

to me, and I pointed out that the Bill in paragraph (c) of Subsection 7, and in the proviso to Subsection 2, already provides for an emergency of the nature suggested.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I cannot agree with the member for Perth. Service stations will be allowed to render service if they can be located, but they will not be open. Under the proposed new subsection, motorists would know that certain stations would be open.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### **BILL—INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 11.17 p.m.*

## **Legislative Council.**

*Thursday, 23rd 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 Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Administration Act Amendment.
- 2, Death Duties (Taxing) Act Amendment.
- 3, Wheat Products (Prices Fixation) Act Amendment.
- 4, Government Railways Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 5, Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment.
- 6, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
- 7, Dried Fruits Act Amendment.
- 8, State Forest Access.
- 9, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.

### **MOTION—ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.35]: I move—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House meet for the despatch of business on Fridays at 4.30 p.m., in addition to the ordinary sitting days.

I do not think there will be any necessity to sit tomorrow, but it may be necessary to sit tomorrow week.

Question put and passed.

**BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.****1, Income Tax (Rates for Deduction).**

Returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

**2, Builders' Registration.**

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

**BILL—LOAN, £2,137,000.***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East) [4.40]: I regret that I have not a copy of the Chief Secretary's speech, since it was difficult to follow all his remarks on the Bill. No doubt this is due to my own fault in not requesting the hon. gentleman to supply me with a copy. Probably, if one could peruse the Chief Secretary's speech and compare it with the corresponding speech made in another place, one would find that the Chief Secretary gave a great deal more of valuable information. Loan Bills are hardly annuals. I do not know what we should do without them, in view of the necessity for borrowing money in order to carry on. Still, one occasionally questions the wisdom of expending such large sums of money as are mentioned in the Bill. The Chief Secretary will correct me if I am wrong, but I have an impression that he mentioned a considerable sum of money, I believe £100,000, as being requested in order to provide for works the cost of which had exceeded the estimates.

The Chief Secretary: Not exceeded the estimates, but exceeded the authorisations provided.

**HON. A. THOMSON**: The authorisations have been exceeded, and probably those authorisations were in accordance with the amounts recommended by departmental officers. It is proposed to expend £60,000 on additions and improvements to railways, and £50,000 on rolling stock, a total of £110,000 for the railway system. I do not cavil at the amount, and certainly I do not say that it is not required; but one would like to know exactly what additions and improvements are contemplated. A further £60,000 is asked for on behalf of the new electric power station.

I thought that station was practically completed when recently it was opened, but it seems this additional money must be found.

The Chief Secretary: It is required for reticulation of additional current.

**HON. A. THOMSON**: Nevertheless, we have no particulars. In his reply the Chief Secretary may give them.

The Chief Secretary: All such details cannot be given on the second reading.

**HON. A. THOMSON**: As we are being asked to agree to over £2,000,000, a little inquisitiveness as to the proposed destinations of the money may be pardoned. Goldfields water supply accounts for £325,000, metropolitan water supply for £200,000, Perth and Fremantle sewerage and drainage for £325,000, water supply for towns generally for £60,000, and water supply in agricultural and north-western districts, including drainage and irrigation, and loans and grants to local authorities for £240,000. The item Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £63,000 is what may be expected. The item Development of Agriculture, £123,000, includes a sum of £70,000 for pine planting, purchase of land, and forest regeneration. This proposed expenditure of £70,000 attracts attention. My impression was that royalties on timber should enable the undertaking to finance itself. I should like some information on the subject. Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc., £380,000, includes £325,000 for roads and bridges throughout the State, including feeders to railways and grants to local authorities. I wonder whether the Government in anticipation of the passing of a certain measure now before Parliament proposes to make grants to local authorities provided they can prove having spent certain sums of money on roads and bridges. Possibly part of the item which I am discussing is to be applied in that direction. For public buildings £40,000 is asked. There is also an item of £3,000 for State Quarries. I may be wrong, but I have the impression that last year the quarries showed a loss. If they did, it would be interesting to know the reason for the item on the Loan Estimates. If we are losing money on the State Quarries, the time is highly inopportune to invest additional funds in them.

I have frequently protested against the Government's general policy. Perhaps I am running my head against a stone wall, but continual reiteration is necessary when one considers that something is open to criticism. The present method of spending large sums of money is not economical, so far as one can judge. My reference is to the policy of doing everything by day work. I point that out for the reason that there is no effective check on such work. That is the position as I see it. The amazing feature is that while day work represents the Government's policy, we frequently learn from the Press that private plastering firms, for instance, have secured contracts from the Public Works Department. Again, as regards tiling and terrazzo work tenders have been called and tenders have been accepted. It appears, therefore, that the Government does not carry out its day work policy in its entirety. If Ministers deem that they obtain the best value by the day work method, one would naturally assume that all Government works would be carried out by day work.

The Chief Secretary: Then you should be satisfied.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I would have been had the Government accepted my challenge. If ever a Government fell down on its job, in my opinion this Government did on the occasion when it was asked to give contractors an opportunity to tender for a building and refused to do so. Possibly I may be biased, but the Government's action showed clearly to me that, in effect, it was not game to accept the challenge.

The Chief Secretary: Surely there is no necessity to accept any challenge.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Perhaps not. In view of the fact that public money is being expended, I think I am justified, representing as I do a considerable portion of the State, in asking the Government to prove that its methods are correct. In my opinion, they are not. We are being asked to authorise an expenditure of £2,137,000. All we are expected to do is to say "Yea;" and next year the Government—this applies possibly to other Governments, but more so to the present Administration—will bring down further Loan proposals and supply members with no more information than we have now received. The Government must carry on,

but I certainly have grave doubts whether this State will receive full value for the money that is to be expended. I would like further particulars as to what is proposed to be done with the £70,000 set apart for the purchase of land and forests regeneration.

The Chief Secretary: I have already given you some information.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am aware of that. I am not saying for a moment that the Chief Secretary is withholding information. I regret that I have not had an opportunity to read his speech, although I carefully perused the Premier's speech. Certainly not much information was conveyed by it, except the fact that the money had to be borrowed. We might be given some particulars of how the £40,000 for public buildings is proposed to be expended.

The Chief Secretary: I dealt with that. Had you listened, you would have known.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is very difficult for members to follow. Those are one or two items upon which I would like to have some information. The Government would certainly be embarrassed if it did not obtain this money. I would be happier, however, if there were more competition. The Government calls for tenders for some classes of work which are in the nature of subletting. As a matter of fact, I think one of the conditions of Government contracts is that no subletting shall be permitted; but it is all right for the Government itself to sublet. The measure is a hardy annual, and we shall have to pass it. I would prefer the House to have more control than it has at the present time over the expenditure of Loan money. All members can do, when the Bill is presented to them, is to offer a few words of criticism. Next year we shall have a similar Bill presented to us for our concurrence. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [4.54]: I desire to offer a few words on the Bill, more with the object of obtaining information. I notice from the Loan Estimates that a sum of £50,000 is provided for rolling stock for the railways, excluding the tramways, and for additions and improvements to the railways, the electric power station at East Perth, and electricity supply. We very often find items grouped

in this way, and sometimes other items creep in. For instance, I am wondering if the amount includes provision for the building of a trolley-bus barn on the Esplanade.

The Chief Secretary: You have got that on your mind.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I have. Not only is it on my mind, but it is on the minds of all the people residing in the city of Perth. I shall keep at this matter until I am relieved by the Chief Secretary's reply to my motion.

The Chief Secretary: Are you not prepared to accept the word of a Minister in another place?

Hon. A. Thomson: We are not supposed to discuss another place.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I have known Ministers in another place to break their word. I have known them to give incorrect information. I saw a comment by another Minister that the matter had not even been considered by more than one Minister. That may or may not be so. I require something more definite than that before I shall give up the fight. Not only have I this Chamber behind me, and also the citizens of Perth, but almost the whole State; in fact, everybody who knows the site and what is likely to happen to it. I shall not rest until I am convinced that there is no possibility of the erection of a trolley-bus barn on the Esplanade. That is one item upon which I desire to obtain information. The other item comes under the heading of Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc. Included in that item is the sum of £10,000 for the purchase of Bundibup Farm. I am anxious to know what the Government intends to do with that farm. I have had some little experience of farming with the assistance of the youth of the State. I hope the Government will profit by the experience gained in the carrying on of this particular farm, which for a number of years was known as the Ugly Men's Scheme. I suggest that the Government might fall in for another tragedy there, unless it is very careful indeed. Such farms are extremely costly. The only reference I can see in the details of the Loan Estimates is that the Government is proposing to purchase the farm, and to recondition and clear vacant holdings at Wooreloo. The items are grouped. I would like to know how the amount is to be allocated. I have my own views of the value of the property and I know Mr. Craig—

who is familiar with every inch of it—shares my views. Perhaps I may be pardoned for speaking on his behalf, but we have the same idea of the value of the farm. I wonder whether the Government is getting value for its money. As a matter of fact, I would not take the farm as a gift.

The Chief Secretary: You are fussy.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I may be. The farm is situated in the Province represented by Mr. Craig. I know there is a little good land on it, but not enough to warrant the purchase price being paid.

Member: What is the acreage?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is just the point. What is the acreage? Some of us in this Chamber with farming experience know it is better to have 1,000 acres of first-class land than 10,000 acres of which only about 300 acres can be worked, the remainder being worthless.

The Chief Secretary: It all depends on what you are going to do with it.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: What does the Government propose to do with it? Probably something can be done with it if there is enough money available to spend on it; but my argument is that a more suitable place could have been found, something that would have cost the Government considerably less and a property that would have contained better land. Few men have a greater regard and respect for the wonderful work that has been carried out at Fairbridge than I, and I do not wish to say one word against Fairbridge, but those who know the quality of some of the land in this State, and the quality of the land that should have been taken up for a scheme of that character, are aware that if the Fairbridge authorities had taken up a better class of country, the work of those authorities would have been much more successful. I hope we shall be given some information with regard to the proposed expenditure of £10,000 on the Bundibup property.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

## BILL—RURAL RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and on motion by Hon. H. V. Piesse read a first time.

**BILL—SUNDAY OBSERVANCE.***Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [5.0], in moving the second reading, said: This short Bill has been brought forward with a view to ensuring Sunday observance in the building trade and such other industries or callings as may be prescribed from time to time by regulation. Briefly, the Bill provides that no person shall work at or in connection with the building or any other prescribed trade on a Sunday at any time. The prohibition against Sunday work in the trade I have mentioned will not apply in cases of emergency, nor where a person is not ordinarily or customarily engaged in the trade concerned and he performs the work on his own dwelling house and without paid assistance. This provision will enable persons not engaged in the building trade as a business to carry out improvements or alterations to their homes, or even to erect, say, a seaside residence over week-ends. While an ordinary person will be competent to carry out building operations in connection with his own dwelling house on Sundays, the same provision will not apply in the case of persons engaged in the building trade. Unfortunately, it is impossible to provide that the builders themselves shall be allowed to carry out activities on their own properties on Sundays, without destroying much of the effectiveness of the proposed legislation.

Many of the building partnerships operating in this State consist of quite a number of members, and if we were to permit those people to engage in their usual activities on Sunday, there would be nothing to prevent the wholesale circumvention of the purpose of this legislation. As members are aware, recent years have witnessed a considerable increase in Sunday work in the building trade. Undoubtedly one of the main factors responsible for this development has been the increasing number of men who have set up as contractors in a small way and who, in their desire to gain a foothold in the trade, have been prepared to accept a profitable contract. Many of these people are foreigners—their numbers have been increasing year by year—and they have cut prices for certain classes of contracts to a level allowing little or no profit under normal building conditions.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Is that the reason for the Bill?

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** That is one of the reasons. We know that alien contractors work in the building trade on Sunday and also from daylight to dark. These foreigners can only carry on by working all hours of the day and on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays. They enjoy a strong competitive advantage over the builder who refuses to work more than five or 5½ days in the week. Although at present only a minority of the builders are active on Sundays, the proportion will inevitably increase as more and more contractors become obliged, by force of competition, to adopt the seven-day working week.

This brings me to another aspect of the question of Sunday observance. In its awards\* and agreements, the Arbitration Court lays down the maximum number of hours to be worked in any one week at ordinary rates of pay, and then prescribes the rates of pay when overtime is worked beyond those hours. It is true that the enactment of this measure would prevent employees in the building trade from working on Sundays, but by no stretch of the imagination could this be construed as an interference with the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court. The fact is that the court does not say in its awards that Sunday work may be carried on; it simply lays down the hours and rates of pay that shall prevail in the ordinary course of events. Where a question is one of public policy, the court leaves the matter for the decision of the Legislature. Under our factories and shops legislation we have provided for the closing of certain premises on Sundays and on half-holidays. If we continue to countenance building activities on Sundays, then the time will arrive when persons engaged in certain other trades will assume that because Parliament has not expressly prohibited them from carrying on operations on the Sabbath, there is no particular objection to such activities. I think the House will agree that there are very important objections.

Apart from the general desirability of preserving the Sabbath as a day of rest and quiet, there is the matter of unfair competition that I have mentioned. Then, again, we have to consider the question in its relation to the general welfare of the

community, particularly in regard to industrial efficiency, the health of the workers and the effect of the seven-day week on unemployment. It cannot be denied that where there is a given volume of building work to be done, the employment of some workers on every day of the week inevitably decreases the amount of work available for other men employed in the trade. Thus we find that some workers receive far more employment than is consistent with the maintenance of their unimpaired health and efficiency, to the detriment, not only of themselves, but of their fellow workers. Admittedly there are many activities that must be carried out on Sundays, but it cannot be submitted that those connected with the building trade come within that category.

The Bill is short and self-explanatory and its essential provisions are contained in one clause which I have already explained. A comprehensive definition of "Building Trade" is set out in the proposed section dealing with interpretations, and reference is made in the same clause to prohibited trades. The application of this legislation will have effect only in such areas of the State as the Governor may from time to time prescribe by regulation, and provision is also made whereby the proposed Act may be applied by regulation to other industries and callings as well as the building trade. The remaining proposals in the Bill are the usual machinery provisions which are necessary to police a measure of this description. I may add that today a deputation from the West Australian Conference of the Seventh Day Adventists waited on me and requested that an amendment should be made to the Bill to permit the members of their faith to engage in occupation on the Sabbath, because, as everyone knows, their Sabbath is observed on Saturday.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the Jews?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They work on Saturdays and Sundays. I have communicated with the Minister for Labour with reference to this request and an amendment will be inserted by this House to meet the wishes of the Seventh Day Adventists. We must, however, be careful that we do not leave the door too wide open, otherwise the Bill will be valueless. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

### *Further Recommittal.*

On motion by the Honorary Minister, Bill again recommitted for the purpose of inserting a new clause.

### *In Committee.*

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

New clause:

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 4:—

Amendment of Section 4: Section four of the principal Act is amended as follows:—

- (a) by inserting therein before the definition of "District" a new definition as follows:—"Approved insurer" means any person or association of persons carrying on the business of insurance who or which has been approved by the Minister as an approved insurer for the purposes of Part IVA. of this Act, and includes the State Government Insurance Office as established under the State Government Insurance Office Act, 1938;
- (b) by deleting therefrom the definition of "owner" and inserting in lieu thereof a definition as follows:—"Owner" when used in relation to a vehicle which is the subject of a hire-purchase agreement means the person in possession of that vehicle under that agreement, and, when used in relation to a vehicle which is the subject of a hiring agreement (other than a hire-purchase agreement) under which the vehicle is hired for a period of not less than six months, means the person in possession of that vehicle under that hiring agreement. Save as aforesaid the term "owner" means any person who owns a vehicle.

This new clause is precisely the same as that which was rejected in lieu of one moved by Mr. Baxter, which was in turn rejected. I think the majority of members will now support the proposal to include the State Insurance Office in this part of the Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The new clause would leave it in the hands of the Minister to approve of such companies as he thought should do the business under Part IVA of the Act. Whilst it would admit the State Insurance Office, it would not necessarily admit any insurance company. I should like

to see all the words after "approved insurer" struck out with a view to inserting other words.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That after the word "Act" in line 9 of paragraph (a) the following words be inserted:—"And all persons and associations of persons and companies approved under Section 10 of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-1938."

Such an amendment would prevent the Minister from approving only of the State Insurance Office for this class of business.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: To test the feeling of the Committee on the issue of State trading concerns, I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) the words "and includes the State Government Insurance Office as established under the State Government Insurance Office Act, 1938," be struck out.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is only right the amendment should be agreed to. When authority was given for the establishment of the State Insurance Office, and the acts it had performed without authority were ratified, it was laid down that the scope of the work to be undertaken would be limited to the activities specified at the time.

The Chief Secretary: For all time?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. If we give the State Insurance Office authority to conduct this new business, we shall be departing from the decision arrived at last year.

Hon. G. Fraser: Last night you departed twice from previous decisions.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We should adhere to that decision, and have every justification for doing so. The activities of State trading concerns should, in the interests of the trading community and the people, certainly not be extended.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The issue has been debated over several lengthy periods on this Bill and on the State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment Bill. Mr. Nicholson argues that because the Committee decided at one time to limit the activities of the office, we should never depart from that attitude. The contention is absurd. New conditions have arisen, which demand that the public should be protected in every possible way.

Hon. G. W. Miles: An insurance is compulsory.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. In the interests of the motoring public, provision should be made for the State office to participate in the business.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	10

Majority for .. .. . 1

#### AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. G. Fraser
	(Teller.)

#### PAIRS.

##### AYES.

Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. H. Seddon

##### NOES.

Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. W. R. Hall

Amendment thus passed; the new clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill again reported with a further amendment, and the report adopted.

### BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

### BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 21st November; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 2 (Amendment of Section 2), after Mr. Parker had moved to strike out all words after "as follows" and to substitute in lieu the words "(b) in relation to insurance under Part IV.A of the Traffic Act 1919-1939" and Mr. Miles had moved a further amendment to strike out the words "including third-party risks." I hope the Committee has sorted itself out and has arrived

at the understanding that the decision on the Traffic Act Amendment Bill has rendered this measure abortive.

Hon. G. Fraser: Someone may change his mind.

The CHAIRMAN: The easiest way out of the difficulty would be to move me out of the Chair.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think we should proceed with the Bill.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There might be a conference.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is possible that some member may—

Hon. L. Craig: See the light.

The CHAIRMAN: One Bill says one thing; the other Bill says another thing. That is absurd.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I agree with, Mr. Chairman. I move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have listened attentively to the debate, and, notwithstanding the decision on another Bill, I think there might be a conference on this measure. I am of opinion that the State office should participate in third-party risk business. That form of insurance is made compulsory, and it was in view of that fact that I moved my amendment with the object of inserting other words later on.

Amendment (Mr. Miles's) put and passed.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "vehicles" in line 4 of proposed new paragraph (b1), the words "including third-party risks, in connection with the ownership and use of motor vehicles."

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But they are already in.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I made inquiries regarding the amendment which I am informed makes it perfectly clear that the application of the Bill will be confined to the insurance of motor vehicles. It was suggested that it would cover all classes of insurance, but Mr. Miles's amendment makes it clear that the business will be confined to motor vehicles only.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It makes it perfectly clear that the State office can undertake all classes of motor car insurance, which is exactly what the Bill in-

tended, and Mr. Miles's amendment says in other words, that it can do so.

The Honorary Minister: It includes comprehensive policy risks.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes. My amendment was to confine the State office to third-party risks as defined in Part IVA of the Traffic Act.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I made it perfectly clear that the Government wanted the lot or none. We want the State office to have the right to compete with private insurance companies for the business.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: We have prevented that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Nicholson suggested that the provision in the original Bill left the way open for the State office to transact all classes of business. The paragraph has been altered to make it clear that the measure will apply to motor insurance only.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Are you going to put my amendment, Mr. Chairman?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The words are there.

Hon. G. W. MILES: We have two legal men with legal minds—I was going to add "such as they are"—and one says it is one thing, and the other says it is not. Mr. Nicholson says the Bill now includes all classes of insurance and Mr. Parker says it does not.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I did not say anything of the sort.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Excuse me, you said I was putting it back as it was before. I have been one of the listeners this session. I have listened to all the debates and formed my own conclusions. Mr. Fraser was the first to suggest this means of clarifying the clause. I took the matter up, and the House has agreed to delete these words. By inserting them in another place in the paragraph the position will be made clear, and Mr. Nicholson will be satisfied that the State office has no right to undertake business other than motor insurance business.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the hon. member simply transposes these words "including third-party risks," he will not be attaining the end he desires. I suggest a slight amendment that will accomplish what he desires.



Hon. G. W. Miles: What you desire, not what I desire.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I suggest that the hon. member should move to include the words "in relation to." The paragraph would then read, "Subject as hereinafter provided, all classes of insurable risks in connection with the ownership and use of motor vehicles in relation to third-party risks."

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is what you want, not what I want.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I understood that was what Mr. Miles desired.

Hon. G. W. Miles: No; that would limit the work of the State Insurance Office to third-party risks.

Hon. G. Fraser: We do not want that.

The Honorary Minister: Mr. Parker's amendment would do that.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I understand that what Mr. Miles has done is to strike out the Proviso.

The CHAIRMAN: No. Mr. Miles's amendment is to add after the word "vehicles" in line 4 of the proposed new paragraph (b1) the words "including third-party risks in respect of the use of motor vehicles."

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: So the paragraph will then read, "Subject as hereinafter provided in relation to all classes of insurable risks, including third-party risks"—

Hon. G. W. Miles: No; "including third-party risks" has been taken out.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It will read, "Subject as hereinafter provided, in relation to all classes of insurable risks in connection with the ownership and use of motor vehicles, including third-party risks in respect of the use of motor vehicles." That looks to me like a repetition.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It will be fully comprehensive again.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Words are being added that are already in the paragraph.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the Bill will have to be recommitted again to enable Mr. Miles to achieve the desired result. The Committee has resolved that "including third-party risks" should come out, and now it is desired to insert those words somewhere else.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Committee had in mind that, as they stood, the words did

not convey clearly what was meant, but by taking them out and inserting them a little further on, the meaning would be clarified. That was the idea behind Mr. Miles's move. I gather from what the Chairman says that if we strike out certain words they cannot be inserted in a different part of a clause at the same sitting.

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. members are aware that if we give way on certain points, we do not know what that may lead to. The original question was that Clause 2 stand as printed. Mr. Parker moved to strike out paragraph (b1). Mr. Miles moved an amendment on the amendment to strike out the words "including third-party risks." That does not prevent other words being struck out. The question now is that Mr. Parker's amendment, as amended, be agreed to.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I hope the Committee will not agree to strike out all these words. That would be scrapping the Bill altogether.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What do you want to do?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I want the State office to have the right to handle the whole of motor insurance business. That is what the Minister wants, too.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We don't.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The transposition of those words from one part of the paragraph to another will have no effect at all.

The CHAIRMAN: That question is now settled. The question before the Chair is Mr. Parker's amendment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Parker's amendment will make it definite that the State office's activities will be confined to third-party risks only.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Under Part IV.A of the Traffic Act.

The CHAIRMAN: If the words Mr. Parker wants removed should remain in the Bill, the Bill will be so reported. Mr. Miles will then be able to move for a recommitment in order that he may seek to have included the words "including third-party risk in respect of motor vehicles" where he wants them actually to appear. If Mr. Parker's amendment is carried, the other words he proposes to have inserted in their stead will be put. The decision is in the hands of the Committee.

Amendment (to strike out Paragraph (b1) as amended) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	9

Majority for	..	..	3
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#### AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo  
Hon. C. F. Baxter  
Hon. L. B. Bolton  
Hon. J. T. Franklin  
Hon. V. Hamersley  
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane

Hon. J. Nicholson  
Hon. H. S. W. Parker  
Hon. H. Tuckey  
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom  
Hon. G. B. Wood  
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt  
(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. L. Craig  
Hon. J. M. Drew  
Hon. G. Fraser  
Hon. E. H. Gray  
Hon. W. H. Kitson

Hon. W. J. Mann  
Hon. G. W. Miles  
Hon. T. Moore  
Hon. A. Thomson  
(Teller.)

#### PAIRS.

#### AYES.

Hon. H. Seddon  
Hon. H. V. Plesse  
Hon. J. J. Holmes

#### NOES.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall  
Hon. C. B. Williams  
Hon. W. R. Hall

Amendment, as amended, thus passed.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be inserted in lieu of the words struck out:—“(b1) in relation to insurance under Part IV.A of the Traffic Act, 1919-1939.”

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

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

## BILL—DAIRY INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Assembly's Message.*

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

## BILL—TRAMWAYS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading—Defeated.*

Debate resumed from the 16th November.

**HON. J. T. FRANKLIN** (Metropolitan) [6.5]: I intend to vote against the second reading. I am of opinion that if we pass the measure, we shall be doing an injustice to the people of Perth by depriving them of certain rights and privileges which are theirs.

Members are aware of what happened many years ago when the Perth City Council negotiated with the tramway company on the question of granting permission to lay tram lines in city streets. Certain restrictions were imposed by the concession, which were favourable to the citizens of Perth. First and foremost the City Council was given the right, after the expiration of a number of years, to purchase the system. Then, after a further lapse of years, another opportunity to purchase was provided for. If those rights were not exercised, the system was to revert eventually to the citizens of Perth, and, in fact, to the people of Western Australia, free of cost, with the exception that the company had to be paid for land at its original cost.

In 1911 the Perth City Council decided to exercise its right to purchase the system. The council opened negotiations with the company. At that time, unfortunately, the Government of the day—or Parliament, as we have been informed—decided that it would like to purchase the undertaking. That was a very paltry policy for the Government and Parliament to adopt, because the citizens of Perth had definite rights that should have been honoured. What was the result? There being two buyers in the field, the Government obtained the advantage, but had to pay heavily for it. Had the rights of the City Council been honoured, the tramways today would have been the property of the city and would have been obtained free of cost. In the tramways, Perth would have had an asset worth about half a million of money, and the ratepayers would have acquired the undertaking free of all debt. I do not know whether I can say the same thing of the Government. I cannot say whether the tramways are showing a profit, but I believe there was a loss last year and I dare say the loss will continue.

The Government has now introduced a Bill seeking to deprive the City Council of the 3 per cent. payment. In municipal circles 3 per cents. might mean something quite different, but in this instance it meant that 3 per cent. of the gross earnings was to be paid each year to the City Council. This would represent about £6,000 or £7,000 annually to the ratepayers, equivalent to a rate of 1d. in the pound. As one who has had the privilege for nearly 30 years of representing the ratepayers in the City Council, I strongly object to this right be-

ing taken from the citizens. Formerly we could insist upon the company maintaining the roads in a proper manner, but unfortunately we have not that right now. The City Council can write to the Government and complain that certain streets need top-dressing, but the Government makes the repairs or refrains from doing so just as it pleases. The ratepayers have certainly been deprived of their rights. No one would dare treat a private individual in the same way. It was like robbing the citizens, because the right of purchase belonged to them.

I am definitely of opinion that the 3 per cent. should be paid to the City Council for all time. The Government secured a good undertaking and has had every opportunity to carry on and develop it. In recent years the system has been extended by installing trolley bus services, and the Government is using the roads but not paying for their use. The City Council has not been paid 3 per cent. on the earnings of the trolley buses. As regards the tramways, however, I contend that the citizens of Perth are entitled to receive this money for all time. During my term as mayor, we sought an assurance from the Government that it would maintain the roads on which the trolley buses run. I believe that assurance was not obtained, and the City Council has had to maintain the roads, not only for the use of trolley buses, but also for the use of other traffic.

I hope members will vote against the second reading. It is only fair and just to the people of Perth that this payment should be continued. Naturally, the Government will say that it wants to obviate this expenditure if possible, but let me point out that not only the ratepayers of the city but the people of the State derive advantages from the tramway system. Therefore why should the people of Perth have to meet the extra cost for roads that will be entailed if this measure is passed? The City Council could restrict the volume of road work and dismiss some of its employees in lieu of imposing the extra rate of 1d. in the pound to compensate for the loss of the 3 per cent. But who would desire to do that, especially at the present time? We do not want to dismiss men: we would rather employ additional hands and keep them in work during these times. In conclusion, I wish to express myself as emphatically as possible

against the Bill, and I hope I shall receive sufficient support to negative the measure on the second reading.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West) [7.31]: At the outset of this debate I got the impression from the speeches of some hon. members that the Government proposed, by this measure, to do something in the nature of breaking a contract. Before looking at the Act I was inclined to the opinion that the House should be especially careful, not to countenance anything of the kind. Since then, however, I referred to the Act; and now I am unable to understand just how and why members hold the opinions I have mentioned. Section 8 of the Act to me is perfectly clear. From a perusal of the first two lines of that section I take it that the Government, until the year 1939, was bound to do certain things; and one of them was to pay into a trust fund three per cent of the revenue derived from the working of the tramways. I consider that the Government has a perfect right to bring down the Bill. Had it brought down the measure last year, I would have said that it was taking action within the period of its contract. However, I am now convinced that the Government waited until this year, when it is free, to make at any rate an endeavour to have that portion of the old agreement revised. For that reason I propose to vote with the Government.

We have heard quite a lot about what the Perth City Council has done and what the Government has neglected to do regarding the tramways. The hon. member who preceded me in this debate said that the Government had a good proposition in the tramways. Well, if I were to be offered the tramways of the City of Perth as a good proposition, I do not think I would be at all enthusiastic about the matter. I am convinced that henceforth the tramways will be a diminishing asset. The advent of motor transport has most materially affected tramway earnings, and we have seen for some time now a steady fall in the revenue, despite the fact that trolley buses have been introduced and for the moment at any rate, appear to be popular. I fail to see that the tramway system is something that any body of men would like to put money into.

I have given consideration to the question of the supply by the Government to the tramways of electric current. I understand that a good many years ago the Government was assured by some authority that it could generate current for about .55d. per unit. On the strength of that statement, and with the promise of a load of about 12,000,000 units, the Government fixed .75d. per unit as the price at which it would supply current to the Perth City Council. Right down the years, in spite of all the efforts made by the Electricity Department, in spite of up-to-date, in fact the very latest machinery being installed, we find that the Government has never yet been able to produce current at anything like the estimated cost of .55d. As a matter of fact, the cost is somewhere in the vicinity of .80d. I have gone to the trouble of finding out how much the Government is actually contributing to the Perth City Council under that arrangement. I believe hon. members are unaware that last year the Perth City Council made a profit of £84,037 out of current purchased from the Government. It will be realised that the city has been on a wonderfully good wicket. The council's advocates have carefully kept that aspect of the question in the background.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is a different question.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I fully appreciate that it is a different question. However, the general impression has been that the Government has all along the line been the party that has been anything but generous to the council.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Government took away what was the property of the Perth City Council.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not think the Government would ever have dreamed of supplying the Perth City Council at the present price had it had any idea of what the consumption would be. Let me show how the Perth City Council in this matter is advantaged as against similar bodies.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Perth City Council had acquired the sole rights.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Government is standing up to its contract, and the more current the tramways use, the more money the Government loses. That factor has not been taken into consideration at all. When a public body can make £84,000 out of the

Government in a year and then turns round and makes a tremendous noise over £46,000, the Government, in my opinion, has a perfect right to take the action proposed in the Bill. As regards electricity supply, my figures are official; they were supplied to me only a day or two ago from headquarters. Under the heading "Sale Contract" we find that the Government, in order to make anything like a show in its Electricity Department, has to charge its own tramways .85d. per unit. It charges the Perth City Council .75d. and the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Light Board .84d. For bulk supplies the Government charges .95d., and for low tension supplies it charges 1.92d. The average price per unit sold is therefore .80d.—the margin of .05d. representing quite an appreciable amount in such large purchases as the Perth City Council makes. I have no sympathy at all with the council—none whatever. I say that that body is getting a splendid deal out of the Government.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Do not you allow anything for good management?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I call it by another name. If Mr. Angelo wants to talk about good management in connection with electric current production costs, I can quote to him another concern in this State that can and does produce electric current at a cost of .33d. per unit. I do not know that there is any wonderfully good management in the Electricity Department, especially in view of the huge expense that has been incurred there. However, that is the position; and if for no other reason I should say that the Perth City Council ought to be satisfied in the knowledge that it has obtained an excellent deal from one Government department and should not quibble about an amount of this description. Were I not perfectly satisfied that the Government is acting within its rights, I would not support it; but I consider that under the agreement it has the right to do what is now proposed, and therefore the Bill will have my support.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [7.44]: Mr. Franklin's speech, in my opinion, crystallised all the arguments which have been used here against the Bill; and I wish to congratulate the hon. member upon the manner in which

he presented his case. He covered the ground fully, while extremely concise and definite in the expression of his opinions. I am only sorry that I must oppose, as strongly as I can, some of the arguments he used, arguments used also by other opponents of the Bill. I feel sure that some opponents of the measure, had they first listened to Mr. Mann, would probably have modified their views and objections especially had they studied the merits of the Bill a little more closely. It is all very well for members to say that an injustice will be perpetrated on the Perth City Council. A statement of that kind should be justified, and I have not heard one member give any reasonable justification for it. Some members have been under the impression that the 3 per cent. applies to the takings of the whole tramway system, with the exception of trolley buses. That shows they have been under a misapprehension, because the 3 per cent. applies only to the extent of the tramways in existence when they were nationalised by the Government in 1912. Statements of a somewhat similar character have been made indicating to me that members concerned have looked at only one side of the picture. I propose to deal fully with one or two of the more important statements that have been made, and I hope members will bear with me because I think they are of the utmost importance in deciding whether we should or should not pass the Bill. It is remarkable that in all the discussions that have taken place on the Bill—notwithstanding the number of times that members have referred to what took place in 1912, when the tramways were purchased by the Government—not one member has attempted to quote from the report of the select committee appointed by this Chamber at the time.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I referred to it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But the hon. member did not quote from it. He referred to the fact that a select committee had been appointed and had brought in a finding recommending that the Government should pay to the City Council 3 per cent. of the gross takings of the tramways. I do not want to do an injustice to the hon. member, but I repeat that he did not quote from the report.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I had the report in front of me and drew attention to it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have a copy and propose to quote one or two extracts to support my argument. Quite true, the Perth City Council at that time was desirous of acquiring the tramways. It is also true that the Government had exercised its right and obtained possession of the tramways—as was then said—on behalf of the people of the State. Any member who cares to read the debate that took place in this House on that occasion will get a similar impression to that which most people would get after listening to the debate in the Chamber on this occasion.

