in the past. When the Bill is in the Committee stage I will ask the opinion of the Honorary Minister about the provision relating to plunge baths and showers. The Bill does not state definitely whether the householder will be responsible to include a plunge bath as well as a shower recess.

In proposed new Section 318A the question of local authorities providing immunisation against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and so on is dealt with. The local authorities already—particularly in the Fremantle district where I think this was pioneered—are attending to the immunisation of children against such complaints. In Fremantle, where this has been done for about ten years, there is a committee representing five local authorities. When I advocated in this House immunisation against whooping cough, the Chief Secretary, who was then Minister for Health, said whooping cough was not a notifiable disease and therefore could not be brought under control. The local authorities can keep some check on notifiable diseases, but it would be difficult to keep a check on cases of whooping

cough, because in many cases the parents do not even obtain the services of a medical practitioner.

While I have no objection to local health authorities being given power to immunise children against certain complaints, I feel that the more power given to them in this regard, the greater will be the expense involved. Mr. Bennetts mentioned that the health rate at Kalgoorlie was 6d., but the maximum provided by the Act is 9d. If local authorities are saddled with the expense of all these prophylactic measures, the time will come when the maximum rate will have to be increased. The preservation of child life is of national importance and a matter in which the State should actively interest itself, so I do not think the local authorities should have to find all the necessary finance. The taxpayers of the State should be called upon to make a contribution in this regard. I trust that during the parliamentary recess the Minister will give this matter further consideration and that the subsidising of local authorities in this regard will be gone into. I support the second reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [3.23]: I was pleased to hear Dr. Hislop refer to sterility. There is no doubt that sterility is a terrible thing for a young married couple, as the essential enjoyment of life, of course, is to be got only through a home and children. The Government should take this matter in hand providing a clinic, and no doubt consideration will be given to that question. Mr. Davies mentioned the expense of immunisation. I think he will agree that the Fremantle City Council would be able to immunise the children in that area more cheaply than could the Health Department.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I want a subsidy.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member suggested that the taxpayers generally should pay for it, but in that case it would be a matter for the central authority. As it is, the central authority has said that the municipalities can do the work more cheaply and efficiently and that the people who actually enjoy the service in the area concerned should pay for it. Otherwise, the residents of Fremantle might find them-

selves paying for an outbreak of some complaint at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. E. M. Davies: I referred to Fremantle and districts.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The local authority is able to do the work more cheaply and perhaps more thoroughly. Immunisation saves local authorities a considerable sum of money, as they have to pay a proportion of the cost of hospitalisation of those who enter the Infectious Diseases Hospital.

Hon. A. Thomson: You are passing the buck to the local authorities.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: It is not that, but the local authorities are better able to do the work.

Hon. L. A. Logan: And they have always wanted to do it.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I was surprised at Mr. Bennetts saying he would rather put people in hospitals than put someone else in the blue. I think he should have put that someone else in the blue when he found these dreadful cups, which were liable to put other people into hospital, being used. Under the Bill no-one will have to be put in the blue, because I trust that when its provisions come into operation cracked utensils will not be used.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 133:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I would like some information from the Chief Secretary on this clause. I agree that the local authorities should prevent any unregistered person from collecting pig swill. Mr. Davies gave some interesting information about the composting of swill, but there are people who think swill should be turned into a useful pig food, and possibly a poultry food also. There is a serious shortage of bran and pollard at present, which is affecting the poultry growers. I would like the Honorary Minister to give some information as to when something is likely to be done about turning pig swill into a useful product.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I thought I had done that but perhaps Mr. Thomson was not here. Great progress has been made in this State, particularly in Perth, regarding the treatment of pig swill. I have devoted a great deal of time and made investigations as to what is done with pig swill in England and other parts of Australia. I am pleased to say that we lead the way in Australia regarding the treatment of pig swill.

A man at Rivervale has spent £3,000 or £4,000 in the establishment of the most up-to-date treatment works in Australia. Of course, we have treatment works at Midland Junction but it is not desirable to have them near the abattoirs. This man has a piggery of 1,800 pigs attached to his works and he is producing valuable pig feed. He wants to go further than that and today he is in Victoria inquiring into the turning of pig swill into a dry feed so that it can be exported anywhere. I am rather proud to have been associated with the establishment of this place.

Hon. A. Thomson: What is the man's name?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Ferguson. He is a man who is also interested in other things.

Hon. L. Craig: Big business!

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Up to 15 months ago, about the time I took over the Department of Agriculture, the whole of the pig swill from Perth was buried at Floreat Park, which was a wicked waste and I immediately sought to have it put to some use. Today, Mr. Ferguson can treat what previously was wasted and some of the balance is going to small piggeries on the outskirts of Perth. There is no monopoly, but a man with a large plant such as this can deal with the swill more cheaply. He employs 26 men and it is a most interesting place to visit.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Regarding paragraph (47c), I would like some elucidation as to whether this Bill will force upon local authorities the power to compel householders to install a plunge bath as well as a shower bath or whether it is understood to mean a plunge bath with a shower attached. I do not want people to be

forced to install a plunge bath with a shower recess, although that is a modern trend. There are, however, houses that have been built for a number of years that do not lend themselves to these facilities.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This paragraph only provides that they can make reservations as to those things. They will not make regulations to say, "You must have a plunge bath and a shower recess." At present a person is bound to have a wash basin in the house but this is only to provide that if a person has a shower bath there shall be an adequate water supply.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Amendment of Section 314:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I wish to emphasise the need for this sort of thing, to impress upon the Minister that this is only portion of the requirements and to quote a short paragraph regarding the incidence of sterility within Australia. This is an extract from Chapter VIII under the heading of "To what extent is sterility responsible for the declining birth rate?" from a book entitled "Women and Children First" by V. H. Wallace. It reads—

Unfortunately there are many married women who are most anxious to have children, but who cannot succeed in becoming pregnant. Mr. A. E. Mander, who has a flair for analysing official statistics, gives us in his book "Something to Live For," page 101, the following approximation which refer to our Australian population:—

Twenty per cent. of marriages remain childless.

Twenty-two per cent. result in one child.

Twenty-four per cent. result in two children.

Thirty-four per cent. result in three or more (average $4\frac{1}{2}$) children. This means that, of all married couples of this generation, 66 per cent. average only about one child per couple. The remaining 34 per cent. of them average four or more children per couple.

He then adds the words, "What a dangerous state of affairs is revealed by these figures!" I consider the Government would be doing a great service to this State if it called for an inquiry into the methods for the provision of a sterility clinic. I do not mean a clinic to advise on birth control but one which will be set aside for

assisting married couples whose marriage has remained barren.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following words be added:—"but only with the consent of the parents."

My object is that the Commissioner or the doctor cannot take a still-born child for research purposes without the parents' consent. It is not one man that is to be specifically detailed to make these investigations, and for that reason I am opposed to the Commissioner or a doctor taking the body for examination purposes without the consent of the parents.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: This amendment would destroy the whole of the Bill. If we are to make inquiries into still-births then the whole of the population must be prepared to assist. I would go further, I would make it essential to hold a postmortem inquiry into every death.

Hon. A. L. Loton: More money for the doctors.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: In every instance where that is done the official who is appointed is a full-time salaried doctor. We have laboured for a long time in this State because of the viewpoint that the postmortem examination of a person must only be done after obtaining the consent of the relatives. Many times a postmortem that would have been of tremendous benefit to the profession and therefore, directly to the public, has been refused us because we have been unable to obtain the consent of the relative. In Victoria, for example, there is a section in the Anatomy Act which provides that any person dying in a public institution shall be submitted to a postmortem examination unless relatives lodge a complaint; but here we have to actually request for a postmortem.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It seems to me that our medical profession and scientific gentlemen are prepared to take this sort of thing so far that they are imposing on the liberty of the subject to an extraordinary degree. I still think that the parents should be consulted before a body is treated as a guinea pig's, even if a postmortem might be for the good of the race. I cannot understand why we, who have some regard for family life, should adopt such a provision.

Hon. G. FRASER: If a child were three or four years of age and a medical man would not certify the cause of death, a postmortem would be ordered. Yet objection is taken to a postmortem being performed on the body of a still-born child.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Why should not the parents be consulted?

Hon. G. FRASER: I believe that 98 per cent. of the parents would agree.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Then you do not understand human nature.

Hon. G. FRASER: Perhaps I should say that a large percentage would agree. There might be a particular case where a postmortem was especially desired by the department and that might be the case where the parents would refuse.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And the opportunity for research would be lost.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I can conceive of nothing more cruel or horrible than to ask the parents to permit a postmortem on the body of a still-born child. The mother would be distracted and the father little better. To ask those parents in a cold-blooded way for permission to conduct a postmortem would be quite wrong. I suppose not one of a thousand still-born children would be seen by the parents.

Hon. A. L. Loton: But it would still be their child.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The object of the provision is to endeavour to ensure that those parents will not again be faced with a similar disaster. As Mr. Fraser stated, if the child were three or four years old and the doctor would not certify the cause of death, a postmortem would be ordered.

Hon. H. L. Roche: And if he certified the cause of death, there would be no postmortem.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so. If no postmortem were held, the parents might have more still-born children. The amendment would entirely defeat the object of the provision.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—Section 318A added:

Hon. A. THOMSON: I object to the proposed new section, which will involve local authorities in the cost for immunisation services. This treatment will be carried out in the interests of the children and the cost should be borne by the State.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Some adults are affected by diphtheria and whooping cough.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, but mainly children. It is becoming a practice with Governments to pass the buck to local authorities. I move an amendment—

That all the words after "tetanus" in line 4 of the proposed new section be struck out.

The Chief Secretary: What will be the effect if the words are struck out?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Who is going to pay for this treatment?

The Chief Secretary: If the words are struck out, the local authorities will still pay.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I think the amendment will have the effect of throwing the financial responsibility on the Government. Why should this responsibility be placed on the local authorities?

The Chief Secretary: If not, why have local authorities?

Hon. A. THOMSON: If the Minister thinks I am asking too much in suggesting that the Government should bear the expense, let him make a suggestion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The striking out of the words will not make the slightest difference as to payment by the local authority. The only effect of the words is to authorise the local authority to make the cost of this treatment a charge against the health rate. If the local authorities do not desire that authority, it makes no difference.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The new section should be retained. The idea behind all this is to rear healthy children, and their future welfare depends to a large extent upon the successful administration of the local health authority. The better that administration, the more money will be available for this kind of work. Immunisation is a great thing for youngsters. What does it matter who pays? The Chief Secretary's argument, is that the local authority can do it much

cheaper than can a central authority. Everybody in this Chamber argues that way every day.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Why not let things go on as at present?

The Chief Secretary: That is what this Bill is for.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We are proud that we started this immunisation scheme in the Fremantle district.

Sitting suspended from 4.3 to 4.20 p.m.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The immunisation committee was first started by a combined committee of the local authorities in the Fremantle district. It has proved very successful and has materially reduced the fees charged to local authorities with respect to the Infectious Diseases Hospital. The Government provides a free nursing health service, and it supplies tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough serums free to the local authorities and the local authorities pay the other costs. This has been going on for eleven years. The clause will make legal the practice that has existed for that period. It would be a pity to interfere with the clause. I hope that Mr. Thomson will withdraw his amendment.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The State is anxious that the health of the people shall be preserved. We have a free x-ray clinic and a free dental service. In addition, free immunisation is provided for the complaints mentioned here. I do not know why the local authorities should have to bear the whole cost. If they contributed on a 50-50 basis with the Government, I would say the State would be getting off very lightly. Mr. Thomson's contentions should be given serious consideration.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I hope the amendment will be withdrawn. It is not mandatory on any local authority to provide immunisation. The clause simply authorises a local authority to pay from its health rate the necessary costs incurred in respect to immunisation. The amendment will have no point because local authorities that have introduced immunisation schemes have used money from the health rate without authority. The Bill merely gives them the right to take that money from the health rate.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The amendment is most worthy because it will remove the financial burden from the local health rate.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: A compromise should be effected here. The word "may" would be much better than the word "shall."

