Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 4th September, 1956.

CONTENTS.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Moir) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment Bill.

BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Standing Orders Suspension.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

> That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Bill for "An Act to amend the Marketing of Potatoes Act, 1919-1946" to be introduced without notice and, if necessary, passed through all stages at the one sitting.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: We on the Opposition benches have not had an opportunity yet of seeing this Bill. There is no doubt about its importance and the position in regard to the potato industry today is, I admit, one of urgency. Nevertheless, I would draw the attention of the Government to the fact that no doubt this legislation will contain some very important matter, and I think it is an unusual course to adopt to bring in important legislation affecting an industry and not give those engaged in the industry an opportunity to see what is proposed. Is there such urgency about this legislation that it must go through this House in one day?

The Premier: It is certainly very urgent.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have already admitted its urgency, but it has always been the practice of Parliament to give those concerned with legislation of this kind an opportunity to know what it contains. As we know, when legislation is introduced Bills are sent out to various industries or businesses that may be concerned to enable them to have a look at the measures and express opinions that may help.

Today we have this legislation being introduced with no opportunity at all of letting the growers know what is contained in the Bill. It is true that the measure has yet to go to another place, but it is in this Chamber that the important discussions will take place and where the decisions will largely be made. In the circumstances, therefore, I would ask the Government to agree to an adjournment of this legislation until at least tomorrow. I realise that tomorrow is private member's day but there is not very much private member's business on the notice paper. If this matter regarding potatoes is so urgent, then surely we could go on with this Bill when the House meets tomorrow. I think that those engaged in the industry should be given some opportunity to express any views they may hold on what is to them a most vital matter.

Mr. BOVELL: We all know that the potato position in Western Australia has become quite alarming over a period of time. As one who represents the potato growers I am rather concerned that the Minister should give notice now that he intends to rush legislation through at one

sitting of the House. In fairness to growers and consumers, I think there should be some delay in the proceedings in order to allow the growers an opportunity to understand what amendments are proposed by the Government in relation to the existing legislation covering the marketing of potatoes. Potato growers live in far distant areas and I suppose those I represent are some that are furthest removed from the metropolitan area. It is a matter of great concern and this problem has been a very hot and burning one over the past few years.

Mr. May: A hot potato, eh?

Mr. BOVELL: The Minister now comes in with a measure which he intends to rush through all its stages at one sitting, without giving an opportunity to the representatives of the potato growers to convey to those growers the intention of the Government. I would ask the Minister to give consideration to the suggestion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition that the matter be adjourned till tomorrow, at least, to enable us to communicate these proposals to the potato growers.

Mr. HEARMAN: I would also like to point out that I have been interested in this matter for some time. During the session I have been asking questions and the answers I have received from the Minister indicated that the position was not critical. Yet we are now confronted with the suggestion that it cannot stand over for 24 hours! I hope the Minister will show members some consideration as we do not know what is in the Bill. Some of us may have to take outside advice and also obtain legal interpretations.

Mr. ROBERTS: I join with the Leader of the Opposition in the request to the Minister that time be given for this side of the House to consider the Bill. As one who for many years and particularly since I have been in this House has been very interested in this subject, I would like to know what the Bill contains in order that I may talk to the growers concerned and obtain their views. I, therefore, support the request of the Leader of the Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (in reply): I am very glad to know that the Opposition agree that this is an urgent matter, as it undoubtedly is. But I do not think the subject matter of the Bill would be improved by any delay. In my view, there is no need to contact the growers' organisation whatsoever because it is a section of the growers' organisation which has been responsible for the position which now exists in this State, and all loyal growers, fortunately, are still handsomely in the majority and undoubtedly will agree with the proposal that is contained in the Bill. So far as the other growers are concerned and so far as I am personally concerned, I hope they will not be growers in this State much longer. As a result of what I have said, there is no reason at all to seek a delay in the presentation of the legislation, in order to find out what the growers feel about this matter.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It is only for a few hours.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not a question of a few hours. The member for Blackwood stated that, in my replies to previous questions, I had said the position was not critical. I would inform the House that the situation was not critical until such time as that hon. member, together with others, asked questions. The nature of those questions made evident to the growers of this State and to merchants in the Eastern States, just what could be done by blackmarketing so far as Western Australian potatoes are concerned, and it is from the day that those questions were answered that a state of emergency has developed.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I do not think it made the slightest difference.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because of the change of the method adopted today by growers on the market in the Eastern States, it becomes a matter of extreme urgency that the Government should do something about the position as the State will find itself without potatoes in three weeks' time.

Mr. Bovell: In answer to questions in this House, you said that would not be the position.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was the position then as road transport was being used and the growers sending potatoes did not number more than 20 or 24. Now, however, other larger methods of transport are being used, such as railways and possibly shipping later, and the State could be without potatoes within two or three weeks, unless the Government does something about it.

Mr. Nalder: Has not the Potato Marketing Board any power?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, the Board cannot take any action other than what it is doing at the present time, and it has done a splendid job. Since new potatoes came on the market as from the 1st April, it has distributed 18,000 tons to Western Australian consumers, bearing in mind that prices were rising to phenomenal heights in the Eastern States during that time. The board will be powerless unless we can give it the further strength, which is proposed in this Bill. If anyone says that the matter is not urgent today, that person does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. Roberts: Is much moved by rail?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know. Between here and Burekup there are between 500 and 1,000 tons to go by rail or ship. I am going to oppose any suggestion of an adjournment. There is

no necessity to approach the growers as it is a matter for Parliament and no one else.

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

Ayes	24
Noes	17
Majority for	7

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Evans	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Toms
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. May
	(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. I. Manning	Mr. Wild
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Nalder	*(Teller.)*

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Mann
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Cornell
Mr. Rhatigan	Mr. W. Manning
Mr. Rodoreda	Mr. Ackland

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There not being an absolute majority voting with the ayes, I declare the motion lost.

Question thus negatived.

QUESTIONS.

BETTING CONTROL BOARD.

(a) Instructions to Licence-Holders.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has the Betting Control Board been issuing general instructions binding on all licence-holders without gazetting those instructions?

(2) Is this in accordance with the Act?

(3) If not, would he request that such instructions be gazetted immediately?

The MINISTER replied:

The Betting Control Board has from time to time issued instructions of a general nature, but such instructions have been within the ambit of the existing Act and regulations.

(b) Revocation of Notice, Alexander James Hyman.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Police:

Will he inform the House of the reasons for the revocation by the Betting Control Board of the notice of the registration of the premises in the name of Alexander James Hyman in respect of premises at 579 Canning Highway, Melville, as published in the issue of the "Government Gazette", dated the 24th August, 1956?

The MINISTER replied:

The reason for the revocation was that the applicant, Alexander James Hyman, failed to pay the registration fee within the time agreed upon.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Earnings for June and July, 1956.

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

What have been the earnings for June and July, 1956, respectively, by the W.A.G.R., from—

(a) wheat hauled;

(b) timber;

(c) ores and minerals;

(d) country passenger traffic;

(e) suburban passenger traffic;

(f) total of all earnings?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

The details are as follows:—

		1st to 30th June, 1956.	1st to 31st July, 1956.
		£	£
(a)	....	363,767	346,901
(b)	....	93,266	93,509
(c)	....	33,821	39,713
(d)	....	46,680	48,882
(e)	....	27,815	28,886
(f)	....	1,232,466	1,247,200

(b) Standard Gauge, Perth-Kalgoorlie.

Hon. L. THORN asked the Premier:

(1) Has any progress been made relating to the proposed standard gauge railway between Perth and Kalgoorlie?

(2) What is the present position in regard to this matter?

(3) Does he think it likely that an agreement will be reached, and if so, can he give any idea when?

(4) Have any changes in the proposed route through Toodyay, as originally announced, been suggested, and if so, what are they?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Discussions took place in Perth recently with a Federal parliamentary party committee which is inquiring into the matter.

(2) Discussions were of an exploratory nature only.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) An alternative route south of the Eastern Goldfields railway with entry into the metropolitan suburban area in the vicinity of Armadale was dealt with generally during the recent discussion.

(c) Tonnage Handled through Bunbury Goods Shed.

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

In view of the reply to my question (No. 15, part 2, of Tuesday, the 28th August, 1956) in regard to the total tonnage handled through the Bunbury goods shed, in its first year of operation, will he advise—

(a) what is the earliest year in which records were kept;

(b) what was the total tonnage handled through the shed in that year?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(a) 1941.

(b) 16,500 tons.

FISHING INDUSTRY.

Provision of Freezer at Metropolitan Markets.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) Does he consider that it would be an advantage to the fishing industry if a freezer were provided at the Metropolitan Markets where the fishermen could send their fish for storage prior to putting them on the auction floor, and where they could (if necessary) return them in the event of unsatisfactory prices?

(2) Does he agree with Section 12, Subsection (2) (a) of the Metropolitan Market Act, 1926-1941?

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

(1) It might possibly be of some advantage if this were done, but fish removed from, and later returned to, cold storage would undoubtedly be subjected to very much closer examination by health inspectors because bacterial activity commences very soon after removal from cold storage. The best authorities all over the world advise against returning to cold storage fish which have been removed therefrom.

(2) Yes.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Installation of Larger Storage Tank, Mt. Magnet.

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

In view of the fact that the population in the township of Mt. Magnet is steadily increasing, and that during last summer water was restricted to residents there, will he give consideration to the installation of a larger storage tank at a suitable site?

The MINISTER replied:

It is intended to install additional storage before next summer.

ELECTRICITY.

Output and Maximum Capacity of Power Houses.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is to the total output of current at peak load periods of the metropolitan power houses?

(2) What other major power houses feed into the power system of the State, and what is the peak load output?

(3) What is the maximum capacity of power houses controlled by the State Electricity Commission?

(4) What increased power is planned?

(5) When will such be available?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Maximum system demand on metropolitan power stations this winter was 127,000 kilowatts.

(2) Collie power station—10,400 kilowatts.

(3) Installed capacity of metropolitan power stations, 164,000 kilowatts. Capacity to meet loading, 139,000 kilowatts.

Collie power station: Installed capacity, 14,500 kilowatts. Capacity to meet loading, 12,000 kilowatts.

Albany power station: Installed capacity, 3,400 kilowatts. Capacity to meet loading, 2,400 kilowatts.

(4) and (5) It is planned to install generating capacity as follows:—

16,000 kilowatts—June, 1957.

15,000 kilowatts—December, 1957.

20,000 kilowatts—June, 1958.

30,000 kilowatts—June, 1959.

TAXES AND CHARGES.

Increases since February, 1953.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Premier:

(1) Will he read to the House a list of increased taxes and charges of all kinds, since he assumed office in February, 1953?

(2) Will he supply the percentage increases in each case?

(3) Are any further increased taxes or charges contemplated?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The details are as follow:—

State Shipping Service.—Darwin Freight Rate, excluding personal effects, household goods and foodstuffs—August, 1953, increase 10s. per ton, 4½ per cent.; May, 1954, decrease 1s. 6d. per ton, 1 per cent.; May, 1956, increase 7s. 6d. per ton, 3½ per cent.

Mines.—Survey Fees—Average increase of 55 per cent. from the 11th June, 1954. State Batteries—Northampton—Crushing charges increased by 50 per cent. on the 14th March.

1955, £1 to £1 10s. All batteries—Average increase of 33⅓ per cent. on crushing charges for base metals on the 11th November, 1955.

Forests.—Royalty charges were increased from February, 1953, from 12s. 5d. to 19s. 2d. per load—approximately 54 per cent.

Crown Law.—Supreme Court fees from the 16th July, 1954, were increased approximately 2 per cent.

Lands and Surveys.—Survey fees under the Land Act have been increased by 33⅓ per cent., September, 1954. Maps and plans for sale have been increased approximately 50 per cent., 5s. to 7s. 6d.

Agriculture. — 1st July, 1953 — Orchard registration, 1s. to 2s.; 1st March, 1954—Grade herd testing, 5s. to 7s. 6d.; 1st August, 1955—Dipping cattle, 9d. to 1s.; Spraying cattle, 1s. to 1s. 6d.

