

prices left the farmers with an impossible burden of debt. Many men had given up in despair, and so it is we have abandoned farms in all districts rapidly reverting to nature. The population in the last few years has been drifting rapidly away from the rural areas. As has previously been said the men and women concerned have passed through years of either disastrous prices, or crop failures. To-day the settlers are deserving of special consideration. Instead of receiving such consideration they have been brought under a form of bureaucratic control, which is sapping their independence and destroying their morale. To-day we should reverse the policy of despair, and endeavour to restore to the farmers confidence in their ability to run their own business.

The Minister for Lands: I agree with that.

Mr. PATRICK: Such is the main object of the measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister of Lands debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 9th November, 1939.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 2, Contraceptives.
- 3, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.
- 4, Supply (No. 2), £1,200,000.

QUESTION—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS.

As to Discontinuance.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Assent having been given on the 7th November, 1932, to an Act to discontinue the State Implement and Engineering Works as a concern under the State Trading Concerns Act, has this Act been proclaimed? 2, If so, on what date? 3, If the Act has not been proclaimed, why has it not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by 1. 3, Inquiries are being made.

QUESTION—WAR WITH GERMANY.

Public Servants Enlisting: Superannuation Fund.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: As the circulars regarding employees on leave owing to military duties issued by the Public Service Commissioner do not cover the contributions to the Superannuation Fund by those who have enlisted for service with the A.I.F. or R.A.A.F. and are now in camp—1, When may it be expected that the Government will arrive at a definite decision in this matter? 2, Is the Government taking steps, in the meantime, to safeguard the interests of these employees?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The subject is to be discussed at the conference between representatives of the Commonwealth Government and State Premiers now being held in Canberra. 2, Pending the decision, the interests of the members concerned are being safeguarded.

MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulations.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 31st October of the debate on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter (East):—

That Regulations Nos. 65 and 106R made under the Native Administration Act, 1905-1936, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 8th September, 1939, and laid on the Table of the House on the 12th September, 1939, be and are hereby disallowed.

Hon. A. THOMSON (South-East): I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member previously got the adjournment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I will move in the hon. member's stead.

The PRESIDENT: The Chief Secretary also has already secured the adjournment.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South): In that case, I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed; the debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Firearms and Guns Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Chief Secretary.
- 2, Government Railways Act Amendment (No. 2).
Introduced by Hon. A. Thomson.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Administration Act Amendment.
Returned to the Assembly with an amendment.
- 2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 3, Dried Fruits Act Amendment.
- 4, State Forest Access.

Passed.

BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.44]: I secured the adjournment of the debate with a view to making inquiry as to whether the closing of the Land Titles office on Saturday would inconvenience people likely to use it on that day. The Honorary Minister pointed out that an average of nine persons used the office on Saturday, and that the opening of the office on that day involved the employment of 16 officers. This is really the first time that Parliament has had an opportunity to discuss the action of the Government in closing Government offices on Saturday where such a course was considered not to inconvenience the public. While I have no desire to impose hardship upon a section of Government employees, nevertheless, as far as I can judge, the convenience of the public has not been given preference to what I might term the convenience of civil servants. Government servants who are so fortunate as to be working in offices, some starting at nine in the morning and leaving at five in the afternoon, others a little later in the morning

and a little earlier in the evening, are in a happy position. Will the Honorary Minister in his reply inform the House whether this consideration is extended to field officers, who are not so fortunate, as they have to work longer hours, frequently at considerable discomfort? How do Agricultural Bank inspectors and officers of the Agricultural Bank fare under the Government's decision to close public offices on Saturday?

Hon. J. Cornell: Those officers do not work on Saturday.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Which officers?

Hon. J. Cornell: Field officers.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not know that. But an Agricultural Bank inspector, for the sake of argument, may be 100 miles from his home and have one or two inspections to make.

The Chief Secretary: Would you suggest that he stay where he is rather than go home?