Briefly, the facts are that the Government entered into negotiations to purchase the tramways and that eventually the sum of £475,000 was agreed upon as the price at which the system was to be purchased. Certain costs incurred in connection with the transaction brought the amount up to £488,452. When the Bill was before the Chamber on that occasion the same arguments were used as have been used now. Notwithstanding an attempt made to defeat the Bill at the second reading stage, this House decided to appoint a select committee. That committee met and presented its report. The Government of the day, rather than have further argument over the matter, accepted the amendments which were adopted by this House on the report of the select committee. Without quoting the exact words, those amendments were to the effect that until 1939—which was the year when ordinarily the tramways would have reverted to the council had the purchase not been effected—the Government would pay three per cent. of the gross takings of the tramways to the council; and that after that year it was to be left to Parliament to decide whether any further payment should be paid or not. That, briefly put, I think was the decision of this Chamber after having accepted the report of the select committee. From that point I desire to give members a little more history than they have had so far. Before doing so, however, I will quote one or two brief extracts from the select committee's report. Commencing its report, the committee says—

At the outset, it was decided to confine the evidence so far as possible to ascertain what, if any, were the reversionary rights of the Perth City Council in the trams; and if there were such rights, what would be a fair value to place on them assuming it was decided

that the trams be nationalised as proposed by the Bill before the House.

Later, we find the following:—

That being so, it becomes necessary to ascertain what the City Council, who by the Bill will be deprived of their right to these advantages, should receive in lieu thereof by way of compensation. It is difficult to assess an amount to cover this compensation, as opinions so widely differ as to what the value of these rights is. It must be taken into consideration that the present high fares will not be allowed to continue and that the trams will be run at a minimum of profit, so the ratepayers and general public residing in the city will undoubtedly receive great benefit from the fact that the system will be operated in the future mainly in the interests of the travelling public.

A little further on, just before the conclusion of the report, we find this—

It is also agreed that the concession at 1932 and 1939 will be of little intrinsic value to the council, as in all probability the present system will be obsolete and even if not obsolete of very little residual value. Taking all these facts into consideration, the committee are of opinion that the rights of the council will be fully provided for if Clause 8 is amended to provide that the rights conferred by this clause be fixed definitely until the year 1939 and thereafter until Parliament determines.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: You would not say that the residual value of the system was almost negligible today?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, but this select committee pointed out that if the trams were left in the hands of the private company and reverted to the council in 1939, the private company, following the usual practice in such circumstances, would leave the tramways in such a condition that the residual value would be very small.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The company had to maintain them under the contract.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know there were certain conditions regarding maintenance of the trams.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Clear, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know, too, that in all such cases what the practice has been. The select committee was under no misapprehension at all as to what would happen in that respect. I think if members read the evidence given to the committee they will find that that is so.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Neither would the council have done so, if the Government stepped in.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: All right. We will proceed a little further. We have reached the stage when 1939 has arrived. This is the year that the select committee suggested Parliament should decide whether the payment of the 3 per cent. should be continued. The opponents of the measure contend that the 3 per cent. should be paid to the City Council in perpetuity. Only one member who spoke against the Bill, to my recollection, suggested that a limit should be placed upon the payment of the 3 per cent. The suggestion was that we might fix a graduated reduction.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That suggestion was made.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To the best of my recollection it was made by only one member.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: That is the fairest way.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the hon. member's opinion. Other members, including Mr. Franklin, have said that the Government should pay the 3 per cent. to the City Council for all time. Mr. Franklin said that a certain injustice would be done and that the rights of the City Council would be taken from them. It was his opinion that the Government should pay the 3 per cent. for all time.

Hon. L. Craig: Three per cent. of the gross earnings of the tramways?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of the tramways as they existed at the time of the purchase.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In lieu of rates.

Hon. L. Craig: How was the 3 per cent. of the gross takings at that time arrived at?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: An arrangement has been made whereby the department keeps a record of all the fares collected on those particular routes.

Hon. L. Craig: The arrangement would have to be elastic.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That reminds me that some members asked for information showing how the City Council would be affected if payment of the 3 per cent. were discontinued. I have figures in that connection which I will quote in a few minutes. I have given the history of what took place at the time the purchase was made. Now I should like to continue that history just a little further. But before doing so, may I quote from "Hansard" of the

23rd December, 1912, when the Tramways Purchase Bill was under consideration in another place. The Premier of the day had this to say—

The Premier: . . . unless we can purchase the trams on the condition that the reversionary rights shall not be continued, we will be placed in the position the tramway company would be in at the expiration of these dates. We will have to hand back to the Perth City Council the part of the tramway system within the boundaries of the City, and will have to continue to operate those portions in Subiaco, North Perth, and Leederville, and undertake, under the terms of the agreements and provisional orders entered into between the tramway company and the local authorities, to carry passengers from these suburbs to the Town Hall, Perth. If the trams were to revert to the Perth City Council it would be absolutely impossible for the Government to comply with that portion of the agreement. . . . I want to be candid, and say that, so far as the present Government are concerned, they are not prepared to purchase the tramway system, if they are compelled to adhere to all the agreements which are in operation at the present time, that is, to step into the shoes of the company until the trams revert to the local authorities. If the Government are to purchase, they will purchase for the people for all time. The company must make provision in the agreement that the purchaser shall relieve them of all responsibility.

Mr. George: Quite right, too.

The Premier: That is so, and we have entered into an agreement with them under those terms, but unless we can be relieved of some of the provisions of the agreements, we shall not be prepared to complete the purchase. That is definite, so far as the Government are concerned.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The City Council had option rights.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We will deal with those rights directly. I think it was Mr. Franklin who said that these trams belong to all the people, and that he looked to the country representatives to support the City Council in the objection to the Bill. If that appeal is listened to, and all the facts are taken into consideration, and then a fair decision arrived at, members will support the Bill. I point out that while the purchase of the system cost the Government £448,452, the amount of capital involved in the undertaking is £1,105,235, and interest has to be found on that amount of money. In that connection I should also like to mention that the Perth City Council has had the benefit of all the extensions that have been made and also the benefits from

the service during all those years, benefits that have cost the municipality nothing; and it can be said without fear of contradiction that the return to the Perth City Council, as a result of the extension of the system, cannot possibly be calculated, because it must run into hundreds of thousands of pounds, arising from the increased values that have been created, while the citizens of Perth must have reaped a wonderful return as a result of the State's purchase of the tramways. I have already pointed out that the Government has an asset that has cost £1,105,235, for which all the taxpayers of the State, not only the ratepayers of the City of Perth, have had to find interest, and I am drawing particular attention also to the fact that by virtue of the extensions that have been made, the municipality has reaped a wonderful return because the trams have been the method by which the people have been brought into the city.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They come in more by buses now.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The buses, which are run for profit, are of comparatively recent date, and so there cannot be any comparison made between the trams and the buses over the whole period. I make the definite statement that the benefit that has been derived by the ratepayers of the city cannot be calculated; it must amount to a tremendous sum, and there is not a business man who has not reaped an enormous advantage as a result of the extensions of the system over the years. While it may be said that the buses have had some effect on the tramway traffic, that does not for one moment vitiate the argument I have advanced, and while the taxpayers have had to find interest on the large sum of money that I have mentioned, the Perth City Council has reaped the reward from increased values throughout the metropolitan and particularly the metropolitan-suburban area. Yet we find the City Council, through members in this Chamber, submitting that it is the only party to be considered in a matter that represents £6,000 a year, or as suggested by Mr. Franklin, 1d. in the pound as far as the rates are concerned. Some members of this Chamber must recognise that there are others in the State to be considered besides the Perth City Council. As I have stated, the argument is all on one side. It cannot be said

that any injustice is being done. Whether Parliament does or does not agree to the Bill, the Government has only exercised its right. If it is considered that £475,000 was a fair price to pay for this concern in 1912, and since that time no less a sum than £144,755 has been paid to the Perth City Council, surely everyone will agree that we have paid a fair thing for this concern, and it is time that the payments stopped. The Perth City Council is not the only local authority that is affected. Originally, quite a number of other bodies were concerned—the Leederville Council, Victoria Park Council, North Perth Council, Perth Road Board, Subiaco Municipality, and also Nedlands Road Board. The total paid by the Government since 1912—that was the year in which the trams were taken over—is £163,261. There are business men in this Chamber, and at times they remind me that they are business men. I submit to them, in view of the facts I have mentioned, that the City Council has had an extraordinarily fair deal in regard to this matter, and now there is every justification for the Bill.

In addition to the capital expenditure to which I have referred, there is an amount of £420,838, which represents special expenditure on renewals and replacements. That is exclusive of ordinary maintenance. It is doubtful, I suggest, whether the local authorities would have been in a position to spend such a huge sum of money on renewals and replacements. I wish also to point out that there has been a considerable advance in the wages paid to the employees of the tramway system during the period the system has been controlled by the Government. In 1928-29 the wages were increased by approximately 55 per cent. over the 1914-15 figures; and as members know, wages today are considerably higher than they were in 1912 or 1914, or 1915.

Reference has been made to the question of maintaining the roads upon which the trams run, and some members have suggested that the Government has not been quite as fair in that regard as it might have been. I am advised that when the tramways were purchased, the agreement provided that the Government should maintain the roadway between the rails and 18 inches on either side of the rails. That part of the agreement has been carried out, and not only has it been fulfilled in regard to

the roads on which the trams were running when the system was purchased, but it has been carried out on those roads on which the extensions have taken place since the year of purchase. There is no obligation on the Government to do that, but the Government has done it. It will be found now that the extensions are very much longer than the length of the tramway routes at the time the system was taken over by the Government. Yet some members suggest that the Government has not given the municipality a fair deal. It is even suggested that because the trolley buses run over a short length of road, the Government should pay to the municipality 3 per cent. of the gross receipts from this latest form of transport. There is no obligation on the Government to do so, and I do not consider it can be argued that the trolley buses do very much damage to the roads. They certainly use the roads—

Member: They must, by their weight, do some damage.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They are very different from the trams.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I admit that. The hon. member will admit that there is not the same wear and tear from the trolley buses going over the roads as there is from the trams. I suggest also that the poles that have been erected for use in connection with the trolley bus service are certainly a big improvement on any system of poles previously utilised in the city of Perth. That must be admitted. There is an arrangement whereby the City Council is allowed to use the tramway poles for lighting, etc., but I do not mention that as justification for the passing of this Bill.

That brings me to the question of electricity. I thank Mr. Mann for his very concise reference to the supply of electric power to the city of Perth. It is argued that the Government of the day entered into a contract which was binding upon both parties, and that therefore no reference should be made to that in connection with a matter of this kind. The electricity supply of the city is closely bound up with the tramways. I propose to quote certain figures which I think will be more illuminating than those quoted by Mr. Mann. I want to show how the tramway system is bound up with the electricity supply and to point out that the general manager is also the officer charged with the control of



the power house and the costing and clerical duties associated with the supply of current to both the City Council and the tramways. Certain testing and other technical duties are carried out by the one staff in the Tramways head office. The Fremantle Municipal Council is also supplied with current from the power station. The Tramway Department is, however, the largest customer, as it took nearly 12,000,000 units for the year ended the 30th June last. The figure quoted by Mr. Mann is correct, in that last year the Tramways were charged at an average rate of .85d. per unit compared with .75d. which the Perth City Council has paid for many years, and which, under the agreement of 1913, cannot be exceeded for a further 24 years. The agreement has another 24 years to run. The city of Perth is supplied with electricity at a low cost, and the difference between the price charged to it and the cost to the Government has to be paid by the general taxpayers of the State. That is another item members should take into consideration. When the agreement was entered into, no one had any idea we would be involved in a war, or that that fact would so alter conditions that no one—not even the Government—would be able in future to produce electricity at the same price as was done before the war. The price of all commodities went sky high, while the cost of fuel rose 50 per cent. and has not since been reduced. Notwithstanding those facts, the huge increase in wages, and many other relative costs, the Government has stood by its contract. It is no use members suggesting that because it is a contract this Government desires to evade any of its obligations, and that therefore it should not be mentioned in connection with this Bill. The Government is keeping to the contract. I feel that if any Government had been prepared to come down with a reasonable Bill immediately after the Great War, pointing out the very great differences that existed then compared with when the agreement was entered into, Parliament would have been prepared to modify the terms of the undertaking. But the agreement still stands and the Perth City Council is receiving electricity at the present low cost.

I wish now to quote a summary to show the advantages that have accrued to the City Council in the matter of electricity

supplies. The amount received by the Government from the council for electric current supplied from the commencement of operations on the 3rd December, 1916, to the 30th June, 1939, was £2,273,930; the cost of current calculated on the basis of the schedule in the agreement of 1913 was £2,703,702; and the difference between the cost price and the maximum amount chargeable—.75d. per unit—is no less than £429,772. It will be seen that by the generosity of the Government the City Council has benefited to the extent of practically half a million on its electricity supply, and yet we have complaints on behalf of the council that, because we desire to terminate the present position in regard to the tramways and save an expenditure of something like £6,000 a year, we are doing an injustice to the local authority. I point out that except for the two years ended the 30th June, 1932, the supply of current purchased by the council has increased annually, and the extent to which the use of electricity by the City Council has increased may be gauged by the undermentioned particulars of sale. These figures are very illuminating. In 1917-18 the City Council was supplied with 2,250,000 units; in 1922-23, with 13,000,000; in 1927-28 with 31,000,000; in 1932-33 with 42,000,000; in 1937-38 with 67,000,000; and in 1938-39 with 72½ million units, compared with 2¼ millions supplied in the first year of the agreement. Who could imagine that the increase would be so great? That the City Council has been supplied with electricity at a much cheaper rate than would otherwise have been possible is clearly proved. It has received indirectly other benefits from that circumstance.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What proportion is the 72,000,000 units to the whole output?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That information will be found in the annual report. An examination of the latest report by the Lord Mayor of Perth reveals interesting figures in respect to the operations of the Electricity Department. For current purchased from the department at a cost of £214,033, sales, etc., were effected totalling £399,852. After payment of operating expenses amounting to £66,799, and depreciation charges of £34,983, a profit of £84,037 resulted. For the current year it looks as if a larger quantity of current will be purchased by the council

and a financial position not less favourable than that shown in 1937-38 should again be in evidence. Those who argue that we are committing an injustice by introducing this Bill at the present stage have not considered the facts and figures I have supplied. So far as the operations of the tramways are concerned, it is correct to say that we have perhaps passed the peak period in our returns owing to the competition by other modes of transport. That competition is having its effect. With regard to the annual payments to the Perth City Council, I propose to give the exact figures:—

Local Authority.	Year ended 30th June—			
	1939.		1938.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
City of Perth .....	5,838	2 11	6,085	3 1
Subiaco Council .....	363	10 10	386	16 2
Nedlands Park line—				
Subiaco Council and				
Nedlands Road Board	182	11 3	192	0 1
Perth Road Board .....	23	10 6	24	16 10
	£6,202	15 6	£6,688	16 2

These are the figures I promised Mr. Nicholson and other members. The argument has been used that it is customary wherever trams are operated by the Government or any other authority to pay the local authority a certain sum as compensation for the exemption from rates. Certain authorities and tramway systems were quoted, but I wish to use only one illustration, namely, that of the Melbourne tramways. That is a big concern, and is operated by a board, not by the Government. Instead of the Government having to provide money for the local authority, the board is called upon by statute to provide money for the Government. It is interesting to note the amount of money that is provided by the board each year under one or two different statutes. I will quote from the annual report of the Melbourne Tramways Board for the year 1939:—

The payments to the Consolidated Revenue of the State pursuant to Section 77 of the Board's Act, No. 3732, totalled £101,065 10s., a reduction of £24,630 16s. 8d. Under the provisions of the Act No. 4598, the board was from the 1st July, 1938, relieved of the Licensing Fund Payment, which in the previous financial year amounted to £22,238. Since the inception of the board, the pay-

ments made to the Consolidated Revenue total £2,099,638 14s., made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
On account of the Fire Brigades Board .. ..	1,032,081	13	4
On account of the Licensing Fund .. ..	435,251	10	0
On account of the Infectious Diseases Hospital ..	632,305	10	8
	£2,099,638	14	0

Instead of the City of Melbourne receiving three per cent. of the revenue from the trams running within its boundaries, the tramway revenue has to provide Consolidated Revenue with the amount of money I have stated.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about the Fremantle position?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The tramways there are municipally owned by the Fremantle and East Fremantle councils.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about the payments made to those bodies?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This year the tramways have contributed a small sum to the local authorities, but for many years nothing at all was paid. The Fremantle trams are wonderfully situated, perhaps better than any similar system throughout the world.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The profits go towards a reduction in rates.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; when distributed, but the profits have not been distributed in recent times.

Hon. J. Nicholson: They are distributed, and that is the point.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The profits have not been made by the tramways, but by the electric lighting supply, which has carried the financial burden of the trams for many years past. Owing to the terms of the Act under which that system operates, conditions that are indeed stringent, the system is in a very fine position, and the councils own an asset valued at between £350,000 and £500,000, and the tramways are almost clear of all loan liability.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Is that result due to private enterprise?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, to municipal enterprise.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And that is the position in which the City of Perth should be.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Yes, and would be had it not been for interference.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Yes, through the system being taken over by the Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would like Mr. Hamersley to elaborate that question. If he did so, I think we would find out that he knows very little indeed about the subject. I have presented some facts that should cause the hon. member, who is so keen from time to time adequately to represent the people who sent him here, to realise that he should cast his vote in one direction only, and that is in favour of the Bill. It must be admitted that the purchase of the Perth tramways by the Government in 1912 for a sum of £475,000 was more than a fair arrangement, and the payment of £160,000 odd since then has carried the matter to a stage at which we can say the Government has paid all it ought to pay for the rights acquired 27 years ago. That being so, particularly in view of the fact that the Perth City Council must have reaped a tremendous benefit from the operations of the tramway system and has not been called upon to provide one penny towards the cost of the system, and, further, that the taxpayers of the State are required to meet the interest bill on the undertaking, the Bill is not only justified but should receive the approval of this House.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	13

Majority against .. .. 3

## AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter  
Hon. J. Cornuell  
Hon. L. Craig  
Hon. J. M. Drew  
Hon. G. Fraser

Hon. E. H. Gray  
Hon. W. H. Kitson  
Hon. W. J. Mann  
Hon. G. W. Miles  
Hon. T. Moore

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo  
Hon. L. B. Bolton  
Hon. J. A. Dinmuth  
Hon. J. T. Franklin  
Hon. V. Hamersley  
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane  
Hon. J. Nicholson

Hon. H. V. Plesse  
Hon. A. Thomson  
Hon. H. Tuckey  
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom  
Hon. G. B. Wood  
Hon. H. S. W. Parker

(Teller.)