Kalgoorlie Abattoirs.—From the 14th September, 1953, slaughtering fees were increased by 33⅓ per cent., ¾d. to 1d. per head dressed weight.

Child Welfare. — Maintenance charges on account wards in the reception home increased from £1 per week to £2 10s. per week—150 per cent.

Native Welfare.—Accommodation at Bennett House increased from 15s. per week to £2 16s. 8d. per week for adults, who could pay. Generally the visitors are indigent and no charge is made.

Factories.—The schedule of fees was increased with parliamentary approval approximately 200 per cent.

Homes.—Accommodation charge for pensioners advanced approximately 14 per cent. from £2 5s. 6d. per week to £2 12s. per week. This is in accordance with the pension increase.

Medical.—Consultation charges per visit for North-West doctors increased from 10s. 6d. to 15s.—approximately 43 per cent. Hospital fees increased by approximately 70 per cent., and out patient fees from 2s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. per visit.

Public Health.—The range of pathological fees was amended from 10s. 6d. to £1 1s. to 17s. to £6 6s. Schedule of meat inspection charges was increased 50 per cent.

Mental Health.—Accommodation at —Heathcote, £1 7s. to £2 4s. 1d., 63 per cent. Claremont—General, 16s. to £1 2s. 5d., 40 per cent.; service, £1 4s. to £1 9s. 11d., 25 per cent.

Railways.—From the 1st October, 1953, the freight rates were increased by an average of 33⅓ per cent.

Trams and Ferries.—Recent increases provide for 25 per cent. on trams and 50 per cent. on ferries.

Registry.—Searches, 2s. 6d. to 3s., 20 per cent.; certified copies, 5s. to 7s. 6d., 50 per cent.; extracts, 2s. 6d. to 3s., 20 per cent.; change of name, 5s. to 7s. 6d., 50 per cent. Registration of births, deaths and marriages within 14 days have been exempt from the payment of a fee. Previously it was 1s., 1s., and 2s. 6d., respectively.

Fremantle Harbour Trust. — The scale of charges has been increased approximately 100 per cent. since February, 1953.

Country Areas Water Supply.—The rate has been increased by 3d. in the £, which approximates 16 per cent.

Public Works.—Water Boards—An increase of approximately 20 per cent. for the year 1956. Country Lands—The rate has advanced from 4½d. to 5d. an acre. Irrigation—The irrigation rate of 11s. 3d. per acre was increased to 22s. 6d. per acre, the latter providing for two free waterings, whilst previously it was one. Increase approximates 7s. 6d. per acre or 66⅔ per cent. Drainage—The charge has been increased by approximately 25 per cent.

Metropolitan Water Supply.—Sewerage and Drainage Rates—Net increase of 2d. in the £ on annual valuation. Excess Water Charges—Increase of 9d. per 1,000 gallons.

Treasury.—A turnover tax of 1½ per cent. was imposed on off-course and on-course bookmakers on the 1st August, 1955. This replaced the winning bets tax of 2½ per cent., which was imposed by the previous Government and operated from the 5th January, 1953, to the 31st July, 1955.

(3) Yes, but details have not yet been finalised.

POLIOMYELITIS.

Cases during Last Four Weeks.

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Health:

How many people have been reported to be suffering from poliomyelitis during the last four weeks?

The MINISTER replied:

During the four weeks ended Friday, the 31st August, 1956, two cases of poliomyelitis were notified to the Commissioner of Public Health. Both were adults from the country and the disease was reported to be of the non-paralytic type.

TRAFFIC.

(a) Number of Accidents and Cost of Treatment.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What was the number of casualties as the result of traffic accidents in the metropolitan area treated at the Royal

Perth and Fremantle Public Hospitals for the years ended the 30th June, 1952, 1954 and 1956?

(2) What was the total cost of treating the casualties referred to in No. (1) for each of the years ended the 30th June, 1952, 1954 and 1956?

(3) (a) Was any repayment of this cost received from patients or other sources?

(b) If so, how much and from what sources?

The MINISTER replied:

Statistical data of this nature is not recorded by hospital authorities and it is regretted that the information is not available for the hon. member.

In addition, I might explain that it is not that I do not want to supply the information. It is merely that we have not the statistical data available. When an accident occurs, the victim or patient is admitted purely and simply as another hospital patient and is not specifically recorded as an accident patient.

It would be possible, no doubt, to obtain the information by making a search of the records of the police and other courts and follow up such information to the hospital. However, that would be a very long and tedious job. As I have said, we are anxious to give an answer to this question, but in the circumstances it is not practicable.

(b) Cost of Motorcycle Patrols and Fines Received.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What was the total cost, including maintenance and salaries, to maintain the police motorcycle patrols for the years ended the 30th June, 1952, 1954, and 1956?

(2) What was the amount of fines, exclusive of parking fines, received for traffic offences in the metropolitan area for the years ended the 30th June, 1952, 1954, and 1956?

(3) Is it considered that there is a sufficient number of police motorcycle patrolmen employed to patrol the highways in the metropolitan area, knowing that there were 19,338 traffic accidents during the year ended June, 1956?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 3th June, 1952—£26,281.
30th June, 1954—£44,717.
30th June, 1956—£47,482.

(2) Year ended the 30th June, 1952—£21,800.
Year ended the 30th June, 1954—£51,077.
Year ended the 30th June, 1956—£85,600.

(3) This matter is receiving attention. However, from my personal observations it would require almost as many patrolmen as there are motorists to enforce complete adherence to traffic regulations in respect of which, fortunately, only a very small percentage of breaches result in accidents.

(c) Use of Lanes on Causeway.

Mr. MAY (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he give consideration to a suggestion that a suitable neon sign be erected in a prominent position at the eastern end of the Causeway directing motorists to keep to the same traffic lane over the Causeway until reaching the western end? This is mainly for the benefit of country motorists who may not be so well acquainted with the conditions laid down by the Traffic Department.

The MINISTER replied:

Consideration will be given to the suggestion, but I say that with complete reservation. This does not imply that the suggestion will be given effect to. As the member for Collie is no doubt aware, attention is being given to very many aspects of traffic control at the present moment, and it is not desired, above all other things, to make final decisions or to instruct the public in certain behaviour unless it conforms with the ultimate pattern. Control of vehicles both approaching and crossing the Causeway is one of the matters to be further investigated before any final decisions are made.

(d) Minor Offences and Fines.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) How many charges have been made respecting minor offences under the Traffic Act?

(2) What is the total sum received from this source of revenue?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 25,257 charges received from the Police Department up to the 31st August, 1956.

(2) £13,237 to the 31st August, 1956, in respect of 21,308 offences. The prescribed period has not expired for the balance of the charges received.

HOUSING.

(a) Details re Certain Houses, Albany.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Are the following houses in Albany under the control of the State Housing Commission—

No. 12 Hanrahan Road;
No. 10 Sims Street;
Nos. 4 and 25 Preiss Street?

(2) If the answer is "Yes," who are the tenants and on what date did they occupy the houses?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) 12 Hanrahan-rd.—Vacated on the 20th August, 1956. At present being renovated. Will be re-let on the 10th September, 1956.

10 Sims-st.—Vacated by B. G. Myers on the 27th August, 1956. Re-let on the 3rd September, 1956 to J. E. O'Donoghue.

4 Priess-st.—Purchaser J. A. McLeod, the 18th July, 1952.

25 Priess-st.—Vacated about the 25th August, 1956. Re-let on the 3rd September, 1956, to F. Meek.

(b) Movement of Tenants, Maniana.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many of the tenants at Maniana have been removed from housing settlements previously used for evicted persons?

(2) From which settlements were they moved?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 11 families out of 300.

(2) 6 ex Allawah Grove.

3 ex Wembley.

2 ex Woodman's Point.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

List of Minor Changes.

Hon. A. F. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact that the list of the minor changes in the Local Government Bill was sent to local authorities?

(2) If so, why was not such a list provided to members of Parliament?

(3) Will he supply such a list to members at once?

The MINISTER replied:

A list was sent to local authorities throughout the State, but I admit that such a list was not provided to members of Parliament.

Hon. A. F. Watts: And will it be?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, I will give that undertaking.

SPECIAL UNEMPLOYMENT AID.

(a) Tabling Correspondence with Federal Government.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Premier:

Further to the correspondence between himself and the Acting Prime Minister, which he laid on the Table of the House, has he received a further letter from the Acting Prime Minister, dated the 31st August, 1956, and, if so, will he lay the letter on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER: Before replying to this question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask your permission to repeat it to the House so that members will appreciate what is in the question. This is the question asked of me by the Leader of the Opposition—

> Further to the correspondence between himself and the Acting Prime Minister which he laid on the Table of the House, has he received a further letter from the Acting Prime Minister, dated the 31st August, 1956, and, if so, will he lay the letter on the Table of the House?

It is a remarkable thing, is it not, that the Leader of the Opposition should not only have knowledge of a letter which has passed between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government, but also should have knowledge of the date on which the letter was sent? This information could come from only one of two sources: Either direct from Sir Arthur Fadden at Canberra or some Commonwealth officer at Canberra who has knowledge of what has happened, or from someone in my own office.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is most certainly not the case.

The PREMIER: I am not suggesting that it is. I am pointing out to the members of the House and the public generally, that the Leader of the Opposition is in possession of information that he should not be in possession of. It is fairly obvious that someone in the Federal Ministry is maintaining a very close direct liaison with the Leader of the Opposition in connection with this matter.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It did not come from a Federal Minister either! You keep on guessing!

The PREMIER: Then it came from a source from which it should not have come. It is a remarkable situation, is it not, that the Leader of the Opposition should have information about correspondence passing between the two Governments before I have it?

The Minister for Transport: It is a scandal, that is what it is.

The PREMIER: Of course, it has been clear for quite a while that the Federal Government—or someone acting on its behalf—has had the closest of relations with the members of the Liberal Party in this House. It has also been clear to me that the members of the Liberal Party in this House have been doing their best to sabotage the application of this Government to the Commonwealth Government for special financial help to relieve unemployment in Western Australia.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I asked the Premier if he would table the latest correspondence. I gave the date of the Acting Prime Minister's letter.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Is the hon. member asking a question?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. I would again ask the Premier:

> In view of the urgency of this matter, is he prepared to table this correspondence?

The PREMIER replied:

Before answering that question, I would like to ask the Leader of the Oppposition from which source he obtained this information?

The Minister for Transport: Stand up like a man!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: From Canberra.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition has now placed everybody at Canberra under suspicion.

Mr. Johnson: They are all as dishonest as he is!

The PREMIER: The reply to the question about the tabling of the correspondence is that I shall certainly be willing to table the letter and also a copy of the reply which I will send to it.

(b) Amplification of Press Report.

Mr. NALDER (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he clarify the position in regard to the following extract that was taken from an article which appeared in the country edition of "The West Australian" dated the 1st September:—

> Sir Arthur Fadden stated that he induced the Loan Council to give special consideration to the position in which the W.A. Government found itself through its own fault and Mr. Hawke had been asked to supply certain information. The replies have been far from satisfactory.

The PREMIER replied:

As I have said before, there seems to be an organised move on the part of the Liberal Party in this State and at Canberra to sabotage the endeavours of the Government in this State to obtain a special financial grant from the Commonwealth Government to relieve unemployment in Western Australia. Correspondence has been passing between the two Governments and the file containing this correspondence was placed upon the Table of the House during the whole of last week, during which time the member for Katanning was absent through sickness. However, I would be quite prepared to allow the hon. member to have a look at the file in my office and he can then see in what respect, if any, the replies which this Government has sent to the Acting Prime Minister are unsatisfactory.

FINGERPRINT SYSTEM.

Procedure by Police Bureau.

Hon. A. F. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Are fingerprints taken of every person charged with an offence?

(2) If not, in what cases are they not taken?

(3) Are experts completely satisfied that no two sets of fingerprints are sufficiently identical as to risk mistaken identity?

(4) If not, what safeguards are available to ensure against mistaken identity?

(5) When fingerprints are taken, is it done before or after conviction?

