

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.16]: I have examined the Bill and I have no objection to it. Therefore, I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 23rd October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.19 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 17th October, 1951

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

QUESTIONS.

GASCOYNE ELECTORATE.

As to Visits of Crown Officers.

Mr. **GRAHAM** asked the Premier:

(1) What officers of the Crown have visited the Gascoyne electorate—

(a) since the resignation of Mr. Wise;

(b) during the three months immediately preceding his resignation?

(2) What was the total cost of such trips, respectively?

The **PREMIER** replied:

(1) (a) Transport Officer (Transport Board); Secretary, Transport Board; Officer of Prices Branch; Assistant Surveyor General; Engineer for the North-West; Cost and Wages Inspector (Public Works Department); Acting Executive Engineer (Main Roads Department); Health Inspector (two trips); Officer of Infant Health Department; Chairman, State Housing Commission; Under Treasurer.

(b) Superintendent of Primary Education; Inspector of Schools (Education Department); Transport Officer (Transport Board); Transport Inspector (Transport Board); two Audit officers (Local Government Department); two officers of the Prices Branch; Engineer for the North-West (two trips); Secretary, Main Roads Department; Officer of the Public Health Department; Officer of the Infant Health Department; School Dental Officer; Acting Under Secretary, Public Health Department; Officer of State Housing Commission; Agriculturist (Department of Agriculture); Research Officer (Department of Agriculture); Superintendent of Horticulture; Officer in Charge, North-West Branch, Department of Agriculture.

(2) As the majority of trips made within the two periods were in the course of comprehensive tours of the whole North-West, it is not possible to calculate the total cost.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Rollingstock Loaned and Sold to Midland Company.*

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

(1) Is it a fact that the Midland Railway Company has been loaned railway rollingstock whilst the Government Railways are in short supply of such stock?

(2) What number of trucks has been—

(a) sold;

(b) loaned,

to the Midland Railway Company?

(3) What charge has been made for trucks—

(a) sold;

(b) loaned,

to the Midland Railway Company?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) Thirty-one under option of purchase.

(b) Fifty.

(3) (a) The Department's quote is £8,085.

(b) No charge is being made, but the wagons which were selected from a large number awaiting repairs at Midland Junction Workshops, are to be reconditioned by the Company in its own workshops, and using its own material, and returned to the Government in good running order at the end of the year.

(b) *As to Warning Signals at Level Crossings.*

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

(1) Will he state the number of railway level crossings that have been protected with electric warning signals during the past 12 months?

(2) Where have the signals been erected?

(3) Can he state when the 11 level crossings in the Guildford-Midland electorate will be provided with warning signals?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Four.

(2) Spearwood—Rockingham Road.

Spearwood—Sussex-st.

Cottesloe—Jarrad-st.

Welshpool—Welshpool-rd.

(3) Crossings are equipped in the order of priority recommended by a Government Committee and as materials come to hand. No definite date can be given for the installations in the Guildford-Midland electorate.

(c) *As to Homes for Employees.*

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

(1) Can he state when the erection of railway houses at—

(a) Midvale; and

(b) Greenmount,

will commence?

(2) Is he aware that railway employees applying for homes from State Housing Commission in recent years are being informed that 1946 and 1947 applications are still being dealt with?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No date of commencement can be given at present.

(2) It is understood that the State Housing Commission has a waiting list of applicants of all categories extending over a number of years. However, no discrimination is made in the case of railwaymen.

(d) *As to Locomotive Spark-Arresters.*

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Lands:

In view of the widespread belief that many bush fires adjoining railway property are started by sparks from locomotive smoke stacks, will he inform the House—

(1) Is it compulsory for all engines to be fitted with spark-arresters?

(2) Are these spark-arresters locked in position?

(3) If not, is it permissible, under the Act, to remove the arresters temporarily in order to give increased steaming power where specially required?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No, not under the Bush Fires Act, but railways compulsorily fit spark-arresters to engines.

(2) Not in the way that prevents the removal of portion of the arrester.

(3) Answered by (1). Railway Department does not permit removal.

GALVANISED IRON.

As to Allocations of Local Manufacture.

Mr. HOAR: asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it a fact that Australian-made corrugated roofing iron is reserved exclusively to home builders?

(2) Does he know that primary producers needing roofing iron for hay sheds, etc., and holding permits for same, are compelled to take the imported product at the greatly increased cost, even though it was known the local product was available at the same time?

(3) Will he investigate the present method of allocating the local product with the view to primary producers getting a fair share?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. For some time past it has been necessary to confine releases of Australian made galvanised corrugated iron to house building, which has a No. 1 priority.

(2) In view of the fact that there has been insufficient galvanised corrugated iron coming forward to meet housing requirements, it has not been possible to release Australian made iron for hay sheds or other farm buildings. Permits for farm buildings are issued subject to the use of imported galvanised corrugated iron.

(3) The position is constantly being watched by the Commission, and when production and shipping improve sufficiently, consideration will be given to the question of releases for farm buildings.

INDUSTRIAL PROSECUTIONS.

(a) As to Tabling File.

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Is he prepared to table the file relevant to the prosecutions recently carried out against members of the Coastal Dock, River and Harbour Works Union of Workers?

(2) If not, would he give reason for not so doing?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The prosecutions were not instigated by the Minister for Labour, nor was he associated in the action taken, and therefore he has no papers dealing with the matter.

(2) Answered by (1).

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Much!