The Chief Secretary: The word "may" is what is used in the first line of the proposed new section.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Lower down, the word "shall" appears. In some districts children have to be transported considerable distances to the doctor. In such circumstances a fair amount of cost attaches to the work. Under the amendment the local authority could appeal to the Health Department for some assistance, and that is quite justifiable. This is not very important in the smaller districts.

Hon. L. CRAIG: All the clause provides is that a local authority may protect the children in its area by immunisation, and if it does so it shall bear the cost.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Is that not the position today.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes. Local authorities do not have to take these precautions.

Hon. H. Tuckey: It is bad for the State if they do not.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes. Immunisation against certain diseases may be desirable in some areas and not others.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is wise everywhere.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is probably not necessary, in the northern parts of the State, to immunise against diphtheria, but it is in the damper areas.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I would like to hear from the Chief Secretary as to whether the Government would take into consideration the suggestion made by Mr. Davies that the Government should pay a subsidy towards this work.

The Chief Secretary: The Government pays a subsidy to local authorities now.

Hon. A. THOMSON: What for?

The Chief Secretary: Traffic fees and so on.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Members will have an opportunity of addressing the Committee later.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have been connected with local authorities for a number of years and I have not yet been able to find out what subsidy is given to them for health work. Mr. Davies told us that in Fremantle four or five local authorities had combined to carry out this work and thus reduce the cost, but local authorities in country districts cannot do that unless they could be combined in the same way as they are for infant health work. I did not think I would get any support for my amendment, but the object in moving it was that I want the Government to realise that this is part of its responsibilities and that it should not pass the buck to the local authorities. I would like the Chief Secretary to say that he is prepared to suggest to the Government, in the interests of the health of the children, that the State should give some financial assistance. The Government accepts half the financial cost when patients go into infectious disease wards and they should do the same thing here. Having accomplished my purpose, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: In Kalgoorlie we advertise in the paper that any people requiring immunisation can fill in forms at the municipal council office, take them to the laboratory and obtain the serum required. The people then go to the doctor and he carries out the work. Instead of the burden being placed upon local authorities, the Government should subsidise them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is all very well for Mr. Thomson to make all sorts of assertions and allegations and then ask leave to withdraw them. He says that the Government is passing the buck. I do not know what he means.

Hon. A. Thomson: You have a shrewd idea.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Does Mr. Thomson desire that the Government should take away from districts that he represents all their control over health and make them sanitary supervisors only?

Hon. A. Thomson: That is absurd.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Mann says that he would like the Government to pay fifty-fifty. If that was so, local authori-

ties might find themselves paying more than they do now.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**BILL—PARLIAMENTARY
SUPERANNUATION.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

**BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT
AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council subject to further amendments.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Council's Amendment. Clause 8—New Section 12A: In line 5 of proposed New Section 12A the word "May" be struck out and the word "April" inserted in lieu.

The CHAIRMAN: The Legislative Assembly requests the concurrence of the Council in further amendments to the Council's amendment is as follows:—

That the amendment be amended by inserting before the word "May" the words "the thirty-first day of" and before the word "April" the words "the thirtieth day of."

This really corrects an error in the amendment because there are only 30 days in April.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the Assembly's further amendments be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's further amendments agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

**BILL—MARKETING OF APPLES
AND PEARS.**

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council, and had amended Clause 4, in which further amendment the concurrence of the Council was desired.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly has further amended Clause 4 by striking out the words "and of the proclamation under and in accordance with Section 1 of this Act," which is consequential upon an amendment previously made by the Council.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I consulted the Minister for Housing in another place who dealt with the Bill there, and he informed me that the further amendment was quite in order. It is really consequential upon an amendment previously made in this House in order to make sure that this applied to the 1949 crop. I move—

That the Assembly's further amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's further amendment agreed to.

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

**BILL—PARLIAMENTARY
SUPERANNUATION.**

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.52] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is based on the recommendations of a committee of representatives of both Houses of Parliament, which has submitted to the Government a scheme to provide superannuation benefits for members of Parliament and their dependants. Under this measure it is proposed to supersede the existing legislation whereby members receive a lump sum payment from the Members of Parliament Fund by way of compensation for loss of membership, and to establish in lieu

a system of pension benefits. Any rights which have accrued to members as contributors under the Members of Parliament Fund Act will not be disturbed, however, by the proposals now before the House.

The Bill provides that all members will be required to contribute at the rate of £48 a year to a fund to be known as the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund, which will be administered by five trustees comprising the Treasurer (or his deputy) as chairman and two members from each House. From the fund, payments will be made to ex-members or their dependants, who have qualified for pension benefits. To unqualified ex-members or their dependants, will be refunded the amount of their contributions with interest as determined by the trustees.

Before any member may qualify for a pension upon retirement, he must serve for at least seven years in the Parliament of this State. Moreover, having ceased to be a member, he will not be entitled to a pension unless he stands for re-election and is defeated, or satisfies the trustees that there are good and sufficient reasons why he should not seek re-election. The rate of pension is to be governed partly by length of parliamentary service and partly by the period of the member's contributions under the Members of Parliament Fund Act and under the proposed legislation:—

(a) Where the person has served as a member for not less than 14 years and the aggregate period of contribution is also not less than 14 years, a pension will be payable at the rate of £6 per week for 10 years and £3 per week for a period of 10 years thereafter.

(b) Where the period of service is not less than seven years, but less than 14 years and the member's contributions have covered a period of not less than seven years, a pension will be payable to the ex-member at the rate of £3 per week for 10 years.

Concessions are provided, however, in the case of persons who are members of Parliament at the commencement of the proposed legislation. Any such member who has served the requisite qualifying period, but whose period of contribution may ultimately prove to be less than 14 years or seven years, as the case may be, will be entitled to a pension at five-sixths the relevant normal rate. In this connection, I would mention that it is a fairly general practice to provide concessional benefits to veteran joiners at the commencement of a new superannuation scheme.

As regards pensioners who have accrued rights under the Members of Parliament Fund Act, the Bill provides that they shall receive their lump sum payment in due course. It also provides, however, that the lump sum shall be regarded as in lieu of the pension until such time as it would be exhausted at the relevant pension rate. At the expiration of that time, the pension will commence, but will be payable during the balance of the pension period only. No person will be able to transfer his pension benefits.

The Bill provides, however, that the widow or widower of an ex-member, who was married to the deceased before his loss of membership, shall be entitled to a proportion of accrued pension benefit. Any dependant child or children under 16 years of age, who are the issue of such a marriage, shall be entitled to the benefits if there is no widow or widower. It is proposed to pay to these classes of beneficiaries a pension at half the rate for which the contributor had qualified, subject to the provision that, where a contributor dies while still a member, the pension to the dependant for the first five years shall be two-thirds of the relevant ex-member rate.

There will inevitably be cases where a member re-enters Parliament after receiving a pension or a refund of contributions with interest. Provision is made in the Bill to ensure that in such cases contributions and benefits or refunds will ultimately be the same as if the period of the member's service had been continuous. The Bill does not contemplate the payment of a pension to any ex-member who receives any payment from the Crown, whether in right of a State or the Commonwealth, at a rate in excess of £312 per annum.

In a small scheme of this character, it is impossible to make a satisfactory estimate of future commitments, which are likely to show substantial variations from time to time. In view of this, it has been considered expedient to provide for an actuarial investigation of the fund every five years. If the actuary reports that the benefits or the contributions should be varied, the decision as to the action to be taken shall be made by Parliament. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [5.1]: I am indeed surprised that apparently the second reading of this Bill was to be passed without members having been given any information about it.

The Chief Secretary: I gave the House full information.

HON. L. CRAIG: I object to the introduction of a Bill of this character when, in an hour or two, the session will be ending.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: We shall be here more than an hour or two.

HON. L. CRAIG: The Bill is complicated and requires study. If carried, there will be deducted from members' salaries a further contribution of £24 per annum, whether members like it or not. Some members may not feel disposed to permit of this further deduction from their salary. It might be a serious amount for them. It will not be deductible for income tax purposes, but will be taken from the balance of a member's income remaining after he has paid his income tax. A member may be allowed a rebate, provided his total contributions to funds of this kind and to insurance do not exceed £100 per annum.

HON. W. J. MANN: It will not worry them.

HON. L. CRAIG: I point out that members advanced in years know that, on retirement, they will receive £600 by virtue of a contract entered into by them in connection with the existing fund. This Bill interferes seriously with that contract.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT: Not at all.

HON. L. CRAIG: It does.

The Chief Secretary: Not one fraction.

HON. L. CRAIG: I admit that a member might draw out the whole £600, but if he does he loses the right to this further pension for a number of years. They probably would never receive the pension, because they would have reached an age at which they could reasonably expect to pass on. Members are losing rights and paying an extra £24 a year, with no right to a further pension. The fund may not work. We are asked to pass a Bill which will commit a future Government to make unknown contributions to another fund.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN: This Bill does not commit anybody.

HON. L. CRAIG: The Bill states how much shall be payable to members.

The Chief Secretary: By members.

HON. L. CRAIG: By members and to members. Members know that unless the Government makes contributions at some future date, the fund will be unable to stand up to the obligations set out in the Bill.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN: That is not admitted.

HON. L. CRAIG: We need not argue on that point. The Bill permits of payments by the trustees of the fund.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN: The Bill does not say that.

HON. L. CRAIG: I have had much to do with superannuation funds during the past year or two. A much greater contribution is demanded for benefits under those schemes. Those benefits are greater than the benefits set out in this Bill. This scheme will cost the Government thousands of pounds. We have no right to proceed with the Bill without letting the public—and members—know what the effect of the measure will be. What right has anyone to deduct a further £24 from my salary?

HON. R. J. BOYLEN: You might be an exception.

HON. L. CRAIG: That is not the point. Members should not be forced to enter this scheme.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: If they did not, it would break down.

HON. L. CRAIG: Why should a member, who is in another scheme and satisfied with it, be compelled to pay into this scheme, especially if he is old in years? I might be quite satisfied with the old scheme. A member might not be able to afford to contribute this extra £24 a year. The principle of the Bill is wrong.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: We have seven hours in which to discuss it.

Several members interjected.

HON. L. CRAIG: Members say we shall be here all night. Yet the Government brings in a Bill of this importance, which will be discussed by the public.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM: The public is not affected by it.

HON. L. CRAIG: The hon. member knows the public is.

HON. E. H. GRAY: No.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is a subterfuge.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I say the public is not affected by it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If the hon. member could assure me that the Government would not have to contribute to this scheme, I would sit down without saying another word.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest the hon. member be permitted to continue his speech.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Another provision in the Bill about which nothing has been said is that ex-civil servants who become members of Parliament will not benefit from this fund, although they will be forced to contribute to it. Regular soldiers who receive a pension of £312, and who become members of Parliament, could not receive any benefit from the fund. Are we to allow that to go by without discussion? Is it not true?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Only while they are drawing the pension outside.