(6) If the charge is dismissed, are the fingerprint records destroyed and, if not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

The member for Stirling was good enough to give me notice of this question. The answers are as follow:—

(1) No.

(2) Fingerprints are not taken of persons who are not placed in a lock-up. Persons coming under this category would be those arrested persons who were charged and admitted to bail forthwith, without being placed in a lock-up.

(3) Experts are completely satisfied that no two sets of fingerprints are sufficiently identical as to risk mistaken identity.

Since sets of fingerprints are mentioned, then further amplification of the answer is that it is impossible for such a thing to happen when the examination is carried out by an expert, and that examination checked by another expert as is normal fingerprint bureau practice.

If it is intended that the possibility of error between the impressions of a single finger from two different people be considered, then the answer is that no error can possibly occur if existing bureau procedure is adhered to, and that is that there must be 12 of the same identifying features of the same type in their correct sequence and relative position on each, before positive identity is established, and once again identity is not declared unless checked by another expert.

(4) Fingerprint identification is the only infallible form of identification of the human being, and has proven this claim by constant usage over half a century, and the constant daily examination of fingerprints involving millions of sets throughout fingerprint bureaux of the world.

If this form of protection against mistaken identity is not used, then we would have to rely upon personal description details, and/or photographs, and experience has proven that these aids are not completely reliable when used as the sole means of establishing identity.

(5) Fingerprints are taken before conviction, in order that positive establishment of identity may be made with previous convictions, if any exist, in order that the correct record may be presented to the judge, magistrate or justices, when demanded by them after their decision to convict. This identification also protects the individual concerned because his identity has been checked for each conviction by virtue of fingerprints taken in relation to those occasions.

Further, the Prisons Act (See Police Regulation 105, first paragraph) provides, "Every prisoner shall submit himself or herself to be photographed and to have the prints of his or her fingers, measurements and other particulars taken and recorded on reception and discharge; also at any other time when ordered by the Comptroller General of Prisons."

(6) The fingerprint record is ultimately destroyed as provided for under the Prisons Act, (See Police Regulations 105, first paragraph) which continues from the preceding quote, thus:—"Any photographs or fingerprints taken of any person under remand or committed for Trial, who shall not be ultimately convicted shall, with the plates be destroyed, and not recorded."

(7) The fingerprint records are not destroyed immediately but are kept available for a reasonable period because it has been found that many people come to the department for varying periods after their particular case has been dealt with and demand to have their fingerprints produced and destroyed in their sight. In some cases they desire to take them away with them —this latter course is not permitted, but the fingerprint records are produced on demand and burnt in front of the person concerned. We consider that, if we are not able to meet this demand by virtue of the fact that the fingerprints have been destroyed forthwith, doubt may arise in the particular person's mind as to our motives when we cannot produce the fingerprint sets demanded.

All fingerprints of unconvicted persons are withdrawn from the files during routine checks which are made from time to time and destroyed by us because we consider by that time that we will not be called upon by the affected person to produce these records in order that he or she may personally supervise their destruction.

As the answers are lengthy, I shall table a copy for the perusal of the hon. member.

MARKETING OF EGGS.

Introduction of Legislation.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the many and sweeping recommendations made by the Royal Commissioner who inquired into the egg industry, is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation for the marketing of eggs this session?

The MINISTER replied:

The Government and myself, as Minister, are closely investigating the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner as they affect the various subjects which he was asked to investigate. We have not reached the stage of determining whether we will introduce a Bill in respect of eggs this session.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [5.16]: Firstly, let me say that I regret the necessity for continuing the second reading debate on this very important Bill. At this stage I consider the Bill should be withdrawn so as to allow further and more mature consideration of the various aspects involved in it, because, following a meeting of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation yesterday, the Minister was requested by the federation to withdraw the Bill and to call a meeting of all interested parties in order that a round table conference could be held at which certain controversial items could be discussed. I had hoped right up to the present that the Minister might have suggested the withdrawal of the Bill and acceded to the request of the federation.

The Minister for Health: I was not apprised of the union's attitude until this morning.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I realise the Minister was not apprised of its attitude until this morning, but, having been apprised of it, I feel that he could have held the Bill in abeyance so as to allow discussion on certain controversial clauses in it around the table, where these matters could be thrashed out. Does the Minister still desire the Bill to continue in its present form?

The Minister for Health: I would like to hear a few second reading speeches on it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The purposes of the Bill are twofold. The first is to reduce the intake age of trainee nurses from 18 to 17 years, and the second purpose is to delete from the Act the provision that before a nurse can be registered, she must have attained the age of 21 years. The reasons advanced appear to be very sound. The reason for the first objective of the Bill is that the supply of trainee nurses shall be increased substantially, so that the public generally may benefit accordingly. The reason for the second purpose is to delete the phrase "attained the age of 21" from the Act. This would mean that nurses who had completed their three years of training would be able to

register whether or not they were of age and would receive salaries as trained nurses.

When I was first confronted with the Bill and after the Minister had explained the proposals embodied in it, my initial impression was to agree with the purposes of the Bill. Indeed, everyone I spoke to in this House felt the same way. However, as the member who obtained the adjournment of the debate on the second reading, I indulged in some research and I obtained expert advice on the matter. On every occasion that I contacted the experts in this field and obtained their advice, I was informed that the Bill was wrong in concept and it would not achieve what it sought to do. As I proceeded with this research and as I received more and more advice, I was utterly amazed that the views of these experts in the training of nurses had been by-passed.

Perhaps at this stage I should explain that the Nurses Registration Board feels guilty or rather responsible, for this Bill being introduced. The board, in an effort to overcome the anomaly of a young nurse who completed her training at the age of 20 years nine months, or thereabout, was desirous of enabling such a nurse to be granted registration on completion of her training, instead of having to wait until she had attained the age of 21 years. So a request was sent forward to the department, or to the Minister, to ask that the best possible should be done to overcome such an anomaly. That request was exceeded in that the Bill will reduce the intake age to 17 years.

The Minister for Health: Is that your only objection to the Bill?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes.

The Minister for Health: Your only objection?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes. It is felt that by reducing the intake age, a greater number of trainee nurses will result initially, but it will most certainly bring about a bigger wastage. I have a list of the other reasons why it would be very bad for the nursing service and the public generally if the Bill were passed and the age for trainee nurses reduced.

The Minister for Health: This is something traditional. Even the nurses' union does not like changes.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That is not quite fair.

The Minister for Health: I highly respect that union.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Usually the Minister is very considerate. That is why I am surprised he will not give favourable consideration to the postponement of this Bill so as to allow a round table conference to take place.

The Minister for Works: Can you not deal with it in Committee?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister considers that the Bill must go forward.

The Minister for Education: Have you any idea of the loss of prospective trainees due to the intake age being 18 years?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If the Minister listens to my speech, he will get some idea. My first reaction to this Bill was to agree, but as I made inquiries on the various features in the Bill, I found that matrons of hospitals, tutor sisters and the medical profession were unequivocally opposed to the reduction of the intake age of trainee nurses. They unequivocally oppose it, and not one person to whom I spoke was in agreement with it. They all wanted to overcome the anomaly of the nurse who had finished her training just before attaining the age of 21 years and being unable to become registered. They wanted to enable that nurse to be registered immediately after completing her training, but they also considered that the reduction of the intake age was not in the best interests of the trainee nurses themselves, the nursing profession or the public.

The Minister for Health: If something is not done, before very long we will have to start training young men.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Let me say again that I am surprised that the expert advice I have consulted had not been sought before introducing this particular provision of the Bill which prompts this controversy. I am surprised at that. Were the parties in this House reversed, and had this Bill been introduced by a Liberal Minister, the member taking the adjournment from this side would have done exactly the same as I have. He would have gone to the same sources that I went to. He would have had to change his mind, as I have had to change mine.

The Royal Australian Nursing Federation is quite adamant on this point. As the Minister has rejected its application for a deferment of the Bill in order to allow it to be considered in a more mature manner, it has requested me to oppose the measure. The federation feels there is no other course open. Last night I received a message at home to the effect that there would be no need for me to speak to the Bill today because a request was going forward to the Minister this morning asking him to withdraw the Bill. The Minister would not agree and, of course, the secretary of the federation contacted me and said, "I am sorry, but you will have to go forward and oppose the Bill. There is no other course open to us." The reason given as to why the reduced intake age is faulty in concept is that a nurse taken on at 17 years is emotionally unstable.

The Minister for Health: She would be more stable than a boy of 17.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister contends that girls are more stable than boys at that age, but that has nothing to do with this question at all.

Mr. Hall: Some girls travel around the world at 17 years of age.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That also has nothing to do with the question. I would point out that I am not speaking in any Opposition frame of mind. I would like to convey the fact that I am passing on the impressions and feelings of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation, which is opposed to this particular measure for the reasons I have stated.

The Minister for Health: The intake age is now 17½ years. Will the six months make much difference?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I think the six months will make a great deal of difference, and so does the nursing federation. I would say at this stage—and it was pointed out to me by a number of people whom I contacted regarding the Bill—that 17½ years of age is too young. It is too immature an age for many girls to take up the profession. That, of course, does not apply to all girls. At 15 years of age some girls may be stable enough emotionally to take up the profession, but we must take the average. When it is contended that girls around this age are more mature than boys, and when it is said that girls travel around the world at this age, I would point out that those aspects stand quite apart from the meaning I am trying to convey. The nursing profession is one that deals with human life and psychological upsets.

The Minister for Health: Boys of 18 flew kites over Germany.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not think the Minister realises what I am trying to convey; which is that entering this profession is different from going into an office in the city, or becoming a trainee teacher, or taking up any of the 101 occupations that a girl can enter. This profession stands alone in its importance both to the people taking it up and to the public generally. It is a profession that deals with human lives and with making sick people well.

The Minister for Health: Lady doctors qualify at 21.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister will have an opportunity of replying to the debate. I say again that the first and most important point is that at 17 years of age girls are not emotionally stable enough to enter the profession. They have not that full sense of responsibility which is so essential. By reducing the age to 17, we would close the gap between the time girls leave school and the time they are able to enter the nursing profession. The Minister and the department desire that that gap should be closed in order that girls will not drift to other occupations but it is contended by all those whom I have contacted that it is far better for girls to wait and have that gap widened rather than that it should be closed, because at that age girls have not had sufficient experience of well people to understand how to treat the sick.

That leads me to the second point I have been asked to indicate to this House. It appears that it is desired that these girls should have greater experience outside the home and the school environment before going into the nursing profession, and so it is far better not to close that gap between the time of leaving school and entering the profession. In a number of instances girls are admitted at 17½. The regulations lay down 18 as the intake age; but if the board otherwise approves, girls may be admitted at a lesser age. That is how 17½ came to be adopted in certain instances.

With regard to the point of either closing that gap, as the Minister would have us do, or widening it to enable the girls to become more mature, it is significant that the nursing profession itself, in its higher level of thought, is considering putting girls in the fairly early period of their nursing training through some short course—not a full course—in midwifery, in order that they might understand something of the treatment of well people, something of the demands of the normal person and what happens to normal people under fairly normal circumstances. The point made to me was that these girls should have an opportunity to know the outside world a little, apart from their home and school environment, before entering the profession.

The Minister for Health: We will not get them then. They will go into other professions.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I think the Minister is wrong.

The Minister for Health: No. It will be only a few years before we will have to close some country hospitals because of a shortage of nurses.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Another significant fact is that recently, in Britain, which is also very short of nurses, the intake age of trainee nurses was advanced from 17½ to 18 because of some of the reasons I am putting forward. It is felt that the average girl of 17 is physically immature to meet the demands of the strenuous work required of a nurse. She can also be psychologically or mentally immature in her approach to the job. One has only to speak to tutor sisters or matrons with a wealth of experience in the training of nurses to appreciate how they feel about this matter.

It is contended very soundly that with the great increase in technical knowledge imparted in the training schools, plus the apprenticeship policy, under which a nurse carries out eight hours' manual work daily, a young nurse is incapable of shouldering the responsibilities expected of her. The sisters have intimated to me that with

the reduced age desired by the Minister, their responsibility in watching over these young girls would be too great. They consider that more trained staff would be required to supervise the girls in their work in hospitals, and therefore the purpose of the Minister would be defeated.