(b) As to Minister's Reply.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the evasive answer given by the Minister for Labour, will the Premier table all files and papers dealing with the prosecutions recently carried out against members of the Coastal, Dock, River and Harbour Works Union of Workers?

The PREMIER replied:

I do not think that the reply given by the Minister was evasive.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: It was.

The PREMIER: I disagree. This action, as the Minister stated, was not taken at his request.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: He was not asked to table the file of the Labour Department. He was asked to table any file.

The Minister for Lands: It is in the Arbitration Court in the charge of the President, and you know it.

The PREMIER: The Minister explained that this was not a prosecution which he had authorised or instigated.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Not much!

The PREMIER: It is not rubbish; it is an absolute fact.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Nobody said it was rubbish.

The PREMIER: Then I am sorry. I think the reply of the Minister for Labour was justified.

(c) As to Tabling All Files and Papers.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Seeing that the Premier has not replied to my question, I ask him whether he as Leader of the Government is prepared to table all Government files and papers dealing with the matter.

The PREMIER replied:

I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition move for the papers in the usual way.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I shall do so.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Prosecution of Coogee Beach Campers.

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that the Fremantle Road Board is prosecuting campers at Coogee Beach?

(2) Is he aware that a least one camper has been prosecuted twice?

(3) Is he aware that the State Housing Commission has refused these campers any assistance?

(4) Would he be prepared to suggest some solution to these campers' problems of finding alternative accommodation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) I have read the Press reports.

(3) The Commission has stated that it could not extend special priority to those persons who chose to camp on the Coogee Reserve, but each applicant would be considered when his turn on the priority list was reached.

(4) It is suggested that each applicant should consider the erection of a modest home on a self-help basis.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Where will he get the bricks?

(b) *As to Permit and Dwelling, Armadale.*

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

(1) On what date was the release given for a residence for Mr. R. O. Williams, Armadale?

(2) What area was authorised?

(3) Is Mr. A. C. Skinner, who is the builder of this residence, an established client of the State Brick Works?

(4) Does Mr. Skinner receive a regular allocation of bricks from the State Brick Works?

(5) Did Mr. Williams inform the Housing Commission that the house which was being erected for him exceeded the authorised area and thus by his own action cause a prosecution to be launched against himself?

(6) What were the reasons which caused the Commission to grant a permit for such a large dwelling as Mr. Williams proposed to erect?

(7) How many bedrooms were provided for in the approved plan?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approval indicated by letter dated 19/12/50 for dwelling of 16½ squares and as plans lodged were for area in excess of this squarage, Mr. Williams was requested to lodge modified plans. Permit and releases issued 15/3/51 for building to modified plan.

(2) 17.32 squares authorised on 15/3/1951. Amended designs submitted 23/4/1951 and Commission approval given on 30/4/1951 for 18.78 squares.

(3) Mr. Skinner has been a client of the State Brick Works for many years.

(4) Bricks are supplied to Mr. Skinner only on releases.

(5) Yes.

(6) In view of large family to be housed, comprising applicant and wife, four daughters aged 20, 16, 14 and 6, and son aged 15 years, and need to provide accommodation for his employee foreman mechanic and family, who will occupy Williams' existing dwelling, which is too small for his family.

(7) Three bedrooms.

WATER PIPING.

As to Road Transport from Eastern States.

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

(1) What quantity of water piping has the State Housing Commission had brought to this State from the Eastern States by road during the last 12 months?

(2) What was the cost of transporting such piping?

(3) What was the name of the contractor (or contractors) who transported the piping?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 136,660 feet of ½ in. and 248,930 feet of ¾ in. piping have been brought by road from the Eastern States for the Western Australian Government.

Action to bring pipe by road from Newcastle was taken by the Government following advice from the Controller of Stores that his stocks of small diameter piping were very low and that it was impossible to replenish stocks from overseas owing to transport difficulties.

(2) £10,004 5s. After paying cost of road transport it has been possible to land water pipe into store at approximately half the cost of overseas pipe. Half-inch pipe delivered by road has cost 8½d. per foot and ¾ in. pipe has cost 1s. 0½d. per foot, as against 1s. 6d. per foot and 1s. 11d. per foot, respectively, for pipe imported from overseas.

(3) R. O. Williams.

KOREAN WAR.

As to Long Service Leave, etc., for Enlisted Private Employees.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Premier:

Will he recommend to the W.A. Employers' Federation that employees who were engaged in private industry and who have voluntarily enlisted for active service in Korea be granted the same conditions, insofar as long service leave, etc., applies as those outlined to Government employees?

The PREMIER replied:

This is a matter which it is considered should be taken up with individual employers. The Employers' Federation no doubt has already read the Press report which indicated the Government's decision on this matter.

CHILD WELFARE.

As to Subnormal Children and Treatment.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Will she inform the House how many subnormal children are at present in the State?

(2) What has been done for them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There is no clear definition of "sub-normal," which would include—(1) low normal intellect requiring special school provision, (2) mental defectives, (3) social misfits requiring special care.

There has been no survey in Western Australia, but upon the basis of surveys made in Britain, there might be—

Low normal of school age—5,400.

Mental defectives up to 14 years—2,900.

It is impossible to estimate the number of social misfits, and in many instances these would overlap with the other classes.

(2) By far the majority of sub-normal children are looked after in their own homes.

Some receive training in charitable institutions, and about 50 of very low intelligence and practically untrainable are at Claremont Mental Hospital.