## PAIRS.

## AYES.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall  
Hon. W. R. Hall

## NOES.

Hon. J. J. Holtues  
Hon. H. Seddon

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

## BILL—RESERVES (No. 2).

## Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st November.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [8.37]: As so many members during the last day or two have been reminded that they have changed their views from those they expressed last session, I suppose there will be plenty of cause for a similar accusation against me, if when the division on the Bill is taken, I may decide to change mine. If I decide to vote against the Bill, as I did against that introduced last session, on this occasion I shall be prompted by another reason. As I feel sure my remarks during the debate will be used in evidence against me, I propose to remind the House of what I said.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: To get in first.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not necessarily say that, but I believe that a member is perfectly justified in altering his views if the position changes. Since the legislation was first presented to the House, I have secured much more information than I had then. Should the Government lose the present Bill—I do not know that it will be a very serious matter for the time being, because I am convinced that some day the site proposed may be what the Government desires—it will be due to the fact that the Government did not take this House sufficiently into its confidence. I do not wish to be unkind, but I suggest to the Honorary Minister that if he had marshalled his facts on the wall some days before his second reading speech, as he has now done, and had members been able to secure the additional information that has come to my knowledge, we might not have heard the speeches that have been delivered in opposition to the Bill.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The question is one of site, not of land.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am discussing the site. Although no mention is made in the Bill of the buildings to be erected, we know the object of the Government in asking for the site. When the Reserves Bill was before members last session, I said, in my second reading speech—

I join with Mr. Nicholson in an emphatic protest against the attempt to acquire two acres of land from the Government House Domain. Before I became a member of this Chamber, I opposed the giving away of a

square foot of ground that had been set aside in the city for the use of the people. Especially am I opposed to this particular area being utilised for the purpose suggested.

I want to be perfectly fair and to put both sides of the question before the House. I trust I shall be able to give members a little information not formerly at their disposal. In reply to an interjection by Mr. Craig, who asked, "What site do you suggest for Government offices," I said—

An ideal position for Government offices would be the site now occupied by the Barracks, which is centrally situated, is close to Parliament House, and affords ample room for buildings many storeys in height. The structures would be an ornament to the city. I support the second reading, but in Committee will vote against Clause 10.

I have tried to be fair up to that point, and have reminded members of the attitude I formerly adopted. I still say the Barracks site is ideal for Government offices and feel that what may eventually turn out to be a white elephant—the present Treasury building—is worthy of some consideration.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I subscribe to the opinion that it is time decent public buildings were provided. That various departments, particularly the Department of Agriculture, should be housed as at present is a standing disgrace to the State. I do not know whether the Government has put off the evil day and taken no action in the hope of making some progress in this direction, but something that may influence the vote on this occasion has occurred since the Bill of last session was before us. I refer to the unfortunate war. Whether the time is opportune for the Government to take this step is problematical. Each member, when voting on the Bill, must decide that question for himself. Undoubtedly something must be done and done soon, and if the Government loses this Bill, I am going to make a suggestion that might meet with approval and be the means of enabling finality to be reached.

Last session we were not taken sufficiently into the confidence of the Government, and when the proposal to exise two acres from Government Domain was made, this House, by a two to one majority, decided against it. Had we seen the plans that have been submitted on this occasion and had the Government then taken us

into its confidence I believe, not that the Bill would have been passed, but that members would have appreciated better what was in the minds of Ministers, and would not have thought some things that possibly were not correct. After the Minister had made his second reading speech, the plans were placed on the wall of the Chamber. Whether members had studied them before, with the exception of a couple of members to whom I showed similar plans, I do not know, but had I inspected this plan last year—and I believe it was in existence then—although I was averse to the resumption of the Christian Brothers' property, I certainly would have given the proposal much more favourable consideration.

The Honorary Minister: The plan was not in existence last year.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Did not you inspect the site?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes, but an inspection of the site does not enable one to understand the lay-out as well as does the plan. No sane Government would build public offices on this site without securing the block between Victoria-avenue and the reserve. The acquisition of that block would greatly enhance the value of the Government's property. The time would eventually come when the Government would have to acquire it and the price then would be tremendous.

Hon. J. Cornell: I understand the price has increased already.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I believe that is so. I am given to understand that the land has not been offered to the Government by the Christian Brothers. However, the Government has the right to resume that block either now or at some future time.

Hon. A. Thomson interjected.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: The hon. member has not yet spoken, and will have an opportunity later.

Hon. A. Thomson: I have spoken, but I have not been talking to Mr. Clare.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I have, and I claim it is the duty of members to interview high officials who can give information that cannot be obtained from any other source. I see nothing wrong in my having interviewed Mr. Clare. Other members, some of them seated not far from me, have acted similarly on other occasions and probably will continue to do so. I feel perfectly

justified in having listened to what Mr. Clare had to say on the subject. The unfortunate part of the whole business is that the Government did not take Parliament fully into its confidence last year. Had the Government created a committee representative of both Houses, together with the Principal Architect and the Town Planning Commissioner—

Hon. J. Cornell: Would those two agree?

Hon. J. T. Franklin: They would agree to differ.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Perhaps so, but, on this matter, I believe they do agree. To appoint a committee of five departmental officers to report upon this site, and this site only, was entirely wrong.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not want to be unfair to those officials, but would it not be natural for them to lean towards the ideas of the Government? Had another Government been in power and had they been asked to report upon another site, possibly they would have favoured that site. The Government should not have asked five of its officers to report on the site now under discussion. Had the Government desired to get a report from a committee apart from members of Parliament, experts outside of Government officials should have been appointed, although I believe that the Principal Architect should have been included on such a committee. A report from a committee so constituted would have carried much more weight than the one that has been presented. If the Bill is defeated I do not think it will be a serious matter except as regards the price of the adjoining land. This is a big scheme. It means determining for all time the site of our governmental offices. With the help of Mr. Clare, I have carefully studied plan "B" and have entirely altered my opinion regarding the whole scheme. Many members will say that the site involves the question whether the city is likely to extend in a westerly or an easterly direction.

Hon. G. Fraser: The block in question will always be in the heart of the city.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am not sure about that. I am inclined to think that the heart of the city in future might be further north. There is considerable room for expansion in that direction. During the last few years it has been my good fortune to travel a

little. Being in public life, I was naturally interested in public buildings, and I found that public buildings in cities created in the last decade have invariably been placed in large open spaces and never right in the heart of the city.

Hon. J. Cornell: The north part of Perth will never become a commercial or professional centre.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I do not think it will. Last session, when a similar proposal was before us, the question of acquiring the site of the Christian Brothers' College was not officially mentioned. Had the Government put its cards on the table at that time and stated its intention to acquire that block eventually, it would have been much better. Having inspected the site, and considered the plan and the lay-out of the land, I consider it would have been entirely wrong to excise the two acres from the reserve without acquiring that block. I wish to justify some remarks I made in my second reading speech last year when I said I objected to one foot of the people's land being taken from them. I feel justified in amending my views because, near the site in question, we have hundreds of acres of beautiful land for the recreation and pleasure of the people.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Hundreds of acres?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes.

Hon. J. Cornell: Not many hundreds.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: There must be over 200 acres.

Hon. J. Cornell: Where?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Along the River-side-drive, from Crawley to the Causeway. Thus ample space is available for the recreation and pleasure of the people. One other point I should like to touch upon is the question of finance. Scheme "A" or scheme "B" as set out in the report will involve an expenditure of £280,000. At the risk of being criticised for interviewing another high Government official, let me say that I have some information as to how the Government intends to finance the building of these offices.

Hon. L. Craig interjected.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am glad the hon. member heard that remark in the speech, and remembered it. Perhaps, then, it is hardly necessary for me to give details. However, I wish to show why the present scheme does not meet with my approval.

Hon. J. Nicholson: We would like to hear the details.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I will quote them—

At the present time the State Insurance Office has a reserve of something over £400,000, of which a little over £300,000 is held in cash in the savings bank. We have been holding this money with the intention of using it for the new public offices when the proposal was approved.

The State Insurance Office is now established by Act of Parliament, and the authorising Act states that in regard to the investment of its funds it may invest them as approved by the Hon. the Treasurer. There is no reason why the State Insurance Office should not invest its funds in the acquisition of land and in the erection of a building.

If these means are adopted there will be no curtailment of our ordinary loan programme as fixed by the Loan Council. If, on the other hand, the funds of the State Insurance Office were invested in a Commonwealth loan we would get no benefit by any additional loan money, because no matter where the loan money comes from, the total loan programme is fixed by the Loan Council.

Hon. A. Thomson: You are giving us more information than the Honorary Minister gave us.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I hope the hon. member will benefit by the information. I am trying to be perfectly fair in putting up my case. This is a matter vital to the State. Even if this Bill is not carried, the information will be of benefit to the House. The greatest care should be exercised in arriving at a final decision where to spend so tremendous an amount of money. Let us try to force the hands of the Government to take Parliament into its confidence before a step is taken in the wrong direction.

Hon. J. Cornell: Let us wait and see who wins the war.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I continue to quote the details—

What I am trying to make clear is that the reserve funds of the State Insurance Office cannot be used for any purpose. For example, they could not be applied by the State for unemployment relief works; they have to be invested in some avenue which has a connection with the State Insurance Office. By utilising them for the erection of a public building, we are keeping within the avenues of investment available to the State Insurance Office.

Mr. Cornell suggests that we should wait and see who wins the war. That may be good advice. The other angle is that quite possibly the industry which is going to be

hit harder than any other is the building trade. That trade in this war, as in the last, is going to feel the pinch more severely than any other trade. If I could be assured that the Government will give private enterprise a chance by calling tenders for the erection of the first of the proposed buildings, I would be more inclined to support the second reading of the Bill. I take that view because the money is available, and because, after all, it is the Government's duty to maintain employment wherever possible. I am sorry to say that one cannot always feel sure that the Government is getting good value for the money it expends. If we could have the assurance I have indicated, then this measure would appeal more to hon. members than it does under the conditions obtaining in connection with Government work today.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: You have the answer in connection with the Perth Hospital.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Possibly so. I believe there is something in Mr. Thomson's continual complaints on the score of waste of money in work undertaken by the Government. Speaking of the Perth Hospital, I am one of those who would never spend another penny on the present Perth Hospital. The proper site for that hospital is on this hill. Many members have advocated that the proposed Government offices should be on this hill, but I am of opinion that it is the site for the Perth Hospital. Unfortunately, however, the Government in its wisdom has seen fit to proceed with the extension on the present site. I can only express the hope that the people will obtain reasonably good value for their money in the extensions being carried out.

I have no desire to sit on the rail. I feel that in view of the explanations I have made, and in view of what I have learned since last session and since the second reading speech of the Honorary Minister and the debate ensuing upon it, I may be justified in reversing my vote on this occasion. For the time being, and until the Honorary Minister has spoken in reply, I shall keep an open mind. I may add that I feel that having certain information, I was justified in giving it to the House. If hon. members appreciate it, I am glad. If not, I am sorry.

**HON. H. V. PIESSE** (South East) [9.8]: I have listened with great interest to Mr. Bolton, and I commend his attitude. If he desires to change his opinion in view of the knowledge that he has received, he is entitled to do so, assuming that the new opinion is correct. Unlike Mr. Bolton, I did not speak on the previous Bill. However, I voted against it; and I propose to vote against the present Bill. I hear Mr. Craig make a remark. I can assure the hon. member that I have listened to his observations regarding the proposed site. With all due respect to him, I consider that site not to be the right one. It has been suggested that a joint select committee of both Houses should take evidence and recommend a site. There would be no harm in that proceeding. We are elected, in part, to take evidence and, as Mr. Bolton has said, to make inquiries. I commend him for his remarks. Any member who can give information concerning a Bill before the House should give it. The fullest inquiry ought always to be made before a vote is cast on any proposed legislation. I have two objections to the present proposal. One of them may be sentimental. I do not like the idea of excising any portion of Government House grounds. On the other hand, I do not consider a site alongside Government House to be the most suitable. I have spoken because I do not wish to cast a silent vote.

**HON. J. M. MACFARLANE** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.7]: I voted against last session's proposal because of the expressed intention to trench upon Government Domain. Last session's speeches suggested sites that appealed to me as more desirable than the present proposal. I am greatly concerned as to how I shall cast my vote. Today I walked along St. George's-terrace to the proposed site and had a look at the place. I was astonished to find quite a large quantity of sand dumped there. I said to myself, "Here is an instance of the Government being determined to go on with work no matter what Parliament says." However, I was doing the Government an injustice. That sand came from the Perth Hospital site, and will be returned there when it is needed, as it will be when that building progresses. I therefore wish to give the Government credit for effecting economy where I thought they were committing waste.

The purpose of the Bill could not be effected on two acres of land taken from Government Domain. Possibly if Government House were closer to Barrack-street, the resultant advantage to the public would be greater than that proposed. I looked at Parliament grounds and at other sites in West Perth. I feel sure that the Government, in accepting the Committee's recommendation, has chosen the site handiest to the city, but still too far out of the city. Walking along St. George's-terrace I met two of my friends, leading architects and heads of important firms. We stood in front of the old Treasury buildings and looked them all over and discussed that proposal. It is many years since the Perth City Council has used the Town Hall for civic purposes. I feel sure the Government errs in overlooking that site. I shall vote against the Bill hoping that next session the Government will bring down a proposal which I can support—a proposal for utilising the existing buildings.

The Chief Secretary: What do you think the Perth City Council would demand to let the Government do what you suggest?

**Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE**: An arrangement with the Perth City Council would be cheaper than a purchase of the Christian Brothers' College block. Take the size of that block, including the Town Hall site, and it becomes apparent that on that site could be found accommodation for all the Government departments, or at least most of the important departments. I feel sure, therefore, that to select the Town Hall site would be in the interests of the State as a whole and would be less costly. It would be in the best interests of the community as a whole, and would be eminently suited to the requirements of the departments themselves.

**Hon. L. Craig**: Could you have a laboratory on that site?

**Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE**: That might be possible. The site lends itself to a basement better than any other site I know of. The next point that occurs to me is one that members must bear in mind. The Empire is at war, and who can say what the outcome will be? The Federal Government is imposing upon the people of Australia heavier taxation; and we know, from the remarks of the Chief Secretary, what taxation we may expect from the State. The

man in the street, as well as the business man, is wondering what the future holds in store for him. When a man gets that feeling he, like the snail, draws in his horns and waits to see what will happen. Before embarking upon this heavy expenditure, we should await the result of the present European conflict. I shall vote against the Bill not for reasons stated by other members, but for the reason that in my opinion the Government has not fully explored all the possibilities of the Treasury buildings site, and because, as I have said, the nation is at war.

**HON. J. A. DIMMITT** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.17]: It was very interesting to hear Mr. Bolton make his apologies. In my opinion, there is no need for apology because—as I said last night—no progress can be achieved unless we alter our mental outlook with the march of time. Strange to say, I came across a quotation by Abraham Lincoln only this morning. He said, "I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday."

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Thank you!

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Mr. Bolton is apologising for himself, not for the speaker.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Last session I voted against a similar measure, although I did not speak against it. Like Mr. Bolton, I have examined the plans of the proposed buildings. I examined them while they were in another place, and again a night or two ago. I also discussed the matter with Mr. Clare. I will be quite frank. Having inspected the plans, I took it upon myself to inspect the site. I examined it from the Terrace, from the street that runs from the hill, and again from the Esplanade. I tried to visualise the buildings as they would appear on the site, and must confess that I was greatly struck. The plan is a long-sighted one and will cause future generations—if the Bill is passed and the buildings are erected—to acknowledge that the Parliament which authorised the construction of the buildings showed a great deal of foresight. I think aesthetic and utilitarian values have been taken into consideration. I walked from the site along to the corner of St. George's-terrace and Barrack-street, where a number of transport vehicles empty their passengers. I then proceeded to the corner of William-street, which is the ter-

minus for other passenger vehicles. I then went to the railway station. Having done that, I came to the conclusion that the site is not inconvenient, but reasonably "get-at-able." I then inspected other suggested sites. Like Mr. Macfarlane, I walked around the Treasury buildings and as I inspected the site I bore in mind information that had been furnished to me by the Principal Architect. I discussed the site with him. He said that if a building were erected on the Treasury site to the greatest height allowed by the City building regulations, the resultant floor space would be insufficient to house our Government departments, let alone provide for future growth. The alternative was to acquire the Perth Town Hall; and, as the Chief Secretary said a moment ago, what would the City Council ask for that site? I venture to suggest that it would cost considerably more than would the site proposed by this measure. The Treasury site is centrally situated and is easy of access by the public, but there is the financial difficulty. Another point is that any building erected upon it would have no aesthetic appeal. It would have four street frontages. I then inspected the site below Parliament House, again bearing in mind Mr. Clare's advice to me. He said that to erect a suitable building of eight or nine storeys there would require all the space available. Let members picture an eight or nine-storey building occupying all the available land below Parliament House! Parliament House would virtually become an out-building in the back-yard of the public buildings.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That would be a crime.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Yes, and future generations would curse us for it. I also inspected the Hale School site, but its inaccessibility is a point to be considered, as well as the expense of acquiring it. I therefore reverted to the first site. Like Mr. Macfarlane, I interviewed three architects. The first was a gentleman who has had experience as a town planner. I told him my story and asked his opinion of the proposed site. He said it was a very good one but that he knew of a better one. He was not, however, prepared to disclose its situation. He said it was an excellent site, but it was not one of the sites that I had indicated to him. I then informed him of the technical



difficulty which had been mentioned by some members. He replied that there were no technical difficulties at all. I even went so far as to tell him that one member had made a biblical quotation about the man who had builded on sand. He said sand would make no difference, as in these enlightened days we can solve such problems. Mr. Wood has said that the land is low-lying, but I point out that other buildings are erected on sites still lower. There are the buildings along Bazaar-terrace. The Supreme Court and the Christian Brothers' College buildings are on practically the same level as is this proposed site. So Mr. Wood's remark does not cut any ice. Engineers can overcome those difficulties. The Perth Post Office building is erected on piles driven into swampy land. The second architect to whom I told the same story also approved of the site and said that if he were a member of Parliament he would certainly vote for it. The third architect said the site was a good one, but he knew of one better. The better one was in Francis-street—the Drill Hall site. I intimated that that was not in the picture at all. He then said if that were so he would vote for this proposed site. Therefore, three different architects, each practising and each reputable, approve of this site and say that it presents no technical difficulties.