Hon. A. THOMSON: No. We do know, however, that he completes his work in the particular district where he happens to be. Those officers work on Saturday. It is no use Mr. Cornell saying they do not. I know they do. It does seem that differential treatment is being meted out to public servants who are not so fortunate as to be working in offices.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: They get overtime.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not think so. As a matter of fact, I was wondering whether they did and that is why I raised this point. What is the relative position of the public servants working in offices and field officers? Not only field officers, but supervisors employed by the Public Works Department have to work long hours and at considerable distances from their homes. This applies also to officers of the Department of Agriculture and to Agricultural Bank inspectors. Those officers, in my opinion, do not receive salaries commensurate with the conditions under which they work compared with employees who are fortunate enough to be engaged in offices in the city and country. Seeing that it has been found advisable to keep open the Commonwealth Savings Bank, the railway offices and the tramway offices for the convenience of the public on Saturday mornings, shall we be studying the convenience of the public that desires to use the Titles Office if we provide that the office shall be closed?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: If you carry the railway and tramway argument to a logical conclusion, these offices should be kept open on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Perhaps so, but let me instance the Commonwealth Savings Bank, which does not open on Saturday afternoon or Sunday. I believe that the Commonwealth Savings Bank opens on Saturday night to enable depositors to bank their money. As the Government has extended this concession to other officers, I would not penalise one section, but I have spoken to people who have occasion to use the Titles Office on Saturday morning, and have been informed that there will be inconvenience if the office is closed. I shall support the second reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.52]: This is a Bill that leaves a wide-open field to members who are prone at times to say, "Hands off the Arbitration Court." It would be extraordinary, when the object of the measure is to protect by legislation workers who cannot be protected by the Arbitration Court, to demand that hands be kept off the Arbitration Court. Here is a section of workers—a sheltered section of the community—that has accepted the Arbitration Court. The hours were fixed by Cabinet decree for officers of the public service, with the exception of those employed in the Titles Office, and their hours are fixed by Act of Parliament. Now we are being asked to alter their hours by Act of Parliament. I have no objection to the proposal. It would be like flogging a dead horse to suggest nowadays that civil servants should work on Saturday morning. They have not worked on Saturday for a long time and no protest was made when the altered hours were instituted.

Hon. A. Thomson: There was not much use in protesting.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I ask members who blow hot by insisting upon "Hands off the Arbitration Court" and then blow cold by fixing the hours of employees to consider their attitude. 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.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT
(No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st November.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [4.56]: This is a measure that we all admit is long overdue. I do not propose to offer much objection to the Bill, except to the proposed new section 55, which proposes to include the State Government Insurance Office as an approved office. I had something to say on the State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment Bill, the object of which is to extend the operations of the office to include third-party risks, and I do not propose to repeat what I then said. I still think that this measure should be dealt with before the Bill to amend the State Government Insurance Office Act is further discussed. That, of course, is a matter for the Leader of the House to decide.

When speaking on the other measure, I said that the ink was hardly dry on the authorisation by this House of State insurance when the Government came along with this proposal to extend the business to include third-party risks. I said there had been an honourable agreement as to the limitation of State insurance, and my statement was challenged by Mr. Fraser, who wanted to know where the honourable agreement came in. This House agreed to the legalising of the State office only on condition that the insurances then being effected should be continued, and no other. That is the answer to Mr. Fraser. A suggestion has been made that it is necessary to police the insurance companies and the rates of premium to be charged by them. That is moonshine. Why should the State office have to police the premiums when this very measure provides for the policing of premiums in that they are to be fixed by a committee consisting of the Auditor General, the Government Actuary, and representatives of the motorists and approved insurers? We were told that probably the insurance companies would not take the business because of the rates that would be fixed. I am advised, and correctly advised, that the companies will take on this insurance at whatever rate the committee may fix. The companies are bound to do so, they say, because the Minister might otherwise withdraw the permit recognising them as ap-

proved companies. That in itself would be sufficient to compel the companies to accept the premium rates and accept the business. The question of cheap insurance by the State Insurance Office about which we have heard so much is all a myth. I have a letter over the signature of the Government Actuary addressed to a country hospital in which it is set out that the premium would be increased from 32s. 6d. and 35s. to 65s. One of the outside companies that has to be policed by the State Insurance Office has actually come in and taken the business at 35s.