Two homes at Guildford have been purchased and are being remodelled to accommodate about 40 children, and, in the future when building conditions and other circumstances permit, there will be separate accommodation for mental defectives within a new institution upon a new site, a day and residential school for approximately 80 children, and residential homes for "social" problem children associated with the Child Guidance Clinic.

The Education Department has 12 classes for mentally slow children who cannot profit by the ordinary curriculum.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

As to Application and Printing of Regulations.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Attorney General:

(1) To what States and countries, including (a) the Commonwealth of Australia and its Territories, (b) the other States of the Commonwealth, does subsection (5) of Section 6 of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-1949, apply?

(2) What progress, if any, has been made with respect to the drafting and printing of regulations under the provisions of the abovenamed Act?

(3) Can he indicate, approximately, when such regulations will be made available to the public through the Government Printing Office?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) The Act extends to dependants resident in every State of the Commonwealth of Australia, but has not been applied to dependants resident in the Commonwealth Territories; nor to any other country, with the exception of New Zealand.

(2) and (3) The drafting of new regulations is expected to be completed shortly, and arrangements will be made for them to be printed and published forthwith after completion.

PRIMARY PRODUCTION.

As to Development at Wiluna.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier:

What progress, if any, has been made in regard to developments at Wiluna from the point of view of primary production?

The PREMIER replied:

Although considerable work has been undertaken in the production of peanuts in Wiluna with Government assistance, it has not yet been demonstrated that these can be grown commercially in that area or on an economic basis.

The Mines Department recently carried out a survey of the water supplies, and, in view of this, arrangements are being considered for a group of appropriate specialist officers to visit Wiluna and investigate and report upon its agricultural potentialities.

MINERS' PHTHISIS ACT.

As to Annual Benefits.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier:

What is the annual amount paid out in benefits to beneficiaries under the Miners' Phthisis Act for the years ended the 30th June, 1949, 1950 and 1951?

The PREMIER replied:

	£
Year ended 30/6/1949	30,421
Year ended 30/6/1950	29,533
Year ended 30/6/1951	26,878

FINANCE.

As to People's Savings and Government Borrowings.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Treasurer:

(1) What are the approximate annual savings as disclosed by statistics by the people of Australia for the years ended the 30th June, 1949, 1950 and 1951?

(2) What are the aggregate annual borrowings by the States and the Commonwealth, inclusive, for the respective years mentioned in (1)?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Relevant estimates of personal savings given in the Commonwealth White Paper on National Income and Expenditure, 1950-51, are as follows:—

	Through Assurance Funds.	Other Personal Savings.	Total Personal Savings.
	£ million.	£ million.	£ million.
1948-49	24	192	216
1949-50	28	296	324
1950-51	33	392	425

Total personal savings are defined in the White Paper as the excess of personal income over consumption expenditure and direct taxes on persons. It includes provisions made by persons for tax accruals.

In addition to personal savings, there were the savings which accrued in the form of interest earned on assurance

funds (£18 million, £19 million and £21 million in each of the respective years), and in undistributed profits and in financial provisions for depreciation. Undistributed profits and financial provisions for depreciation include amounts retained in businesses as well as amounts earmarked for specific purposes in subsequent years, e.g., subsequent distribution of profits as dividends.

		Financial Provisions for Depreciation.	Undistributed Profits.
		£ million.	£ million.
1948-49	....	112	80
1949-50	....	164	93
1950-51	....	202	135

(2) —

		£
1948-49	....	66,703
1949-50	....	92,059
1950-51	....	164,383

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

As to Action for Abolition or Adult Franchise.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Premier:

In view of the recent happenings in the Legislative Council will he take the following action to ensure that the will of the Assembly shall prevail—

(1) Hold a referendum of the people of the State on the question of the abolition of the Council?

(2) Introduce legislation to abolish the Council?

(3) Introduce a Bill for adult franchise for the Council?

(4) If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied:

(1), (2), (3) and (4) The Constitution of the State gives the Legislative Council certain rights which must be recognised. No action so far taken by the Legislative Council exceeds in any way the powers of that House under the Constitution, and it does not seem to me that the occasion for any of the actions suggested by the hon. member has arisen any more than when similar difficulties faced the Labour Government in 1934 and no such action was proposed.

SHIPPING.

As to Charter of m.v. "Trevelyan."

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Premier:

(1) Did the Government specially charter the m.v. "Trevelyan?"

(2) For what purpose was it chartered?

(3) What percentage of cargo was for Government purposes and what percentage of cargo was for private enterprise?

(4) What were the freight rates?

(5) Will he table the file relevant to the chartering of this ship?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) To transport much needed cargo for Western Australia which had been awaiting shipment at English ports for some time, and which could not be transported by ordinary shipping methods. The accumulation of this cargo was causing English manufacturers to refuse to accept further orders.

(3) (a) Seventy-two per cent.

(b) Twenty-eight per cent.

(4) Normal freight rates, plus 40 per cent.

(5) The file is in use, but may be perused at my office if the hon. member so desires.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Grounding of Aircraft and Emergency Service.

Mr. RODOREDA (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) As a great number of people in the inland country behind Roebourne and Hedland are dependent mainly on Dove aircraft for perishables and other necessities, can he ascertain how long the order to ground these planes will remain in force?

(2) If for more than a few days, will he urge that arrangements be made for Air Force planes to run an emergency service to these areas? I may add that I have noticed that the second aircraft is now suspect and so the position is worse to that extent.