Hon. L. CRAIG: There are retired Servicemen from India and retired Army men from the Australian Forces who may stand for Parliament, and I point out that some officers retire from the Army at the age of 45 years. These men would be compelled to contribute this £24 per annum, as well as the £24 to the existing scheme, making £48 a year in all, but they will not get any benefit from their contributions. Has consideration been given to that aspect? It is important.

The Chief Secretary: That is not what the Bill says.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I think it is.

The Chief Secretary: Read the Bill.

Hon. L. CRAIG: This measure should be postponed to next session.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Why?

Hon. L. CRAIG: So that we may have time to examine it thoroughly. I am not willing to hand over another £24 of my salary without having something to say about it, merely because somebody says it might be all right. The whole scheme should be examined by a chartered actuary. Evidence should be obtained as to the average length of life of a member of Parliament, and the average length of his service in Parliament from, say, 1900. Here, again, there is a difficulty, because the average

length of life has changed completely in the last 20 years. Members may be surprised to learn that a man who is 65 years old and still working, may expect to attain the age of 78.

The Chief Secretary: That gives me a chance!

Hon. E. H. Gray: And me!

Hon. L. CRAIG: Members are treating the matter lightly. We should not be asked to deal with this measure today, notwithstanding that we expect to be in session during the night or until the early hours of the morning. Why was not the measure brought in earlier in the session so as to give members and the public an opportunity of thoroughly examining it? I oppose the second reading, not because I am opposed to the scheme but because I object to the way in which this measure has been brought in.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [5.12]: I congratulate Mr. Craig on his wonderful speech. It is one of the best speeches I have heard him make in this House.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: He said that of you yesterday.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know. This is a quid pro quo. I think Mr. Craig is misleading himself; he knew before this meeting of the House what the conditions of the pension scheme were.

Hon. L. Craig: It was only decided two or three days ago, as you know.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The terms were decided upon a long time ago, but some details had to be worked out.

Hon. L. Craig: The Government was intending to make contributions.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know it was anticipated that the Government would be asked to make contributions, but this Bill does not provide for any contributions to be made by the Government.

Hon. L. Craig: We did not know that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not want the public to be led to believe that the Government will contribute to the scheme. Members of Parliament themselves have to accept full responsibility; they have no power whatever to compel the Treasurer to make any contribution to the fund. If

the scheme fails, and the Treasurer is approached but declines to assist, members of Parliament must accept the financial responsibility themselves.

Hon. L. Craig: Yet you want to pass a Bill like this!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I tell the hon. member this, because I think the public might get a wrong impression of the scheme. I hope the Press will be generous enough to publish what I say. A scheme was introduced before I left another place, but it did not come into operation until 1944. It started without any funds at all. True, considerable contributions were made by some members who anticipated retiring from politics, but we have met all commitments under that fund to date and still have close on £4,000 in the pool. That statement is true. Not one penny has been contributed to the fund, except by members of Parliament.

There seems to be a general tendency in these days to belittle members of Parliament and Parliament itself, with the result that little respect is shown for our parliamentary institution. I wish to make it perfectly clear that we are not helping ourselves to the people's funds. I am not going to say whether or not the scheme is sound. There may be justifiable differences of opinion on that point; but, in comparison with other pension schemes, this is sounder than most of them. Members of this House, who face an election only once in six years, and who generally retire at a fairly ripe age, will make contributions considerably in excess of the benefits they will get from the scheme. The younger members are the only ones who are likely to get any real benefit from the proposal, but I do not begrudge it to them. If any real benefit is to be reaped, it will probably go to members of another place, which seems to attract younger men.

I have worked this scheme out, with other members, taking into account the history of members here since the beginning of responsible government, and I believe the scheme will not necessitate—at all events for a considerable time—any contribution by the Treasury, although, to make it sure, some such contribution would be advisable. So far, that is not provided in the Bill, which does not commit the Government at all. Only Ministers of the Crown can commit the Government in that regard. Private mem-

bers cannot do so by introducing legislation providing for contributions by the Treasury. Had such a scheme been introduced at the beginning of responsible government in this State, there would now have been standing to the credit of the fund the sum of £50,000, after paying pensions to those who had retired.

It is worthy of remark that few members who have retired from this House have lived more, on the average, than eight years after their retirement. One member, who subsequently resided in London, would have received considerable benefit from such a scheme. He retired from politics 32 years ago and died in London recently at the age of 94. Generally speaking, the scheme will be of material help to retiring members. I would point out that one ex-member of Parliament died in the Old Men's Home and other members made contributions to ensure that he was not given a pauper's funeral. I did not know that man, but I have no doubt that older members will recall that incident. We do not want such a thing to happen again. Of course, members' allowances have been increased since those days, but we have all seen men go out of public life in this State practically penniless.

Some, even ex-Ministers of the Crown, have had to work on the roads in their old age to obtain a living until they were eligible for the old age pension. Not long ago a man who had held ministerial rank passed away in the meagre shanty where he lived at Bayswater. It is only fair that men who have given years of their lives in the service of the public should be provided for, in spite of what some of our critics, who try to prejudice the public against parliamentary institutions, may say. They will probably remark, "This is another help-yourself-to-the-Treasury scheme," but it is not. Every member entitled to the £600 under the existing scheme has been paid on retiring from Parliament, and the others were paid whatever they were entitled to, but the fund is still £4,000 in credit.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Was not that scheme good enough?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Under this measure, we are to extend the benefits. The value of money is depreciating rapidly and, though many of us will not require assistance and may never receive it, at all

events we will be providing that the widows of members shall receive some compensation for the inconvenience they have suffered through their husbands being away from home so often in the service of the public. Mr. Craig is entitled to conserve his £24 if he can, but this scheme must fail unless all members contribute. I would ask the hon. member to recall that the £24 may not mean a great deal to him, but might mean a great deal to some friend of his whom he would willingly help and who today is in public life.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [5.24]: I do not intend to reply at length, as I think information required by members can better be supplied when the measure is dealt with in Committee. Clause 14 provides who shall receive pensions. The gentlemen referred to by Mr. Craig would be entitled to pensions, if they were ordinary individuals, under the terms of this measure—

Hon. L. Craig: I do not agree.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: If the hon. member raises the question when we are dealing with that provision in Committee, we may be able to settle the dispute then.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Income of fund not subject to tax:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Although we can exempt income from this fund from State taxation, we have no control over Commonwealth taxation.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Contributions:

Hon. A. THOMSON: Could the Chief Secretary give some explanation of this clause?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: If the hon. member looks up the Parliamentary Allowances Act, he will see that no deductions can be made.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Does that mean that the deductions are to be made, in spite of what the present law says?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: It is to defeat the Truck Act. Members will be credited with the £48 in the fund, instead of having it paid to them.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11 and 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Member being re-elected after ceasing to be a member:

Hon. A. THOMSON: What is the position of a member who has contributed to the fund and will not be re-elected in 1950, for instance? Will he be entitled to draw the £600 that he has contributed, or will he have to take it by way of pension?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Under the present scheme, if he has served seven years he will be entitled to £600. If he has served less than that, he will be entitled to £5 per week instead of £6 per week, and I therefore assume that, as a lump sum, he will be entitled to £500 instead of £600. He must have paid in enough to have made his contribution for the seven-year period. Some members paid in £160 and at the end of three years had made sufficient contribution to enable them to draw £600.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The amount was £168.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes. Some of them started off de novo and paid £24 a year. They will have their money returned to them plus an amount equal to the contributions made. Under the individual scheme, if they retire at the next election and have not paid, they will get five-sixths of the amount that they would be entitled to if they had completed the six years.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: If this Bill had never been introduced and a member was entitled to £600, he would still be entitled to it and he may take it in a lump sum. If he does so it will be paid at the rate of £5 per week over a period of a little more than two years. Then he goes on to the pension of £5 a week.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Members such as myself who have paid £168 and who are up in years are entitled to £600, but the payments into the fund now are double. What

was the proposition under the old scheme is not the one today.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—Person in receipt of pension receiving other remuneration from the Crown:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The purpose of this clause is that supposing a member of Parliament from another State or from the Commonwealth Parliament lost his seat and was in receipt of a pension, and got into Parliament here and lost his seat, he would not get the two pensions.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Chief Secretary has not told the whole story. If a member of Parliament holds any office under the Crown in Western Australia or elsewhere he also loses his pension. If he receives a pension as a result of being a member of Parliament elsewhere and becomes a member of Parliament here and then loses his seat, he does not get his pension under this Bill.

The Chief Secretary: The words "holds any office under the Crown" only refer to (c). They do not apply to paragraph (b).

Hon. L. CRAIG: It includes people who have held offices under the Crown and if they are in receipt of a pension in excess of £312. If we pass this clause as it stands, we will exclude a great number of suitable men from becoming members of Parliament.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not agree. We are being perfectly honest to the people who become members of Parliament here. We will tell them that they must make contributions to the pensions scheme. Those people will then have an opportunity to come in under those conditions. I am not sure that they will get a refund of the amount they paid in plus interest.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There is nothing in the Bill to say that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know whether there is or not, but it was discussed.

Hon. H. HEARN: Will they be acquainted with the position when they are standing as candidates? Mr. Watson will bear me out that the first we knew of the pensions scheme was when our contributions were deducted from our salaries.

The Chief Secretary: I am surprised to hear that any gentleman who stands for Parliament does not know the laws of the State.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I move an amendment—
That in line 3 of paragraph (c) the words "or having held such office" be struck out.

The amendment will allow people who have retired from the Civil Service or from the Armed Services to become members of Parliament if they so desire. This does preclude members who are receiving a parliamentary pension, but I am not objecting to that.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	16
Majority against	8

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. C. H. Simpson	Hon. L. Craig

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. H. A. C. Duffen	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. F. R. Walsh
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. Sir C. G. Latham	Hon. G. Bennetts

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Actuarial investigation and report:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The proviso reads—

Provided that if the Government Actuary reports that the rates of contributions or the rates of benefits payable under this Act may or should be varied, the decision as to what action shall be taken shall be made by a majority of both Houses of Parliament sitting together.

I move an amendment—

That the words "both Houses of Parliament sitting together" be struck out, and the words "the subscribers to the fund and a meeting for that purpose shall be convened by the trustees" inserted in lieu.

What is wanted is a meeting of the contributors to the fund sitting together, and provision for calling a meeting.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Will "subscribers" mean those contributing and not receiving any benefit at the time, or recipients past or present?

The Chief Secretary: The contributors to the fund.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.49]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [5.50]: I missed the opportunity to speak on the second reading and I believe the same applies to Mr. Gray and other members. I had hoped to hear Mr. Gray's utterances on the Bill. I agree with the views expressed by Mr. Craig. I feel that we have hardly given adequate consideration to the scheme, and that some of the provisions will result in running the pension scheme on the cheap, not at the expense of the Government but at the expense of participants or prospective participants who may have pensions of their own.

The Chief Secretary: They will not be affected.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—LAND SALES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to the amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 3: Insert after the word "amended" in line 12, the letter and brackets "(a)."

No. 2—Clause 3: Add a paragraph after the word "ten" in line 14, as follows:—

(b) By adding a subsection after subsection (2), as follows:—

(3) Any order made under this section shall cease to have effect at the expiration of three months from the date of the gazettal thereof, and no order shall be made in respect of land which has already been the subject of an order.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The Assembly's reasons for disagreeing are—

The objections to the amendments are two-fold:—

(a) The amendment is completely outside the scope of the Bill as introduced and read a second time and as such is not in order. The Bill is only to correct an error.

(b) The amendment, if accepted, will strike a severe blow against ex-services settlement and will almost certainly result in loss of desirable properties.