Some people have objected to the site on the score that we shall be robbing the public of four acres of land at the eastern end of Government Domain. As a matter of fact the public would not be robbed. It has never had access to those four acres, at least not in recent years. The four acres belong to Government House. The privacy of Government House has always been respected by the public of Perth, and the particular section in question has never been available to the public. If the site is chosen and buildings are erected upon it, about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  acres of the four acres will be open to the public as paths, roads, lawns and gardens. So that objection has no weight at all. I agree with Mr. Craig that, unless a start is made with the construction of public buildings, we shall have a repetition of the deplorable battle of sites that has taken place in connection with the Perth Town Hall. In view of the inquiries I have made, I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. J. T. FRANKLIN** (Metropolitan) [9.26]: The matter of a site for public buildings is a very familiar topic to me, because I am still bearing in mind the question of a town hall site, which has been argued for the past 30 or 40 years. I sincerely hope that a site will be chosen to house our public servants in less time than that. I sympathise with the Government in its desire to erect offices which will prove suitable and comfortable for our public servants, but I do not favour the site selected. It is a swamp and has been filled in with sand. It has been explained that the sand is to be removed to the place where it was obtained. It seems rather peculiar to me that this sand should have been carted from the site of the Perth Hospital to the Government Domain, when there was ample land available near the church from which it could have been shifted back practically in a wheel-barrow. But that point has no connection with this proposed site. Some hon. members have advocated the present Treasury buildings site. I have had that site in mind, as well as another one, but before dealing with them, I desire to say that we should obtain competitive designs from architects practising in this State for the proposed buildings.

Members: Hear, hear!

**Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN:** In that way we shall get an up-to-date design. I wish it to be understood that I am in no way reflecting upon the ability of our Chief Architect, who is most competent.

**Hon. J. A. Dimmitt:** Your suggestion can still be carried out.

**Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN:** Yes. In my opinion the Treasury buildings site is suitable, because a building of the necessary type can be erected upon it to accommodate the Government departments. The present structures could be altered, now that steel stanchions and girders can be used in building operations. We could have an up-to-date building, with a modern front, extending along Barrack-street, facing Hay-street, Cathedral-avenue and the Terrace. There would be four frontages and people could utilise various entrances instead of having to go through halls and passages. I know a little bit about the Town Hall. I do not know whether the Chief Secretary has the papers in his possession, but I do know that the Government had the deeds of the Town

Hall and probably some day it will sign them and hand them back to the City Council.

The next site I would mention has not been quite overlooked because Mr. Baxter spoke of it. I refer to the land in Irwin-street. If the Government is anxious to make a commencement with this building, it could do so on its vacant block of land in Irwin-street. Then the Government could resume further land on the east side of Irwin-street. I say the Government could resume that land because I understand that the present recommendation includes the resumption of the land on which the Christian Brothers' College stands. If the Government proposes to purchase that property, could it not resume a certain portion of the land at the corner of Irwin-street and Hay-street, and Irwin-street and St. George's-terrace? I would emphasise that when the building is erected it should be on a site adjacent to the commercial centre of the city. Up here we are a long way from the commercial centre of Perth. Anyone doing business with Government officers here would have to go down to the city to carry out other transactions. Perhaps a man might receive a cheque from the Treasury, if the Treasury had any money, and he would then have to go into town to pay it into the bank. I do not know whether members have given consideration to the site recommended. That site has only one street fronting it, namely St. George's-terrace. The site I have suggested in Irwin-street is far more suitable. The Government could resume land that would meet its requirements for all time. That is what we should do, though it might cost more money; I do not know. I did intend, had time permitted, and had I been in better health, to obtain the plans of certain property there and ascertain the cost. The objection might be raised that Irwin-street is a small street, but my idea is that if land were resumed there the street could be closed and another opened at the east end of the resumed land. I should like hon. members to visualise that site. Vacant land extends from the tin shanties near the Masonic Hall to Irwin-street. The only piece of land occupied is that on which Anzac House is built. The plans could be so drawn that a building could be started on that site and later on the Government could resume land to serve for all time, even though that meant going

as far as Victoria-avenue. Some members have stated that the site recommended is central. The site I recommend and which I think Mr. Baxter mentioned, is also central and I would like the Minister, when replying, to let this House know whether at some distant date—though not very distant—the Government has any idea of resuming a certain portion of this particular land.

The Chief Secretary: That is spoilt, from the Government's point of view, by Anzac House.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I think the authorities would hand that over.

Hon. J. Cornell: The building is totally unsuitable.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I am earnest in my recommendation of the Irwin-street site. I think it was the late Mr. McCallum who gave me the information that the Government of the day had an idea of resuming land there. I do not know for what purpose. Mr. McCallum told me that in confidence and I have kept that confidence until now. I oppose the Bill, but am wholeheartedly with the Government in its effort to secure a site and to commence the building at the earliest possible moment.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [9.36]: Since last year, when I opposed the revocation of part of Government Domain for public buildings, I have been having a quiet look around in an endeavour to satisfy myself as to where a suitable location might be found. I have looked at quite a number of blocks within easy distance of the centre of the city. I think I have examined most of the blocks that have been mentioned up to date, with the exception of the one just referred to by Mr. Franklin. I pay him the compliment of saying that I believe his is a plan that might well be considered. I have had a look at another site which will probably not prove very popular, though I believe it is an outstanding site. I refer to the area bounded by Bridge-street, Stirling-street, James-street and Beaufort-street. I went to the City Council yesterday and looked at the plans and I found that that area comprised nearly four acres, of which one-half belongs to the Government. The remaining buildings are very old and of no very great value.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: There is a hotel.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The hotel is fairly old and it is bounded by a ramshackle theatre that could very well be pulled down.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But the value of the license?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Of course there may be some value in the license.

The Honorary Minister: And what about the baby centre?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am sorry about the baby centre; I had forgotten that. However, that is an excellent site and would provide all the space required. I am not sure that the cost of resumption would be very much greater than that suggested for the resumption of the Christian Brothers' College in St. George's-terrace.

Hon. J. Cornell: It should not be as great.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is one site regarding which I should have liked a report from the Government's advisers. I intend to vote against the Bill as I did last year because I am satisfied that the site suggested is not the most central, apart from my objection on the ground that it is portion of Government Domain. It is not nearly as central as the site I have mentioned. Whether we realise it or not, this city will extend northwards. Reference has been made to the land on the south side of Parliament House. I hope the time will never come when any more buildings will be erected on that land. I believe Western Australia is the most fortunate State in the British Dominions in regard to the location of its Parliament House.

Hon. J. Cornell: The situation of Parliament House in Ottawa is not bad.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Parliament House in Ottawa is not on an eminence such as this, though it certainly overlooks a river. We are particularly fortunate in having this site and I hope it will not be long before the Government completes this building on the plan that is in existence. When that is done, the old building that now encumbers the earth down below should be taken away and the approach should be a park or garden. This will provide one of the grandest approaches to a majestic building that one could possibly conceive, and it would be little less than a crime if we erected public buildings about here. Far better would it be to resume land such as Mr. Franklin

has mentioned or the block I have suggested. I shall vote against the measure with a great deal of regret because I realise just as much as other hon. members how unfortunate we are in regard to the housing of our civil servants. This morning I had to go to the Agricultural Department. I wandered through some of the back portion of that department and I really believe that if it were privately owned the local Board of Health would condemn it. It is a shocking place and should not be permitted to exist any longer than we can help. I do not believe that the Government has any desire that it should exist longer than is necessary. The whole of those buildings should be cleared out as soon as possible and the gardens extended. However, that has nothing to do with this subject. I would like to be able to help the Government because, I believe, now that money is available, the work should be proceeded with. Someone has mentioned the fact that there is likely to be a slump in the building trade and I fear the same thing. I should like to see the Government change its attitude regarding day labour. Any buildings constructed for the housing of public servants should be erected under contract.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I heard that there were hundreds of applications for workers' homes and there is no money to build them.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Workers' homes cannot be built with the money available for the building of these public offices. In my judgment the best site is that to which I have referred. The report refers to the fact that the building that would be erected would require a street at least 100 ft. wide. That could be obtained by setting the building back slightly, but, as it would be on an eminence and have the railway in front of it, it could be erected and shown to the greatest advantage without being put back any great distance.

The Chief Secretary: The railway line may not always be there.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If the railway is moved the ideal place for public offices would be where the central railway station is at present. I intend to vote against the Bill.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [9.46]: I support the measure for the reason that I want something done regarding the Govern-

ment offices. I can foresee the same thing happening as has occurred with the Perth Town Hall. For years an argument has been going on in respect to the Town Hall, because people could not agree upon the site. During the course of this debate almost every member has had a site in mind, and has advanced it as the perfect place for Government offices.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: There is no perfect place.

Hon. G. FRASER: In the opinion of hon. members the sites they have suggested are perfect. I would not entertain for a moment some of those suggestions, mainly because of the inaccessibility of the localities concerned. The most suitable place for the offices is where the Treasury Buildings are, or the site proposed in the Bill.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I agree with you there.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not very keen on the Treasury Buildings. We want buildings that we shall be proud of. We cannot attain that objective by converting the present Treasury Buildings into administrative offices.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Why not re-build them?

Hon. G. FRASER: The site proposed in the Bill will allow full scope for the architects, both as to beauty and surroundings. I am not so enamoured of the proposal to resume the Christian Brothers' College in order to obtain a larger area, but I do think it is a suitable site. Members who have had a long experience of Perth have recommended other centres. During my 30 years' knowledge of the city I think I have seen every corner of it. It is our duty, irrespective of what architects may think, to make up our own minds on this subject. If I were building for myself, I would first satisfy myself as to where the building should go. I would then say to the architect, "There is the land, your experience and knowledge are now required to erect a suitable building upon it." That is the attitude I would adopt if I were building privately. I would choose the land and tell the architect that the building was his job. That portion of Perth along the Terrace will always be the heart of the city. The course of the river decides that point. The commercial life of the city is also centred within half a mile of the proposed site. No one would use the Government offices more than would

the commercial community. Mr. Cornell said that not many people visited the administrative offices. Most of those who do belong to the commercial life of the city, are mainly centred in the Terrace.

Hon. J. Cornell: The business done in the city has not much connection with Government departments.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Terrace provides the most customers for the Titles Office and other offices in the Treasury Buildings. One has only to go to one of the counters of the Treasury Buildings to have to wait a couple of hours whilst the law students ahead of one are attended to. Those people do their work in close proximity to the proposed site. From all points of view, from that of usefulness to the commercial community, of beauty and so forth, I know of no better site than that proposed in the Bill. If the measure were defeated 12 months would elapse before the matter could come before us again.

Hon. J. Cornell: What is wrong with putting up offices alongside the Repatriation Department?

Hon. G. FRASER: That would be going still further away.

Hon. J. Cornell: Not further away than the proposed site.

Hon. G. FRASER: I want the entrance to the offices to be from the Terrace. We must get on with the job. If the Bill is carried the job will be gone on with, but if it is defeated we shall have over again what we have had this year and what we had last year.

**HON. J. NICHOLSON** (Metropolitan) [9.52]: If this debate has done nothing else it has revealed in a very accentuated form the fact that some members have within a year formed very different views compared with views they expressed before with regard to a similar Bill. After due inquiry, close investigation, and obtaining the fullest possible information, they are now convinced they can reverse their opinions and vote with the Government which they so keenly opposed when a Bill of this nature was before us on another occasion.

The Chief Secretary: The hon. member was in that position last night.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not blame members but would draw attention to the changes that have occurred in less than a year. The debate has also revealed what may

be termed a contest of sites. That must make manifestly clear to the Government the mistaken course it has adopted in presenting this Bill. True, it has been presented with an accompanying statement from a committee appointed by the Government to make a report upon a site. Most members have complained that the committee was placed in a far from favourable and fair position when it was asked to report upon one site, and the Government acted unwisely in dealing with the matter in such a narrow way. I would be inclined to adopt the course suggested by Mr. Angelo, namely, to appoint a committee representative of both Houses so that the fullest investigation might be made into every possible site that might present itself.

The Chief Secretary: The committee investigated many other sites.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is not revealed in the report.

The Chief Secretary: That was not necessary.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we are asked to determine so important a question without having before us the fullest information, we can only vote against the Bill.

The Chief Secretary: The reports have been made available on previous occasions.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not think reports were presented to us upon sites on a previous occasion. Mr. Franklin has had a wide experience of the city, as Lord Mayor for the longest period, I think, of any man. I congratulate him on his speech, and commend him for his suggestion. He visualised the position as a man of his wide vision would do. The appointment of a committee would enable us to arrive at what is the best and most advantageous site. I am sure every member realises the necessity for giving proper housing accommodation for our public officers. On the other hand, we may well ask ourselves, is this the proper and wisest time to go ahead with an expenditure such as this? In my view it is not time to proceed with such buildings, but we can go ahead by preparing the ground for future operations, and by deciding where is the best place upon which to commence building operations.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That is all we are asked to do.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, it goes far beyond that. According to what Mr. Bolton

stated, financial arrangements have already been made, despite the fact that private investors are disinclined to embark upon any similar undertaking at the present time. In order to provide continued employment, the Government proposes to go on with the erection of public buildings and to proceed with the work immediately. That is to be done despite the fact that master builders hesitate to embark upon operations of any magnitude at the present juncture. If members look around them, they will see no large buildings under construction in the city.

Hon. L. Craig: That is all the more reason why the Government should proceed with the project.

The Chief Secretary: Yes, that is largely the cause of the trouble.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Craig would urge the Government to do what practical men in their wisdom are not willing to undertake. Surely that is not right!

Hon. L. Craig: Private enterprise has to seek tenants, but there will be no lack of tenants for the proposed buildings.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The problem is one that could be dealt with wisely by a joint Parliamentary committee such as I have referred to.

The Chief Secretary: What becomes of your argument that the obligation rests upon the Government to provide work?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We have been informed that suitable work will be available in connection with defence and other operations, more even than is contemplated by the Government. Most people in responsible positions in the building world consider we should not embark upon huge undertakings, but should prepare ourselves to meet what could possibly be a catastrophe for our nation. The sooner we realise that, the better it will be for the State. I have remarked upon the great number of sites that have been mentioned, and justifiably so, but we find no reference to them in the reports placed before Parliament. I have taken an interest in this question, and have looked around so as to form my own opinion. I can mention some sites that have not been referred to so far. I admit that the site proposed by the Government has certain advantages, but, in my opinion, it is situated too far eastward for public offices. If erected there, many people would be inconvenienced. We must consider a site from the standpoint

of convenience and the requirements of the future. We must review the past 50 years and note how the city has developed in the meantime. It is astonishing that in almost every great city of the world the tendency has been to spread westward. I admit the likelihood of the city developing towards the north, because of the natural features of the city area. Great cities tend to spread westwards and not to the east.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What about Fremantle?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What about San Francisco?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Of course, if a city is situated on the western coastline, natural development cannot be to the west.

The Chief Secretary: Can you name any particular city where the spread has been as you suggest?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: London, and my home town of Glasgow. However, I will suggest one site that has not yet been mentioned.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: This is No. 13 site.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am grateful to Mr. Angelo for his statistical information. The site I have in mind is that of the existing Government House. For years past it has been recognised that necessarily in the near future Government House will be used for other purposes.

The Chief Secretary: But you objected to parting with any part of the ground.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, so long as Government House remains there. The site I suggest includes Government House and the building at present used by the Agricultural Department. By taking in that area, the boundaries of the Class A reserve would be followed, and, necessarily, the Government House ballroom would also be taken into the scheme. The complete site there would be most centrally situated and could be utilised to advantage if the site of the present Treasury Buildings, itself an excellent location, cannot be availed of. So far as we can ascertain from the memorandum presented to us, no investigation or inquiry was made regarding the sites I have mentioned, despite the fact that they are worthy of such consideration. When the present Government House ceased to be suitable for such purposes, the Observatory site would be ideal for the new Government House.

Hon. J. T. Franklin: And the Observatory could be established in the hills, where it should be located.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is quite right. If my suggestion were adopted, ample space would be available to meet all the needs of the Government for many years to come. Another suggestion could be considered by a joint Parliamentary committee of inquiry.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That makes No. 14.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: My further suggestion is to make use of the area below the Supreme Court, taking in the land adjoining the Repatriation Department offices. That would provide a beautiful site with gardens already laid out. Members should look at that site. Not one single building would have to be removed there, and, in fact, any building constructed there would be on what is now unoccupied land.