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) The hon. member intimated his intention to ask these questions and I endeavoured to obtain some information. Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. have only two Dove and two Anson planes left. They lost one Dove. One Anson is in the Kimberleys dog-baiting and the other is undergoing Civil Aviation airworthiness tests and will not be available for some time. They have chartered two aircraft—a D.C.3 from Australian National Airways, which has only been made available for the Perth-Kalgoorlie run, and an Anson, which will go on the Wittenoom Gorge run, tomorrow and will also run to Wittenoom Gorge on Saturday. In addition, arrangements have been made with MacRobertson Miller Aviation Company to handle as much as possible of their north-bound freight and passengers. I understand that under this plan arrangements will be made to visit inland towns.

If the hon. member will indicate that the inland towns are suffering as a result of the emergency service that has been put into operation, I shall do what I can to assist to overcome the difficulty.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [4.56]: I move—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 onwards.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [4.57]: I do not intend to oppose the motion, but I wish to direct attention to the fact that last Wednesday the Premier made the following observations:—

The Government would be prepared to give some consideration to earlier sittings on Thursdays with a view to adjourning at teatime. I think if I make that promise, it should satisfy members.

Now we have this motion apparently designed once again to apply the usual sitting hours without making any arrangement whatever for an earlier sitting on Thursdays. It is not my intention to press the matter at this stage because I want to have the general principle established under another motion, but I should like some indication from the Premier as to what he intends to do to honour that promise, which was implied, at any rate.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray—in reply) [4.59]: I did say that favourable consideration would be given to meeting at an earlier hour on Thursdays so that members would not have to sit after tea, but I did not intend it to apply to this session.

Mr. Graham: This is a new session that started only yesterday.

The **PREMIER:** That does not alter the fact that we are getting very close to Christmas. I am anxious, if possible, to finish the session by the 15th December in order to give members an opportunity to return to their constituencies just before the Christmas season. I think that will be more convenient to members than knocking off earlier on Thursday and having to sit to a date close to Christmas. I have said that we will give favourable consideration to meeting earlier on Thursdays and I hope next session to be able to honour that promise.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the Premier, resolved:

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Premier, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Library.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nimmo and Hon. J. T. Tonkin.

Standing Orders.—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Nalder, Hon. J. B. Sleeman and Mr. Rodoreda.

House.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cornell, Mr. Yates, Mr. Graham and Mr. Styants.

Printing.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hutchinson and Hon. E. Nulsen.

MOTIONS—LAPSED BILLS.

(a) *To Restore to Notice Paper.*

Resolved: That the following Bills be restored to the notice paper:—

Companies Act Amendment.
Petroleum Act Amendment.
Muja-Centaur Coal Mine Railway.
Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment.
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance).
Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment.
Optometrists Act Amendment.
Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
Library Board of Western Australia.
War Service Land Settlement Agreement.
Rubber Tyre Industry.
State Housing Act Amendment.
Pneumoconiosis Benefits.
University of Western Australia Act Amendment.
Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
On motion by the Premier.
Gas Undertakings Act Amendment.
On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman.

(b) *Assembly's Message to Council.*

On motion by the Premier, resolved:

That a message be transmitted to the Council to the following effect:—

The Legislative Assembly requests that the consideration of the following Bills (which lapsed during the last session of Parliament) may be resumed by the Legislative Council, namely:—

Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance.

Bunbury (Roman Catholic Old Cemetery) Lands Revestment.

Country Towns Sewerage Act Amendment.

Hospitals Act Amendment.

Law Reform (Common Employment).

Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).
 Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
 Parliament House Site Permanent Reserve (A1162).
 Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment.
 Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance).
 Real Property (Foreign Governments).
 Trustees Act Amendment.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Prices Control Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 3, Constitution Acts Amendment.

Introduced by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke.

MOTION—SITTING HOURS.

As to Day-time Sessions.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [5.6]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House normal hours of sittings in future sessions should be held in the day time.

Members will recall that exactly one week ago I moved this motion which was, because of circumstances, not determined by members but it is one, as I said then, upon which I feel all members should submit their point of view as an indication to the Government, of the times, in a general sense, at which we desire to give attention to that portion of our parliamentary duties which refers more particularly to legislation. As the arguments were submitted so recently it is not my intention to reiterate the viewpoint then expressed by me. Accordingly, I submit the motion and leave it to members to make up their minds. At the same time, I do appeal to them to express their view point rather than permit a silent vote to be taken.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [5.8]: I have already spoken to and opposed the motion, and I ask members to vote against it. I have indicated to the House that next session we shall give favourable consideration to earlier sittings on Thursdays with a view to letting members get away at the tea adjournment. Of course, towards the end of the session it may be necessary to sit after tea on Thursdays or else to come back on Fridays. But as far as possible we shall, in accordance with the undertaking I have given, call the House together earlier on Thursdays next session with a view to finishing before tea. When I spoke previously I said that we had to consider two important matters, one being the political or legislative side of government with which we deal here, and the other the administrative side.

If Ministers have to attend sittings in the day time they will have to return to their offices at night. I know from my own personal experience—and it would be that of the Leader of the Opposition—that it is very often necessary for Ministers to get back to their offices at night. I am glad that this evening we shall be adjourning at tea-time so that I can meet the Under Treasurer at the Premier's Department and put in a few hours work with him. If we are going to meet in the day time, Ministers will have much less time to attend to administration and I can see difficulties there. Let me again remind members that, irrespective of which party has occupied these benches over the many years that we have had a Parliament in this State, the present hours have been the hours of sitting because they have been found to be the most convenient.