Honorary Minister: That is not the whole of the story.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The whole of the story is that the State office wanted 65s. per cent. and the private company came in and accepted it for 35s. Of course, according to what the Chief Secretary said the other day, no one will believe a word I say; but I have been here longer than he has and I believe that what I say in this House is more readily accepted than anything the Minister might say. This will interest the Honorary Minister, who represents the West Province: I am told that the State Insurance Office quoted a rate of 40s. per cent. for the Fremantle Hospital, and that one of the approved companies got the business for 32s. 6d. The State Insurance Office was created to police the insurance business. The very opposite is the position now: the private companies are policing the State office and keeping it in order. I come now to the Collic miners. I have it on reliable authority that the State office wanted 200s. per cent. for that risk but the private companies secured the business at 148s. The State Sawmills were quoted by the State Insurance Office 275s. per cent.; the private companies are doing the work for 210s. Mr. Parker justified his support of this legislation by saying that the State office should be able to do the insurance work at a much cheaper rate than that quoted by the private companies, the reason being that the State did not have to pay rates and taxes, and income tax. So here we have the wonderful State Insurance Office relieved of all those obligations mentioned by Mr. Parker and yet it is unable to compete with the private companies!

On page 108 of the Auditor General's latest report, under the heading of

"General Accident" a deficiency of nearly £21,000 is shown for the year. That must be the reason for the State office putting up the rates. On page 109 of the same report—I hope the Chief Secretary will take a note of the pages I am quoting—we find that the gold mining companies were charged last year a rate of 70s. per cent., and as policies were renewed or new business accepted the revised rate was 90s. per cent., an increase of 28½ per cent. If a private company increased its rates by 28½ per cent. this Chamber as well as the other Chamber would accuse it of profiteering. I could go on giving other similar instances but I think I have said enough to prove that the State Insurance Office is carried on at a loss, just as is every other concern that is in the hands of the Government. The man in the street tells us that the Government cannot even run a wheelbarrow. I am inclined to believe him.

It is right, I think, that I should draw attention to the fourth paragraph at the bottom of page 9 of the Bill, a paragraph that nobody appears to understand. This has been taken from an English statute, but I am informed that Lord Halsbury and three other English judges were unable to interpret its meaning. Yet we find it taken from the English Act and put into the Bill that is now before us. I hope the Minister in charge of the Bill will tell us what it means. As I said before, this Bill should be dealt with before we reach the measure relating to the State Insurance Office. I give general support to the Bill with the exception of Clause 55. I hope when it reaches the Committee stage it will be amended in the directions in which amendments may be considered necessary.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [5.7]: As this is essentially a Committee Bill, my remarks will be brief. Every member believes in the principle of third-party insurance and I find that the general public are in accord with this type of legislation. All, however, are afraid that the premiums will be high. We have been told that it will be necessary for the State Insurance Office to take this business so that the premiums may be kept down, but I am not one of those who think that is necessary. I am of the opinion that the committee, for the appointment of which the Bill provides, will serve to keep the premiums at a reasonable level. I have made

inquiries and ascertained that not only will the insurance companies take on this class of business, but that they will welcome it. The expenses will be low and the companies therefore will be able to accept the risks at low premiums. I support the second reading.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [5.9]: In supporting the second reading of the Bill, I wish to offer a few remarks on a subject that has not been yet referred to by other members. I consider that something more is necessary than is actually contained in the Bill for the purpose of protecting the motor vehicle owner who may pick up a person and in that way render himself liable for damages or costs in the event of an accident happening to that person. I am wondering whether anything can be done in this Bill to protect the motor vehicle owner in that respect. It has happened that a car owner has picked up a person really to give him a lift and by doing so rendered himself liable for damages in the event of an accident occurring. There should be some provision in the Bill to meet a situation of that kind.

Member: It will increase the premiums.

Hon. J. Nicholson: No, it should reduce the premium.

Hon. T. MOORE: I do not care whether it increases or reduces the premium; a man should not be liable for damages in the event of an accident to a passenger to whom he has offered a lift.

Hon. J. Cornell: A passenger should be in the same position as a member of Parliament who travels at his own risk.