The Minister for Health: Years ago they did not receive the tuition that is imparted today, and yet we had a lot that were good.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Technical knowledge is demanded of these nurses and there are higher standards of nursing. The Minister knows that. The federation believes that while there would be a bigger intake by a reduction of the age, there would also be a bigger wastage.

The Minister for Health: Why?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Because the girls are not mature enough at that age to face responsibility, and the severe psychological shocks imposed would be too great for many of them to bear. Various schemes have been evolved to try to overcome this difficulty. For instance, in the Newcastle hospital in New South Wales there is a system of cadet nurses under which a girl may enter a hospital at an earlier age. What the age is I cannot say at the moment. It is probably 17, but it could be 16½. These girls go into the hospital as cadet nurses to absorb the atmosphere, to do work associated with nursing, and to be given elementary lessons in various aspects of the profession.

In the Fremantle hospital a system has been evolved along similar lines. Girls desirous of taking up nursing go into the hospital as ward runners, do jobs in the hospital, and have lectures in elementary nursing subjects to fit themselves to become fully qualified at the appropriate age for entry into the nursing profession.

It has been pointed out to me that some hospitals take in trainee nurses at 17½. The Minister says that six months will make very little difference, but the nursing profession feels that it would make a great deal of difference, and it prefers that girls be accepted for training at a later age. One matron insisted that they should be 18 before they began their training as nurses in hospitals. The regulation that appeared in the "Government Gazette" on the 13th October, 1950, reads as follows:—

> Applicants for admission as trainees into an approved training hospital shall, unless the board otherwise approves, be at least 18 years of age, except (a) in the case of a trainee as a midwifery nurse in which case, unless the board in any case approves otherwise, she shall be at least 21 years of age, and (b) a trainee as a tuberculosis nurse in which case she shall be at least 18 years of age, and (c) a trainee as a mothercraft nurse in which case she shall be not less than 17 years of age.

The Minister for Health: Why did they not make it 19 or 20 while they were about it?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Some reasonable age had to be fixed. I think the Minister is being facetious. I have been asked to point out that the Royal Australian Nursing Federation feels responsible to a certain extent for the introduction of this Bill. Nurses must be 21 before obtaining registration. This means that girls who begin their training at 17½ and pass before they are 21 experience some delay in being registered. The federation made a recommendation to the department to overcome that, and the recommendation triggered off the proposal for a reduction in the intake age, with which the federation disagrees. I have also been asked to point out that the federation represents a very large cross-section of nurses in Western Australia and throughout the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Health: It will have to carry the responsibility for an insufficient number of nurses to go round.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I know that the Minister, the Government, and the departmental officials are alarmed that in certain country districts hospitals are not staffed as adequately as they should be, and this step has been proposed to try to overcome that situation. I am not denying that for one moment. I am not standing in an Opposition frame of mind alone, and anybody who has listened to me intelligently will realise that.

But the question of adequate staff in country hospitals is a problem on its own. After having tackled this subject over the weekend, I feel that one way of overcoming the shortage would be to provide better amenities for nurses in country hospitals. Another way would be to give a slightly higher remuneration to nurses who have to go to such hospitals, and I put forward that suggestion for the Minister's earnest consideration.

The Minister for Health: That has already been done.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Apparently not substantially enough. I remember standing in this House shortly after I came here and receiving the approbation of the teaching profession by and large by suggesting that before we could attract to that profession people of merit and worth, who would give something to the Education Department, we would have to pay them higher salaries and provide them with better amenities.

The Minister for Health: They have to go where they are sent.

The Minister for Education: There were some good ones there in those days.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If we were to adopt the intake age of 17 years, nurses at 18 would be in their second year and as such would be in charge of 30-bed wards. Does not the Minister think that that is a very young age for any person to be placed in charge of a ward of 30 beds?

The Minister for Health: Not necessarily; a senior nurse could be put in charge.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I suggest that such a person would be far too immature. I was pointing out, before the Minister interfered with my train of thought, that the Australian Nursing Federation represents a large cross-section of the nursing profession throughout Australia and the opinion of that body is valued very highly. Its members are experts in their field of training nurses and they are people of whom we should take a great deal of notice. I am surprised that the Minister and the department have not contacted these people because the advice given would have been invaluable. So I suggest to the Minister that he would be wise, even at this stage, to withdraw the Bill instead of allowing it to proceed.

The Minister for Health: There is no need to withdraw it; we can amend it in Committee.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Does the Minister hold out hope that he will agree to amendments being made to the measure?

The Minister for Health: I have not yet.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Unless the Minister is agreeable to the legislation being amended, I still suggest that he withdraw it and introduce it at a later stage in the session so that the items I have mentioned, and the information I have received from the Australian Nursing Federation can be discussed in a sensible fashion at a round-table conference. I would say that the Minister has had some "duff" advice from his colleague sitting alongside him.

The Minister for Works: This jumping to conclusions is a very dangerous practice.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is a practice that the Minister for Works has indulged in on more than one occasion—

The Minister for Works: With success when I do it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: —with dire results to himself. However, I would like to reiterate the statement that I am not standing up here and just opposing this measure for the sake of opposing it. I would much rather be able to get up and agree with the whole of it; but, owing to the research I have undertaken, I have found that all those to whom I have spoken are opposed to reducing the intake age for trainee nurses. So I suggest that members should give consideration to the advice of experts in this field because they should know what they are talking about.

The Minister for Health: I have been congratulated, outside, on bringing down a Bill which will enable us to train sufficient nurses.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Only a layman would have congratulated the Minister; he ought to discuss the matter with the experts who know something about it. I have tried to point that out to the Minister, but he is being most obtuse about the whole thing.

The Minister for Works: Is it your idea that at 17 years of age a girl has emotional instability but at 17½ she has not?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am suggesting that the extra six months is of great value to them if they are away from the home and school environment. They can gain outside experience during that time. Of course, the Minister for Works poses such a question and thinks it is the answer to everything. The Australian Nursing Federation suggests that in the case of the Fremantle hospital it would mean a difference of twelve months instead of six months. Six months or twelve months outside of the home and school environment means a great deal in human experience. It means that in that time these girls can mix with well people before they commence to help in the treatment of the sick. I hope that other members will speak to this measure and in the interests of the nursing profession, and of the public generally, I trust that the Government will not proceed with its proposal to reduce the intake age of trainee nurses. I oppose the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Sewell, debate adjourned.

BILL—CORNEAL AND TISSUE GRAFTING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

MR. CROMMELIN (Claremont) [5.50]: A Bill somewhat similar to that now before members was introduced into this House about two years ago and I believe, because of certain clauses included in it, the measure did not pass. Before dealing with the Bill as a whole, I would like to say that this type of legislation, in the modern world in which we live, is absolutely essential. In the Bill reference is made to eyes and tissues of the body and naturally, when dealing with a measure such as this, one endeavours to learn a little about these terms and to find out why eyes and tissues of the body are required.

From the inquiries I made, I have learned a good deal. For instance, I am led to believe that skin is classed as a tissue of the body and I was quoted the

case of the badly burned man coming into a hospital but, because of his having been severely burnt, the surgeons could not take sufficient skin from the body. Had the surgeon in charge had available to him preserved skin, he could have utilised it to keep the man alive. Preserved skin does not remain a permanent graft on the body but lasts for approximately six weeks and during that time it gives the patient a chance to recover to such an extent that some of his own skin can be used as a graft.

When I first read the Bill, I was a little worried as to the number of tissues and eyes that would be required in this State; but I have been informed that, so far as tissues are concerned, it is expected that the number to be used in the next twelve months will be only 24 and the total number of eyes required for the same period will be a maximum of 50. If only 50 are required in the next twelve months, only another 50 are likely to be required for the following twelve months; and in two years' time the demand for eyes should automatically decrease because people who need the graftings today will be cured and and there will not be a repetition of those cases. Where accidents to eyes are serious, usually a lot more than just the corneal operation is required and, consequently, it is only reasonable to assume that the demand in this respect will not increase to any great extent.

I feel that the Bill in principle is essential and that we should make sure it is passed on this occasion. It should conform to the requirements of the medical profession but, at the same time, if the provisions of the measure are kept within bounds, no logical objection can be taken to it by the ordinary man and woman in the street. I am sure few Christians object to it and, in fact, I was able to discuss the matter with two ministers and they said quite frankly that they would be quite happy to give their eyes should the occasion arise. However, I think that the Bill should be amended to make sure that nothing can be put in its way to delay its passage.

In the measure there is a reference to the fact that a man, during his last illness, may give away his eyes. But let me quote the case of a man who goes to hospital with a severe heart attack and, realising that he is about to die, says in front of two witnesses, "You may have my eyes when I die." Now, for the sake of argument, let us say that within a month he recovers to such a degree that he is able to walk home and, on the way, he suffers another heart attack and dies. In such a case it would not be possible to say that the promise made in the hospital was a binding contract, because it was not made during his last illness. So I think the measure should be amended to cover that aspect.

Further on in the measure there is a phrase that the person in charge of the body "has reason to believe." Surely we could get a better phrase than that. I could say that I have reason to believe lots of things, but I do not consider that good phraseology in a measure of this nature. Further on in the Bill there is the term "a relative." I think that is far too wide a term in this instance, and that we should be more specific. "A relative" could mean a fourth or fifth cousin and I cannot see that it would be any concern of such a person.

The Minister for Health: It still gives the right to the spouse to object.

Mr. CROMMELIN: Yes, but the relative might be miles removed! Subclause (6) is not very clear and I cannot understand whether or not the hospital will be made a responsible authority. If the measure sets out to give the hospital authorities the right to give eyes, why not be quite definite and say that the management of the hospital has that authority?

The Minister for Health: So long as there is no objection, it has that authority.

Mr. CROMMELIN: That is not the way it reads to me. I think it is a bit ambiguous and in an important measure such as this there should be no ambiguity. If the Minister does not want to give that authority to the hospital management, why leave that particular part in the Bill; but if he desires it to have that authority, then let us make it perfectly clear.

The Minister for Health: I think someone should have the authority.

Mr. CROMMELIN: Is it given to the hospital management?

The Minister for Health: Where there is no objection.

Mr. CROMMELIN: Exactly. When I first read it, I thought the measure would affect a tremendous number of people, but after I discussed the matter with others, I found that there will be only a small demand for cornea and tissue grafting. I can see no reason why the measure should not be passed and I will give it my support with the reservation that when we reach the Committee stage, I shall move a few small amendments in the hope of making doubly sure that it will suit both the public and the medical profession, who so badly need it.

MR. WILD (Dale) [6.0]: I only want briefly to support the measure. Over the years I have often considered the matter, and, in fact, have debated it from time to time with one or two of my friends. I have asked which would be worse, to be born blind and not know what the world around us is like, or to be stricken with blindness. One or two of my friends from the Blind

Institute have told me that it is considered, among those unfortunate people, that those who have been able to see and who have slowly lost their sight, suffer much more than those who do not know what is going past them, because they have had no sight whatever.

This measure is a most important step forward in an endeavour, by the profession, to remove the possibility of some poor unfortunate people finally becoming totally blind. We are far behind other parts of the world in this respect. I had a discussion with one of our leading specialists just after the measure was introduced last week and he told me that Western Australia is one of the very few parts of the world where the operation mentioned in the Act can not be carried out. I understand that this became law in New South Wales only about 18 months ago and that this measure follows along similar lines.

We should do all we can in the interests of those people afflicted with blindness to see that their sight is restored and preserved to them for the rest of their lives. I agree with the member for Claremont in his reference to relatives being able to lodge an objection. I can understand the spouse doing that, but I cannot believe that it should be done by a second cousin or some distant relative.

If this were possible, it might mean that somebody would be denied the opportunity of receiving a cornea and thus having his sight restored. I hope the Minister will give the matter careful consideration. I think we might even go so far as to allow objection from the mother or father, but I do not think we should extend it to any relative of the person so affected. I support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [6.3]: I would like to thank the member for Claremont and the member for Dale for their kindly references to the Bill. I think it is a most important measure and that it will be a great help. At the present time, I have five or six letters asking which is the best way for the people concerned to will their eyes. They are quite satisfied to do this and they wish to help those who are blind. I had one such letter from an old lady at the Mt. Henry home. She said she was getting old and she did not think she had much longer to live. She pointed out that she did not wear glasses and would like to leave her eyes to somebody who might need them.