The Chief Secretary: That seems like sacrifice to me.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not regard it in that light at all. I see no objection to it at all. Suggestions have been made regarding the present Treasury Buildings, I agree that the site is a magnificent one, and, if utilised for the new buildings, would prove most centrally situated. All the sites could be inquired into by the proposed committee, which could ascertain the opinions held by those capable of speaking on the subject. But there is something that has not been considered by the members of the committee. There are certain buildings fronting Hay-street and opposite the Criterion Hotel that used to be occupied by the Mines Department. I am informed that those buildings are now occupied by the Agricultural Bank. There we have a Government building with a good frontage to Hay-street and a fair depth. The resumption of the corner block to Cathedral-avenue should not be a costly matter.

Hon. J. Cornell: The block occupied by Crystal Cafe?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. One member drew attention to the Treasury site, and the Chief Secretary said that if that building was carried to the full height permitted by the building regulations, it would be impossible to provide sufficient floor space to accommodate all the offices. If there is not sufficient room on the Treasury site,

enough could be provided by using the Agricultural Bank site and resuming the block to Cathedral-avenue. On that site could be erected a new building in harmony with the Treasury building and of equal height. Such a structure would not interfere in any way with the Cathedral.

The Honorary Minister: It would spoil the Cathedral.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Nothing of the sort. During the debate, my mind has been informed by the results of investigations by other members. We all desire to help in solving this difficulty, but the Government has dealt with the matter in a wrong way. I shall vote against the second reading.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban [10.18]): I consider it essential that the Bill be passed so that the Government may proceed with the building scheme. I feel that I could select a better site than the one that has been proposed, but I also realise that a committee of experts inquired into the matter and that any site, by whomsoever selected, would probably be opposed by a majority of this House. The experts say that the present site is suitable, and for my part I cannot see where a better one can be found. I appreciate that space must be left between the various blocks of buildings in order to give access to a decent current of air and permit of gardens being planted. We do not want to have the new offices cooped up as the old ones are. The present offices are a disgrace to the State. The waste in time and man power is absurd. We must have modern buildings and we ought to see that they are provided at the earliest possible date.

I trust that the Government, when erecting the buildings, will take into consideration the unsightliness of Parliament House as viewed from St. George's-terrace. Looking up the Terrace one can see little more than series of tin sheds. The Government should construct a decent exterior to the eastern side of the building at the earliest possible moment and the accommodation could be used for housing certain Government officers whose duties are associated with the work of Parliament. I suggest that a start be made by providing accommodation for the Parliamentary Draftsman and his staff, by which means the business of Parliament could be expedited. I hope

members will vote for the site proposed in the Bill and allow the Government to proceed with the work. I am not going to take upon myself to disagree with the experts, and therefore I shall support the Government in the hope that it will proceed quickly with the building of the new offices.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move—  
That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	9

Majority for .. .. 3

#### AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. H. Klison
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. V. Plesse

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. J. Mann	

(Teller.)

Motion (adjournment) thus passed.

### BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th November.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [10.27]: This measure has been fully explained by the Minister. It contains a number of necessary amendments. The Act has been in operation for many years, and experience has shown that certain amendments are essential. Conditions now are very different from those of years ago and the Government is to be commended for having brought forward the proposals. Amongst other things, provision is made for relief to pastoralists. Everybody knows of the difficult times they have experienced during the last few seasons, and with these amendments to the Act the Government will be in a better position to afford the pastoralists the relief they need. I support the second reading.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [10.28]: The department has found that certain sections of the Act need to be

amended, and I am not offering any objection to its proposals because I consider that most of them are quite sound. Provision is made in Clause 6 that if a lessee shall request a Crown grant for any particular holding, being one of a group of contiguous holdings of which only the external boundaries have been surveyed, or if a lessee shall transfer to any other person any particular holding, the Minister may, before the Crown grant is issued or the transfer approved, require the lessee to pay such amount as the Minister may determine for the cost of the survey necessary to define the boundaries. I should like the Minister in his reply to indicate whether this will permit of a lessee engaging a private surveyor, or whether he will be required to have the survey made by a Government surveyor.

The Chief Secretary: It must be the Government Surveyor.

Hon. A. THOMSON: A qualified private surveyor may be practising in the district. He would be fully competent to make the survey, and possibly his services might cost the owner less than those of a Government Surveyor.

The Chief Secretary: Private surveyors are employed by the Government now.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Private surveyors are having rather a difficult time. They should be given the opportunity to do work of this kind if owners are agreeable. On the whole, the amendments which the Bill proposes are designed to expedite and improve the operation of the Land Act. One part of the Bill seems to me to require further explanation, the part referring to cases where land is intended to be resumed and withdrawn from a lease. It should be possible to have more land freeholded in our North. Recently a visitor from overseas inspected an area there. His object was to ascertain whether sufficient land could be acquired for the establishment of a Jewish settlement. I am glad that the Government showed itself sympathetic in the matter. I may be corrected by North-West members, but I am of the opinion that if more land in the North were freehold, progress and settlement would be expedited. Some years ago I asked a Federal Minister why so much money had been spent in the Northern Territory, with so little apparent result. He replied that the reason was that the greater part of the area was held under pastoral lease, which

fact militated against closer settlement. That is by the way.

One feature I especially commend to the attention of hon. members is that under the Act a man is not permitted to hold more than 1,000,000 acres under pastoral lease. A proposed new section provides that if any person becomes beneficially interested in a pastoral area, and if he already holds another area, and then if the two areas combined exceed 1,000,000 acres, he will become liable to a fine of £5 per day. That is my reading of the provision. I suggest hon. members look into the matter, because of the possibility of great hardship being inflicted, even though unintentionally. The Chief Secretary in replying may be able to make the position clear. I may add that a North-West member asked me to raise the point. The proposed amendment of Section 130 is desirable, the intention being to extend terms of payment over 40 years in the case of a lessee who has got behind. Another proposal on which the Government is to be commended is the adjustment of repurchased estates. Admittedly, quite a large sum of money has already been written off the prices at which blocks in those estates were sold by the Government; but if past Governments purchased land at too high a price, settlers should not be asked to pay for governmental blundering.

The Chief Secretary: Why speak of blundering?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Let me say, because of altered conditions. There was no blundering; but conditions altered, rendering it necessary to re-value the repurchased estates. That would be only an act of justice to settlers, notwithstanding the previous writing-down. The settlers there have been placed in an impossible position, particularly on the repurchased estates, and the Government is certainly not giving anything away. However, I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

### *Second Reading.*

Order of the day read for the resumption from the 8th November of the debate on the second reading.



**HON. J. NICHOLSON** (Metropolitan)  
[10.44]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	..	15

Majority against	..	..	9
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#### AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton  
Hon. J. Cornell  
Hon. J. Nicholson

Hon. A. Thomson  
Hon. H. Tuckey  
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom  
(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo  
Hon. C. F. Baxter  
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt  
Hon. J. M. Drew  
Hon. J. T. Franklin  
Hon. G. Fraser  
Hon. E. H. Gray  
Hon. V. Hamersley

Hon. W. H. Kitson  
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane  
Hon. W. J. Mann  
Hon. H. S. W. Parker  
Hon. H. V. Piesse  
Hon. G. B. Wood  
Hon. G. W. Miles  
(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

**HON. J. NICHOLSON:** I regret that I have not had an opportunity to study the Bill; because of that, I asked for the adjournment of the debate. I am sorry that the House in its wisdom decided otherwise. The adjournment had been obtained previously by Mr. Dimmitt, and naturally I thought he would have been prepared to continue the debate. A suggestion has been made that we should endeavour to complete the work of the session next week, and the spirit animating members seems to be that we should pass legislation without due consideration.

**HON. L. B. BOLTON:** I object to that.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER:** We have been considering this for weeks.

**HON. J. NICHOLSON:** I have not considered it at all.

**THE PRESIDENT:** I hope the hon. member does not intend to reflect upon the Council.

**HON. J. NICHOLSON:** No, that would be the last thing I would do. I suggest that the idea of endeavouring to finish our work next week when we have such a formidable list of business before us—

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER:** Then let us get on with the business.

**HON. J. NICHOLSON:** That interjection indicates the spirit to which I alluded. I feel that this Bill, if passed, will vitally affect the industries of the State. I have not had an opportunity to closely consider it, but it is of such importance that its pass-

age should not be rushed through. I presume it will pass the second reading; I do not seek to raise any question in that respect. I hope, however, that we shall have ample opportunity to weigh and seriously consider the measure when it reaches the Committee stage. On a previous occasion a Bill which was introduced to amend the Factories and Shops Act was deemed to be of such importance as to warrant its being referred to a select committee. Close and careful investigation followed, and as a result amendments were made to the legislation. Now we have a Bill again presented to us which, obviously, so far as one can see at a glance, has an important bearing upon the deliberations of that select committee. The Minister has said that he desires to foster our industries and I am sure all members of this Chamber will assist in every way to do so. I shall not make further comment now, but I again urge that we be given the opportunity to consider the measure in Committee at a later sitting, thus giving members a chance to make a closer study of the Bill.

#### *Personal Explanation.*

**HON. C. F. BAXTER:** I desire to make a short personal explanation. I find that when speaking on the second reading of the Bill I made a statement that was not clear and that might mislead hon. members, which is the last thing I want to do. I referred to a case in which a decision was given against a union. I also said that if we agreed to insert the word "day" in the Bill overtime would be incurred. As a matter of fact, I said that if the shift commenced at 8 o'clock in the evening and proceeded till 4 o'clock in the morning, the four hours after midnight would be counted as overtime and that the 12 hours waiting time would finish at noon on the next day. Those four hours would not be overtime. If, however, workers commenced at 8 o'clock in the evening, the four hours till 12 o'clock would be overtime; but that would be a different shift altogether. I hope hon. members will accept my explanation.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.55]: I remind hon. members that this Bill has been before us for some time. We discussed it fully on the 8th November. It was then pointed out that the Bill proposed to do something which certainly in my opinion can be done by the

Arbitration Court, if the parties desired to approach that court. An award is in existence dealing with the class of worker who would be affected by this Bill. That award has been in force for many years and no application has been made to vary it. Whether or not the court would vary it does not matter much for the purpose of my argument. Like the Minister, I do not agree with people who are employed on night work, having breaks in their shifts during the night. I have no objection to workers with a spread of 12 hours during the day having breaks. In my opinion, as I said, the matter is one with which the Arbitration Court has full and complete power to deal. That court is far more competent to deal with the matter than I am and, I venture to say, than many other members of this Chamber. Therefore I cannot see my way clear to support the Bill, as it is an attempt to short-circuit the Arbitration Court. I understand a case was heard by the court and that an interpretation was given unfavourable to the complainant; but that would not prevent an application being made to the court for a variation of the award to give effect to the desire of the union. In my opinion, that is where the application should be made, and not to this Chamber. Therefore, reluctantly, I shall vote against the second reading.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [10.58]: I have no axe to grind in this matter. I voted for the adjournment of the second reading debate, notwithstanding that the measure had been for some time in the stocks, because I am given to understand that members cannot possibly follow this Bill intelligently unless they have a consolidation of the Factories and Shops Act. I understand that that is available, but I do not know of any member who has a copy except the Minister.

**Hon. H. S. W. Parker**: I have one.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: Then the hon. member is probably the only one except the Minister who has a copy. I tried to compare this Bill with the statutes that we have available, but I found I could not.

**Hon. H. S. W. Parker**: You cannot.

**Hon. A. Thomson**: That is the experience of most of us.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: It is unfair to bring down Bills to amend statutes when hon.

members are not in a position to make an intelligent comparison in order to ascertain how far and to what extent existing legislation is to be amended and what the effect will be.

**The Chief Secretary**: The consolidated statute is available.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: Not for hon. members, unless they go to the Government Printer. Our clerk's statutes are up to date, but it is no use going to his study to try to make a comparison between the existing statutes he has and the Bill. The last amending Bill was like a battlefield and the amendments were battered from pillar to post. If the second reading is passed I hope the Bill will not be taken to the Committee stage until next week so that members will have a chance of making comparisons.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [11.1]: I will accept the statement of the hon. member but I was not aware of the position. The Bill is not in my charge, but I rise to point out that it has been before the House for some time and there is no excuse for any hon. member to say he has not been able to consider it. I should have thought Mr. Nicholson would have found time to look through the measure.

**Hon. J. Nicholson**: I have not had the opportunity.

**The CHIEF SECRETARY**: I am anxious that we should make as much progress as possible but by adjourning debates we are not making the progress that should be made. I should like to appeal to hon. members to assist Mr. Gray and myself with the conduct of the business before the House. I have appealed previously for progress to be made so that we might finish the session at the end of next week if it is at all possible. I do not want to take action that would debar members from giving full consideration to Bills and for that reason I suggest to the Honorary Minister that he should at this stage adjourn the further consideration of the measure so that the position pointed out by Mr. Cornell might be rectified. I hope members will assist by continuing the debate on measures before the Chamber and even by taking them into Committee.

On motion by **Hon. L. B. Bolton**, debate adjourned.

**BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT  
AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [11.3]: I have very little to say on this Bill. I believe from what Mr. Cornell said when introducing the measure that there is a necessity to amend the Act to cover the point that was mentioned by him and which he thought was covered in the Bill presented to the House. I submitted the Bill to the Crown Law authorities and acting on the advice of the Solicitor General I have suggested to Mr. Cornell certain amendments that will give him what he requires. I have pointed out to him, on the Solicitor General's advice, that the Bill as drafted certainly will not secure for him what he stated he desired. The effect of Mr. Cornell's amendment will be to enable a person whose name appears on any electoral list for any ward or district to contest an election. That is clearly not the hon. member's intention. The Solicitor General advises that if it is Mr. Cornell's desire to narrow the qualifications for candidates, the words proposed to be inserted should be as follows:—

Whose name appears on the electoral roll for the district or where the district is divided into wards, on the electoral roll for any ward thereof.

The word "roll" has been substituted for "list" in the foregoing amendment as the electoral list is subject to revision upon repeal.

Hon. A. Thomson: That would mean that a man not living in a ward would still be eligible to contest an election.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: So long as he is on a roll in a district he will be eligible to contest the election for any ward. The Solicitor General states that the anomaly referred to by Mr. Cornell which led to the prosecution of a candidate who signed his own nomination could best be remedied by adding a proviso to Section 70 as follows—

Provided that this section shall not apply in the case of a candidate who is qualified for election signing his own name.

I understand Mr. Cornell proposes to accept that advice and in Committee to move the amendments suggested. In those circumstances I raise no objection to the measure.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South—in reply) [11.7]: I wish to thank the Chief Secretary for giving me an opportunity to put the Bill through tonight. The only purpose I desire to serve is to correct an anomaly. The position today is that a person may be eligible to nominate for election to a road board and the only way he could nominate would be to sign his own nomination paper and then be liable to a fine for signing it without being qualified to vote. I am prepared to accept the Solicitor General's amendments.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; Hon. J. Cornell in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 23:

On motions by Hon. J. Cornell, clause amended by striking out of line 5 the word "and" and inserting the word "the" in lieu; by striking out the word "list" and inserting the word "roll" in lieu; by striking out the words "a ward or" and inserting the word "the" in lieu; and by striking out of line 6 the words "as the case may be" and inserting the words "or where the district is divided into wards or any ward thereof" in lieu.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—agreed to.

New clause:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 3:—"Section 70 of the principal Act is amended by adding a proviso as follows:— 'Provided that this section shall not apply in the case of a candidate who is qualified for election signing his own name'."

A person was fined for signing his nomination because he was not qualified to vote. The Crown Solicitor recommends the new clause.

New clause put and passed.

Title:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That after the word "twenty-three" the words "and seventy" be inserted.

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

Bill reported with amendments and an amendment to the Title, and the report adopted.

## BILL—POTATO GROWERS LICENSING.

### *Second Reading.*

**HON. H. V. PIESSE** (South-East) [11.19] in moving the second reading said: I wish to inform members that Mr. B. H. Burvill and I have represented Western Australia as members of the Federal Potato Advisory Board for the past three years and have promised to do our best to see that this Bill becomes law. Though it has been introduced at a late hour of the session, members will recall that when I spoke on the Address-in-reply, I said I hoped that the Government would be able to bring down this legislation. After a conference with the Minister for Agriculture, I found that he could not introduce the Bill on account of pressure of business. Therefore I decided to initiate it in this House. I listened attentively to the Chief Secretary when he moved for the suspension of the Standing Orders, and noticed that this did not debar members from discussing fully any Bill that might be before the House. It is my duty to my constituents and to the potato-growing industry to present the case for this Bill. In Melbourne on the 17th and 18th July last it was unanimously agreed that all States' representatives should request their Governments to bring in a Bill of this nature with the conditions applying to the individual States. This last meeting was specially called at the request of the Commerce Department to deal with orderly marketing on account of the excessive price of potatoes during the year. The notice sent out by the executive committee included the following paragraph:—

Legislation on the lines of the Bill drafted for presentation to the New South Wales Parliament, to register all growers cultivating potatoes for sale:—The committee is greatly disappointed at the failure of the States (excepting Tasmania) to give effect to its repeated recommendation and that of the Australian Agricultural Council (August, 1937, meeting) for the registration of growers. Legislation to this end is regarded as an essential preliminary to the effective organisation of the industry.