I read the other night an extract from "Hansard" where the member for Murchison strenuously opposed any alteration in the hours of sitting, as also did the member for North Perth who, I regret to see, is not in his seat today, through illness. Other members on the opposite side of the House also opposed the motion at that time. I think I have offered a fair compromise, namely, to call the House together earlier on Thursdays, and I hope that members will reject the motion.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [5.11]: The motion asks members to express their opinion as to whether the normal hours of sitting should be in the day time. There is a fair amount to be said in favour of and against the motion. I think the balance with regard to what can be said for and against is actually in favour of carrying the motion. I know it has been the practice in Western Australia all through the years, with some emergency exceptions, for the normal hours of sitting to start at 4.30 o'clock in the afternoon of sitting days. I know, too, that in some of the other States, the normal hours of sitting have commenced at earlier times. In South Australia, for instance, the commencing hour has been 2 p.m. for many years, and it appears to have worked satisfactorily. There are many less Ministers in South Australia than in Western Australia—

The Premier: They also sit after tea, do they not?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:—despite the fact that the population of that State is considerably greater than ours. I should say that the administrative work in South Australia is no less than that carried out by the Ministers in this State.

The Chief Secretary: More decisions are left to the discretion of under secretaries there.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not think that is so.

The Chief Secretary: I have been told it is.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I understand that nearly all the decisions in South Australia, since Mr. Playford has been Premier, have been made by him.

Mr. Yates: They are good ones.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: So I think it can be argued on the basis of experience in other States, that it is not necessary for the Parliament in Perth to commence its sittings as late as 4.30 p.m. on sitting days. I think in New South Wales the Parliament commences its sittings as early as 11 o'clock in the morning. If Ministers of the Crown in New South Wales and South Australia are able efficiently and completely to carry out their work, and meet Parliament at these hours, then it is not at all beyond the ability of the Ministers in this State to meet Parliament at 2 p.m. on normal sitting days, and carry out their administrative work perhaps even more effectively than at present.

The Premier: You were an official member of two Governments, and no alteration was made in that time.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There were some things I might have wished the Governments with which I was associated should do, but which were not done. I have no doubt that the Premier is compelled, as a member of the Ministry, to do things which he would not do on his own judgment.

The Minister for Lands: Have you ever raised the question?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes, on more than one occasion.

The Chief Secretary: Favourably or unfavourably.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Favourably. At the moment, I am trying to discuss the pros and cons of the motion, and I feel that that is preferable to discussing the attitude of any individual member of the House who might at some time have been, or who even at the present time is, by some accident or otherwise, a Minister. Surely we should approach this question from the point of view of its merits and not on the question of what might have been the attitude of someone towards it ten years ago, or even yesterday. The Premier a few moments ago said that, whenever opportunity offers, he goes back to his office at night for the purpose of carrying out business associated with the Treasury Department or the Premier's Department or even—it may be—for the purpose of looking closely into some recommendations received by him from his Ministers.

I think the Premier would agree, as would his Ministers, that twice as much work can be done by a Minister in his office in one hour at night as can be done

during a similar period of daytime. My own experience was that a Minister could do five times as much in two hours at night, in his office, as he could during two hours in the daytime.

The Attorney General: That is because the telephones are not working at night.

Mr. Yates: And because there is no staff.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Very often a Minister does better work without his staff, though not always. Much depends on the staff, and much on circumstances.

Mr. Totterdell: And much depends on the Minister.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is so. However, when he is working at night on his own, a Minister is able to get straight to work and obtain a much clearer understanding of his business than is possible during the day. Even if this House agreed to meet at 2 p.m. each sitting day, Ministers would not have to work any longer hours than they do now. The only difference would be that they would then spend from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. in the House, instead of spending most of that time in their offices. Instead of spending from, say, 7.30 p.m. till 10.30 p.m. in the House, they would perhaps spend from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. in their offices. I think that administrative work might be done much better and that the work of Parliament would certainly be carried out much better in those circumstances.

It has been argued that, when Parliament has sat in the daytime in this State during emergency periods, quite a number of members have not bothered to attend. Are we to say that, just because some members do not attend daytime sittings, that is a sound argument against doing what would be the best thing to do? If daytime sittings were customary and some members consistently failed to attend, I think they would soon find themselves in trouble with their parties, or their electors, or perhaps with both. There is no reason why members should not attend a sitting of Parliament during the afternoon, from 2 p.m. till 6 p.m., and I am sure every member could, if that change were made, alter his existing habits and fit in with the new hours of sitting, quite conveniently and effectively.

The Premier: I think I have offered you a fair compromise.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We are all creatures of habit. None of us realises just how strongly habit has hold of him. We become slaves of habit because of convention and because of the circumstances and situations into which we move. After we have comfortably fitted into those situations, we regard any suggestion of alteration as being something in the nature of sacrilege. We feel it is an attack on our personal liberties and convenience, and upon the established traditions of the British Empire, on some occasions. We are

almost tempted to blame communists for having been the originators of any suggestion of that kind. I am satisfied that something ought to be done to improve the method of dealing with legislation within the Parliament. We know what happens in this House towards the end of a session. We sit very late hours and members cannot possibly take the same keen and intelligent interest in matters under discussion as they should be able to take.