I suggest that amendment No. 2 be dealt with first.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: I should like to link the two amendments. It seems extraordinary that, when an amending Bill is introduced to correct an error by inserting "ten" instead of "three," an amendment can be made that has absolutely nothing to do with the matter.

Hon. L. Craig: We have had that before.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: Yes, but this is a very bad instance. The object of the Bill was to correct a printer's error.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It was our error.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: It is of no use confining the period to three months because land settlement is wrapped up with Commonwealth transactions and sometimes the Commonwealth authorities take three months to make up their mind.

Hon. L. Craig: Well, hurry them up.

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: No-one could hurry them.

Hon. L. Craig: What about the rights of the owner?

The **HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: Three months would not be sufficient time to put these sales through.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What would be adequate time?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Probably there should be some limit, but three months is insufficient. I move—

That the amendments be not insisted on.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The amendment should be insisted on as it is both reasonable and necessary. The Bill proposes to permit the land control officer to interfere unduly with private sales of farming properties. This is beyond the ordinary acquisition stage of the scheme. The Bill is aimed at transactions of a purely private nature. John Smith may be selling a farm to Jack Brown. Jack pays £30 valuation fee and decides to buy. The price is satisfactory to the vendor and the purchaser and in the ordinary course of events they transmit the contract of sale to the land control officer for approval. In the past that officer would have approved of the contract if the price was satisfactory, but now he is given the right to say that the land might be handy for the Commonwealth land settlement scheme. He does not know whether it will be wanted or not, but he can put a stop order against the sale.

The Bill allows that and permits the officer to upset the contract of sale arranged between the vendor and the purchaser. The Bill also provides that once the stop order has been put on, it may be kept there indefinitely. In the meantime the person who had a buyer for his land loses him and the prospective purchaser has been put to unnecessary expense. Altogether it is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs; particularly as, after the delay, the authorities may decide, as they frequently have done, not to buy the property at all. If the Under Treasurer is to be given this power, the time should be limited to three months.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Members may recall that the original legislation introduced early in the session was a stampede measure. I consider that if members had had more time to consider the Bill, it would never have gone through in its original form. Now when a member makes an amendment to limit the period in which the controller of land sales shall make a decision, objections are taken. If the controller cannot make

up his mind in three months whether the property is wanted or not, I fail to see why an individual should be prevented from effecting a private sale. I do not see why it should be necessary to give one man the power to say that somebody cannot sell or lease his property.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It has been said this measure was a stampede measure when originally introduced. I would point out that the Chamber could have debated the Bill all night and the next day and the day after. I certainly asked members to carry it as quickly as possible, but ample time was given for its consideration. It is a wonder the opportunity has not been taken to introduce a few more amendments through this amending Bill! It is rather rough that when a Bill is introduced to correct an error, the opportunity should be taken to submit fresh amendments. I do not say that it should not be done, but I am sorry that advantage has been taken of the measure in that way.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister should not discuss that matter.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The people who are to administer the Act are rather concerned about the period of three months.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The period of three months is far too short. Commonwealth approval of a sale has to be obtained. On the other hand, I do not like properties being held up for as long as they are. I am sorry the Minister complained about amendments being made.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already told the Minister that we are not discussing the admissibility of amendments, but whether or not we shall insist on this amendment.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I think that even six months would be too short a period, but I hope the time will be extended to at least six months.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: If Mr. Baxter felt that the period should be six months, the proper time for him to have raised that point was when the Bill was in Committee.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I was not in the Chamber.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	12
	—
Majority against ..	2
	—

AYE.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. Sir C. G. Latham
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. E. H. Gray
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. C. H. Simpson
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; the Council's amendments insisted on.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT. AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendment.

Returned from the Assembly with an amendment.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 4, line 14 of the Bill—After the word "the" strike out all words down to and including the word "its" in line 17, and substitute the following words—

"Conjoint operation of the provisions of the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act of 1948 of the Parliament of the Commonwealth and those of the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, 1948, of the State or those of any Act or Acts amending those provisions or passed in their".

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This amendment ties up the Bill which mentioned only the Commonwealth stabilisation Act. It is a matter of legal opinion as to whether it is necessary. It has been drafted by Mr. D'Arcy the Parliamentary Draftsman. I move—

That the Assembly's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's amendment agreed to.

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

BILL—LOAN, £2,315,000.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st December.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [7.36]: I am pleased to see that the sum of £400,000 is to be made available for the railways. I would like the House to give an expression of opinion in respect to supporting the views I have already outlined in connection with the State Electricity Commission. When the State Electricity Bill was before us it was anticipated that only Collie and other rural areas would come within the jurisdiction of the Commission; it was not thought that the Commission would take over the Perth City Council's undertakings. In effect, we have handed over to the State Electricity Commission the control of the whole of Western Australia as far as electricity is concerned.

I therefore hope that the House will indicate to the Government our desire that country consumers shall be placed on an equal footing with those in the metropolitan area. I do not say that in any spirit of antagonism against the people who reside within the city limits. I have been in Parliament since 1914, and from that time forward, and even prior to it, every Government that has been in power has declared itself to be in favour of decentralisation. One of the greatest problems we are facing in this State, and in Australia as a whole, is that the metropolitan area is increasing by leaps and bounds while, unfortunately, the population of the country districts is declining.

It is absolutely hopeless under present conditions to expect to be able to establish industries in the country unless we have an equalisation scheme or a flat rate. I referred to this matter earlier. The point is this, that if we had a flat rate we would put the country districts on an equal footing in respect of power, and also water supplies. I congratulate the Government on its action in taking over control of the Perth City Council's undertakings. I also wish to express my appreciation to the City

Council for the friendly spirit in which it carried out the negotiations. I am sure it has lost nothing as a result.

The Electricity Commission will now be able to do that for which it was brought into being. I would like members to agree to my proposal by indicating to the Government that this House, at least, is in favour of providing a flat rate so that we can put into effect a plank which is in every Government's platform, namely, decentralisation. We must congratulate the Commonwealth Government on its endeavour to spread the factories all over the country districts of New South Wales and Victoria instead of concentrating them in the cities.

I also wish to express my pleasure at the action of the Government in providing £20,000 for the Albany harbour works. I have been a consistent advocate of the improvement of that harbour to make it capable of handling outward and inward cargoes. It is really the regional harbour for the lower Great Southern. The Government has taken a forward step in approving a scheme which will mean the development of that port. Some preparatory work has to be done, namely, the filling in of a certain area, so as to enable a decent start to be made. I hope members will not think I am drawing comparisons.

A sum of £350,000 is being made available for sewerage and water supply purposes. That is rendered necessary because of the thousands of houses now being built. I am hoping that with the raising of the Wellington Dam, the scheme for the conveying of water to the Great Southern district will soon be put into effect. I understand that pipes are the main trouble just now but it is hoped that the difficulty will be overcome in the near future. I am hopeful that the charcoal iron industry will prove all that its sponsors expected of it. I note that a sum of £225,000 is to be made available for that work this year.

For pine planting, purchase of land and forest regeneration a sum of £50,000 is set aside. Some time ago a proposal was put forward concerning a large area of sand hills which is well sheltered from the sea and the prevailing gales. At present it is looked upon as practically useless but I am hopeful that portion of the sum I have men-

tioned will be expended upon this area. I had the pleasure of meeting Lord Robinson on his short visit to this State and he made a most interesting speech and stressed the importance of tree planting. I feel that the sooner we can, in this State, inaugurate a vigorous tree planting scheme, the better it will be for future generations. We must be thankful for the forest policy which was inaugurated by Mr. R. T. Robinson when he was Minister for Forests. Through that policy we will have a permanent asset in our forest areas.

Never before in the history of Western Australia, or in the history of the world, has timber been cut out so quickly as it is today in response to the needs of the people for homes. In view of this it seems to me that the sum of money provided for forest regeneration is a very wise provision. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and would like to congratulate the Government on its broadminded policy and its desire to look after country interests. I also notice in the Schedule a sum of £50,000 which is to be used for the purchase of land for industrial purposes. If portion of that £50,000 were provided to assist the Electricity Commission to provide a flat rate for electricity in the country areas, it would mean we would get a considerable quantity of land for about a quarter the price that we now pay for it in the more congested areas.

HON. H. A. C. DAFFEN (Central [7.50]: Upon looking at the schedule, I think the Government is to be congratulated on its programme of works set out for the coming year. I intended to speak on one or two matters. The first concerned water supplies for country towns, but this matter was covered fully in my address-in-reply speech and now that Mr. Thomson has spoken on it at some length, I will satisfy myself with endorsing his remarks.

One matter which is most conspicuous by its absence is expenditure on hospitals. Unfortunately it looks as if there is to be no provision for the long-promised regional hospital at Geraldton and that is a matter for regret. The schedule covers a sum of £2,315,000 and it is most disappointing that the structure at Geraldton has not received an allocation from that amount. However, I have pleasure in supporting the

second reading of the Bill, and trust the Government will find a way to remedy this serious omission.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [7.51]: I would like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to give consideration to the purchase of land in the Esperance district for pine planting. During a recent trip in company with the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, it was found that on certain properties pines could be grown very well, and the Honorary Minister was most impressed with what he saw in the district. It is an ideal area for pine planting and some consideration should be given to that aspect. I have the same opinion as Mr. Thomson on the question of electricity.

I believe in decentralisation and if we had flat rates for electricity and water in the outback areas it would ensure country towns remaining in existence and preventing the population from drifting to the metropolis. This area is becoming overcrowded, and as soon as that happens it becomes unhealthy. It is better to have a population scattered throughout the State instead of being altogether in one small portion. Like Mr. Daffen, I am most disappointed that no allowance has been made for hospitals. A week or so ago I spoke about the position and stressed the shortage of nurses and hospitals throughout the State. In view of that, I thought we might have seen a considerable sum of money for hospitals set out in the schedule. I support the Bill, but feel that it is necessary to make my feelings known to the Government on these matters.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [7.53]: In the first place I would like to refer briefly to the remarks of Mr. Thomson concerning electricity supplies and the possibility of a flat rate. I think all of us are seized with the importance of securing for Western Australia the lowest possible rate for electrical power. In that lies the future progress of our secondary industries. Never before in the history of the State has there been so urgent a need to consider the question of decentralisation as there is now. We must not forget the history of the last war and the possibility of any future trouble.

The Electricity Commission will ultimately take control of the whole of the

electricity supply of the State and if it is not possible to institute a flat rate, then consideration should be given to power supplies for country towns, even if it does mean assistance being granted by metropolitan consumers. However, we must bear in mind that the majority of the huge manufacturing concerns are situated in or around the metropolitan area and the cost of electricity is vital to them. I am sure that the Electricity Commission will give serious consideration to the point raised by Mr. Thomson because it is necessary, if Western Australia is to develop as we would wish, for us to attract industries not only in the metropolitan area, but also throughout the length and breadth of the State.

Western Australia has been most fortunate over the years because of the far-sighted people who originated our forestry policy and the administration that has taken place since the Act was brought into being. We have a wonderful asset in our hardwoods, but we must realise that the bulk of our timber supplies belong to that hardwood category. On occasions when I have visited the Eastern States, I have been most impressed with the pines that are grown in South Australia and just what those pines meant to that State during the war years. Their experience should be an inspiration to Western Australians in our attitude towards planting other varieties of trees as well as the hardwood species. In South Australia, 75 per cent. of the domestic consumption of plywood is made from their own pines that were planted many years ago.