There is also the case of the mother who had not seen her children for many years and who, owing to the generosity of some person making a cornea available, now has her sight restored by 30 per cent. and is waiting to look at her children whom she has not seen for 30 odd years. When we consider the matter, we find that blood is a tissue, and we all know that blood transfusion has saved hundreds of lives. That, of course, is done voluntarily and while the person is living. I have no objection to an amendment with respect to distant relations, but I wonder whether it would not be as well to leave the Bill as it is and to amend it later.

It was because a similar Bill was amended last year and a clause inserted whereby it was necessary to obtain the consent of relatives after death, that I dropped the measure. It would have been impossible in that form. So if we get the Bill through, I might agree to an amendment along the lines suggested, extending it perhaps to the spouse, mother, father, brother or sister. Other relatives could probably be cut out. Otherwise it might prove embarrassing for people who would like to help some unfortunate person who had lost his or her sight.

Mr. Court: Do you agree with the figures advanced by the member for Claremont as to the incidence of tissues and cornea being sought?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have not gone into the statistical side of it.

Mr. Court: It is rather interesting because if the demand is so small, the present Bill would cover the situation.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It would. There might be something in those figures, but I have not investigated them. It is a question of helping people who are not able to help themselves. I am getting on in years myself and it is possible that my sight will probably get dim, but I would have no objection to my body being used to help those who might need it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Not too soon, we hope.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Leader of the Opposition has said at one stage that there are no morals involved. Tissues are not morals, so everything is all right.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authorisation for use of eyes and other tissues:

Mr. COURT: I wanted to make some observations on this clause arising from comments of the member for Claremont when he expressed some concern at the degree to which relatives far removed from the deceased could object. The hon. member has returned to the Chamber and I will give him the opportunity to move his amendment.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I move an amendment—

> That the words "during his last illness" in line 11, page 1, be struck out with a view to inserting the words "within six months preceding death."

I do so because I question what one's last illness is, particularly when it applies to a man who enters a hospital because of a heart attack and during his stay there says that he would donate his eyes. He then recovers from his heart attack and, as he is living close to the hospital, he proceeds to walk home and suffers another heart attack from which he dies. It is reasonable to assume that when he said he would donate his eyes, it was not said during his last illness. His last illness was surely when he died on his way home. I feel there will be a loophole in the Bill if my amendment is not accepted.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I move an amendment—

> That the words "within six months preceding death" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

Mr. OLDFIELD: We will get ourselves into bother if this goes through. I would like to know how this is going to be policed or who is going to say that the man dropped dead at the specified time. The Bill has been framed almost word for word along the lines of a similar Bill introduced two years ago. An amendment was moved relative to that part of the measure which referred to consent being given in writing. Anyone would be able to take a body and use it for the purposes which they believed to be the wishes of the deceased.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Just prior to the tea suspension, I was pointing out that I did not feel it would be advisable to insert the words proposed because if they were included it would, in fact, undo what good we have just done. I suggest it might be preferable for the mover to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I ask permission to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I think it would be better to have no time limit at all. Clause 2 (1) of the Bill reads—

> If any person, either in writing at any time, or orally in the presence of two or more witnesses during his last illness, has expressed a request that his eyes or other tissues of his body be used for therapeutic purposes after his death, the party lawfully in possession of his body after his death may, unless he has reason to believe that the request was subsequently withdrawn, authorise the removal of the eyes or other tissues from the body for use for those purposes.

I can see that the insertion of those words would have made it confusing. Now the member for Claremont has made it very clear and I do not think there will be any confusion. After a person has made his will, irrespective of time, that will should be carried out.

Clause. as amended, put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [7.35]: It is my intention to support the second reading of this Bill and I consider that all the members of my party feel much the same way about it as I do. The Minister was very clear in his introduction of this Bill. He told the House that this legislation was passed in 1947 and at that time there was a considerable amount of confused thinking by the wheat growers of Australia. We found that the various States had different methods which they thought would be best to solve the difficulties in which the wheat growers of Australia then found themselves.

Therefore, the Government, in its wisdom, decided to pass legislation which has remained on the statute book for approximately 10 years. It has never been proclaimed because after the passing of the measure, the Australian wheat growers, through the Australian Wheat Growers' Federation, decided on a policy which was to the satisfaction of the great majority of growers in the States, after which the necessary legislation was passed by the Commonwealth Government to provide for wheat stabilisation. Later on, of course, there was the International Wheat Agreement.

I think it would be only fair to myself to say that at no time did I favour an Australia-wide wheat growers' stabilisation scheme. I was supported in such an attitude by at least two authorities, Sir John Teasdale, and the then president of the wheat section of the old Primary Producers' Association, Mr. Ken Jones. The arguments which we put forward at that time have been justified by what has happened in the interim. We were of the opinion that with an ever rising market the wheat growers were doing something very much against their own interests to enter into either of those two schemes.

When speaking in the House quite recently, I mentioned to what extent they had contributed to the economy of Australia by entering into those schemes. From

memory, I think it was somewhere in the vicinity of approximately £230,000,000 which the wheat growers received less—because they entered this scheme—than they would have received had they adopted the open market. In the interim, I think the wheat growers of Australia contributed very much and the wheat growers of Western Australia contributed something more than £3,000,000, on the average over the period that we have had controlled marketing.

The position is such today that prices are dropping and the transport charges overseas are increasing, particularly when we realise that only two years ago chartering could be procured to take wheat from here to England for 75s. per ton and now it is 275s. per ton. That makes the position so much more difficult and without some form of Government security under this scheme—much as I personally dislike a stabilisation scheme or any controls in this industry—I know very well that if the wheat growers had the opportunity to decide by ballot, they would show an overwhelming majority in favour of a continuance of the stabilisation scheme.

The very fact that we have this legislation on the statute book means that whatever Government may be in power during the next five years, if it decided, as I should like to see done, to adopt a Western Australian marketing scheme, then the authority is here to do it. I do not think there is any need for me to speak further on this matter, and I support the second reading of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [7.45]: I rise to support the measure. The Minister clearly and simply explained the object of the Bill, namely to include in the definition of "crops" for the purpose of crop liens, the word "tobacco." It is just as simple as that. It is a measure which acknowledges the importance of the tobacco industry, and it will be welcomed by the tobacco growers and by the various firms and financial houses which deal with the financing of tobacco crops. I have no further comment to make other than to support the inclusion of this word to make a desirable amendment to the definition of "crops."

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [7.46]: It is surprising to me that tobacco has not previously been included in the schedule covered by a bill of sale, and I offer no objection to the amendment, but I believe that the Act could well come up for further revision. The usual time for a bill of sale is three years, but I feel that the time has come when this period should be extended to, say, five years. Furthermore, the limit of time for a bill of sale to be re-registered should be increased. The period of 14 days, or seven days in some circumstances, is not sufficient. I realise that the re-registration of a bill of sale brings in certain revenue to the Government, but I would prefer to see a period longer than the three years which applies at present. I feel that the Government could introduce a measure to extend the time of a bill of sale to, say, five years.

The Minister for Lands: When does the Act expire? I have not got it before me.

Mr. Court: It is not the Act which expires, but the bills of sale registered under the Act.

Mr. BOVELL: Each period a bill of sale has to be re-registered, and this causes a lot of work for financial and other institutions. It also causes a lot of inconvenience. A declaration has to be signed before a justice of the peace or a commissioner for declarations, and it has then to be forwarded to the appropriate office for re-registration. It is time that the period was extended from three years to five years. If, as I say, the Government considers it may lose some revenue as a result, the costs or fees for re-registration could be increased. Usually speaking, however, the period of three years is not long enough, and it could well be extended to five years. I have no objection to tobacco being included in the items which bills of sale can cover. I cannot understand why the position has been allowed to go on for as long as it has.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [7.49]: I agree with the remarks of the member for Vasse in relation to the re-registration of bills of sale; at least as far as it applies to agricultural bills of sale. I think the period could readily be extended. I draw to the Minister's attention—I think the member for Vasse will agree with me here—to the fact that whilst the period of three years is too short for an agricultural bill of sale, it could be left for bills of sale covering items like household goods.

Mr. Bovell: I agree there. I was referring to agricultural matters.

Mr. JOHNSON: I know the hon. member was referring to the type of bill of sale that is used as a security, in particular for bank loans. The job of re-registering, preparing memorials and going into details including the interest up to

the date of re-registration, every three years, for bills of sale which, in some cases, have lasted for 20 years, does seem to be excessive. What the hon. member has suggested would save quite a deal of unnecessary work and I am only too happy to support his remarks in that regard.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [7.50]: I just wish to say in passing that although we do not propose to do anything on this occasion, naturally, we will have a look at the suggestions made by the members for Vasse and Leederville and, perhaps, provide an opportunity next session to do what they require.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [7.54]: When the Minister introduced the Bill he explained that it was to overcome two shortcomings of the present Act, and, personally, I see no objection to the amendments proposed. Both points are more or less technical. The first one deals in three parts with the rights and privileges of departmental officers who have been seconded to the Agriculture Protection Board. When the Act was framed in 1950, provision was made for some rights and privileges under one or two Acts, but for some reason or other several other Acts were not mentioned.

The departmental officers concerned, who have been giving good service to the Agriculture Protection Board, have not had those privileges, and this measure seeks to correct the position. In the deletion of certain words, and the inclusion of others, the Bill, as I see it, does not read straight, and I ask the Minister to look at it. In one place it finishes up, "and/or the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act." I think that should be corrected. Perhaps it is just the way I read it, but I would like the Minister to check it.

The Minister for Lands: Where is it?

Mr. OWEN: It is the first amendment to Section 9 (5) which appears on page 2 of the Bill. The Bill provides, "by substituting for the passage, '—1948 . . . the Public Service Appeal Board Act, 1920; the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act, 1945; ' ; and." It then takes up again with the Act which states "or the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, 1938." I think the word "or" should be deleted. I am referring to line 5 of the particular subsection.

The Minister for Lands: Is that line 5 of the Bill?

Mr. OWEN: No, line 5 of the Act. I think it is only right that these officers should have these benefits and I support that part of the Bill.

The next section which the Bill seeks to amend is that dealing with the provision to sell or to make use of moneys received not only from now onwards, but from the proclamation of the Act in 1951. I was a little bit concerned because I felt it might mean that the Agriculture Protection Board had power to sell land, but on a second look at it, it seems as though the Lands Department will still have the land and will sell it, but will hand over the moneys to the Agriculture Protection Board. I see nothing wrong with that. I think that any moneys provided by the sale of assets, including land which had been used by the Vermin Board and by the Agriculture Protection Board, should be used by the Agriculture Protection Board.

I feel that if it were not so, it could be that, in times of financial stress, as at present, if they were paid into Consolidated Revenue the Treasurer might see fit to use them for some other purpose and the Agriculture Protection Board would be denied that finance. Therefore, it would be unable to carry out the good work which it is doing at the present time. With the exception of the two provisions I have explained, I see nothing wrong with the Bill, and I support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [8.1]: In replying to the hon. member's query relating to the word "and," apparently he thinks, from the wording of Clause 2, that this word is to be transferred into the Act, but this is not so. If the hon. member will read the clause again, he will see that it states—

> by substituting for the passage . . .

which is already in the Act, and we intend to insert the words—

> the Public Service Appeal Board Act, 1920; the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act, 1945;

They are the only words that will be inserted in the Act. The word "and" which follows the words in quotation marks is only required for the purposes of the Bill and will definitely not be inserted in the Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [8.5]: I do not propose to vote against the second reading of this measure but I think there are one or two aspects that should be referred to in order that the House may be perfectly sure of what it is passing and also that it should be given more than a passing glance by the Minister. In introducing the Bill, the Minister for Justice referred to two offences which were indictable and which could be dealt with on summary conviction before justices or a magistrate.