I would like to quote some extracts from the minutes of the committee dealing with this matter, which will prove to the House that all States are unanimous in their desire for this legislation—

The chairman, Hon. W. C. Cambridge, M.L.A., indicated that the executive com-

mittee had definitely stated in its submission to the Federal Commerce Department that legislation to register growers was an essential preliminary to the effective organisation of the industry.

Upon this point of registration of growers, he desired to state that the terms of the Bill to be presented to the New South Wales Parliament had been recently approved. A copy of this Bill was being made available to members at the meeting. He would suggest that the meeting endorse the provisions of this Bill, and that it should recommend its adoption by all States. It will be noted that the Bill provides that a registration fee should be paid by all growers and that the collections therefore should be made available to the potato growers' organisation. It was essential if the industry throughout the various States is to be properly organised, that funds must be available for the purpose and this measure presented the medium through which they could be obtained. The Bill would be known as the Potato Growers' Licensing Act, 1939, and would enable the following very desirable aims to be achieved:—

- (a) The maintenance of a record of growers including the foreign element who are growing potatoes on rented land.
- (b) The compilation of a roll of growers which will enable an elected committee to be established for the purpose of promoting the interests of the industry and of representing the views of growers to Governments when such is required.
- (c) The provision of funds to enable the committee set up under (b) to function effectively.
- (d) The establishment of a means through which growers can be directly contacted for the purpose of securing reliable information (statistical and other) concerning the industry.
- (e) Facilitating efforts for improving the cultural practices of growers and for controlling diseases and pests.
- (f) It is considered that legislation of this nature is essential to effect proper organisation of the industry.
- (g) Certain producers and merchants are of the opinion that the Bill is out to—

- (i) Limit production;
- (ii) Regulate areas planted;
- (iii) Fix prices;

but if the Bill is read it will be seen it contains only a condition to raise a small amount of money for the benefit of the industry as set out in the above clauses (a) to (f).

Mr. Guy Parsons, the chairman of the Tasmanian Potato Marketing Board, explained the circumstances in which the Tasmanian Potato Marketing Board functioned. There was no special legislation which provided for the registration of growers in this State, but there was provision for the imposition of a

fee for each bag of potatoes submitted for inspection, and funds thus acquired by the board were used for the better organisation of the industry. Accordingly, Tasmania was more advanced in respect to organisation than were any of the other States. The State, however, is prepared to bring down legislation to register growers when other States have at least reached the stage of organisation that has been reached in Tasmania.

Mr. Dodds, representing New South Wales, said that before anything effective could be done to organise growers, there must be funds available for the purpose. It must be possible to counter propaganda, and, for this purpose, funds are necessary. Legislation for the registration of growers and the imposition of a registration fee were essential before anything effective could be accomplished.

Mr. Pitt, representing South Australia, said the general attitude of potato growers in South Australia and of the Government in that State was that they should tread warily before adopting any marketing plan. It was considered undesirable to limit production, but, by way of a beginning, growers considered that a measure to register all growers was essential. He saw difficulty in inducing the South Australian Government to bring down legislation for the establishment of a Federal Marketing Board or for the limitation of production.

Representing Western Australia. I said—

As far as Western Australia was concerned, the growers were definitely in favour of legislation for registration and I was prepared to do my utmost to have such legislation enacted. Without the funds, which could be derived from the registration fees, it was very difficult to obtain facilities for committee members from some States to attend meetings of the council. This was particularly the case with Western Australia, and I believed also with South Australia and Queensland.

I also added—

In Western Australia there was much land capable of effective potato cultivation, and Western Australia would be penalised more than any other State if a policy of acreage control was adopted.

Mr. Burvill, also representing Western Australia, stated that apart from the aspects already discussed legislation for the registration of growers was very desirable for the purpose of assisting in the conduct of research work and in the control of disease. If effective measures in these connections were to be taken, it was necessary to be able to control growers in the first instance. This was recognised by the Department of Agriculture in Western Australia.

Mr. Wright, representing Tasmania, said he was satisfied that funds were necessary to organise the industry effectively. Each State should have its own organisation capable of expressing its views of the industry. He

added that if Tasmania had not funds available from the inspection fees, there would undoubtedly be strong agitation for the adoption of legislation on the lines of the present New South Wales Bill.

Some discussion then took place as to the position of Tasmania in the matter of introducing legislation for the registration of growers, having regard to the existing legislation in that State. It was eventually agreed and carried unanimously—

That all States, other than Tasmania, adopt legislation to register growers on the lines of the New South Wales Bill and that when this had been done, Tasmania amend its existing legislation to bring it into line with the other States in this regard.

On my return to Western Australia from the last conference of the Federal Potato Advisory Council an article was published—thanks to the courtesy of "The West Australian" and the country Press—giving full details of the resolutions which had been passed and the discussions which had taken place, not only in reference to the proposed legislation for registration of growers but also the Orderly Marketing Bill proposed by the Federal Government. And this is where some confusion has taken place, as various growers are under the impression that the Bill I am now introducing will have a tendency to limit production and forcibly to control marketing. This is not so. I would refer hon. members to my Address-in-reply speech appearing on page 126 of "Hansard," No. 3. I then set out fully the reasons for this Bill, after conference with my colleague Mr. Burvill. Mr. Burvill and I greatly appreciated the courtesy shown to us by Mr. Wise and his departmental officers. I feel confident that had there been more time during this session, Mr. Wise would have given careful consideration to the introduction of this measure himself. The hon. gentleman is a member of the Federal Agricultural Council, which body has passed a resolution agreeing to this legislation. From time to time I have had opportunities to discuss the Bill with the officers of the Agricultural Department, and I feel sure they will agree with me in stating that it sets out to facilitate the progress of the industry.

I promised the Federal Advisory Potato Committee that if I found the Western Australian Government could not introduce this Bill, I would do so on behalf of the potato

growers of Western Australia. Hence the introduction of this measure at so late a stage of the session. It might be considered by some hon. members that I have not the consent of the growers to the introduction of the Bill; but I can give an assurance that I have been in touch with many growers, including Mr. Frank H. Pugh, who was lately in control of the marketing scheme inaugurated by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., with such success last year. He, in turn, has been personally in touch with leading growers in the South-West, including those at Waroona, Bridgetown, Donnybrook, Burekup, Bunbury, Nornalup, Benger and Denmark. Mr. Pugh himself being one of the largest potato growers in Western Australia—at Narrikup—it will be thoroughly understood that his opinion is worth while. He has taken a great interest in the organisation of growers.

The Bill sets out to do the following:— Clause 2 provides for regulations and conditions of licenses. Clause 3 by Subclause (1) makes it binding on all potato growers cultivating one quarter of an acre of land to be licensed under the measure, and by Subsection (2) sets out the scale of license fees thus: one quarter of an acre to five acres, 10s.; five acres to 10 acres, £1; 10 acres to 20 acres, £2; over 20 acres, £3. Subclause (3) of Clause 3 sets out the duration of the license, and Subclause (4) provides for breaches of the Act, stipulating fines of a minimum of £2 and a maximum of £100. Clause 4 by Subclause (1) sets out that license fees collected, and any penalties imposed, under this Act shall be paid into a special fund at the Treasury. Subclause (2) stipulates that the Treasurer shall, upon the recommendation of the Minister for Agriculture, pay out of such special account moneys, at his discretion (a) to any society or body of persons who, to the satisfaction of the Minister for Agriculture, will wholly apply such moneys to the promotion of the production, marketing, treatment and sale of potatoes, and (b) to be used in any other manner which the Minister for Agriculture deems to be best calculated to develop or protect the potato-growing industry. Subclause (3) provides that any moneys so paid shall be expended for such purposes in furtherance of the interests of Western Australian potato growers as in any particular case the Minister for

Agriculture may approve, or generally as may be prescribed. Subclause (4) lays down that the expenditure of any moneys so paid shall be accounted for in such manner as may be prescribed. Clauses 5 and 6 deal with appointment of inspectors and the policing of the measure. Clauses 7 and 8 deal with prosecutions under the measure. Clause 9 prescribes the usual conditions as to regulations, which will be laid on the Table in both Houses in the usual manner. In fact, the Bill prescribes for a small fee to be charged and paid by growers of potatoes on land exceeding one quarter of an acre in area. I wish to impress on hon. members that all collections will be controlled by the Minister for Agriculture, and that such funds can be paid out only at his discretion and for the benefit of the industry.

Western Australia's two main competitors in the export of potatoes in Australia are Victoria and Tasmania; but Tasmania is by far the stronger of the two, because that State is so well organised. I ask hon. members to bear with me for a few minutes while I give a short resume of the Tasmanian position:—

The present year, 1939, could be properly termed the centenary year of the well-known and firmly-established potato industry, and it is worth noting that the price of £20 per ton obtainable for potatoes this year is a repetition of a price realised exactly one hundred years ago.

Mr. George Hall, of Spring Dawn, near Port Sorell, in 1839 was the first to exploit the possibility of potato production on the North-West coast of Tasmania. Immediately after the founding of Port Phillip high prices were ruling for Tasmanian potatoes, selling at £20 per ton; flour, £23; and for sheep at £2 per head. Mr. Hall made full use of the demand. Specialising in potato growing he was able to produce 10 tons and more to the acre, which found a ready sale.

Prices have not always been payable over the past 100 years. In slump years they have been below zero and in the years 1841 to 1888 potatoes were practically unsaleable. In 1842 the original land policy of the Van Diemen's Land Company was superseded by a plan initiated by a new manager, Mr. Gibson. This aimed at selling or letting in small sections a large area of the company's property.

This land in the Emu Bay (now Burnie) and Circular Head (Stanley) districts was offered at £2 per acre, or leased on easy terms. The company was appointed on similar lines to our C. J. De Garis Kendenup Estate, and

like on that estate, the producers of Tasmania must have been outstanding in their ability, determination and tenacity of purpose.

Now I come to a point that I mention because unless markets are available for potatoes and reasonable prices are obtainable, the industry will not survive.

The company agreed to take all produce raised for seven years at a fixed price: Potatoes £5 5s. per ton, wheat 7s. per bushel, barley 9s., oats 4s. The settlers were under contract to buy their supplies from the company's stores, and to sell their produce only to the company. In addition to these inducements, the company undertook, at the expiration of the leases, to give a bonus of £4 for every acre cleared of timber, with the exception of ten large trees left standing. Small wonder there was a rush of applicants, and soon production was at a peak output.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Does your Bill make provision for the growers' production to be purchased?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No, the Bill gives the growers absolute freedom to act as they wish.

As usual this had the effect of every farmer producing at boom prices, and increasing the output of this commodity, but while leaseholders of the Van Diemen's Land Company sold at the contract price of £5 5s. (highly payable) over a term of seven years, the other growers had to sell on a rapidly falling market.

Under the cash payment system, the leaseholders soon overloaded the company's stores; the open market was glutted, and hundreds of tons of the company's produce received at £5 5s. per ton were thrown into the sea. It must be recognised that at this early date, demand for produce has its limits.

Obviously where over-production takes place, methods must be adopted at once to deal with the situation. Nevertheless, the Bill leaves the growers quite free, for there is no regulation proposed of prices nor control in any form.

A general improvement set in in 1849, when the Van Diemen's Land Company leases expired, and the tenants had to share with others the risk of the open market.

It speaks well for the productivity of the rich red soil of Devonport and Burnie. During the past 100 years this industry has had its ups and downs, and whilst prices have fluctuated, they have been on the average highly payable.

On Thursday, the 9th March, 1939, I was appointed chairman of a delegation consisting of Mr. J. F. Wright, representing Tasmania, and Mr. A. Boustead, of Victoria, to

wait on Sir Earle Page, the then Minister for Commerce, to discuss the lifting of the New Zealand potato embargo. I had the pleasure of conversing at the time with the late Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, who informed me that, when he was Premier of Tasmania, he had made available funds necessary under the Plant Diseases Act of that State, to assist the Marketing Board in Tasmania. That body had no power to fix prices, but was established purely for advertising and exporting purposes. The board consisted of growers elected by growers. I feel sure that had those funds not been made available, Tasmania would not possess the marvellous organisation it has to-day in the Sydney and Brisbane markets. The late Mr. Lyons represented Devonport in both the State and Federal Parliaments and his electorate was by far the largest potato producing area in Tasmania. While he represented that portion of the State in both the State and Federal arenas, he extended every assistance possible and helped greatly in the progress of the industry.

I wish to impress upon members the fact that the Bill is introduced with no thought of controlling production, marketing or prices. All that is desired by the growers to-day is that they shall elect a board to function along lines similar to the Tasmanian Marketing Board, and to secure funds necessary for the operations. A salient feature is that this is not compulsory. Even if the Bill be passed, there will be no need to form the board, but the legislation will furnish the Minister with an opportunity to advance money to assist the industry or even to aid any existing organisation. In Tasmania a publicity department has been appointed and its chief officer, Mr. A. C. Foster, resides in Sydney, with offices in Sussex-street. He is the life's blood of the Tasmanian board. He broadcasts over the air and is continually in attendance on the wharves. On one occasion when I was with him, he went so far as to take a moving picture of potatoes as they were being emptied out of the bags. They had been condemned and he sent the picture back to Tasmania in order that the growers might see for themselves the condition of the exported article. In my opinion Mr. Foster, as the chief publicity officer, is responsible to a very great extent for the successful marketing of Tasmanian potatoes in New South Wales. He

also assists the brokers who, every Monday morning in Sydney, fix the price of Tasmanian potatoes for the current week. While the Tasmanian Board has no statutory powers, it is the only organisation in the Commonwealth that is operating in the potato-growing industry. It is non-political and is elected by the growers. In a report I received from New South Wales, dated the 30th October, the following appeared:—

The prices to-day here are:—Western Australian Delawares, £22 to £23 a ton; New South Wales (new) from Raleigh and Grafton, £21 to £21 10s.; Tasmanian Brownells, £18. I might say for your information that the prices of Tasmanian potatoes were dropped by Sussex-street merchants fearing that they may not be able to clear their stocks of old Tasmanian potatoes. In the meantime this decrease in price has hit seriously the prices for the New South Wales and Western Australian growers, as the fall yesterday was £6 to £8 per ton.

That drop took place within 24 hours. When one considers the powers the Tasmanian board possesses, one realises all the more how essential it is for Western Australian growers to exert themselves to act along similar lines. We must have direct representation in the Eastern States, particularly as our potatoes are now down in price to £6 or £7 per ton. In my opinion, the Federal Government, under the provisions of the National Security Act, should have made arrangements, on the declaration of war, to fix the price of potatoes at, say, an average of £10 per ton at ports, which would have been a payable price to growers and satisfactory to consumers.

As I have been approached by several members representing the South-West Province who stated that insufficient publicity had been given to the Bill, particularly as it was being brought forward in the dying hours of this Parliament, I decided to despatch a letter to all members setting out my reasons for introducing the legislation. Thanks to the courtesy of Mr. Guy Parsons, the chairman of the Tasmanian Potato Marketing Board, I have before me the annual report of the board for 1937-38. So as to give Western Australian growers an opportunity to know how the Tasmanian board functions, on the 16th November, 1939, I wrote to potato growers and those interested in the industry, setting out the proposed

legislation in comparison with the Tasmanian organisation. The letter is as follows:—

Re Proposed Potato Growers' Licensing Act, 1939.—Having posted you a copy of "Hansard" No. 3, in which is printed on page 126 my Address-in-reply speech, on 16th August, 1939, you will be fully aware of the reasons set up by Mr. B. H. Burvill and myself, as your representatives on the Federal Potato Advisory Council, for the passing of the above Act.

Attached is a copy of the proposed Bill, and the following are my reasons for introducing it:—

1. Mr. B. H. Burvill and myself have promised the Federal Potato Advisory Council that we would endeavour to persuade our Government to introduce this Bill. Having the feeling that the Minister for Agriculture and his Department are sympathetic; but realising as I do that it is impossible for the Minister, Hon. F. Wise, M.L.A., with all the work he has on hand at the present moment to introduce this Bill in the Legislative Assembly, I am prepared to introduce it in the Council, hoping to have the approval of the Minister and his Department, and also the members of the South-West, as I feel sure they will all agree with the principles of the Bill.
2. Never in the history of Western Australia has it been more essential to have organisation of the potato-growing industry; particularly in war time, when freights are difficult to obtain, export arrangements have to be made, and Western Australia is in open competition with the other States in the larger centres, such as Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane. Tasmania, which has a board to assist it in every way, is Western Australia's greatest competitor.
3. I would not think of introducing this Bill unless I had the moral support of the Minister for Agriculture and his Department.
4. The Bill will be known as the Potato Growers Licensing Act, 1939, and will enable the following very desirable aims to be achieved.

There is no need for me to repeat these aims, as I have already stated them. The letter continues—

If the Bill is passed, I wish to impress upon growers that a board can be elected by them individually. I would point out that at present the Minister for Agriculture has no power to advance any money from his department to assist any organisation for the benefit of this industry; but if the Bill is passed, the registration fees and fines, if any, are to be paid into a special fund at the



Treasury for the benefit of the industry as set out in the Bill.

Potato Marketing Board of Tasmania.—I have before me the Annual Report of the Potato Marketing Board of Tasmania as at 30th June, 1938, which deals with market supervision, advertising, show advertising, transport from Tasmania to the mainland, the supply of crop reports, and the employment of marketing officers in Tasmania and in Sydney. This board keeps closely in contact with kindred associations and the Department of Agriculture in connection with the industry. It also deals with freight rates of produce and pays the expenses of delegates to the Federal Potato Advisory Council Conferences. This board receives its income from a levy and so much per bag on export, under the Plant Diseases Act, and last year the receipts from this levy totalled £2,695 2s. 8d.