Hon. T. MOORE: I repeat there have been occasions when after a person has been picked up on a road, an accident has unfortunately occurred, and the owner of the car who offered a lift to the person was mulcted in pretty severe damages.

Hon. G. B. Wood: And there have been instances of criminal proceedings arising out of such accidents.

Hon. T. MOORE: Probably arising from criminal neglect which would be another matter altogether. Where an accident takes place to a person who is picked up on the road, the owner of the vehicle should be absolved from liability. I hope the Minister will look into the question and determine whether it is possible to protect an owner in circumstances such as I have described. I

should like to know whether it would be possible to offer such protection in the Bill that is now before us. In any case, legislation should be passed to provide protection. Regarding the State Insurance Office, the same hostility is always displayed towards it. There has been really remarkable reasoning on the part of some members. Mr. Holmes finds fault with the office because it is a losing proposition, but he does not tell us that for a long time no other insurance office would take up a certain class of business.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What was the explanation?

Hon. T. MOORE: The State Insurance Office undertook the risk and so the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Mr. Wood is opposed to State insurance.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Not last session.

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member tells us that this class of insurance is all right and it is what private companies will take on because it is good business. So we propose to be quite as logical as we usually are and we will give to the State Insurance Office what the other companies will not have! There is no other reason why the State Office should not be allowed to handle this business on a fair basis. It has every right to this business. After all the State Office will only get a portion of it. No one will be forced to go to the State Office; so why bar it?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The principle is wrong.

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member has omitted to tell us what was agreed to by this House when the State Insurance Office Act was passed. He said we had agreed to a certain course. Where is that agreement to be found? He knows just as well as I do that, even though this House should agree to go so far and no farther, an agreement reached this session can be altered at will next session.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What about the mandate?

Hon. T. MOORE: That is a real Hitler-type of argument.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to Mr. Moore and other hon. members that they can very well postpone these arguments until another Bill is before the House. Incidental references may be all right, but that course should not be pursued too far.

Hon. T. MOORE: I thank you for the tip, Mr. President. The arguments that have been advanced have been absolutely futile, and I felt it incumbent upon me to direct attention to their weakness. Every member realises what is happening regarding motorists and passengers, and if the Bill can be amended in the direction I suggested earlier in my remarks, I hope the Minister will give the matter consideration. In the meantime I welcome the introduction of the Bill.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [5.17]: The point raised by Mr. Moore was exceedingly well taken. Some motorists are accustomed to driving passengers throughout the country.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is so.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Thereby they run a grave risk. Some time ago a Fremantle resident was sued because a passenger in his car had met with a serious accident. Proceedings were taken and as the motorist lost the case, the action cost him some hundreds of pounds. If it is possible to introduce some safeguard into the Bill, the Minister should give consideration to that phase.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why make it compulsory?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not care how the matter is dealt with, so long as some safeguard is provided. On the other hand, I noticed the report in the Press of a case in which a railway employee, who was travelling on a railway pass, was unable to secure a verdict against the Commissioner of Railways arising out of an accident he sustained.

Hon. J. Cornell: But those passes are issued under certain conditions.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is the point. He was travelling free and those enjoying that privilege should not have the right to sue anyone who chooses to give him a lift, should he meet with an accident.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You can proceed against a motorist only if he has been negligent.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And what is "negligence?"

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is what is so difficult to prove. Then there was the instance mentioned by Mr. Wood. I am in accord with the Bill. I agree that provision for third-party risk insurance should

have been made years ago. On the other hand, I do not believe in extending the functions of the State Government Insurance Office to cover all classes of business associated with motor vehicles. The Minister will understand my views on that question. The bogey that the premiums will be excessive if the State office is not allowed to undertake that class of business, is ridiculous.

Hon. G. Fraser: That has not been said.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, and in this House.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not during the course of this debate.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: With the provision of a committee that will fix the premium rates, I am convinced that the private insurance companies will undertake the business under fair conditions in the interests of the public.