I would inform the House, too, that even with our limited resources a pine plywood has been made from our locally-grown pines, but we have only a fraction of what is necessary. In the duty we owe to posterity we should see that every avenue of securing money and labour for this purpose is investigated and pursued. With the world shortage of timber and the fact that we have two types of beautiful hardwoods, we should see that the immense acreage of forest land which we have at our disposal is not decreased in any way. As well as that, we should do something to increase the varieties of timber for future generations. I congratulate the Government on being alive to the possibilities of the situation and trust that as the years go on, instead of seeing a sum of £50,000 on the schedule, we

will be able to see £250,000 devoted to this all-important work. I support the second reading.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [7.59]: It is essential to have a plentiful supply of electricity and water if we are successfully to develop this State. I think the Government is to be commended—not only this Government but past Governments—for the large expenditure in the South-West Province. Today we have very good water supplies in the different areas between Perth and Bunbury. If any member has any doubts on the question, I would like him to pay a visit to these centres and look at the dam sites himself. I have seen all of them and some of them a number of times, and I can assure members that there is a large volume of water waiting to be used on the land.

It would do members good to pay a visit to these areas and although the work in the irrigated portion has not been completed, it is well worth looking at. In spite of all that has been done, there is room for further improvements and further schemes to be established. It is a pity that there seems to be an inclination on the part of the Government to reserve certain rivers and streams for metropolitan purposes. I hope that at least one or more of these streams will be utilised for irrigation purposes. No doubt the time will come when even the harnessing of those streams will be insufficient for the metropolitan area, and it will be necessary to go further afield. Now is the time to prepare for the future rather than to be content with taking water from the Serpentine and North Dandalup Rivers.

With regard to electricity supplies, we have been waiting for a long time for what is referred to as the South-West power scheme. I remember attending a conference at Bunbury 30 years ago when the matter was discussed, and ever since then there have been periodical agitations for such an undertaking. Every time a scheme has been submitted to the Government, it has been shelved for one reason or another. Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, we read a lengthy report in "The West Australian" giving details of the scheme that was to be put in hand at South Fremantle. Of course, that was not what people in the South-West

had contemplated, but there was then no chance of a successful protest in favour of the scheme they desired at Collie.

The people are now resigned to their supplies coming from South Fremantle, and there is no desire to embarrass the Government but rather to assist in every way possible. We realise that the Government is doing its best in the interests of people not only in the South-West but in other parts of the State. I trust the work at South Fremantle will be pushed on energetically. When current is available from that source, it should prove of great advantage to the producers, particularly those who have engines. Hundreds of people find it necessary to use power today, and naturally it is easier to use electricity in that regard rather than to operate gas engines.

There is certainly something in Mr. Thomson's suggestion about a flat rate. I realise it may not be possible to arrange the supply on that basis, but it is a matter that should receive careful consideration. I have been told that the price of current is likely to be about 4d. a unit. I think that is a bit high, and I do not think people engaged in secondary industries would be able to stand such a cost. No-one would expect such a scheme to pay from the beginning. Victoria has a very fine electricity undertaking but it sustained heavy losses at the outset, and we certainly must expect losses in this State. If the people in the country areas are not allowed rates similar to those applying in the metropolitan area, it will hardly be possible to carry out the decentralisation schemes about which there is so much talk.

To achieve decentralisation, we must foster industries in the rural areas. We would simply be talking with our tongues in our cheeks if we did not do something along the lines suggested. I congratulate the Government on tackling the Bunbury harbour scheme, where a large amount of money is to be spent. I am not an expert in such matters, but I have a certain amount of common sense that enables me to appreciate that the construction of a satisfactory harbour there is a very big problem involving huge expenditure. The Government is doing its best and is taking a risk with the necessary expenditure to provide the port with a decent depth of water. If in the end it fails to achieve its object, I do not think

people will blame it unduly. I certainly hope the operations undertaken there will be successful.

A large amount of Loan money has been spent in the South-West and we have often been told that the expenditure has been unprofitable. In the group settlement days, a good deal of money was wasted, but it has been more than repaid by the wonderful success achieved in those areas in later years. I hope the Government will persist with its policy of development in the South-West, particularly in connection with water supply schemes. The value of an abundant water supply is beyond question. I support the Bill.

HON. I. A. LOGAN (Central) [8.5]: Bouquets have been thrown at the Government about the allocation of money for the provision of water supplies, but I will not throw any about until I know how and where the money is to be spent. For the last 12 or 18 months we have been attempting to get a small amount granted for four different water supplies in our area. We have been granted neither the money nor the water schemes.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That would not be for irrigation purposes?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No, it is for the people in the townships.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: For domestic supplies.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We asked for the expenditure of £5,000 for the purpose of providing domestic supplies for the town-folk at Perenjori so that they could enjoy amenities that they do not possess at present. We are still without that money. We asked for assistance to provide the people of Yuna with a water supply. The latest advice I have is that if we can get a contractor to do the job, we may have our request granted. While there is £110,000 available under the Bill for water supplies for towns generally, these small requests should receive favourable consideration, and the Government should get on with the job. Geraldton is another place lacking an adequate water supply. Apart from Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Geraldton are the two largest towns in the State.

For years Geraldton has been hamstrung for want of an adequate water supply. The latest is that instead of putting in a decent

scheme, the department is to provide some more bores. That means the people there will be drinking nothing but bore water for years to come. Surely that is a disgrace to the State. Why should the people have to drink bore water when there is such a satisfactory rainfall in that area? It should not be beyond the power of engineers to work out a scheme that would provide Geraldton with a satisfactory water supply. We asked for £20,000 or £25,000 to provide a larger catchment area at Morawa with a bitumen surface, but we have not got it. The Government should at least have told us from the jump that we would be able to undertake these schemes when the necessary money and materials were available. We have not even had that satisfaction. In the circumstances, I shall certainly not throw any bouquets at the Government until I know how and where the money is to be spent.

There is another point to which I direct attention. The Loan schedule provides for the expenditure of £225,000 in connection with the charcoal-iron industry at Wundowie. That is a serious state of affairs. In view of all the money that has already been spent there, if this means that we have to incur the expenditure of £225,000 each year, I think we might just as well close down on Wundowie straight away.

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: There is another item there, too.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I was going to draw attention to that, too. These two industries have been held up to us as representing a wonderful asset, but here we are asked to spend a further £300,000 or so on them, and I do not know what advantage that will be to us. Then there is the undertaking at Welshpool for which £40,000 is provided. That refers to the tractor factory. I consider that if that industry had been handled properly, the tractors would be running off the assembly line today. If we wait much longer for them, imported machines will be doing all the work in the country.

Hon. H. Tuckey: They are well behind schedule.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not know what the explanation is. I understood the tractors were to be off the assembly line before this. If that had been done, they would have been able to catch the market. As it is, I am afraid that when the factory is in pro-

duction, other tractors will have been installed, and the market will have been lost.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And the Government money.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am dubious about so much Government money being invested in these enterprises. I think private enterprise could do the work much better. In my opinion, in 90 out of a hundred instances when someone goes to the Government for financial assistance, the scheme is not much good. In the circumstances, I ask the Government to be particularly careful how State money is invested in these industries. Ministers should have regard to the fact that people are living elsewhere than in the South-West. It was the pioneering pastoralists in the North that provided the money that made the South-West, and the Government should develop a northern complex as well as a south-western complex.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [8.12]: I would like to explain one or two of the items. The object of the Government has been to make the water rates uniform as far as possible. Recently it took action along those lines. References have been made to electricity supplies. The Government desires to provide electricity as cheaply as possible with a view to supplying the needs throughout the country. It will be provided at as low a rate as possible in order to encourage the establishment of industries in the rural areas. We do not believe in centralisation, and we want industries to be distributed.

A large sum of money is being made available for reforestation purposes. That is a continuing work and is progressing very well. Members should take an opportunity to visit the reforestation areas, which would prove an eye-opener to them. Mr. Logan referred to the Geraldton water supply. This year it is proposed to spend there £21,000 on various items that are set out. Members will realise that the Wundowie and Welshpool industries were established long before the present Administration took office, and obligations in connection with them have to be met.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What is the expenditure to date?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The details with which I have been supplied show

that the total cost of Wundowie is £620,000, including £30,000 provided by the Commonwealth, and the expenditure to date has been £485,000. The estimated further expenditure is £55,000. I cannot understand the item of £225,000 which must be covered up by some of the other details.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Probably a good deal of it is for housing.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. If members care to peruse the details that have been supplied to me, I shall certainly make them available.

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: Has the Chief Secretary anything to say about hospitals?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I am afraid that at the moment I cannot give that information. There is a tremendous building programme for hospitals and schools but the situation is complicated on account of shortage of building materials and labour, and there is also the necessity first to make provision for housing. Whatever excuse we make, or whatever reason we give, we are sure to be wrong. We are doing our utmost to improve all the governmental facilities on which expenditure is required.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; Hon. Sir Charles Latham in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 5:

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I rather expected that Sir Charles Latham would speak to this clause. The matter was contested during the second reading of the debate. As a member of the Select Committee that inquired into the Bill, I endorse the recommendation that the measure be proceeded with and that it be given a trial over the two next ensuing seasons. The

point as to the fixing of boundaries was more imaginary than real. We found, on making inquiries, that the agents in the various districts knew the boundaries quite well. The point was of minor importance, because of the effectiveness of both the administration and the fire fighting appliances in the country districts. From what we saw, we found there would be no difficulty in building up an efficient bush fire brigade. In all the districts that we visited we found that, where brigades were established, the necessity was recognised for providing adequate fire-fighting appliances.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member is not intending to make a second reading speech in Committee?

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: Sections 35A and 35B were severely challenged during the discussion, and so I thought it right to bring forward evidence which is not available to the Committee at present. I shall certainly be directed by you, Mr. Chairman, in what I have to say.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member no doubt will connect up his remarks with the clause under discussion.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I wish to quote from the evidence given by Mr. H. L. McGuigan, as follows:—

The road board has provided all the equipment in the district except the fittings to the Bruce Rock truck which were undertaken by the brigade. The board has also paid half the cost of the buildings at Bruce Rock which has been about £50. The Babakin and Shackleton trucks are not yet housed in a proper garage. The board has undertaken to repair and replace trucks, pay the vehicle and accident insurance, etc., and subsidises each subdistrict up to £100 per year. The board has added a farthing in the pound to its general rates from which it expects a return of £370 per year. The brigades are registered by the board under the Act but they have their own rules and conduct their own affairs without interference from the board although the rules are approved by the board. The brigades have their own finances for extras and whatever equipment they wish to fit to their trucks. The Bruce Rock truck cost the road board £250 and my estimate of the equipment the brigade has installed on that truck is a further £250. The Shackleton and Babakin trucks cost £800 for the two, but that has only been possible because they were Disposal vehicles.

At a later stage Mr McGuigan said—

I would like to mention that I was not altogether convinced of the effectiveness of the brigades before that time. The fire oc-

curred when the brigade was actually away at another fire. We had only one brigade at the time and as we approached the fire we could see it burning on a one-mile face and you could see men everywhere. We got right up to the front of the fire because if it jumped the road at that point it would have spread everywhere. There must have been 20 men in my group and some of them quite old. It was a very strong crop, practically fence high and we were endeavouring to deal with it with knapsack sprays, bags and bushes. The flames were man-high and we struggled for 20 minutes or more and were steadily losing ground. The truck arrived and the fire just seemed to go straight out. It was most amazing. It just went through the fire and put it completely out. After that I became convinced that I had never seen anything as good anywhere. No number of men could have controlled the fire at that time.