The two offences that he referred to were false statements in regard to births, deaths and marriages and stealing charges. The Minister then went on to say, "Other offences are not affected by the Bill unless otherwise expressly provided by the law relating to the particular case." Of course, other offences are affected by the Bill. There is a whole heap of them, as a close perusal of the Criminal Code will show. There are quite a few indictable offences there which, under its provisions and under limitation in some cases, can be dealt with by justices or by a magistrate.

For example, one of them is that which deals with wilful damage to property—which is to be found in Section 465—and the wilful killing or wounding of an animal capable of being stolen. As I have said, there are many others, so it was not a very clear exposition of the instances which the passage of this Bill would affect when the Minister said, "Other offences are not affected by the Bill unless otherwise expressly provided by the law relating to the particular case." It should be quite obvious to everybody that, at this moment, they are not affected because the Bill is not law. However, there are certain other offences it will affect if the Bill becomes law in due course.

Then again, there is a question which exercises my mind as to whether there should be an unlimited time within which permission is to be given to deal summarily with an indictable offence.

The Minister for Justice: I believe that is the case in England.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That may be so. I have not even inquired. I concern myself, as well as I can, with what is good for the people with whom we are concerned, and I am not too sure that there should be an unlimited time for cases regarded as indictable offences to be dealt with summarily. It is true, in some cases, of course, that a summary jurisdiction can only operate if the defendant or the prisoner does not object. In other cases, however, he can be required to be dealt with summarily, but after a lapse of many years—and do not forget that this does not limit the Bill at all—it proposes to abolish the limitation of six months. In effect, that limitation at present says that if an indictable offence is to be dealt with summarily, it has to be dealt with within six months of the indictable offence. In other words, if one commits a stealing offence today, then sometime in March next is the date after which that offence cannot be dealt with summarily.

The Minister for Justice: That is optional, of course.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: In some cases it is and in some cases it is not. As I see it, it depends on the exact provision of the Criminal Code or another statute that is concerned. If this Bill becomes law, those people who now can be prosecuted only within six months, will be liable to prosecution summarily in 20 years' time. The difference between being prosecuted summarily and not being prosecuted summarily is open to question by the jury. The doubt in my mind is whether this period should be unlimited. I entirely sympathise with the Minister up to a point, but a period of longer than six months is desirable.

The Minister for Justice: It is optional in all cases.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: If the Minister holds that view, he should have another look at the Bill.

The Minister for Justice: That is my legal advice.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I well remember, on another memorable occasion, when I expressed the opinion that the Crown Law draftsman had made a slight error, that the Minister said it was impossible. However, after much argument I induced him to postpone the matter until the next day so that he could refer it to the parliamentary draftsman once more. The following morning the parliamentary draftsman very kindly rang me and said, "You caught me up on an error last night," and I replied, "That is good," and he said, "No, it is extremely bad." So it is not the first time that an error has occurred in a Bill.

In this matter I am not very categorical but I would suggest to the Minister that if he considers it is optional in all cases, he should refer it back to his parliamentary draftsman because I do not think it is optional. If an indictable offence punishable by summary conviction comes under the heading of this Bill when it becomes an Act, I do not think any option will exist. I may be wrong and, then again, the parliamentary draftsman may be wrong, but if the Minister thinks it is a purely optional matter we should have it clear because if that is the case, I withdraw my objection; but if it is not, I suggest there still ought to be some limitation. I propose, when the need arises, to submit such an amendment in Committee.

I do not think I need say any more about the Bill except perhaps this: The conclusions I have reached have been arrived at after considerable investigation because I thought the Bill was drafted in rather a peculiar manner. If members will look at the measure carefully they will find that paragraph (b) of proposed new Subsection (3), which appears in Clause (2), has been made subject to paragraph (c), and paragraph (c) has been made subject to paragraph (d). As far as I could ascertain, the bones of the matter were the limitations imposed by Section 51 of the Justices Act, which is dealt with in paragraph (d).

Having gone fairly carefully through it, I see what is intended except for the fact that I do not think there should be an unlimited duration of time. I offer no objection to the provision but, as I said previously, in view of the Minister's interjection, I feel that it would do nobody any harm to clarify at least the difficulty that may arise—if the point I take is correct—by having the matter further examined to ascertain whether it is optional, as the Minister declared it to be. I hope the Minister will do that but, in the meantime, I support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [8.15]: This Bill was introduced to enable people to have cases dealt with summarily instead of involving themselves in the expense of having to go before the Supreme Court. I am given to understand that at present anyone can elect to be tried before a judge and jury if he does not want the case dealt with summarily. As there is some doubt whether that option exists in full, I am prepared to defer the Committee stage of the Bill in order to get clarification. That was the only point of difference raised by the Leader of the Country Party.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1.)

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [8.17]: Having regard to what the Minister has said and the special circumstances surrounding the creation of a new provision in the Act dealing with canteen licences, I have no objection to the Bill and I support the second reading.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [8.18]: With regard to the Bill I find that the new provision is restrictive. I agree that the authority for the issuing of canteen licences should become law, but I fail to see why the Minister has seen fit to apply such licences only to one industry. It would have been far better to broaden the Bill to cover all isolated industries such as mining, whaling and fishing, or any other isolated undertaking which might be developed. I would ask the Minister to see if he could broaden the Bill to include those industries.

In my opinion, the Bill should direct the Licensing Court as to the issuing of licences to canteens in close proximity to existing hotels. I make this point particularly because many of the hotels in the outback are battling. It is our fervent hope that with the extra turnover resulting from oil search and other activities, these hotels will be able to provide the travelling public and the people within their districts better facilities than they are able to do at present. I would suggest that a provision be placed in the Bill to restrict the issue of canteen licences to locations which are over 20 miles from any existing hotel.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [8.20]: I have no objection to the limitation of beyond 20 miles, and I would not mind at all if the restriction were 50 miles. As the Licensing Court will deal with all canteen licences in accordance with the Act, it is certain that none will be issued within 20 miles of an existing hotel because that limitation is recognised now. One has to travel for at least 20 miles on Sundays before one can get a drink, so there is a 20 mile limitation. In the Committee stages I would have no objection to an amendment being moved by the member for Gascoyne to insert a limitation of 20 miles.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Sections 44D, 44E and 44F added:

Hon. A. F. WATTS: As this is the principal clause in the Bill, I might say a few words on it. I have always been very much opposed to tinkering with the Licensing Act such as giving the people the power to sell two bottles of beer here and there. In regard to making some determined effort to review all the provisions, if the consensus of opinion is that they require review, as is certainly my opinion, with a view to bringing the statute up to date, it should take note of modern conditions and requirements and an endeavour should be made to improve the law and the state of licensed premises in Western Australia.

There are aspects which need some degree of overhaul. I do not feel disposed to raise opposition to this Bill because it deals entirely with one type of licence and is confined very strictly to certain areas and for certain expressed purposes. If one subscribes to the issuing of such a licence, one can hardly disagree with the Bill. In case it should be said that I allowed the present tinkering with the Act to go through without protest, I would take this opportunity of making my position clear.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [8.27]: When introducing this Bill, the Minister did not make a speech of any great length. It could be described as a brief speech. I have no complaint to make in that regard at all because a similar measure to this has been brought before Parliament on a number of occasions. The same arguments which were put forward by the Minister have been used on previous occasions, and no doubt they would be used on this occasion.

The Minister said something about democracy and told us how the word was derived from the Greek origin. If we are to judge this Bill from a democratic viewpoint, we will not have very much to worry about. I would say that the people of Western Australia are living in one of the most democratic countries in the whole world. I do not know any section of the people in the State who have suffered because of the legislation which the Legislative Council took part in framing. The fact is that the people are living under good conditions.

I remember one occasion when the Premier visited South Australia and was reported in our papers as having said that Western Australia had the most progressive laws in the world; and he was very proud of that fact. All those laws were passed by the Legislative Council. I also remember the late Mr. Willcock speaking on one occasion when he was Premier and expressing pleasure and giving praise to the laws of Western Australia, and particularly the industrial laws. He said some people complained about them; but he felt that if close attention were given to them, it would be admitted that our industrial laws were progressive and our people well served under them. I was reading those references in Hansard only this afternoon. And again, all those laws were passed by the Legislative Council.

This time the Minister did not say anything about a mandate. He might have mentioned it, of course, seeing that we have recently returned from our electorates. But I do not think the Government has a mandate for this particular Bill.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do not you think the people knew that he stood for this legislation?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know that the Premier mentioned it in his policy speech, but it was very much a side issue and there was practically no interest throughout the country in regard to that statement of policy. It could readily be described as one of the minor issues that were put before the electors. So far as I am concerned, I think that, except on one occasion when I was speaking in Forrest Place, and a gentleman with a very loud voice continuously interrupted me, there was no time when any mention was made of the franchise for the Legislative Council.

But if we are going to talk about mandates, the Government has had no mandate at all for some of the things which it is doing now and which were not mentioned in the policy speech. But when many matters are mentioned in a policy speech, I do not think it can be claimed there is a mandate given for any particular matter; and I repeat that this was quite a minor issue in the election. The fact is that this particular question is not arousing any public interest at all.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It might not be doing so in Pinjarra.

Mr. Lapham: It does at election time, does it not?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Very little. The bicameral system of Government is accepted in nearly all the democratic countries of the world, and in other parts as well.

The Minister for Justice: Not in England.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes; there is still the House of Lords in England.

The Minister for Justice: It has no power.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes, it has.

The Minister for Justice: No. After a Bill has been submitted three times, it becomes law.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That is so. If a Bill is rejected three times by the House of Lords over a certain period, it becomes law. But, of course, the House of Lords, as the hon. member knows, is not an elected House at all.

The Minister for Justice: Even our national House has adult franchise.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I presume the Minister refers to the Senate. It is true that the Senate is elected by adult franchise, but we know that an alteration has been made in regard to the Senate. On more than one occasion we have had the experience of one party having an overwhelming majority in the Senate. I can recall two occasions when the Opposition, so far as numbers were concerned, was almost non-existent. At that time the former member for Perth, who was then Senator Needham, was the Leader of a party of three in the Senate, including himself. And I can remember another occasion when my side of politics had one member in the Senate.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That was enough!

Mr. Heal: Too many!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That shows the lopsided view of the member for West Perth and how prejudiced and how unjust he is! The people, realising that that state of affairs was undesirable, brought about proportional representation. The same thing could apply in our Parliament. We could reach the stage where the Legislative Council overwhelmingly consisted of representatives of one side of politics and that particular party, having a majority in this Chamber, could do anything it wished to do—

The Minister for Justice: That has happened.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: —because of the numbers in both Houses. The Minister says it has happened. I do not know that it has.

The Minister for Works: You do not think it has been overwhelmingly in favour of one party?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not think any Government in Western Australia has suffered to any great extent because of the position that has arisen in the Legislative Council in the past.

The Minister for Works: It is not a matter of suffering.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know that when I was on that side of the House we were not pleased at times with what happened in the Legislative Council, and it has happened to other Governments of my side of politics. But I repeat that I do not think there has been any real grievance in the past against the attitude of the Legislative Council.

With the passing of the years, the Council has become more of a party house than it used to be. Members did have a feeling that they should not be bound by party, and many of them exercised their vote and voiced their opinions quite freely. But I admit that it has now assumed a much more party-political complexion than hitherto. However, if we look at the present set-up of the Council, we find that it consists of 12 members supporting the Government, nine Liberals, and eight Country Party members, with one election to be decided, which, I understand, is being hotly contested in the North Province. So under the present franchise the parties in the Legislative Council are pretty evenly divided.

Let us look at what the qualifications of electors are, and let us see if those qualifications are inflicting hardship on anyone. I have here a claim card which gives a brief explanation of the qualifications required for enrolment. This is open to a freeholder who has legal or equitable estate in possession in the electoral province of the clear value of £50. That is one qualification. Then there is provision for a householder within the province occupying any dwelling-house of £17 clear annual value. That is about 7s. per week, and I cannot imagine any householder in Western Australia today who is not paying 7s. per week. If his wife owns the house, the husband has the right to enrol as a householder.