Hon. G. Fraser: There is no guarantee of that.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but will oppose the extension of the functions of the State Insurance Office.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [5.22]: I do not intend to reply at length to the speeches made during the course of the debate. I am pleased with the manner in which the Bill has been received by members. I shall not comment on the references to the State Government Insurance Office and its functions. Every member knows that premiums are fixed by private companies as well as by the State office in accordance with the degree of risk involved. If a serious accident occurs such as happened in Mr. Bolton's factory and at Fremantle, premium rates must be affected. The private companies accept risks, but premium rates are affected by the degree of risk involved. Mr. Aegelo knows more about that phase than I do. Mr. Moore mentioned an important point about which I shall have inquiries made. Everyone recognises the necessity for including some such provision in our legislation. As to the meaning of the clause to which Mr. Holmes referred, that provision was taken from the South Australian Act and means what it says.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.24]:

The purpose of the Bill is to extend the functions of the State Government Insurance Office to cover all classes of insurable risks, including third party risk, relating to the ownership of motor vehicles. The measure contains a proviso that this shall apply only during such time as third party risk insurance arising out of the use of motor vehicles is made compulsory by law. I do not know whether the Government has any idea that at some early stage the compulsory aspect will be removed, but that is the impression such a provision conveys to me. I welcome compulsory insurance regarding third-party risk, but I still hold the opinion that the rates of premium could best be left to the private companies for determination. They should be allowed to provide the cover. My fear is that if the State office participates in the business, the rates will be higher than they should be. That has been our experience in the past whenever the State has embarked upon competition with private enterprise. We know that the Government commenced manufacturing bricks with the object of controlling prices, but the passing of the years has shown that prices have increased continuously until now, in my opinion, the cost is prohibitive.

The Chief Secretary: The cost of bricks here is lower than in any other State of the Commonwealth.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am always hearing about what applies in the other States, but I do not worry about that. If people there are foolish enough to pay extortionate prices for their requirements, which presumably accounts for the addition of millions of borrowed money to the public debt of Australia, that does not warrant what has happened here. I know that prices locally have soared. The same position arose when the State embarked upon a shipping service and in other directions too. I believe that if we could keep the Government out of the insurance business, competition would be more healthy and the business would be undertaken by private enterprise, which has already invested large sums of money in buildings, pays rates and taxation

and is acting in a manner beneficial to the community at large. On the other hand, the Government is free of all such charges and thus loses much revenue that would otherwise be collected from the private companies if they were permitted to effect increased business. If the State is to embark upon the extended forms of insurance, premium rates are bound to increase. It is my intention to vote against the second reading of the Bill and I hope it will not be agreed to.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAMWAYS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.28]: I have followed the operations of the Perth tramway system from the inception. It was inaugurated by a private company and I well remember the sensation caused in Hay-street when the first tram ran down the main thoroughfare. The general opinion then was that the undertaking was a monument to private enterprise. The concern did very well but then the Government and the City Council developed a desire to take it over. After a lot of negotiation, the Government was able to outbid the City Council and secure possession of the service. An agreement was entered into that until 1939, and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provided, the Government should pay to the City Council three per cent. of the gross revenue received from the trams. I made inquiries and I understand that 3 per cent. of the gross earnings of the trams alone and not of the trolley buses is paid. The aim of the Bill is to discontinue the payment of that 3 per cent. My opinion is that the 3 per cent. is better in the hands of the City Council than it would be in the hands of the Government. In accordance with my policy of endeavouring to rob the Government of all the revenue I can in order to provide for the rainy day which must come, I propose to vote against the second reading. The City Council could do much better with the 3 per cent. If the Government wants additional revenue let that revenue be obtained from the trolley buses and the trams. True it would appear that the

Government does not like loading the people in the metropolitan area. That was demonstrated by the regulations increasing freights on the pioneers of the back country. I suggest that people in permanent employment in the city should be the source from which additional revenue should be obtained. There is room for improvement because, as I have told the House—I do not know whether it is disputed or not but the fact remains—the Tramways Department spent £38,000 more last year than in the previous year to earn only £16,000 more, a loss of £22,000. If the Government needs additional revenue it can be obtained from the people using the trams and should not be secured by extracting from the City Council money which that municipality has a right to be paid. Mention has been made of the contract between the City Council and the electric light department for the supply of electric light and power. I well remember that Bill being discussed in this House. It was demonstrated that the department could supply the City of Perth at that rate. A contract was made for 50 years, and I believe to this day that the contract was and is a good contract.