Mr. Chairman, of course, if you think I should not proceed on these lines, I will stop. May I proceed?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I shall now quote from the evidence of Mr. George Howard Branson. He said—

I wish to cite some instances of savings that brigades have made. There have been two fires in the last fortnight; one at Mr. Roper's property in which there were 30 acres of standing oats burnt and 30 acres of stubble; that was 60 acres altogether.

Point of Order.

The Chief Secretary: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, is the hon. member speaking to any amendment, or is he making a second reading speech?

The Chairman: I have already drawn the hon. member's attention to it.

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: I expected a statement to be put in with the report in the first place, and as there seemed to be no other opportunity to bring these points forward I was endeavouring to do so now; however, I respect your ruling.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I would also like your ruling, Mr. Chairman, as to whether Clause 3 is in order. The Act that the Bill seeks to amend is entitled "An Act to make better provision for diminishing the dangers resulting from bushfires, for the prevention, control and extinguishment of bushfires and for other purposes incidental thereto." The clause with which we are dealing is directed to the reduction of fire insurance premiums

on crops, which I submit has no real connection with or relation to the subject matter of the principal Act.

The Chairman: I rule that this is a new section which I think is a genuine effort on the part of the framers of the Bill to encourage the use of bushfire brigades, which would have the effect of reducing the bush-fire risk. I think the clause is within the scope of the Act and conforms to the purpose of the Bill.

Committee Resumed.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: The witnesses who came before the Committee generally gave their opinion that the insurance companies were being saved double, several times, ten times, or hundreds of times—

Hon. H. Hearn: How were those figures calculated?

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I was going on to say that the amount of the damage was incalculable, but if put down at only half the total premiums, which would make it 50 per cent., it appeared to those witnesses that it was only fair to halve the saving with the insurance companies, and that is how, perhaps haphazardly, the 25 per cent. was arrived at.

Clause put and passed.

New Clause:

Hon Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

4. This Act shall continue in force until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and fifty, and no longer.

It is proposed to limit the operation of this measure to two seasons. I take it that when the measure is printed reference will be made to the fact that this limitation of duration applies only to the amending Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is a Bill to amend the Bush Fires Act, and the only way the operation of the parent Act could be limited to the first day of December, 1950, if that were the hon. member's intention, would be by adding a new clause worded exactly as this amendment is. I do not think the hon. member wishes to limit the duration of the whole Act.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the easiest way in which to accomplish the hon.

member's purpose would be to move an amendment stating that Section 35 (A), Section 35 (B) and Section 35 (C) are to continue in operation only until the 31st day of December, 1950, and no longer.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

New clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

4. Sections 35A, 35B and 35C shall continue in force until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and fifty, and no longer.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

Recommittal.

On motion, by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering a new clause.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; Hon. Sir Charles Latham in charge of the Bill.

New clause:

The CHAIRMAN: It is proposed to delete the clause that was inserted by a previous Committee and substitute another.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move—

That new Clause 4 inserted by a previous Committee be struck out and the following new clause inserted in lieu:—

4. The principal Act is amended by inserting a new section as follows:—

35D. Sections 35A, 35B and 35C shall continue in force until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and fifty, and no longer.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I advise Sir Charles not to proceed with the new clause. The Bill will become a part of the Act if passed and should the Act then not be found to be workable, it can be dealt with later on. I suggest that Sir Charles would be running a grave risk if he sends the Bill back to another place with this provision in it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This was the decision of the Select Committee,

and I would not care to take the responsibility of overriding it.

New clause put and passed.

Bill again reported with a further amendment and the reports adopted.

Third Reading.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [8.58]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [8.59]: I cannot let this Bill go through the third reading stage without one or two comments. This is one of the most foolish Bills that I have seen introduced in this House. The evidence submitted to members is most unconvincing. The detailed evidence that was not disclosed may have been more convincing. There is no indication that the Select Committee examined any forestry officer upon whom the duty of examining these fire brigades and determining what areas would be entitled to a reduction of premiums, etc., would devolve. The whole thing is most foolish, and I do not think the measure will ever become law.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Then why worry about it?

Hon. L. CRAIG: We should not spend time on foolish legislation.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is finished now.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have expressed my opinion about it, and I hope the Government will not promulgate it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—ELECTRICITY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 20th November.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [9.3]: I oppose the second reading. In the years that have elapsed since rents were pegged, costs have increased greatly. I have in mind one or two cases that have come under my notice. In one part of my constituency a man had five cottages and was quite capable of effecting the necessary repairs. He had

always been very careful to give the tenants the benefit of a low rental, which was 13s. a week. Now, however, on account of age, he cannot possibly carry out his own repairs, and this man, who looked to the small income from his cottages for his maintenance, is hard pressed to live.

Again, there is the case of a house let to one tenant and, owing to the lack of housing, several families have crowded into it. It is quite reasonable to expect that, with three families crowded into one cottage, things could happen to the electric wiring. If a tenant desired to go on the "D" rate because of the added load through putting in a refrigerator, the owner would be responsible under the Bill for getting the place re-wired and if, by reason of the foolishness of the tenant, the installation were overloaded and something happened, this would immediately hit back upon the owner.

I feel that in the legislation that has been passed this session, we have listened quite regularly to the claims of the workers, and properly so, but some consideration should be shown for the owners of property, who have been called upon to make the greatest sacrifice of any section of the community. As time has gone on and costs have increased, their income has diminished. In my opinion the Bill is a bad one. I have been given to understand that even the members of the Electrical Contractors' Association are opposed to it. They say that the existing Act contains all the necessary powers.

Inspectors of the State Electricity Commission are empowered to enter premises where electricity is used, to condemn faulty installations and serve a notice on the owner or consumer to have them rectified. That goes far enough. For us to subscribe to a Bill that will make it harder for the owner who cannot be responsible for the misdoings of a tenant, would be quite wrong. If a tenant abuses the property, there is no redress for the owner. The cost of making repairs falls on the owner, because he is liable to a very heavy penalty if he does not ensure that proper repairs are effected to the installation. The Bill is entirely unnecessary.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West—in reply) [9.8]: I am sorry that we have had to wait until the closing hours of the session to discuss this Bill. I listened intently to the criticism offered by Mr. Hearn. He spoke

of a man who was receiving 13s. a week rent from each of five cottages and who was able to keep them in repair until he became too old. That man, evidently, had treated his tenants fairly by keeping the rents low. There is no possible chance of a man of that sort getting into trouble under this measure.

Hon. H. Hearn: The verandah posts might fall down.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They might.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You have not dealt with tenants in rented houses, have you?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Bill deals with them. The hon. member mentioned refrigerators. Surely he is not arguing that a working man renting a house should not be permitted to have a refrigerator. A house that cannot carry the very small extra load necessary for a refrigerator should not be let at all. The statement made by the hon. member regarding the Electricity Act is not correct. At any rate, I cannot imagine an electrical worker making a statement like that. The supply authority may cut off the current if the wiring is dangerous. This Bill would not be necessary but for the very acute housing shortage. In normal times if the ordinary intelligent citizen wishing to supply his family with decent amenities, including a refrigerator, could not get the requisite current, he would move to another house. Today he cannot do that, owing to the housing shortage, and therefore the Bill is necessary.

The measure will apply to a very small percentage of landlords. A case was reported to me yesterday. The wiring of a rented house was so much out of order that the lights were blowing out and putting the tenant to considerable expense. The electrical authorities were consulted and they said there was a fault in the wiring that had to be rectified. This fault had not developed through any abuse on the part of the tenant, and should be rectified by the owner.

The Bill will apply to only a small number of people. It is necessary to protect those who are not in a position to protect themselves. I am putting up a case for decent people only. Others might not care whether they had to use a lamp or a candle for illumination, but decent people want electric light and, if they want a refrigerator, they are entitled to it. I should like to

see every working man in the State supplied with a refrigerator on easy terms. If I were a young man about to furnish a home, I would prefer a refrigerator to a lounge suite.

I have already pointed out that ample safeguards are provided against abuse. I have heard it said that a drunken man might go into a house and damage the installation. If he did so, the supply authority has power to order him to replace it. The landlord and the tenant are amply protected by the Act. As I have pointed out, however, all that can be done in the absence of repairs to faulty installations is for the supply authority to cut off the current and then the tenant is left without light. For the small proportion of people who are placed at a disadvantage through the action of a small number of selfish and absolutely callous landlords, I ask the House to pass the second reading.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	11

Majority against 3

AYES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. Sir F. E. Gibson	Hon. G. Fraser (Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. G. B. Wood (Teller.)
Hon. H. Hearn	

PAIR.

AVE.	NO.
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. F. R. Welsh

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

*Sitting suspended from 9.19 p.m. to
12.13 a.m.*

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker — Metropolitan - Suburban) [12.45] in moving the second reading said: The Estimates of expenditure from the

Consolidated Revenue Fund and the General Loan Fund having been passed in another place, this Bill is now required to appropriate the money necessary for the ordinary services of the year, and to carry out the policy of the Government with regard to loan works. To enable the services of the State to be carried on until the passing of this Bill, two Supply Acts have been passed this session granting in all £6,000,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £1,200,000 from the General Loan Fund and £300,000 from the Public Account for Advance to Treasurer and Clause 2 of the Bill grants further supplies up to the total amounts requiring appropriation, as detailed in Schedule "A".

The estimates of the Consolidated Revenue Fund provide for a total expenditure of £20,491,980, but of this £4,996,551, which includes £4,135,955 for public debt charges, is already appropriated by special Acts and the amount set out in this Bill—namely, £15,495,429—represents departmental expenditure and the requirements of the Public Utilities, as summarised in Schedule "B". The estimates of the General Loan Fund provide for a total expenditure of £6,246,421, the main headings being enumerated in Schedule "C". Clause 3 formally appropriates the amounts required from the respective funds, including £1,000,000 from the Public Account, which may be spent in the manner set out in Schedule "D." Clause 3 further appropriates the expenditure incurred during the year 1947-48 in excess of the Votes for that year and details of these excesses will be found in Schedules "E" and "F", the former covering the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the latter the General Loan Fund.

Revenue for 1947-48 amounted to the record figure of £17,710,000, while the expenditure totalled £18,062,000, resulting in a deficit on the year's operations of £352,000. Included in the revenue was a supplementary grant of £1,000,000 made by the Commonwealth on the recommendation of the Grants Commission. The receipts for last year exceeded the estimated amount of £15,743,000 by £1,968,000, £1,000,000 of the increase being accounted for by the special grant to which I have just referred. Increased taxation collections accounted for a further £146,000, of which £49,000 came from totalisator duty due to

increased attendances at race meetings; £47,000 from stamp duty as a result of increased land sales and general business activities, and £49,000 from probate duty.

Under "Territorial" there was a general increase of £63,000. Owing to increased sales of Crown land and better collections of rent, revenue from land improved on the estimate by £72,000, being offset by decreases of £1,000 and £8,000 respectively in mining and timber. A falling-off in sales of sandalwood was responsible for the latter. Departmental revenue was £307,000 more than estimated. Most of the departments collected rather more than was estimated, but the main variation was in the Treasury, where an increase of £215,000 occurred. Most of this increase was occasioned by departmental recoups for exchange paid on materials and equipment purchased overseas and by increased interest collections by the Rural and Industries Bank.

It was estimated that £102,000 would be available for transfer to revenue as a result of the operations of the State trading concerns, but the amount actually received from that source was £114,000. The public utilities also provided more revenue than was anticipated, the actual receipts being £6,621,000 against an estimate of £6,203,000, an increase of £418,000. Of this increase, £295,000 came from the railways where increased goods traffic and coaching receipts brought the total collections to £4,545,000 or £295,000 better than the estimate. Among other utilities where improvement occurred were: Fremantle Harbour Trust £63,000, Metropolitan Water Supply £24,000, Goldfields Water Supply £21,000 and Other Hydraulic Undertakings £10,000.

