

can enter into agreements embodying guarantees of certain specified revenues with electricity supply authorities. The Bill provides that a guarantee may be given. It may be legal now, but there is some doubt, and the Bill removes that doubt. This is the desire of certain local authorities.

Mr. Sampson: Would this include giving a guarantee to the Government? The Bill refers to a "person."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not permitted to discuss actual clauses of the Bill. I am referring to the general principles. Whatever is not provided in the Bill is a matter for the Committee stage.

One other amendment asked for, which I think is essential, concerns old-age pensioners. It is well known that people desiring to appeal against rate assessments must first of all pay a moiety of the rates. Old-age pensioners' rates are allowed to accumulate so they could not qualify, and if over-rated would not have the right to appeal. The Bill provides that they may appeal against an assessment, although the rates have not been paid.

Mr. Marshall: They are exempt under the 1923 Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A pensioner's rates accumulate, and on his decease they are piled up as a liability on the property. It is highly essential that pensioners should not be over-rated but they have not had an opportunity to appeal against assessments. The Bill places them on a footing with other ratepayers. The measure contains a few other provisions that can be considered in Committee. As I have said, there is nothing of a controversial character, and the provisions are very necessary in the interests of the road boards. They consider them important. The acceptance of the measure will make for the better conduct of road board affairs.

Mr. Doney: Has the association asked for these amendments?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not all of them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 2nd September, 1941.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £2,500,000.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.40]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 9th September.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [4.40]: Although it is unusual for a motion of this type to be discussed, I take it that it is not disorderly to rise merely for the purpose of making a suggestion to the Minister. Would it not be possible, in order to facilitate public business, for a percentage of the Government's legislative proposals for the session to be first introduced in this Chamber? Our first procedure after the Speech read by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor is to introduce a Bill establishing the right of this Chamber to initiate legislation. That right, I take it, is a fact; we would not introduce that Bill merely as a pious expression of the existence of the right. I am aware that a great many Bills might be more properly introduced in another place; but I am sure those of us who have been members of this Chamber for a considerable period will recall that it has not been unusual for Bills to be introduced here that do, in their essence, mean the appropriation of money; but the

clauses dealing with such appropriation are printed in italics to imply that they are exempt from the consideration of this House until they have been dealt with by another place, which rightly and properly has the sole privilege of initiating legislation involving expenditure from the public purse.

No member of this Chamber has the slightest wish, I am sure, to encroach upon the privileges of another place. At the same time, I take it no member of this Chamber would lightly forgo any of our own rights and privileges. If a reasonable proportion of the Government's legislative programme were initiated in this Chamber, the two Houses would practically sit simultaneously. Each would deal in the initial stages with certain legislation, and later in the session each would be called upon to pass judgment on those Bills with which another place had already dealt. The alternative seems to me to be that at some later stage we shall be called upon in a few hurried moments—probably with the suspension of the Standing Orders—to deal with Bills that have occupied quite a long time in another place. That does not permit of the mature consideration which is the obligation of a Chamber of review. I merely throw out this suggestion to the Minister, believing that public business would be expedited, and that the rights and privileges of this Chamber would be more securely preserved, if a reasonable proportion of the Government's legislative programme could be initiated in the Legislative Council.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.44]: I question whether the suggestion made by Sir Hal Colebatch would, if adopted, in any way expedite the business of this Chamber. In past years innumerable Bills have been introduced in this House. My recollection is that some of them were controversial. There was the Closer Settlement Bill, which—in this Mr. Drew will bear me out—was introduced many times in this House before finality was reached. Other instances are the Education Bill and the Native Administration Bill. I have yet to learn that the fact that Bills were introduced in this Chamber obviated the necessity for the suspension of the Standing Orders at the end of the session.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.45]: Be that as it may—as stated by Mr. Cornell

—if one hears a suggestion put forward by so experienced a member as Sir Hal Colebatch, to my way of thinking it is not sufficient for other members merely to sit quiet. I agree with Sir Hal that the privilege which this House is supposed to possess is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. It may not be in the Minister's control to arrange matters in the way suggested, but I support Sir Hal in his remarks.

HON. C. F. BAXTER: He probably will not be a Minister next session.

HON. E. H. H. HALL: Do not say that.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson (West—in reply) [4.47]: It would be possible to introduce a number of Bills in this Chamber as we have done in the past, and as I have no doubt will be done during this session. I take it that Sir Hal Colebatch, in bringing this matter forward, is actuated by the fact that at this moment we find ourselves with very little business before the House. Generally speaking, the reverse is the case, because this House, as a rule—I think I am correct in saying so—takes longer over the Address-in-reply debate than does another place. On this occasion, however, members, in their desire to expedite business—in which I was only too pleased to assist—decided to finish the Address-in-reply debate without any delay. Consequently we have had a period between the completion of the Address-in-reply debate in this House and its completion in another place. The legislative programme of the Government will be proceeded with as early as possible, and the measures now being introduced in another place will reach here with but little delay.

HON. J. CORNELL: They are not contentious.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: They are mostly non-contentious. I can assure Sir Hal, and any other member who considers we would be expediting business by introducing Bills in this House, that if I can help in that direction I shall be only too pleased to do so. I appreciate very much the way in which members responded to my invitation to them at the commencement of the session to expedite the Address-in-reply debate and not string it out over several weeks, as we have done on previous occasions. I hope members will also expedite the passage of Bills as they come before us and not delay them as we have done on so many occasions in the past. A note will be made of

the suggestion of Sir Hal Colebatch; and if it is possible for me to introduce some Bills in this Chamber at an early stage of the session I shall do so. At present, however, as members are aware, the Bills being introduced in another place are Bills which perhaps are peculiarly the prerogative of the Ministers who are introducing them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Many of them are private Bills.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The private Bills do not come into this debate. I have nothing to do with them until they reach this House. That is the position. I will take the opportunity of introducing Bills into this House, but that depends on the nature of the legislation the Government has for presentation to Parliament.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.51 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 2nd September, 1941.

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

QUESTION—SUSTENANCE AND RELIEF.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Employment: 1, What number of men, if any,

are today in receipt of sustenance allowances? 2, What number of men are today on relief work? 3, What number of men were on relief work immediately preceding the outbreak of war? 4, Of the number on relief work today how many are on full-time employment and what is their weekly rate of pay? 5, What numbers of men are, respectively, on other levels of remuneration and what are the relevant weekly rates of pay?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: 1, 37. 2, 2,709. 3, 5,725 on relief work, 1,055 on sustenance work; total, 6,780. 4, 1,526; weekly rates of pay: Basic wage applicable to district where employed, plus marginal and other allowances, as prescribed in Industrial Awards and Agreements for the various classes of work. 5, 916 married, 267 single. Rates same as in answer to question 4, but period of employment based on family obligations.

QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

As to Rural Areas.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the Minister made any representations to the Federal Government in regard to the proposal considered by the Federal Ministers for Commerce and Labour to extend electricity supplies to rural areas so as to overcome the farm labour shortage, as reported in the "West Australian" on the 5th June? 2, If so, what districts in this State were suggested as suitable for the proposed extensions? 3, Has the Government received any further information from the Federal Government in regard to this proposal, and if so, to what effect?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. The report in the "West Australian" on 5th June indicates that the matter was being considered and no proposals have been received from the Commonwealth up to date. 2 and 3, answered by No. 1.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.