Hon. J. Cornell: For the City of Perth.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The department that has been supplying the electric light has been loaded with almost impossible conditions. Coal is hauled from Collie to Perth at a payable rate for the railways. Salaries and wages have been increased and hours of labour reduced. All those costs have been piled on the electric light department with the result that instead of this being the payable proposition we were told it would be and which private enterprise could make it, to such an extent has it been loaded that the City Council would appear to be in possession of a favourable contract. Private enterprise, however, could supply electric light and power to the City Council, if allowed to do so, at a much lower rate than can the electricity department. With the idea of checking extravagance and preventing the Government from getting hold of this 3 per cent. which it is after, I propose to vote against the second reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.35]: The question I have to ask myself is: Am I going to be a party to the continuance of something in perpetuity which, when pro-

perly examined, was one of the compromises arrived at in the purchase of the tramways?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where does perpetuity come in under the Bill?

Hon. J. CORNELL: It says until Parliament otherwise decides.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Parliament can decide at any time. That is not in perpetuity.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is in perpetuity until Parliament otherwise decides. Twenty-seven years have passed since the tramways were purchased. I well recollect the debate that took place, and the same old horse was dragged in then that private enterprise could do the job better than the Government. But there is another story attached to it. I refer to the electric light agreement. In a manner of speaking, what was lost on the merry-go-round was made up on the swing-boat. I said then and I say now that the agreement that the Perth City Council should be supplied for 50 years with current at a loss to the supplier was iniquitous.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Only because the Government made it so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is not so. The municipality in which I live had an electric light station, but it did not come into the scheme of things. Eventually with the march of time it decided to scrap its electric light station and take power from the Government scheme. In doing so it did not get what the Perth City Council obtained. I would not mind if the Perth City Council were not exploiting the consumers, but it is doing so, and has made a departure that was never intended. It has made this electricity agreement a gigantic revenue-raising proposition. I would cheerfully vote to rescind that 50 years contract, because I think an end should be put to anything as iniquitous as that. The position is that 27 years have elapsed since the trams were purchased. Logically we can assume that almost half of the generation alive when that purchase was effected have gone where we shall all have to go sooner or later, and a new generation has arisen. Mr. Nicholson says that the 3 per cent. is paid in lieu of rates. It would be as logical to say that as the railways run through part of the City Council property some of the railway revenue should be paid to the Council.

The Chief Secretary: That is the argument.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There is no comparison between the two sets of circumstances.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is argued that the 3 per cent. does not include a portion of the earnings of the trolley buses. Is the Perth City Council entitled to anything from the trolley bus earnings? Who thought of trolley buses when the trams were taken over? Who in his wildest moment dreamt of trolley buses? I suppose that if the Government established an air scheme the sponsors of the payment of 3 per cent. to the municipality would want 3 per cent. of the earnings of the air fleet to be paid also.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They are "fly" enough for that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think some hon. members should fly a little higher to a broader outlook. When one views the position in its true perspective he perceives that the tramways are a great asset to the municipalities that are drawing this 3 per cent. and particularly to the Perth City Council.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about the Kalgoorlie line?

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is no argument about that.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They pay that.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: This is the man with the broad vision!

Hon. J. Nicholson: I hope when a Bill relating to Boulder is introduced you will be able to argue in the same way.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is only one tram in Boulder now, running into Kalgoorlie.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And the buses.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Kalgoorlie and Boulder tramway company does not pay dividends. The position is that nobody would die of heart disease if the trams in Kalgoorlie stopped running tomorrow. There were many men employed at the mines before the trams were introduced, many more than now, and if the trams ceased running tomorrow, the miners would still be able to get to their work.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But the trams still pay the 3 per cent!