The estimated expenditure for 1947-48 was £16,424,000, but the amount actually spent was £18,062,000. The increase of £1,638,000 was, to a large extent, caused by the higher costs of labour and materials, and although the sum of £250,000 was included in the Treasury estimates to provide for the overall cost of the 40-hour week, other increases such as rises in the basic wage and increased margins that operated during the year, affected all departments to such an extent that in almost every case salary estimates were considerably exceeded. This also occurred in many contingency items and in those instances where the reverse was the case, it was gen-

erally because of the difficulty in securing labour or of procuring requisite materials.

Under "Treasury Miscellaneous," there were a number of items where the expenditure exceeded the estimate, among them being exchange on oversea payments £38,755, due to the large amounts remitted to England to pay for equipment for the new South Fremantle power station; State Shipping Service loss £117,000; additional grant to the Hospital Trust Fund £47,000 and to the University £33,000; and subsidy on transport of superphosphate £70,000. For the Education Department the Vote was £1,412,000 but the expenditure reached the sum of £1,649,000, or £237,000 more than was anticipated. In addition to the factors I have already mentioned that affected all departments, there were new appointments to the staff, new bus contracts, boarding allowances and other measures designed to raise the standard of our educational services. The Police Department estimate of £391,000 was exceeded by £28,000. Here again additional appointments also helped to swell the cost. In the Public Health Department, there was an increase of £49,000 over the estimate of £334,000. The Department of Agriculture and the Forests Department showed decreases of £7,000 each, due in the former to inability to obtain additional professional and technical staff that had been provided for, and in the latter to less activity in the production of firewood.

By far the larger part of the total increase arose in the public utilities, the railways alone being responsible for £952,000. In addition to the extra cost of labour, additional train mileage was necessary to cope with increased business. Similar reasons operated in the tramways where the increased expenditure amounted to £43,000. Among other utilities the increases were not so marked, the ones most worthy of note being: Goldfields Water Supply £16,000, Metropolitan Water Supply £12,000 and Other Hydraulic Undertakings £16,000.

Mainly because of rising costs, expenditure for the current year is estimated at £2,429,588 more than the amount actually incurred in 1947-48. Although estimated expenditure is thus £20,491,980, the deficit budgeted for is £164,723, or less than half the amount of the deficit for the last year. Revenue, amounting to £17,710,310 in 1947-

48, is expected to rise by £2,616,947 to £20,327,257 during the current year, increased payments by the Commonwealth and the revision of Government charges being responsible for the improvement. The effort of the Government to increase revenue was a factor taken into account by the Grants Commission in making its recommendation for additional assistance during the current year, so that the relief provided to the budget through the revision of charges extends beyond an actual increase in collections.

The current year's Estimates provide for major increases in revenue collections by way of taxation, Commonwealth grants and departmental and public utility earnings, but it is estimated that profits transferred to revenue from trading concerns will be about the same as last year, and that territorial revenue will show a decrease. Inclusive of income tax reimbursement, taxation revenue is estimated to yield £5,620,100, or £635,909 more than the sum of £4,984,191 collected in 1947-48. While the main element in this improvement is the increase of £682,000 in our income tax reimbursement from the Commonwealth, it is also expected that there will be a slight increase in land tax collections, which last year amounted to £111,000. The additional amount expected to be yielded from the revision of land tax rates is £10,887. This increase, however, will be almost balanced by anticipated decreases in liquor licenses and totalisator duty. Probate duty at £275,000 is expected to show a decline of £34,487. Last year was particularly fruitful of probate collections, and it is considered unsafe to anticipate a similar experience this year.

Territorial collections are estimated at £546,000, which is £55,004 below the amount yielded in 1947-48. Under this heading, revenue from land has been set down at £300,000. The decrease of £22,035 on last year's figure allows for the fact that fewer arrears are now available for collection and that current rentals will decline because of heavy alienations, rent concessions to ex-Servicemen and the increase in new leases granted rent free for five years. No significant change is expected in mining revenue, but reduced sales of sandalwood will affect timber revenue, which is estimated at £32,363 less than last year. An increase of £270,425 has been budgeted for in departmental fees

and collections, which are estimated at £2,057,781. Included in this sum is a recoup of £71,500 from the Commonwealth of the estimated cost of prices and land sales control.

In "Treasury Miscellaneous," recoups in respect of exchange payments made on behalf of departmental purchases are expected to be a major factor in the estimated net increase of £110,721. Under the same heading, decreases are expected in collections of interest from the agency section of the Rural and Industries Bank, and increases in collections from the banking section. Increased returns from the sale of produce have been provided for in the estimates of revenue from the Agricultural Department, the Forests Department and the Department of Industrial Development. Minor increases are projected in revenue from various departmental charges. Having been fixed on a basis which no longer bears any relation to the value or the cost of the service provided, many of these charges are unjustifiably low, and it is now proposed to effect the necessary adjustments. The increases are expected to yield additional revenue amounting to approximately £23,000 for a full year's collections.

Public utilities are expected to earn £7,766,202 this year, compared with £6,621,226 in 1947-48. Railway earnings, estimated at £5,500,000, represent an increase of £954,624 on last year, and account for most of the increase of £1,144,976 expected in public utility revenue as a whole. Revised freights and fares on the railway system should provide additional revenue amounting to £750,000 during the 10 months of their operation in the current year. Increased traffic and earnings from refreshment services account for the balance of the improvement in railway revenue.

At £677,000, estimated tramways revenue for the current year is £167,697 more than collections for 1947-48. Increased fares operating as from the 1st August are expected to raise earnings by £127,000, while an additional amount of £40,797 may be earned as a result of prospective increases in traffic, due to the opening of new omnibus routes and the reduction of private motor-ing.

Increased sales of tallow and improved revenue from by-products are estimated to

increase revenue from the State Abattoirs to £129,250 for the current year compared with £98,038 for 1947-48. An increase of £15,687 is provided for in the earnings of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department. Other utilities show minor variations only, with the exception of State Batteries which, on account of reduced operations, are expected to earn £10,179 less than in 1947-48.

Of the total expenditure of £20,491,980 provided for in the Estimates, £7,698,391—or about 37½ per cent.—is accounted for by public utilities which are expected to absorb £700,481 of the total estimated increase of £2,429,588. Railways expenditure has been estimated at £6,275,000 and compared with actual expenditure for last year amounting to £5,672,312, shows an increase of £602,688. This year, an amount of £500,000 has been allowed for deferred maintenance and regeneration of rolling-stock, or £62,398 more than the actual expenditure incurred on this account in 1947-48.

Representing normal working expenses, the balance of the estimated expenditure, amounting to £5,775,000 is greater by £540,290 than the corresponding expenditure for 1947-48. This substantial rise in operating expenses includes the cost for a full 12 months of the introduction of the 40-hour week, and of basic wage increases and new awards which came into operation at different times during last year. It provides also for necessary staff increases and for rises in the prices of certain materials, notably sleepers and timber generally, steel and fuel.

Although no allowance has been made in the railway estimate itself for the cost of prospective basic wage adjustments, an item has been provided under miscellaneous Treasury expenditure, which is intended to cover the cost of such adjustments to the revenue fund as a whole. Excluding the prospective cost of basic wage increases or other changes which may affect the cost of operations, normal railway working expenses for 1948-49 are estimated to exceed earnings by £257,000, even after provision has been made for additional revenue of £750,000, when revenue is compared with total expenditure, including the amount to be expended on deferred maintenance and regeneration of rollingstock. A full year's operation of the recent increases in railway

charges will mean the collection of £150,000 more revenue than is provided for in the Estimates.

For tramways the estimated increased expenditure is £37,867. There are increases of £27,702, £20,485 and £15,476 for Other Hydraulic Undertakings, State Abattoirs and the Goldfields Water Supply respectively. Reduced operations account for the estimated decline of £14,234 in the expenditure on State batteries. Expenditure under special Acts is estimated at £4,996,551 and represents an increase of £170,184 on the amount incurred in 1947-48. Interest and sinking fund payments on the Public Debt are expected to cost £35,079 and £56,607 more than last year, thus increasing total expenditure under Loan Acts from £4,044,269 to £4,135,935.

Payments of pensions and retiring allowances under the old legislation are reaching their zenith and are expected to increase by £11,809. The increase in payments under the superannuation and family benefits legislation will be considerably greater, being estimated at £71,435, and there are increases aggregating £14,500 in parliamentary allowances and mine workers' relief and fire brigade payments. Transfers to the Reforestation Fund under the Forests Act are expected to be £21,755 less than last year on account of reduced sales of sandalwood.

Compared with last year, departmental expenditure at £7,768,908 is estimated to increase by £1,556,328. Factors largely responsible for this substantial rise are basic wage adjustments, new awards and agreements—including the reclassification of the Public Service—increases in the price of materials and the occurrence this year of an extra pay day, there being 27 fortnightly pay days this year. The 1st July this year was a pay day and the 30th June next year is also a pay day. The rise also reflects the additional expenditure which will be incurred in providing for normal expansion and improvement of departmental services to meet the needs of a growing population. Another important element in the increase is the provision of an item to meet prospective increases in the basic wage and other related costs. An amount of £400,000 has been provided for this purpose.

Miscellaneous Treasury services as a whole are estimated to cost £2,665,203 for the current year, compared with £1,890,819

in 1947-48, the net increase amounting to £774,384. In addition to the estimated cost of prospective basic wage adjustments, this increase covers provision for several other substantial variations in expenditure. The mounting cost of hospital maintenance has necessitated an increase in the grant to the Hospital Trust Fund, the sum to be provided totalling £740,000, or £155,243 more than in 1947-48.

Operating costs of the State Shipping Service and the State Electricity Commission have shown substantial increases and additional amounts of £128,642 and £155,269 are estimated to be required this year to meet the respective increased losses. The loss on the State Shipping Service is estimated at nearly £300,000. This is a heavy burden to shoulder in attempting to assist the northern parts of the State. If the service could be viewed as a business venture, the obvious course would be to increase fares and freights substantially—an increase of about 100 per cent. would be necessary. But the shipping service has not been and cannot be looked on as a business undertaking. It is a service necessary for the development of the North.

This year, expenditure by the Education Department is expected to show an increase of £79,707, of which £43,166 is accounted for by incidentals largely connected with subsidies, driving contracts and improvements in such amenities as visual education. The increase of £22,094 in the Department of Social Service is largely accounted for by increased payments for outdoor relief and the maintenance of State wards. For the Crown Law Department, expenditure shows a rise of £85,854, of which £66,000 represents the estimated cost of price control and will be recouped by the Commonwealth. There is a related increase of £5,500 under Lands and Surveys to cover the cost of land sales control. Envisaging the employment of additional technical and professional staff, increased expenditure on vermin destruction, and improvements to research stations, the estimates for the Agricultural Department show an increase of £68,719. In view of the shortage of agricultural scientists, the planned extensions of staff may not eventuate in their entirety.

Under Public Works, the expenditure is estimated at £499,495, or £181,007 more than that incurred last year. Repairs to public buildings, partly financed last year from a

special trust fund created for the purpose, will have to be met entirely from revenue now that the fund is exhausted. Partly because of this and partly because of projected increases in activity, it has been necessary to provide for an increase of £102,291 for building maintenance. General increases in costs and increased expenditure on jetty repairs and improvements to town water supplies and stock routes in the North-West are other factors contributing to the rise.