Then there is provision for a leaseholder who has a leasehold estate in possession situate within the province of the clear annual value of £17, and the Crown leaseholder who holds a licence to depasture, occupy, cultivate, or mine Crown lands at an annual rental of at least £10. There is also provision for the person whose name is on the electoral list of any municipality or road board in respect of property within the province of an annual ratable value of not less than £17. So it will be seen that it is within the range of nearly everyone to have a vote for the Legislative Council if he really desires to have one.

The Minister for Justice: Then why have restrictions?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not think it is desirable to have two Houses of Parliament elected on the same franchise, particularly when we could have the position, as I have already tried to point out, of an overwhelming representation from the same party in both Houses.

The Minister for Justice: New Zealand has adult franchise.

The Minister for Education: What about the Senate?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I have spoken about the Senate. Perhaps the Minister was not in his seat. If so, his colleagues can tell him what I said.

The Minister for Education: I have a good idea.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Our Legislative Council is much more democratically elected than the one in New South Wales which is elected by members of the Legislative Assembly. There has been a Labour Government in that State for many years, and it has allowed that position to continue.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Tell us about Victoria.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: In New South Wales the electors do not get the opportunity of having a say as to who shall represent them in the Legislative Council. Perhaps I will tell the member for Fremantle something about Queensland.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: No, Victoria first!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Before I go to Victoria.

The Premier: Are you leaving us?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I would say that it cannot be rightly claimed that Queensland has a democratically-elected Government. In that State the same party has been continuously in office for just on 40 years.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It must have given satisfaction.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I remember that on one occasion it had 60 per cent. of the seats in the Assembly which were obtained by 40 per cent. of the votes.

The Premier: What year was that?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I cannot tell the Premier, but I will get it for him. I have a quotation from a broadcast address in which that statement was made. I will tell the Premier that there have been a number of occasions on which Federal elections have been held and Queensland has returned the largest anti-Labour vote in Australia and elected a greater number of anti-Labour men to the Federal Parliament than any other State. That has applied on several occasions in connection with both the House of Representatives and the Senate. But when it comes to the State election, we find that does not apply, and Labour has been returned almost continuously for nearly 40 years. What member of this Chamber can deny that that has been due to the electoral set-up in that State—the very favourable electoral set-up, which favours the Labour Government? I do not want that state of affairs to apply in Western Australia, because I feel that we are living under a much more democratic form of Government than is the case with Queensland.

The Minister for Justice: Would it be more democratic than New Zealand?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I believe that they have abolished the Upper House in New Zealand.

The Premier: Why?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: But that does not convince me that the Upper House in Western Australia, or any other Upper House should be abolished.

The Minister for Lands: Why not? We are short of space.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Before agreeing to the proposals in this Bill—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What about Victoria?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The hon. member knows what happened in Victoria.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Tell us all about it.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Why does the hon. member ask me? He already knows that there was an election squabble there and the Labour Party was able to capitalise on it—and they have the adult franchise in Victoria.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Three cheers for Victoria!

Mr. Johnson: What about the United States? You are always quoting that country.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: What about, Russia, China or somewhere else?

Mr. Johnson: You do not like the argument?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I know that there are two Houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate in the United States.

Mr. Johnson: Are not their members elected on the adult franchise?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: They may be, but I understand that there is no compulsory voting there as there is in this State. Before agreeing to the proposals in the Bill, I think we should know exactly where we are going. A position could arise in Western Australia where a certain party could gain an advantage such as has happened in Queensland, and where there would be no chance of having anything but the one brand of Government.

The Minister for Justice: That applies in South Australia now, does it not?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No, not by any means.

The Minister for Works: Pretty nearly.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Playford Government in South Australia was returned this time with a very narrow majority.

The Premier: What do you call "narrow"?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think it was about three or four seats.

The Premier: And the rest!

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It is nothing like the majority the Hawke Government has in this State. I think we ought to look at the whole Electoral Act before we do anything about this Bill and in that respect I do not think that electoral boundaries should be fixed at the whim of any Government, no matter what the party may be. The position today is that we have an independent electoral commission which fixes boundaries without requiring parliamentary consent. But will that position always apply? There is no guarantee that it will; and until such time as we can overhaul the Electoral Act and

perhaps make some alteration to the Constitution whereby there cannot be any manipulation by a party which might be in power in both Houses, amendments such as are contained in this Bill should not be agreed to. Under the present circumstances, there is no permanent provision to guard against this party manipulation.

There is really no demand for this Bill and I cannot imagine one person losing a wink of sleep if he heard that the Bill had been rejected. If the Premier and the Minister for Justice held a meeting in the Town Hall next week and made eloquent speeches in regard to Parliament's rejecting this Bill, I would say they would have an extremely difficult job to get any public interest—unless, of course, the whips were cracked and some persuasion was applied to get certain people to attend. I think the whole Electoral Act should be overhauled to guard against the same type of injustices as we have seen in other States and the undesirable electoral set-ups that they have there.

The Minister for Justice: The Legislative Council represents only about 20 per. cent. of the people represented by the Legislative Assembly and yet its members can veto anything we send up there. Do you think that is right?

Hon. L. Thorn: It is just as well they can do that, too, because God help the country if they were not able to do it.

The Premier: Daniel Thorn comes to judgment.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: When the Minister talks about the Legislative Council representing only 20 per cent. of the people, I would remind him that every householder has a right to vote and that means a fairly wide franchise. This talk of representing only 20 per cent. of the people might look all right on paper; but a householder has a wife and family and, as we all know, in most cases the wife and family follow the lead of the husband and father.

The Minister for Justice: You do not think that the Labour Party is sufficiently enthusiastic in regard to the Legislative Assembly otherwise we would hold the power there because of all these qualifications?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The Minister means the Legislative Council.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, the Legislative Council.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think the Minister has been active enough in regard to the Legislative Council. I do not think he has been at all inactive in regard to it. I do not fear the abolition of the Legislative Council if the Government obtained a majority in that House. I do not think there would be any danger of the abolition of that Chamber should that occur. I think the Premier would agree with me that there would be no danger of its abolition.

The Minister for Justice: I think we could be certain of one thing; the Constitution would be altered.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That may be. We have, at present, provisions already existing for compulsory voting and compulsory enrolment for the Legislative Assembly. I voted for that, but I am not sure whether I did the right thing.

The Minister for Works: You have altered your viewpoint.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Only from this point of view: I do not know whether the advantage lies on the Government side of the House or on this side of the House. I often wonder whether we are doing the right thing by compelling people to vote who would not vote otherwise and also whether we are obtaining an intelligent vote under the present electoral set-up.

The Minister for Education: A fairly intelligent vote.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Of course, it is a matter of opinion, but I will give the Minister the benefit of the doubt. This is one of the minor provisions of the Bill and although I do not propose to support it, I offer no serious objection to it. However, taking all in all, I cannot see that any fresh arguments have been produced by the Minister as to why this Bill should be accepted. I do not think for one moment that the Government expects the Bill to pass. It knows that not only has the measure to pass this Chamber, but also it has to pass through another place as well.

If the Government feels that something should be done about the Legislative Council; some new methods introduced in regard to the disputes that take place between both Houses, or that the franchise should be widened in certain respects, let it bring those proposals forward and I will be prepared to consider them on their merits. As I have said, this measure has been brought down year after year; the same arguments have been produced and the same results obtained. In the circumstances, I propose to vote against the second reading.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [8.55]: Ever since I have been a member of this Parliament, year after year members of the Government when sitting on this side of the House, made scathing references to another place. Since then, for each session during the three years that the Government has been in office, a Bill has been brought down for the purpose of altering the franchise of the Legislative Council. Any person who desires to vote for the Legislative Council can do so. The provisions enabling a person in Western Australia to qualify to vote at a Legislative Council election are simple. As has been

pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, in reading from the Legislative Council claim card, I do not think anybody who is really desirous of having a stake in the country is disfranchised from voting at the Legislative Council elections.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You know that there are thousands who cannot be enrolled on the Legislative Council roll.

Mr. BOVELL: If any man desires to support the country that he lives in, he should endeavour to own something in it or to occupy something in it, and the Legislative Council franchise enables any man to exercise a vote if he occupies any property whatsoever even if it is not his own.

The Minister for Justice: The member for Cottesloe wants to make it more difficult for a person to be enrolled on the Legislative Council roll.

Mr. BOVELL: I do not think we should make it more difficult for a person to be enrolled. Incidentally, I never know whether I am in order in referring to another House as the Legislative Council. It has been the custom in this Chamber to refer to it as "another place". In the decade that I have been here, my experience has been that the Legislative Council has at least been impartial. I know that during the six years that I supported the Government which allegedly had the same political complexion as the majority of members in another place, I found it most difficult at times for our Government to get legislation passed through that House. I can speak feelingly on this matter because during those six years I was Government Whip of this Chamber. Therefore, I repeat that over the years that I have been here the Legislative Council has been most impartial.

The Minister for Works: Yes, most impartial on the rents and tenancies legislation, for example!

Mr. BOVELL: Even with that legislation there were several parties to be considered. Another place did its best in the interests of all and I do not think any section of the community was unduly penalised by the legislation that was passed.

For the Legislative Assembly elections we have compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting. Although I was not a member of this Parliament when the former member for Greenough introduced a Bill to provide for compulsory voting, I believe that such a provision should be so and should remain so for Legislative Assembly elections. However, the Legislative Council is a house of review. Its purpose is to review legislation passed by this Chamber and, as I see it, its members are elected on a universal franchise. It is elected by the people of Western Australia who take an interest in politics, who get on the roll of their own volition and who exercise their vote without any compulsion whatever. So, in effect, the Legislative Council is the most democratic Chamber in this Parliament.

The Minister for Education: Would you say it was a non-party House?

Mr. BOVELL: I would say it was an impartial House, and to all intents and purposes, with the exception of the party to which the Minister for Education belongs, it is a non-party House. I wish to record my opposition to this measure, because I feel that we enjoy a most democratic state in Western Australia equal to any in the British Commonwealth. I oppose the Bill because I feel that the present system of our Parliament in this State is designed for the best interests of all people in Western Australia.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [9.1]: I have listened to the most amusing speech of the member for Vasse. We realise, of course, that he was joking. Although it comes hard to him to be humourous, there is no doubt that that was his intention because everything he said was in direct contradistinction to facts as they are. The constitution of the Legislative Council of the State of Western Australia—

Mr. Bovell: Is most democratic.

Mr. JOHNSON: —is the least democratic of any in the British Commonwealth.

Mr. Bovell: It is elected without compulsion by electors who are not compulsorily enrolled.

Mr. JOHNSON: I make that statement on the grounds that there is no other Legislative Council or second Chamber in which it is not possible to change the Constitution and laws regarding its powers without a reference to itself. Members who have taken an interest in the subject are aware that the only possible method of changing the franchise or powers of the Legislative Council is to get an Act through that Chamber after it has passed this House. In nearly every other Chamber in the civilised world, it is possible to change the franchise or a law relating to a Chamber by a referendum or some other constitutional method. That, unfortunately, does not exist in Western Australia and it has the result of making this State the least democratic in the British Commonwealth.

The suggestion that everybody should own property to show their interest in the country is not necessarily the sole reason why people should be entitled to vote at an election. There are many other ways of showing an interest in the Government of the country. Had it been considered wise by the members of the Opposition, and were they honestly convinced of the necessity for a second Chamber, they would have produced ideas for other methods of election.

Property is not the sole measure of a person, either male or female. There are many people who have no property of the type that would entitle them to register for enrolment for the Legislative Council. The great Mahatma Gandhi was one and yet he had an influence that went further than the State of Western Australia. I can think of a number of very eminent persons who would never have been entitled to register as electors for the Upper Chamber of Western Australia. There must be other tests than the ownership of property. However, the manner in which the front bench of the Opposition consistently year after year echo as a fact that property is the only value of a man, indicates what they think. It is evident from the little debate we have had this evening that the Liberal Party bases its whole thinking on one value and one value only—not personality, not humanity, but property. Property is not something that has any real value.