Hon. J. CORNELL: Some countries believe in hanging; some do not. Is that any argument why this 3 per cent. payment should be continued? The tramways authorities in Kalgoorlie keep the roads, or are supposed to keep them in repair. I am sorry that Mr. Hall, the chairman of the Road

Board is not at the moment in the Chamber. I am sure he would say something about the matter. My plea is that members should take a longer view, and ask themselves honestly whether these people are entitled to this concession. I understand that if a new line were laid down tomorrow the argument would be raised that 3 per cent. of that line should be taken over by the municipality.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is not 3 per cent. of the line but of the gross earnings.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Well, 3 per cent. of the turnover.

The Chief Secretary: The 3 per cent payment does not apply to any new line constructed since the agreement was entered into.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Why should the agreement entered into be continued and yet not apply to new lines?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Amend the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The sooner the House takes the long view on this question, the better. I have another objection, namely, that the tramway system is losing money. I have to put my hand in my pocket to help in paying 3 per cent. to the City Council, but I do not have to do that in the case of the Kalgoorlie tramway system. When there is a loss on the tramway system, the municipality still gets its 3 per cent., and the general taxpayer has to foot the bill. That is where we come in. I hope the Bill will be carried.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—DENTISTS.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair: the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 43—agreed to.

Clause 44—Qualifications for registration as a dentist:

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yesterday, during the second reading of this Bill, I commented on the provisions with respect to the registration of dentists after ten years' experience, and the modified examination they will be expected to pass. We have been told that the measure has been brought down as a result of numerous conferences between the

Dental Association and the association comprising dental assistants. There is a third party to consider, namely, the public. Before we assent to any legislation affecting the physical welfare of the people, we should be satisfied that no incompetent persons are permitted to practice upon them. To-day I had an opportunity to meet the president of the Dental Board and discuss this Bill with him. I was assured that the examination the assistants will be expected to pass will be such that only the registration of reasonably competent persons will be permitted; also that the term "modified examination" is used in the South Australian legislation. An examination may be modified to the extent of 5 per cent., or 90 per cent. I am informed that the term will cover all the essentials that dentists should possess, and that only after they have attended lectures and passed their practical examinations will they be acceptable to the board. I am also assured that the character of candidates and their past experience will be taken into consideration before examination. It was pointed out to me that the board is as anxious as is anyone to improve the status of the profession, and is alive to the fact that its duty towards the public is paramount. With these assurances, my fears have largely been dissolved, for I have accepted the statement of the president of the board in good faith. I understand that between 25 and 30 men are concerned. Of these 11 are returned soldiers, and practically all have exhibited very commendable enthusiasm in the direction of obtaining the necessary qualifications. The effects of this legislation will be watched with interest, because of the experience we had in connection with other professions. I hope the result of the examinations will be that the dental profession will have no reason to regret asking for the passing of this legislation. Members of the Dental Board are men of excellent reputation, and I think the same thing applies to the Dental Assistants' Association. Those concerned have an excellent opportunity to prove to the public that their desire is to bring the status of the profession to the highest possible level.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting perilously near to making a third reading speech.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Because of the assurances I have received to-day, I do not in-

tend to move any amendment dealing with the term "modified examination."

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 45 to 64, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 9th November, 1939.

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

QUESTION—WAR WITH GERMANY.

Railway Employees' Pay Deficiencies.

Mr. BOYLE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the Railway Department made provision to make up any deficiencies in pay caused by the compulsory attendance of railway men in military camps where the military pay is less than that earned by the men in the Departmental service? 2, If not, can consideration be given to the question of making up the difference between military and departmental pay?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The matter is one of Government policy and a decision thereon will be announced in the near future. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—SECONDARY INDUSTRIES.

Encouraging Local Firms.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Are various ways and means of encouraging the establishment of new industries continually being investigated? 2, Will he consider whether any financial concession or taxation rebate could be granted to any local firms which make it a condition of employment that their employees shall purchase Western Australian goods wherever possible?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes.

SELECT COMMITTEE—INVESTMENT COMPANIES.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, the time for bringing up the report was extended for two weeks.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Patriek (for Mr. Doney), leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Mann (Beverley) on the ground of ill-health.

On motion by Mr. Shearn (for Mr. North), leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. J. H. Smith (Nelson) on the ground of urgent public business.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Holman (Forrest) on the ground of urgent private business.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.

2, Contraceptives.