The Premier: I think that is due, in some measure, to the amount of time that we lose at the beginning of a session.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It does not matter what it is due to, it happens, and I think it will continue to happen. I am sure the member for West Perth would agree wholeheartedly that he does not take, cannot possibly take, keen and intelligent interest in Bills before this House towards the end of a session when we are sitting on towards 11.30 p.m., midnight and beyond.

The Premier: Why single out the member for West Perth?

Mr. Totterdell: I could take an intelligent interest.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The member for West Perth said he could take such an interest, yet I am wondering why he has not done so in the past.

Mr. Totterdell: Why pick me?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have mentioned the member for West Perth because I have kept a very special and keen watch on him and the number of times he has been in the House, and I have noticed particularly how he wilts whenever we sit after 7.40 p.m. Another reason why I take a special interest in the member for West Perth is that I have been asked by a brother of mine to do so—

Mr. Totterdell: Thank you very much.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —and do everything I can to help him with his spiritual as well as his material well-being.

The Premier: You are taking on a full-time job.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Leaving the lighter aspect of the question on one side I do think it would be a move in the right direction to attempt something along the lines suggested in the motion. I have not yet referred to the "Hansard" staff or other members of the staff of Parliament House in connection with the late sitting hours we have fairly regularly. It is obvious that if Parliament had regular hours on sitting days, running from, say, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. the working hours of the staff would be much more civilised—

The Premier: What about a time limit on speeches?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —and they would be able to finish their work on most days, on that order of things, by 6 p.m. "Hansard" staff might have to work an extra half hour, but its members would have their nights free to be with their families and that, I should think, would be, to some extent, acceptable to all.

The Premier: What about a time limit on speeches?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That would have been very awkward for the Treasurer yesterday evening because—

The Premier: It would have been very acceptable.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —he would have had to deliver his Budget in three separate speeches. Speaking for myself, I have no objection to the limitation of speeches—

The Premier: Good! We will see what we can do about it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —because I think that anyone who has something worthwhile to say can say it in half an hour. I think I have already been speaking 25 minutes. The Premier has offered, say, for next session, a compromise to the motion. In effect, he has promised that during the earlier part of the session which we will hold next year, the House will meet at 2 p.m. on Thursdays and complete the business of that day at about 6 p.m. That appears to me to be a step in the right direction. On the basis of that practical experience next session we might be able to judge more accurately just how day-time sittings would operate, and thereby be able to arrive at a decision as to whether we should continue, after next session, sitting during day-time hours on Thursdays or whether we should extend the sittings during day-time hours to all sitting days. In the circumstances, I am prepared to give my support to the motion moved by the member for East Perth.

On motion by Mr. Brady, debate adjourned.

BILLS (8)—APPROPRIATION.

Messages.

Messages from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the following Bills:—

Law Reform (Common Employment).

Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance.

Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.

Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment.
 Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance).
 Pneumoconiosis Benefits.
 Petroleum Act Amendment.
 Library Board of Western Australia.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

LAPSED BILLS—TO RESTORE TO NOTICE PAPER.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read requesting the restoration to the Assembly notice paper of the following Bills:—

Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment.
 Marketing of Eggs Act Amendment.
 Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Premier, resolved that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable lapsed Bills that have this day been restored to the notice paper to be considered at this sitting.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Companies Act Amendment.
 - 2, Petroleum Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [5.34] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for an extension of the parent Act until 1957. When a Continuance Bill was before the House in 1949 the member for Warren gave it his support because of its importance to the State, but he objected to a period of two years. We have taken notice of the hon. member's objection on the continuance of that Bill and that is the reason why we are extending it now until 1957. This will obviate the necessity to bring a continuance Bill before the House every couple of years. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act commenced to operate in January, 1931, and many thousands of farmers sought its protection during the early years of its operation.

With the introduction of the Rural Relief Fund Act, the majority of the farmers obtained financial assistance to adjust their creditors' claims, and then had their

stay orders cancelled. The two Acts are complementary and it is necessary to extend the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act to enable the Rural Relief Fund Act to continue to function, as this Act provides for the continuous use of the funds held by the Trustees for debt adjustment purposes only. Assistance under the latter Act amounted to £1,291,730 2s. 10d. of which £1,283,000 was granted by the Commonwealth Government and the balance made up from money repaid by farmers. At the 30th September the fund stood at £166,431 15s. 10d. and is gradually being augmented by repayments by the farmers.

Since the Act was amended to provide for the discharge of the mortgagees on payment of 20 per cent. of the amount, 1,651 farmers have taken advantage of the concession and repaid £107,514 5s. 2d. There are still a large number of farmers who have not availed themselves of this generous concession. With the coming of prosperous times in the farming community, the Acts are more or less dormant, and administrative work is carried out by officers of the Lands Department as part of their normal duties. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act has been of material benefit over the years to many farmers, and it is considered advisable to keep it on the statute book, not only to enable the functions of the Rural Relief Fund Act to be carried on but to ensure that in an emergency a farmer could be granted a stay order to give him an opportunity to put forward proposals to his creditors for carrying on his farming operations. Members know that over the years both these Acts of Parliament have been of considerable benefit to the farming community, and it is necessary that they be continued. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hoar, debate adjourned.