The Medical and Health Departments are estimated to require £462,287 compared with £383,359 for last year. Provision has been made for a new subsidy of £5,000 to the Red Cross in connection with its blood transfusion service, for increased expenditure on T.B. diagnosis and aftercare, and for increased grants and assistance to infant welfare centres. Also included in the Estimates is provision for the appointment of additional school dental officers, health inspectors and laboratory assistants.

Police Department expenditure is estimated at £522,224, which is £103,799 more than that of last year. New awards, proposed increases in the strength and extra pay are mainly responsible for the change. If members desire any further information regarding the estimates for the current year, I shall be pleased to supply it on receiving notice. Clause 4 is to approve of the expenditure of £230,000 from the Reforestation Fund, details of which are set out in the scheme of expenditure which has been laid on the Table of the House, and which requires the approval of Parliament. A summary of the proposed expenditure is shown in Schedule "G." I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [1.9]: While the Chief Secretary has been throwing millions of pounds around, my mind has been down on the bottom rung of the ladder. I am rather curious about two items on page 7 under the heading of "Compassionate Allowances." These items are annual allowances to the widow of the late Detective Sergeant Pitman, £17 8s. 11d., and to the widow of the late Police Sergeant Mark, 10s. I am rather curious, particularly in view of the fact that these are under the heading of annual allowances. I do not know whether the Chief Secretary can give

me the information, but I would like to satisfy my curiosity.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [1.10]: I am afraid I can only satisfy the hon. member's curiosity if he will be kind enough to call upon me next week.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION.

Assembly's Message.

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

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION.

Appointment of Trustees.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [1.15]: The Bill which has just passed requires that we appoint two trustees and I therefore move—

That, pursuant to the provisions of a Bill for An Act intitled the "Parliamentary Superannuation Act, 1948," and upon and subject to such Bill becoming law by the assent of His Excellency the Governor, the Legislative Council hereby appoints the President and the Chairman of Committees members of the said Council to be Trustees of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund and the Legislative Council hereby orders that such appointments shall be and are hereby made at this sitting of the Legislative Council on the 11th day of December, 1948.

Question put and passed.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Before we adjourn, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you, Mr. President, and various other members and officers of the House for the consideration extended to us during this session. I especially thank you, Mr. President, because we must appreciate the very severe strain under which you were labouring owing to your ill-health in the early part of the session. I sincerely trust you have made a permanent recovery. It has not been an easy session and the Chairman of Committees, Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, has had a particularly arduous task and has been ably assisted by his deputies, whom I also thank on behalf of my fellow members.

I wish to take the opportunity of thanking the Honorary Minister for Agriculture for the way in which he carried on during my temporary absence from the House, and I express my appreciation for the great amount of work he has performed throughout the session. I, personally, have been most fortunate in having his services and, from the remarks I heard on my return, Mr. Wood should be proud indeed of what he has done whilst Parliament has been sitting. We have many other people who also assisted us. The Clerk of Parliaments has had a particularly trying time this session. He has been rushed with Bills and has had to serve very long hours. That his health has not been good is not surprising. We trust that after the adjournment, he will have sufficient time to enable him to recover his normal health before we meet again in the ordinary way.

The Clerk Assistant carried on very ably during the absence of Mr. Lenke and again we would like to thank him for all he has done and for the courtesy he has always extended to members. Another officer who is always most attentive and always courteous is the Clerk of Records, Mr. Brown. He always seems to anticipate what Act we want almost as soon as we have rung the bell. Everything he does for us is done in a very obliging and happy manner.

"Hansard" has done really wonderful work right through, and I can safely say that I have not had to correct one duplicate of any speech I have made in this House during the session. It is not only the "Han-

sard" that we see before us in the printed form but the work of "Hansard" behind the scenes. A very arduous task is carried out behind the scenes and they have had a very strenuous time during the session. I also desire to thank them most sincerely on behalf of members generally. We also have our typist, Miss Watkin, whom we all regard as a person to whom we can go and say that we want something done at once—and the typing is done at once. I do not know how she does it so promptly, so happily and willingly, whether it be typing out questions or answers or something else. Everything is done extraordinarily quickly and anything she can do to assist members is done very graciously.

What possibly is more important to some of us is the question of the inner man. Mr. Roberts and his staff have performed wonders. Here again it is not only the staff that we see but the unseen staff that works, so to speak, in the bowels of the earth under extraordinary conditions. They have looked after our welfare in a wonderful way, especially during the last few days when they have served up to us special dinners and lunches. The manner in which that has been done is something of which Mr. Roberts and the whole of his staff may be extremely proud.

There is another man who does not appear very much but nevertheless looks after us most carefully. Then again, there is another who watches us come in and go out, and I am sure that if ever any trouble occurred they would both come to our assistance very quickly. I refer to our policeman and the doorkeeper who are on duty in the House. I am glad to feel that the former is one of my own boys in blue. Then again we owe a debt of gratitude to others who sit here listening to us. I refer to the representatives of the Press. I certainly do not think we have over-taxed them, unless it is in the matter of listening. For whatever they have said about our proceedings, we thank them very sincerely. We trust that in future we will be able to give them more copy than we have during the session.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is not a matter of what we have given them but of what they have given us!

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: I thank all members for the assistance they have extended to me during the session. I think all will agree with me that Mr. Wood and I have given them every opportunity in every possible way to express their opinions and cast their votes as they have deemed fit. I do not think anyone can say that either of us has brought any pressure to bear on them in dealing with any measures. I do not think that any member would say that I have exercised undue influence upon him. I trust that when they have recovered from the effects of this very heavy session, members will find time to enjoy themselves and when they return to the House I hope they will not have to move out of their seats as much as in the past. I wish to thank you, Sir, and all associated with Parliament a most enjoyable holiday during the festive season and an extremely happy and prosperous New Year.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT: I am glad to associate myself with the good wishes expressed by the Chief Secretary and I want personally to thank you, Sir, for the help you have always extended to me. I am sure that I am voicing the feelings of every member of the House when I say how glad we are to know your health is so much improved at the end of the session compared with what it was at the commencement. I congratulate the Leader of the House and the Honorary Minister on the way they have fulfilled their respective duties. They are also to be congratulated upon the success that has attended their efforts to place legislation on the statute book. Their percentage of success in that direction redounds to their credit as orators and in other directions.

I desire particularly to thank my two deputies for the assistance, co-operation and courtesy that they have extended to me throughout the session and that applies also to the Clerk, the Clerk Assistant and the Clerk of Records. I extend my cordial thanks to them for the assistance they have rendered throughout the session. I think that we in this Parliament of Western Australia are particularly fortunate in the officers of the House and the staff. I doubt whether any other Parliament in Australia enjoys better service than we have in Western Australia. I also express my thanks to

the "Hansard" staff and to members of the House staff. I hope all members will have a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May I thank all members for the courtesy they have extended to me during my official duties.

HON. E. H. GRAY: I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the Chief Secretary and the Chairman of Committees. Particularly do I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your improved health. We were very worried about you during the early part of the session. I hope we shall all be together at the end of next session. I do not want to mention everyone, but I support the remarks that were made about the Clerk of Parliaments, the Controller and other officers, together with the staff.

Personally I have been a member of this House for a long time and I am convinced that our Parliament is run better now than ever before, which is also a tribute to past members and past officers. That refers particularly to the Controller, who learnt his duties under an earlier occupant of that position, Mr. Ford. Mr. Roberts has done a marvellous job in the manner in which he has handled his staff. The work has always been done excellently and, in fact, all the officers associated with Parliament have done a remarkably fine job. The Chief Secretary certainly went through the whole scale and mentioned every officer, and I support him in all that he said. I congratulate the Chairman of Committees and the Deputy Chairmen for the way in which they have discharged their duties during the session.

We were all deeply concerned when the Chief Secretary became seriously indisposed at the beginning of the session. That threw an extra load on the Honorary Minister. I have been in this Chamber for 26 years, and I consider the Honorary Minister put up a record. No other Honorary Minister in my experience was asked to carry the load which he carried, and he did a wonderful job. I wish both the Chief Secretary and the Honorary Minister, and every member and officer of the House a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

THE PRESIDENT: Before putting the motion, may I express my deep appreciation of the very kind remarks that were

made by the Chief Secretary and other members about myself. I am pleased indeed to say that I am in a much better state of health than I was at the beginning of the session. I think the success of this session has been due to the consideration extended by members to both Ministers, myself and the officers. When all is said and done, the tone of the House depends entirely upon the spirit which is exhibited by members; and that spirit has always been kindly and considerate in all the years that I have been associated with the House. I endorse the remarks that have been made respecting the work done by Ministers. They did an extraordinary amount of work in an efficient and successful manner.

I thank the Chairman of Committees and the Deputy Chairmen for the way in which they carried out the hard work that has to be done in Committee. That, after all, is the test of our parliamentary usefulness. The Clerks have, as usual, stood up to their job, especially at the end of the session, in the way they have always done. We are grateful to them and also to Mr. Brown. To "Hansard," to the Controller and to all those who took part in the work of Parliament, I desire to join with others in expressing my thanks and appreciation. May I conclude by wishing you all the season's greetings. I hope you will have a merry Christmas and that the coming year may bring with it greater hopefulness and greater opportunities for optimism than we have experienced for many years. It appears as though the world is getting back to a state of sanity, and I hope that the blessing of Almighty God will rest on us all in the years to come.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.34 a.m. (Saturday).

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 10th December, 1948.

CONTENTS.

Page.

Questions : Coal, (a) as to Black Diamond leases, expenditure, etc., (b) as to possible conflict of answers, (c) as to supplying copies of answers ...	3462
Potatoes, as to price and bags ...	3462
Bread, as to price and ticket system ...	3463
Housing, as to home sites, Kenwick-Maddington district ...	3463
Tramways, as to supply of driving gears	3463
Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., as to execution of agreements ...	3463
Water Supplies, as to Yuna township and district ...	3463
Road haulage of wheat, as to traffic regulations and road maintenance ...	3464
North-West, as to development railways from Northern Territory ...	3464
Railways, as to "N" class engines ...	3464
Legislative Council, as to defeat of franchise proposals ...	3465
Bills : Hide and Leather Industries, returned ...	3465
Dog Act Amendment, returned ...	3465
Land Act Amendment (No. 2), returned	3465
Country Towns Sewerage, Council's message... ..	3465
Gold Buyers Act Amendment, Com., remaining stages ...	3465
Council's message ...	3465
Mining Act Amendment, Council's amendments ...	3466
Land Sales Control Act Amendment, Council's amendments ...	3471
Council's message ...	3547
Bush Fires Act Amendment (No. 2), Council's amendment ...	3472
Council's message ...	3547
Hospital Benefits Agreement, returned ...	3472
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 1r., remaining stages, returned ...	3472
Companies Act Amendment, 2r....	3472
Marketing of Apples and Pears, Council's amendment ...	3465
Council's message ...	3547
Appropriation, all stages ...	3547
Returned ...	3548
Health Act Amendment (No. 3), returned ...	3547
Parliamentary Pensions, Council's amendment ...	3547
Bush Fires Act Amendment (No. 1), Council's amendment...	3548
Annual Estimates, 1948-49 : Committee of Supply, Votes and Items discussed ...	3475
State Trading Concerns Estimates, 1948-49	3548
Loan Estimates, 1948-49 ...	3548
Parliamentary Superannuation, appointment of Trustees ...	3548
Complimentary remarks ...	3548
Adjournment, special ...	3550

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11.0 a.m., and read prayers.