The receipts of the Tasmanian board for the year amounted to £5,032 16s. 1d., and, after allowing for expenses, the balance remaining in hand was £2,280 6s. The Tasmanian board advertises very extensively at leading shows. Last year it expended on show advertising £1,877 13s. 10d., and received a return of £1,953 14s. 6d., leaving a balance of revenue in favour of the board of £75 10s. 8d. Approximately 100,000 persons were served with cooked samples of Tasmanian potatoes. I draw the attention of hon. members to the following points—

- (a) Western Australia has great prospects as an exporting State.
- (b) It can grow crops of potatoes all the year round and therefore has an advantage over the Eastern States.
- (c) Sufficient land is available in the heavy rainfall areas to grow the quantity of potatoes required to supply the Sydney market.
- (d) In 1936-37, there were 23,090 potato-growers in Australia; and the Agricultural Department estimates that this year, 1939, there are 1,040 growers in Western Australia.
- (e) The estimated return from license fees would be in the vicinity of £900 for the first year, and the cost of collection would be borne by the Agricultural Department. Of course, if our export trade increases, employment will be provided for a great number of workers in the industry, and naturally income from license fees would increase.
- (f) Western Australia has the highest record for production per acre in the Commonwealth.
- (g) It must be borne in mind that it is not the quantity of potatoes marketed that wholly determines the price. The quantity that is capable of being

pressed on the market at any particular time has a regulating influence.

- (h) Stimulation of consumption: The per capita consumption in Australia is about 111 lbs. per annum. This represents a decline of 200 lbs. per head from the beginning of this century. Whatever the cause may be, it is possible that the conduct of a publicity campaign, designed to repopularise the use of potatoes as food, may achieve some success, as have the efforts of the Tasmanian board.
- (i) Of course, it is thoroughly understood that growers in the various States must have first right of sale in their own markets.

What would be the state of the apple and pear industry of Western Australia today were it not for the industry's own special unauthorised organisation? When I say "unauthorised" I mean that the organisation was not brought about by any political act in Parliament, but by the efforts of men such as J. McNeil Martin of Mount Barker, Mr. Price of the Illawarra Orchard, the late Mr. Scott of Bridgetown and many others who associated themselves closely with the organisation of the industry. The result is that they have been able to protect the industry, to a great degree, from outside interests. Federal legislation would have been to the detriment of the industry in this State. Had it not been for the able representation made by the association, such legislation would have been passed. One has only to read the papers of the last few weeks to realise the good work that Messrs. Soot-hill and Park, Western Australian members of the Federal Apple and Pear Board, have done on behalf of the industry.

I sincerely hope the House will pass this measure, and I shall be only too pleased to answer requests for information. I have received a letter from an opponent of the proposed legislation, Mr. Berryman. It reads as follows—

Marybrook Potato Growers' Association.

F. L. Berryman, Agent.  
Tel. Marybrook P.O.  
2/11/39.

H. V. Piesse, Esq., M.L.C.

Dear Sir,

Re Potato Growers Licensing.

Pending our general meeting in two weeks' time I have spoken to most of our members and all the outside growers of note on the above matter.

They have all read of Federal proposals for stabilisation and realise that the growers

licensed under a State Act would vote on any referendum held on the matter.

Should the war last any time the matter could be carried by an alien speculator vote during the Australian growers' absence.

That being so they consider this is not the time for any such legislation.

Yours faithfully,

F. L. Berryman, Secretary.

P.S.—I will put the matter on the agenda for general meeting and notify you result.  
—F.L.B.

I replied fully to Mr. Berryman stating that he had a wrong conception about the board. I also received a letter from Mr. Parke, who, together with Mr. Soothill, has been addressing meetings in the South-West in connection with the apple and pear industry. Mr. Parke wrote as follows:—

I am in receipt of draft of Potato Bill which you intend to move. I consider the Bill long overdue and is what is wanted. Figures of production and quantities grown are essential in the rationalisation of marketing any product. You could quote the success of the Fruitgrowers' Association in running their affairs in support of your Bill. Soothill and myself have contacted approximately 850 growers in fourteen days spread of 300 miles. This would have been impossible without organisation.

The position down here is that the methods of production are in most cases unsound because of the system of share farming, the whole cost of putting land into production having to be borne by the potato crop instead of over several crops which would be the natural rotation of good farming methods.

Later the whole economics of mixed farming will be affected by farmers foolishly selling their damp or summer lands to foreigners. This will in the long run be harmful because some swamp land is essential in dairying and other live stock production. Farmers lacking foresight have done this and the potato grower having only a small area must grow a continuous crop (potatoes) with harmful results to the land, by getting lesser yields and consequently a false impression as to production costs.

If, later, prices are fixed which are not contemplated in your Bill they should be fixed low enough to make good methods essential and thus force out the bad grower. This method of control of production is the most effective.

I think your Bill is good, and wish you success with it, and I very much admire your efforts on behalf of all farming industry.  
—G. Parke.

Last night I received a letter from Mr. Parsons setting out all the conditions of the

Tasmanian board. In a few words they are as follows:—

#### Potato Marketing Board of Tasmania. Constitution.

A marketing branch of the agricultural bureau be established with the object of forming a board of control for the purpose of placing the products of the primary producers of Tasmania:

A. By conferring periodically with merchants and distributors—

1. With a view to finding new markets.
2. To improve transport facilities.
3. To assure a more regular supply of potatoes for the Sydney market.
4. To stabilise the market (as nearly as possible), which would be an advantage to the consumer as well as the producer.

B. To obtain information throughout the Commonwealth which will enable a forecast to be made of the probable production for the year well in advance.

C. That an export levy of 1½d. per bag be placed on potatoes, and ¼d. per bag on swedes, carrots and parsnips, exported from Tasmania, for the purpose of financing the above propaganda.

D. That the board of control consist of five members to be elected for a period of two years; no municipality to supply more than one such member.

Those are the conditions of the Tasmanian board, and there is no doubt that that board has functioned very well. It has done a great service to the growers in Tasmania. I commend the Bill to hon. members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT.

##### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.4 a.m.]: This Bill proposes a number of important amendments to those sections of the principal Act which deal with the definition of "producer"; the poll of producers; the qualification of electors under the Act; and the constitution

of the board. Under the Act, "producer" means a commercial producer who keeps more than 75 head of poultry. Mr. Wood now seeks to bring within the scope of the Act all persons owning more than 25 head. The Department of Agriculture advises that the producers covered by this amendment are in a majority and that the eggs produced by these people would necessarily tend to undermine efficient control by any board constituted under the Act. From the viewpoint of control, Mr. Wood's amendment is desirable, but at the same time it must be pointed out that under this proposal the cost of policing the Act would be enormous. With regard to the provisions relating to the appointment and constitution of an egg board, hon. members will recall that the original Bill introduced by Mr. Wood provided that a producer must own 150 head of poultry before he was entitled to take part in any petition or election. While the hon. member considers that it is a most undemocratic principle that a three-fifths majority should be necessary to bring a board into existence, and therefore proposes to provide for a determination by a simple majority, yet at the same time he now wishes to disfranchise all those people holding less than 250 head of female poultry. These people comprise a very considerable proportion of producers, and if they are not to be allowed to have a voice in the formation of the board or the election of members who are to control their interests, it would be equitable to continue the provision for a three-fifths majority. If, however, none who are to be controlled are disqualified from voting, then a determination by a simple majority would be quite satisfactory.

An alteration to the constitution of the board is proposed by the hon. member. The Act provides for a board consisting of two members elected by the producers and three additional members nominated by the Governor, one of whom shall represent the consumers and one at least shall be a person of mercantile and commercial experience. The Bill seeks to amend this provision by increasing the number of producers' representatives to three and reducing the number of Government nominees to two persons. If enacted, this proposal would place the poultry farmer in absolute control of all phases of the egg industry and it might be asked whether the poultry farmers have had the necessary training and experience to enable them effectively to control an industry of this size.

Hon. G. B. Wood: This House approved of that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It might have, but I do not think it will approve of the present Bill. In providing for the constitution of a board to control the marketing side of an industry, it is necessary to strike an equitable balance between the interests of the producer, consumer and distributor. The present Act has regard to this principle, but it is entirely disregarded by the amendment proposed by Mr. Wood.

When introducing the Bill, the hon. member made reference to the fact that no board had been formed and that no poll had been taken. I am informed that the reason for that is not the reason suggested by Mr. Wood, but because no petition had been received requesting a vote to be taken. I understand, too, that the reason given by some interested persons as to why no petition has been received is that the Act provides for the expenses of such a poll to be met by the signatories to the petition. The people who sign a petition for a poll must also provide the expenses of the poll. The Bill simply states that when a petition is presented, provision shall be made whereby the expenses shall be met. That is entirely different from stipulating that the signatories shall bear the expense. I have been advised by the department that we have nearly 4,000 producers who own 75 fowls or more. There must be a very large number of others who own fewer than 75.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not have a record of them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would not like to say that the 4,000 include all, but the number is approximately correct. I am afraid that I cannot support the Bill in its present form. I am not suggesting that there is no necessity for an organisation to look after the interests of egg producers.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Has not some regulation been introduced by the Federal Government regarding the marketing of eggs?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is some legislation.

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is a war measure and is only temporary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member referred to a board representing certain organisations.

Hon. G. B. Wood: But that is only temporary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The people for whom the hon. member speaks take exception to that board. He was not quite correct in his reference to the constitution of the board, because I am advised that it consists of Mr. J. Gameau, Red Comb Association of South Australia (Chairman), Mr. S. P. Hallick, of the Queensland Egg Board and Mr. S. Barwell of the Victorian Egg Board. I am also informed that our committee established to stabilise the price and secure the export of eggs during the present emergency has met with success. There are very few producers who are evading their responsibilities. I have pointed out the objections to the Bill as I see them and as the department sees them, and therefore I cannot support the measure in its present form.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [12.14 a.m.]: I am not so much opposed to the Bill as I am desirous of drawing the attention of Parliament and of people outside Parliament to the way in which we are drifting. I should like to know how many boards we already have to help producers. The latest is a potato board. So far as onions are concerned, a man who grows a quarter of an acre of onions comes under a board. The same is to apply to growers of potatoes. A man who has 75 hens is to come under a board, and if a man has one fruit tree he is an orchardist. Where are we getting to? The P.P.A., which is responsible for the creation of these boards, has recently announced the formation of a passion fruit growers' branch of the P.P.A. So now we are down to passion fruit. Next session I presume we shall have a cape gooseberry board, and the day is probably not far distant when Mr. Angelo will rise in his place and extol the benefits to be derived from a banana board.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about a duck board?

Hon. J. CORNELL: About the most useful board at present is a duck board. I do not know where we are drifting or where are likely to finish. In the last resort members of Parliament should constitute a board to protect themselves and enable them to remain in Parliament for ever.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are often bored.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope I am not boring them now. I once said that the

Mitchell Government would go down to posterity as the wooden Government because of its penchant for appointing boards. Tonight I withdraw that statement and say that its performance was a mere bagatelle to what has developed since I uttered those words. I cannot see what is likely to happen regarding boards or the extent to which we are going to regulate these industries. What is the object of all these boards? To endeavour to get the producers that come under them a higher price for what they produce. I do not suppose the hens will get any more, but the man that runs them wants more. In the final analysis, the people who consume the produce controlled by these boards have to pay the piper.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Nothing surer.

Hon. J. CORNELL: When the working section of the community endeavours to get a sort of board or an improvement under the Factories and Shops Act, its members are told to go to the Arbitration Court. I am wondering whether the hens might protest and also go to the court to get their affairs regulated.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [12.19 a.m.]: When Mr. Wood introduced the original measure, I opposed it for many reasons. Tonight the Chief Secretary has explained the attitude of the department to the amendments now suggested, and I agree with him. I took strong exception to the passing of the Bill when it was first presented to us; on this occasion I shall not oppose the second reading. At the same time I am opposed to many of the clauses. The hon. member has not improved the Act, and will not benefit the growers by this measure which will place the industry in no more advantageous position than it occupied last year. Parliament was asked to recognise the poultry farmer who was the possessor of 50 hens. This House raised the number to 75, and now we are asked to reduce the figure to 25. As has already been pointed out the policing of the Act on such a basis will be very costly, and will deprive the producer of any benefit that might otherwise accrue to him. The administration charges will be so heavy that his benefits will practically be all absorbed. The authorities in New South Wales have found that out for themselves. The charge was made that

equalisation money had been used to adjust the position, with the result that those in control had to alter their tactics and increase the administration or commission charges. It is said that in New South Wales the activities of the commission have been responsible for an increase in prices by 25 per cent. on the commission that was ruling. My strongest objection to the Bill is that whilst it seeks to bring under the Act those people who are possessed of 25 hens they will not be given a vote in connection with the conduct of the industry. Surely British justice demands that fair play be given to all, and that these two sets of circumstances shall be harmonised. It appears that no producer having fewer than 250 hens will be given a voice in the administration. There is no equity, therefore, about the business. Mr. Wood also wishes to reduce the voting power on a referendum to a fifty-fifty basis. Whilst I have sympathy with him in the attainment of his object, I feel that the House should retain the three-fifths majority basis, even if we pass the provision restricting the voting power to owners of 250 hens. Most of the amendments made to last year's measure as it came back to us from another place were made at the instance of the Minister. I am sure the Chief Secretary and members will wonder why the referendum was not taken during the year and why the Act was not proclaimed and the board brought into being. Reference has been made to export. The British Minister of Foods has agreed to purchase all export eggs for the duration of the war, and a new voluntary board has been formed to carry on the control of home production and marketing, apart from export conditions. I understand this board is meeting with a fair amount of success. Mr. Wood will be doing more good for the industry if he allows matters to rest for another year, before proceeding with the referendum. The services of the voluntary board could then be availed of and increased costs upon the industry avoided. I shall vote for the second reading, but in Committee will oppose some of the amendments the hon. member asks us to support.

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [12.25 a.m.]: I support the Bill. The producers concerned are just as much entitled to the establishment of a board to serve their interests as are those connected with any other industry. I take no exception to

the large number of boards already in existence, for by that means numbers of industries are being developed. In order that those engaged in them shall receive protection and their goods shall be properly marketed, it is necessary that boards should be established. I am not at all worried about the number. I am not in accord with the Bill as a whole, and consider that in Committee it should be amended in certain directions. Although the Act has not been proclaimed, that is no reason why its provisions should not be amended where necessary. If we find it contains defects we should adjust them, so that when the Act is proclaimed it may more readily be administered effectively than it could be in its present form.

**HON. G. B. WOOD** (East—in reply) [12.26 a.m.]: When the Bill that became an Act was before the House last session, it was passed practically unanimously. The only dissentients were Mr. Cornell and Mr. Macfarlane. I have introduced nothing new except the provision for a simple majority at the poll. I have had it thrown up at me that the Act has not been proclaimed. Members who did that could not have listened to me when I moved the second reading. I think it was 4 o'clock in the morning when the Bill was passed last session.

**Hon. L. B. Bolton**: It is getting on for that now.

**Hon. G. B. WOOD**: Certain mistakes were made by the Clerks in both Houses. I do not blame them for what occurred in the rush of the closing hours of the session, but the Act was made unworkable by reason of the cross references. Clause 3 of the Bill was eliminated in another place, but when the measure came back to this House references were made to the clause, although it had been struck out. No self-respecting member in either House could possibly object to the second reading of this Bill. It is designed particularly to rectify the mistake to which I have referred.

**Hon. J. Nicholson**: What about the reduction in the number of hens from 75 to 25? That was not a mistake.

**Hon. G. B. WOOD**: Perhaps not. I ask members to pass the second reading, although they may not agree to all the amendments I propose. Reference has been made to the fact that the Act has not been proclaimed and a board has not been formed. The Chief Secretary said the delay was oc-

occasioned because of the expense of establishing a board, but that is not so. I do not know whether the poultry adviser gave him that information, but it is incorrect. As a matter of fact, the producers were not satisfied with certain amendments that had been made, and felt that the Act was not workable in its present form. I, therefore, ask the House to pass the second reading of the Bill, and deal with it in Committee. If I have an assurance that I shall now receive a little more consideration as regards the Bill than I have received during the three months it has been on the notice paper, I shall suggest going into Committee on it next week, in preference to asking members to carry on until 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. The principle has been established, that an egg marketing board should be formed. Therefore this is purely a Committee Bill. In this House the measure was passed with practical unanimity last session, although containing no provision for a poll. However, the poultry people want a poll, but want it to be taken under the best conditions.

The PRESIDENT: With reference to the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, that mistakes were made as the result of carelessness or of some action taken by the Clerks, what really happened was that the Clerks had no discretion except to follow what was actually done as the result of amendments made in Committee by members. So the blame does not rest with the officers of the House.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I did not desire to cast any reflection on the Clerks, either here or in another place; but I did wish to reflect on the way business was done last session. When references were made to a provision not contained in the Bill, we missed the errors here.

The PRESIDENT: I am glad of the hon. member's explanation of his remarks.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.33] I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 12.34 a.m. (Friday).*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 23rd November, 1939.*

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

### MOTION—INVESTMENT COMPANIES SELECT COMMITTEE.

#### *Extension of Time.*

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

### MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.34]: I move—

That during the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, and all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day they are received.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [4.35]: Usually towards the end of the session the Premier asks permission to suspend the Standing Orders. I want an assurance from him that all the items on the notice paper will be considered, and that time will be given in which to send them to another place to receive such consideration there as they may require. There are 27 items on the notice paper today.

The Premier: Some of them ought not to be there.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A fairly extensive amount of business, therefore, remains to be