BILL—OPTOMETRISTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver—Subiaco) [5.40] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill which seeks to amend two sections of the Act. It is designed to do this by conferring on the Optometrists Board the power to issue diplomas to persons passing the examination conducted by the Board. When the course was commenced, it was erroneously thought that the University of Western Australia would issue a diploma to graduates from the course. I might explain that, although the training is largely given by the University, it is given on behalf of the board. The University is therefore not in a position to issue a diploma. Members will realise that, in a

course of this standard, it is usual and proper for graduates to receive a diploma.

The Bill also seeks to amend the provision dealing with the fee charged by the board for the registration of optometrists. The fee at present is limited to three guineas per year and the board has found this sum inadequate to cover increased costs. The Bill proposes to have the limit raised so that fees not exceeding six guineas may be charged. The present state of the board's finances prevents it from adequately remunerating its part-time registrar. I commend the measure to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. A. M. Coverley, debate adjourned.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th September.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [5.42]: The Bill proposes to delete from the Act a provision which guarantees a minimum wage to junior female workers not covered by awards or agreements under the Industrial Arbitration Act, based upon the provision in the shop assistants' award in respect of these workers as that award applies to the Perth metropolitan area. Under the existing law, junior female workers throughout the State are guaranteed by law at least the minimum rates applying to junior female workers in that award. This Bill proposes to delete that provision of the Act and to substitute an altogether new principle.

The new principle of minimum wages for junior female workers not covered by awards or agreements will be based upon fixed percentages of the basic wage applying to adult female workers in the particular district in which they are employed. I agree that it is desirable to remove from the Factories and Shops Act the present principle, which ties wages for these junior female workers not covered by an award or an agreement to the rates contained in the shop assistants' award for the Perth metropolitan area.

I understand that, in practice, the Shop Assistants' Union, for instance, has encountered considerable difficulty in negotiating with employers on behalf of its members in the metropolitan area because of that provision in the Act. The Employers' Federation, acting on behalf of shopkeeping employers in the metropolitan area, argues that any increase in wages which they grant shop assistants in the metropolitan area means an automatic increase in the wages of all junior female workers in the State not covered by an award or agreement.

It is natural that the Employers' Federation, representing all employers, should not be keen to finalise an agreement with the union for junior female shop assistants in the metropolitan area because of the provisions in the Factories and Shops Act and to agree, in effect, to an automatic increase in the wages of all junior female workers in the State not covered by an award or agreement. These workers include, not only junior female shop assistants, but also all other junior female workers in the State not covered by an award or an agreement.

Although I approve of the principle contained in the Bill to give to these junior female workers, who have no protection from awards or agreements, fixed percentages of the appropriate basic wage as a minimum weekly wage, I do not agree that the percentages set out in the Bill are adequate. In fact, those percentages would in many instances reduce the minimum rate of wages being paid to junior female workers in the metropolitan area and in the South-West Land Division, as compared with the minimum wages they would be entitled to receive if the existing provision in the Act continued in operation. The last thing we should consider is to pass legislation that could, in operation, reduce the minimum rates of wages to which these workers are entitled and would continue to be entitled to receive under the existing law.

Let me give some examples to prove that point. A junior female worker, not under an award or agreement, between the ages of 15 and 16, is entitled to receive £2 10s. a week as a minimum wage. Under the proposed plan in the Bill, the wages of a worker in that age group would be reduced to £2 4s. 5d. a week, an actual reduction of 5s. 7d. For those in the next age group of 16 to 17, the reduction would be 2s. 3d. a week; for those in the next age group, 5s. 7d. a week; for those in the next age group, 11s. 1d. a week; for those in the next age group, 17s. 10d. a week; and for those in the final age group of 20 to 21, 17s. 2d. a week. Therefore it seems that this Bill has been brought before us without having received the detailed consideration it requires.

I know there is in the Bill what is supposed to be a saving provision in that part of it seeks to lay it down that no junior female worker covered by the Factories and Shops Act shall be paid less by way of weekly wage than that particular person is receiving at present under the Act. On the surface that might appear to be a complete protection. It might seem that there could not, under that saving provision, be any reduction at all in the minimum rates of pay now being received by junior female workers in the State who are paid under the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act, and who do not come under any industrial award or agreement.

However, the saving clause is full of holes in my opinion, and in operation would prove to be a very poor and only a partial protection. For instance, if the Bill became law, a junior female worker covered by the Act, and between 15 and 16 years of age, would be entitled to receive the existing minimum of £2 10s. per week and not to be reduced to the percentage of the basic wage which the Bill provides, namely, £2 4s. per week. But as soon as that junior female worker passed from the 15 to 16 age group, the employer could pay her the appropriate minimum weekly amount set out in the percentage contained in the Bill. That would apply right through all the age groups, and the protection of the saving clause would disappear as soon as the junior female worker passed from one age group into the next. So the protection is not nearly enough.

There is the other angle to it also. A father may be employed in the metropolitan area by the Railway Department or by somebody else. For some reason or other he is transferred to, say, Doodlakine. His family go with him and one of the members of that family is a junior female worker. When she goes to Doodlakine and takes on work there, she is not entitled to the protection of the saving portion of the Bill. She is paid the minimum rate which would apply under the percentage of the basic wage principle contained in this Bill.

Then there are all those who might become new workers and would not be covered by an award or an agreement. They would have to depend entirely upon the Factories and Shops Act for protection in regard to the weekly wage which they could claim, as they would not be receiving any wage at all, because of their not being employed at the time the Bill became law. The saving clause would not in any way protect them when they did commence work. That would apply to all females who first took on employment at 15 years of age; they would have no protection at all under the saving portion of the Bill. It is clear therefore, that the Bill is only partly complete.