We all know that the value of a man or woman is character and not property. There is no logical reason why, if one must, as the Leader of the Opposition suggested, have a second Chamber, and it must be elected on a different franchise from that of the lower Chamber, the qualification should not be based, say, on family. Why should not we have a qualification which enables every married person to have a vote at whatever age he or she marries? Married persons who have no children, say, from 25 upwards, and single people who have contributed to affairs of State for 20 years should, at the age of 35, become eligible to vote.

That is another way of doing it; by putting a value on family. A couple who have produced children have done a great deal more for the State in which they live than the man who has built up a fortune of millions, let alone that the man who has built up property should be entitled to more than the man who has spent his whole property on producing children and looking after them.

The argument put forward by the Leader of the Opposition that we should have a second Chamber is not convincing. It is not one to which I subscribe but it is one for which there is a basis of argument. I think those qualifications did have some value back in the distant past when there was lack of education and when the means of communication were inadequate. That no longer exists.

These days people can communicate very readily with their representatives in the Legislature; at times I find they can communicate far too readily. I also know from experience that although people will deal with the member for their district, they are unaware of the fact that they are represented in the Legislative Council. Whether that is the result of a deliberate policy by members who draw salaries for work they do not carry out in the Legislative Council, and hide their lights under a bushel so that they will not be asked to do any work, I do not know. Nor do I know whether it is a deliberate policy of that organ of information that is published in the mornings and which never mentions the Legislative Council if it can get out of doing so. In fact, I do not know what the reason is.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Would you abolish that Chamber?

Mr. JOHNSON: I certainly would.

Mr. Roberts: That is not applicable to country members.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You would not get a vote for the Legislative Council.

Mr. JOHNSON: I beg the hon. member's pardon! I always try to be polite to the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon Sir Ross McLarty: I did not say anything offensive.

Mr. JOHNSON: What a change! The situation is not entirely as has been represented. Quite a number of countries have only one legislature. It is interesting to note that while the Leader of the Opposition kept on quoting Queensland, which has got rid of its second House, although the building is still there and is being used as a party room,—

Mr. Bovell: I venture to say that the legislature of Queensland is not elected democratically.

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member can go to Queensland and say that, but he will find the people are happy with their set-up.

Mr. Roberts: Far from it!

Mr. JOHNSON: I would suggest that the Queensland Government is elected by a majority of the voters. I have looked at the electoral returns for that State and the Government has a majority not only in the House but a majority of the votes. I would point out that the Leader of the Opposition avoided reference to New Zealand. There was a second House in that country, but the people got rid of it. It was a party of the same colour as that of the Leader of the Opposition which destroyed that House. It was destroyed by that party because it hampered the legislation which that party wished to pass.

Many other countries have bicameral legislatures. Russia is one of them and the United States is another. I know that members of the Opposition regard the United States of America as the home of everything marvellous and wonderful. I often wonder why they do not go and live there.

Hon Sir Ross McLarty: We also often wonder why some people do not go and live in Russia.

Mr. JOHNSON: That might be so. I find that Western Australia is the country that suits me best. If there was an inference intended in that polite inquiry by the Leader of the Opposition, I must say that it failed to find its mark. As I was referring to the spiritual home of some of his colleagues, the legislature of the U.S.A., both in its Federal and State spheres, is not only bicameral but is also elected on adult franchise, and in none of the States is there a property franchise that I can discover in the textbook before me, although I know from reading the news that in some of the backward southern States there is a poll tax qualification which acts very harshly against the poor and more particularly against the negro element of the population. So I find it impossible to agree that the arguments put forward by the Opposition have been submitted seriously. We realise that the member for Vasse was only joking, but we cannot regard the Leader of the Opposition as a clown.

Mr. Bovell: You have a peculiar sense of humour.

Mr. JOHNSON: I could not help thinking when he was speaking so strongly about the unfortunate people of Queensland where they have had a Government of one political colour for 20 years—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: For 40 years.

Mr. Bovell: For 40 years with the exception of three.

Mr. JOHNSON: In the past 40 years, a Government comprised of members of the political faith of the Opposition has been in office in that State once. I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the situation in the less democratic State of Western Australia is that although there have been a number of Labour Governments, and Labour has been in office, it has never in the history of Western Australia been in power. Power has never reposed in the hands of any party in Western Australia, except the party represented by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The greatest lot of dictators we have ever had!

Mr. JOHNSON: Despite that facetious interjection, the fact is as I have stated. Power has never lain in the hands of the Labour Party in this State. The nearest approach to power that the Labour Party has enjoyed was on several occasions when, on matters of deep personal and public interest, pressure was brought to bear on those holding seats in the Legislative Council and they found it necessary to bow to some degree for fear of losing the sinecure of payment they got for work which they did not perform.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are making adverse reflections on members of another place.

Mr. JOHNSON: Not on all of them. Only those belonging to the party represented by the Leader of the Opposition, who managed to find time to run full-scale professions, trades and businesses, but who are still prepared to draw the full salary for a job which I know they do not do. Although there are three members representing the district which I also represent, it is impossible to find any elector who is aware of those three representatives of the district, except perhaps an elector who is very actively inclined politically. I was in this House for twelve months before I was able to correct an idea I held previously as to who those members were. They are completely ineffective in my district, yet they draw their full salaries. Some of the people concerned are widely known in other spheres, but they completely neglect their duty as representatives of the district.

Mr. Court: I do not think they do, if you are referring to the Metropolitan Province members. If they were to start interfering with your work, you would be the first to complain.

Mr. JOHNSON: How I wish that some of the people who are not my supporters in my district but who expect me to do their political work, would go to the people in the opposite party who misrepresent them in another place!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do not you represent all the people in your electorate?

Mr. JOHNSON: I certainly do. At least, they think so, and they come to me. The point I am making is that they are entitled to go to somebody else.

Hon. D. Brand: Many of them do.

Mr. JOHNSON: There should be more.

Mr. Court: How do you know they do not?

Mr. Jamieson: How does the member for Nedlands know they do?

Mr. Court: That is just nonsense.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is pretty general. I refer to another point made by the Leader of the Opposition, that is there is no demand for enrolment for the Legislative Council.

Hon. D. Brand: Tell us how the Upper House in New South Wales is elected?

Mr. JOHNSON: By the Parliament which is elected by the people. That is practically identical with the method used by the Electoral College for the election of the president of the U.S.A., in which country the hon. member would feel far more at home. At least, he says so; but I do not think he would if he were there.

Mr. Roberts: Do members not put in full time work in New South Wales?

Mr. JOHNSON: They are not paid full time.

Mr. Oldfield: Do they not get between £600 and £700 a year?

Mr. JOHNSON: Anyone wishing to make reference to that aspect may do so. I am not an expert on the salaries paid to members of other legislatures in this country. I was saying that I did not approve of members of the Legislative Council who do not devote all their time to their work getting the full share of pay. If a man gets paid the salary, he should do the work. That, I gather, is an idea for which the Liberal Party stands, but it is one which Liberal Party members of another place do not stand for.

I want to refer to the point that there is a demand for elective rights for the Legislative Council at election time. A lot of people who go to vote find they are not on the Upper House roll. They do not know they have to fill in a third card. They say, "I have filled in two cards. Is there a third?"—and these people would be enrolled if there were somebody around. In my particular district until recently there has not been an election for a very long time. On election day people rang up and said they had voted for the Lord Mayor and asked could they have a vote for the Legislative Council. They said they had voted for me and asked could they not vote for my team-mate.

The restricted voting for the Legislative Council stopped a lot who would like to have voted. In relation to Legislative Assembly elections, there are people who would avoid voting if they could, and that applies in every district. If the Opposition were prepared to say they would use the same enrolment but leave it as a voluntary vote, then I feel they could be regarded as speaking honestly and being reasonably semi-democratic. But to insist that anybody has no value who is not a property owner is to disclose themselves as peculiarly mercenary, with no standard of value excepting property.

Mr. Court: It is not only property.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is all very well saying that. We know that members of the Liberal Party are the best politicians money can buy, and they prove it out of their own mouths.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Clever fellows!

Mr. JOHNSON: The sole test is property.

Mr. Bovell: A property owner has a stake in the country.

Mr. JOHNSON: A parent also has a big stake in the country. Quite a number of persons would give all their property to be a parent. That is all I want to say except one cannot regard the opposition to this measure as either logical or democratic. If we are to continue the attitude of mind which is exposed by the Liberal Party—it dates back to the days of the great landowners of the Cromwellian revolution in Britain although some of the Opposition have been born since—then we must expect to remain at that stage of history in our development.

We cannot have an out-of-date political set-up and have a progressive and modern State. Furthermore, anybody who reads history would not regard Great Britain at the time of the Cromwellian revolution as a democracy. It is the people opposite who are putting the mock in democracy in Western Australia.

On motion by Mr. O'Brien, debate adjourned.

BILL—RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th August.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [9.25]: In introducing this Bill, the Minister explained that officers of the Rural & Industries Bank would be automatically precluded from becoming commissioners if they had financial transactions with that institution and, of course, that position is completely wrong. In fact, the Minister said a commissioner would be deemed to have vacated his office as such if he had any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any agreement with the bank otherwise than as a member in common with other members of an incorporated company consisting of at least 20 members.

I agree that all officers of a bank should conduct their financial transactions with the institution that employs them and I would say that this Bill is very timely. As members know, I was a bank officer for a number of years and the bank which employed me encouraged its staff members to conduct their financial transactions with that institution. I agree that the principle should apply to the officers and staff of the Rural & Industries Bank.

In the Minister's speech, I notice he said that the commissioners, once they become such, can have no further financial obligations with the bank after they liquidate their initial obligations. They are not permitted to enter into any further dealing with the bank itself. I feel, in fairness to the commissioners, that some facility should be provided for them to borrow money for their personal needs, if they have the security and have a banking proposition to submit.

I believe that it should not be a case of Caesar appealing to Caesar and the commissioners decide for themselves that they shall have certain accommodation from the bank, but I think the Act should be further amended to allow a commissioner of the bank to make application for financial assistance should he so desire and

that application be presented to the Minister who, in turn, would secure the Treasurer's approval for such financial accommodation.

Take the position of an officer of the bank who has lived in country areas due to his employment. He may have been in Geraldton for some years and then be transferred to Merredin, Bruce Rock, Albany or Bunbury with no opportunity of purchasing a home for himself. If he is appointed a commissioner—I think this would be the goal of every officer of the Rural & Industries Bank—and he comes to reside in Perth, knowing how difficult it is for bank officers to exist on the remuneration they receive, he will have no financial reserves with which to provide for himself an adequate home, when he takes up his position as a commissioner.

I feel that is a time when a commissioner should have the opportunity of submitting an application to the Minister for financial assistance. It should be done after it has been perused by his fellow commissioners. The Minister, in turn, would secure approval for the advance from the Treasurer for the time being. The goal of every officer of the bank, I repeat, must be to become one of the bank's commissioners, but, having achieved that goal, he may, through certain circumstances, need financial assistance to provide a home for himself and his family. I feel that the measure, which is designed to encourage officers of the bank to bank with their own institution, is a good one, and I support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 17 amended:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am particularly interested in the point raised by the member for Vasse. I think that, as long as protection and some security are given and some discretion is allowed to the Minister, as the hon. member suggests, what he has put forward might be a very good move. The commissioners themselves are satisfied with the Bill because it is general banking practice not to permit an executive officer of a bank to enter into any loan or other borrowing arrangement from the institution if he is in a position to make a certain profit out of the knowledge which he has as an officer of the bank. But within reason, as suggested by the hon. member, the matter could well be looked into and I promise to do that.

Mr. BOVELL: The main reason why I made the suggestion is that an officer who has probably not resided in the metropolitan area may become a commissioner, and he may have no financial resources to enable him to purchase a home. He may have had no accommodation from the bank in the past, and here he is precluded from applying for it, but under my suggestion he can be granted accommodation for the specific purpose of providing himself and his family with a home. I agree that he should not decide whether he should have the accommodation but that that matter should go to a higher authority, namely, the Minister. My proposition is mainly to assist him to get a home.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.35 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 5th September, 1956.

CONTENTS.

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