There is in the first place a need to increase the percentages of the basic wage to be paid in future, as set down in the Bill, and there is need also to tighten up very solidly on the saving clause. When the Bill reaches Committee the Opposition proposes to move amendments to increase the percentages of the basic wage contained in the Bill by 10 per cent. in each instance.

The Minister for Labour: Will you let me have your amendment as soon as you can?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The increase will be 10 per cent. in each instance. Therefore the amendment under that heading is very clear.

The Minister for Labour: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is easy of understanding. We propose to raise the 40 per cent. for the 15 to 16 age group to 50 per cent.; the 50 per cent. for the next group to 60 per cent.; the 60 per cent. to 70 per cent., and so on. In the meantime, the Minister might care to have a look at that proposition.

The Minister for Labour: I will.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It appears to me to be eminently fair. He might also look at the question of tightening up the saving provision in the Bill to ensure that it will be made fully effective; although, if we increase the percentages along the lines I have suggested, there may be no need to do anything much about the safety provision.

I have pointed out that I agree with the principle which this Bill seeks to achieve. I agree that the minimum wage to be paid under the Factories and Shops Act in respect of junior female workers should not be tied to the award for shop assistants in the Perth metropolitan area; and I agree that this question should be tied to reasonable percentages of the basic wage for females as it applies in the respective districts in Western Australia.

With agreement upon the principle, there should not be very much difficulty in reaching an acceptable measure of agreement upon the suggestion I have made to increase the percentages contained in the Bill, as that would be the basis for deciding the minimum wage to be paid to junior female workers under the Act in future. I support the second reading and hope that when the Bill is in Committee the amendments I have suggested will find favour with the majority of members.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.58]: If the proposed amendment by the Leader of the Opposition is agreed to, I will not have any great objection to the Bill being passed. But I cannot for the life of me see why there was any necessity to alter what has been an accepted custom for many years; that is, to have the country junior female worker receive at least the minimum provided in the shop assistants' award for the metropolitan area. What was the need for any alteration at all?

The Minister for Labour: It was to clear the position because—

Mr. STYANTS: Because it was proposed to give those in the metropolitan area an increase and it was not desired to give the girls in the country that increase. That is the reason.

The Minister for Labour: No, it was a request by the Metropolitan Shop Assistants' Union for an award.

Mr. STYANTS: That is all very well from the point of view of the Metropolitan Shop Assistants' Union. If that is correct—and I very much doubt it—it was a sell-out so far as the Shop Assistants' Union is concerned.

The Attorney General: Why should there be a distinction between juveniles and seniors in the country?

Mr. STYANTS: Why should there be a distinction between junior female workers in the country and those in the metropolitan area?

The Attorney General: There should not be.

Mr. STYANTS: No. But that is what the Bill provides for.

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. STYANTS: The amendment provides in effect that a junior female worker in the country will not receive the same wage as a junior female worker in the metropolitan area as has been the case for years.

The Attorney General: They might not be shop assistants.

Mr. STYANTS: There are hundreds of girls in small country districts who are shop assistants.

The Attorney General: I know; but they might not be.

Mr. STYANTS: The whole reason why this alteration is required is that it is proposed to give some increase to the metropolitan workers and it is not desired that the country girls should get it. If members on the Government side of the House are prepared to sacrifice the wages and the standard of living of female junior workers, they will, of course, vote for the Bill. I do not know who conceived the idea of making an alteration—I understand it came from one of the officials of the court—but I think it is most unfair, and I certainly will not agree to it unless the proposed amendment by the Leader of the Opposition is agreed to, because it amounts to nothing short of depriving the junior female worker in the country of something that she has been in possession of, and which has been an accepted standard for many years—that is, that the junior female worker in the country shall receive at least the minimum rate of the junior female worker in the metropolitan area.

The Attorney General: That is not correct.

Mr. STYANTS: It is. The saving clause that was put in, either deliberately or inadvertently, to create a smoke screen is not worth the paper it is written on. There are three or four instances, as outlined by the Leader of the Opposition, where it will have no application at all.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay—in reply) [6.1]: I assure the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kalgoorlie that there is no smoke screen here. I have endeavoured to agree to the wishes of the Metropolitan Shop Assistants' Union. No Government employees are involved in the Bill.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Employers' Federation is interested, surely.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes. I am quite prepared to give every consideration to the suggestions made by the Leader of the Opposition, and to examine them to see whether we can arrive at a fair compromise.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think the Minister might be unconsciously misleading the House. I am sure the Shop Assistants' Union did not request the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That is the way the position was put to me, namely, that the Employers' Federation and the Metropolitan Shop Assistants' Union had arrived at an agreement and were most anxious to approach the court to get their consent award approved.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is correct.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am not as well up in industrial matters as are trade unionists—trade union secretaries—but on examining the Bill I noticed that certain reductions would take place, and I said that I would not introduce it. It was as a result of my observations as to what would happen that I had the saving clause inserted.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The saving clause is not much good.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Leader of the Opposition brought that fact to my notice this afternoon. I had the question raised with the Crown Law Department, and the saving clause was put in so that no reductions in present wages would take place. I did my best in that regard. The Government has no desire to reduce the wages of these junior workers. I give the House my assurance on that point. I also give the Leader of the Opposition my assurance that the matters he raised this afternoon will be fully examined, and I shall be only too pleased if we can arrive at a compromise, or if we can improve the position.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.